



For your consideration — Woody Gooch joins The Pool Collective.

Hello. It is our pleasure to introduce you to Woody Gooch, a recent addition to our evolving group. To share an intimate insight into Woody's practice, we have paired a selection of his work with an interview conducted just a few months ago.

We hope you enjoy the following deck and look forward to working with you again soon —
Cameron, Courtney, Zoe & Georgia.

Interview by Adam Rivett. First published September, 2023. All images © Woody Gooch. All rights reserved. For all commission enquiries contact — Courtney Lewis: courtney@thepoolcollective.com

The Pool Collective was formed in 2009 to centralise the artist's role within the production process and better facilitate their engagement with our creative partners.

The Pool Collective acknowledges the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora nation as the traditional custodians of the lands where we live. learn and work. We honour and pay our respects to elders past, present, and future.





Woody Gooch's work is blessed by the light and in awe of the heights. Making his name in the world of surfing with imagery that captures both the immensity and instantaneity of the sport, his work naturally evolved to incorporate short-form film, narrative, and portraiture while at every turn maintaining the keen eye and responsiveness to the moment found in those early works.

Woody is widely known for his vivid visions of nature and intimate human portraiture. He has exhibited in galleries from Los Angeles to Zurich and collaborated with clients as varied as Corona, DIOR, Audi, Billabong and MoMA.



“Before I had a camera, I used to swim around in the waves and pretend to take photographs by blinking my eyes.”





AR: You got your start with a very particular visual style and subject: surfing. Was that a case of the personal leading to the artistic?

WG: I've always seen the ocean as my playground from a young age. Before I had a camera, I used to swim around in the waves and pretend to take photographs by blinking my eyes. It was how I saw the ocean, in my own way, as a nourishing space. Over time, it's been a mentor, a place I understand as having a mind of its own.



Working in the water has made me understand texture and abstractions in a very personal way, which I've been able to transfer to the way I see other objects and places. The water is a place that's always corrected and fortified my vision and overall thought.

