

Woman with Rose Tattoo

A big inspiration of mine, in fact, he's probably more than an inspiration, but something close to a mentor is the British-Ghanaian photographer, Eddie Otchere. He shot loads of classic hip hop and jungle photographs in the 1990s, and I was amazed when I found out that it was a guy from Brixton who took those iconic images of Black Star in Brooklyn in 1998 for their debut album.

The first time I properly met him was at a workshop he put together in an old mechanic's garage in Brixton. He gave us all an old camera, loaded with some Ilford film, and we had a walk around Brixton together. Seeing this area through his eyes was eye-opening. I live in Peckham and thought I knew Brixton fairly well, but Eddie had his own kind of subaltern map of the area, the B-side of Brixton, and introduced us to loads of different people, members of the community.

I got some wicked photographs that day. In fact, it might be the most consistent single roll of 35mm film that I've ever shot. I liked almost every single frame on that contact sheet. And this is one of the photographs I took that day of a woman who just so captures, in my opinion, this beautiful, unapologetic vibe of Brixton.

Eddie developed and processed the film in some makeshift tubs filled with chemicals in a pop-up dark room he made in the garage. And, I love the B-side texture of it. And what I, what I love actually, is that Eddie has never stopped shooting film, and even in the late 2000s when it looked like film might be completely dead, he was still championing it.

Working with him really inspired me to go back to working with film again and help me understand how beautiful film can be in the right hands. And I used the texture of this very photograph as the standard against which

all of my other black and white photographs should be measured. This photograph also inspired a very beautiful poem by Roger Robinson that's included in the book.