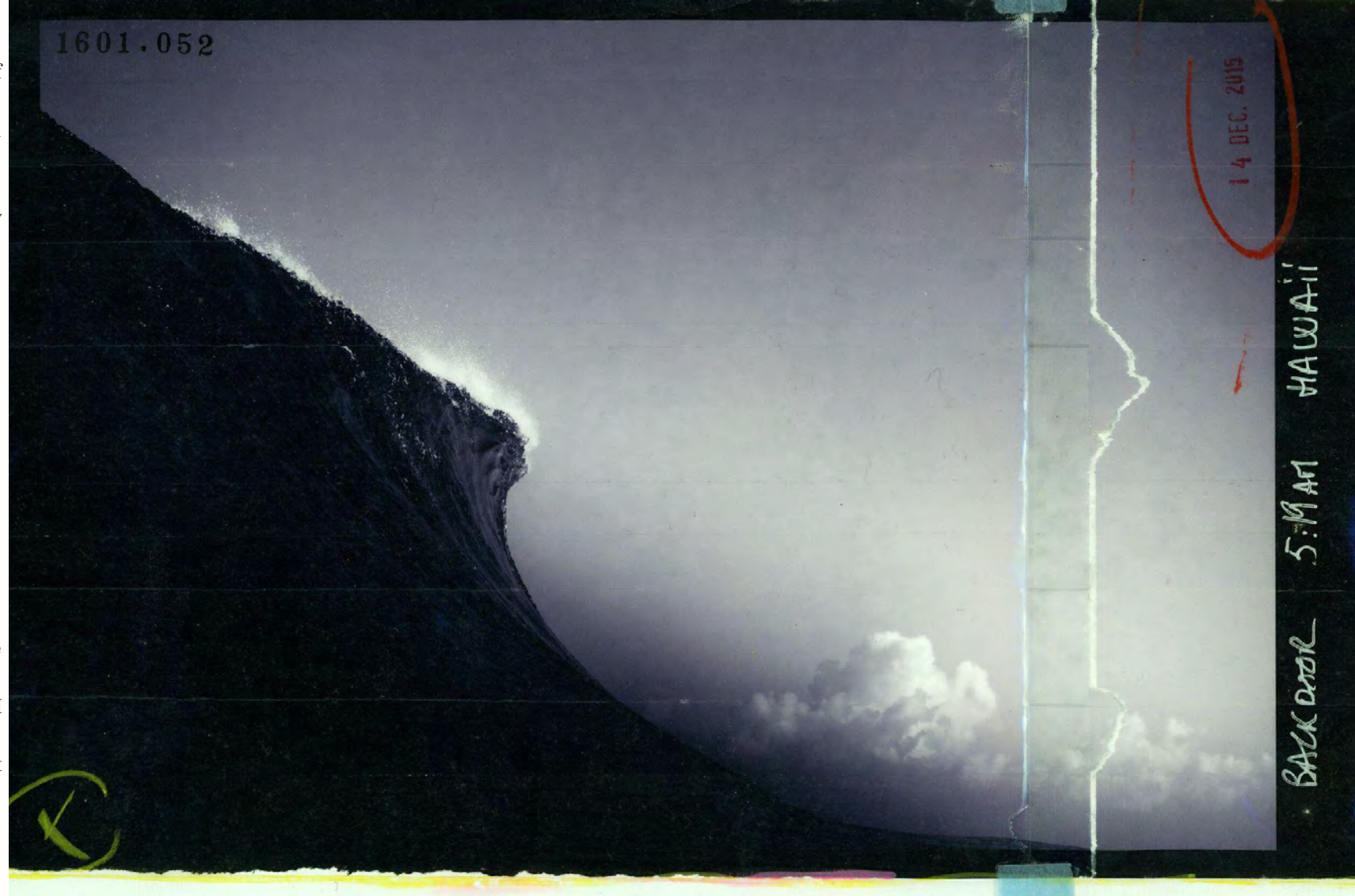






AR: Documenting surfing and working on and beneath the ocean surface offers challenges very different from most other forms of image-making. Some works in your Contained series feel like being caught in the shadow of a wave moments before the crash. How do you position yourself and get the right angle, so to speak, in such an unstable and perpetually changing medium?

WG: The ocean has a mind of its own, and it's why I'm so connected to it. I often like letting the ocean take me where it wants to rather than fighting against it and positioning myself where I believe I should be. It's like the water encouraging me to try harder and see my subject differently. It's also taught me to work with what's in front of me to respond to the moment's immediacy without overthinking it or trying to falsely compose an image.







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AR: I'm very taken with your film *I Am Here Now*, a collaboration with Sophia Layrea. How the conversation with her distant, phone-bound father works against the vibrancy and beauty of Sophia, her movement across various landscapes is very effective. In some of your other work, smaller human figures are often dwarfed by their surroundings, while in this film, Sophia is front and centre almost constantly. Does working with a human subject change your responsiveness to space?

WG: This is where I have enjoyed working in both filmmaking and photography. The parallels have a precise meaning for me. I like working with the idea of naivety and leaving my decision-making open to the possibility of the unintentional. What's important is that I leave space for the viewer's imagination, thoughts, and prejudices to flourish. There must be a window for someone else to step in and bring their own point of view. If I give you all the context and force my version to the fore, there's less space for nuance. My hope is that the less I give you, the more you bring to the work.





I Am Here Now is a conversation between Sophia Laryea and her father, revisiting the backbone of her childhood in Ghana, West Africa. As her father expresses his metaphors, passion for life and movement, he passes it on to her, a translation and transference of space, time and connection.

Director: Woody Gooch, **DOP:** Andrew Gough, **Editors:** Andrew Gough, Woody Gooch, **Colour Grade:** Daniel Stonehouse, **Sound:** Yves.

[Watch the film](#)

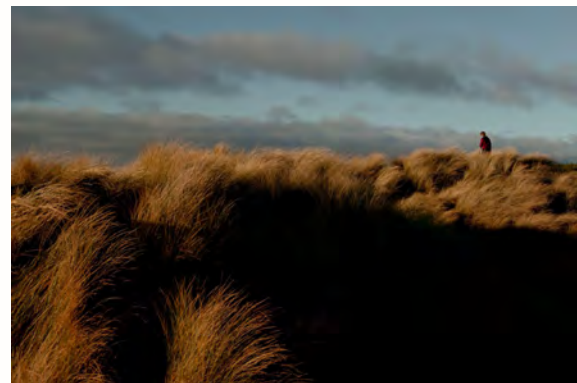
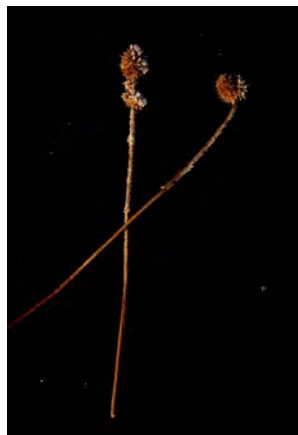
“I find myself waiting for things to shift and change within the conditions of the landscape. Through this patience, you find meaning and convey the exact nature of place and time.”



AR: Your landscape portraits, such as the work from the Common Ground exhibition, feel immense and seem to take on the forceful, stark nature of the subject — the ice obfuscates or obliterates much of the frame, while mountain views are hazy, seeming to dissolve from the lack of oxygen. Is there an attempt to impose a particular idea or aesthetic to the landscape, or do you feel like it's more a matter of trying to honestly capture a space and let its conditions affect the work?



WG: I will see landscapes within landscapes. I follow a thought and vision, find something grand and visually interesting in the image and crop it out. It's a sense or impression that I want to focus on — there is something about creating something from nothing. It's all in front of you, but you don't need to use it all. I find myself waiting around a lot for things to shift and change within the conditions of the landscape. Through this patience, you find meaning and convey the exact nature of place and time.



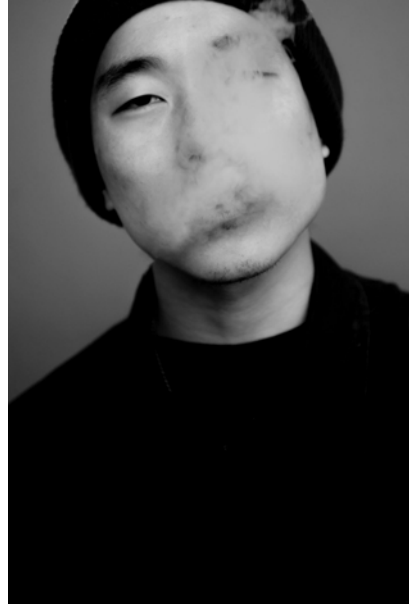






This film was created by Audi Australia as part of Earth Day. It follows Woody on a photographic road trip along Australia's east coast. The previous page features some of the stills from the project.

[Watch the film](#)



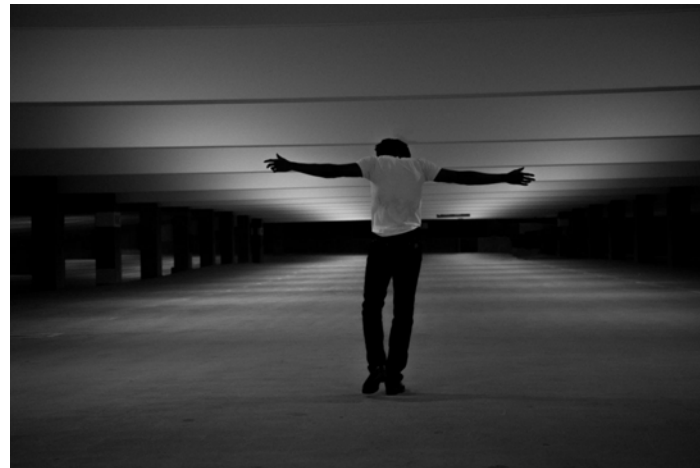
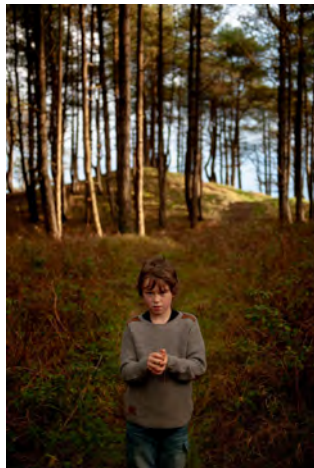
“There must be a window for someone else to step in and bring their own point of view. If I give you all the context and force my version to the fore, there's less space for nuance.”



AR: Do you think the approach changes when the camera moves in closer, so to speak, whether it's Sophia's face or the intimate practice of human portraiture. You mentioned before that you were happy with the ocean taking you to the right spot for the shot — Does the collaboration and trust between a face and a lens need that same fluidity and adaptability? How do you "let it flow" when it comes to more intimate shots?

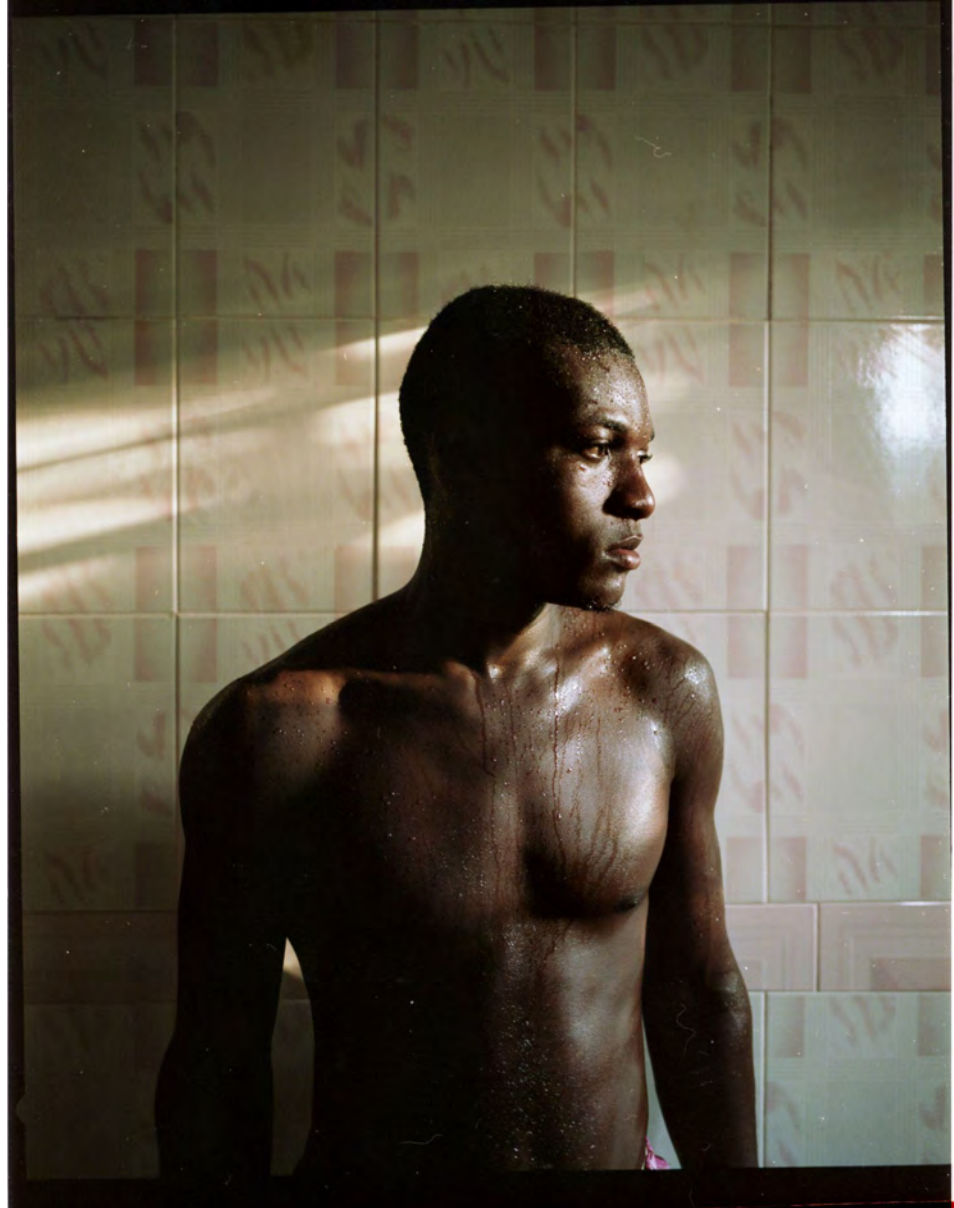
WG: That intimacy of portraiture almost intimidated me when I first started out. I initially enjoyed the anonymity of observing from afar and felt slightly uncomfortable about being in someone's personal space. Over time, I realised that if I were to walk up to people, I wanted to photograph and chat with them and tell them a bit about myself. People sometimes forget to do that — you've got to give some of yourself away and put something at risk. In that circumstance, both the photographer and the subject share moments of awkwardness and uncertainty, which is important and gratifying. Most of my portraits are photographed with little preparation. The spontaneity of that meeting is really crucial and meaningful to me.













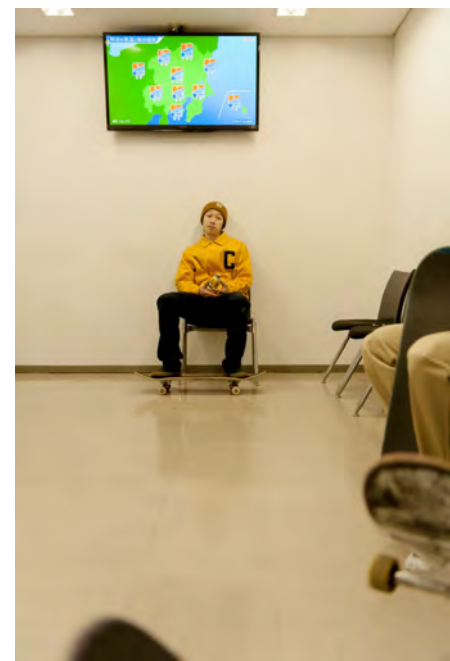
AR: You've worked with a diverse group of commercial clients: Audi, Dior, Corona, Lululemon, Billabong, to name a few. Often, the work feels like an extension of the natural visual grammar you've developed over the years. What are the challenges and points of interest when translating your visual language into a commercial context?

WG: I'm often asked to bring my style to whatever I'm shooting commercially — which I love. Image-making's surreal but wholesome nature speaks strongest in the final work when there's a sense of trust and enthusiasm. If my images can be a vehicle for communicating the subject at hand, then that's what it's all about. It's the most important thing about being an image maker.





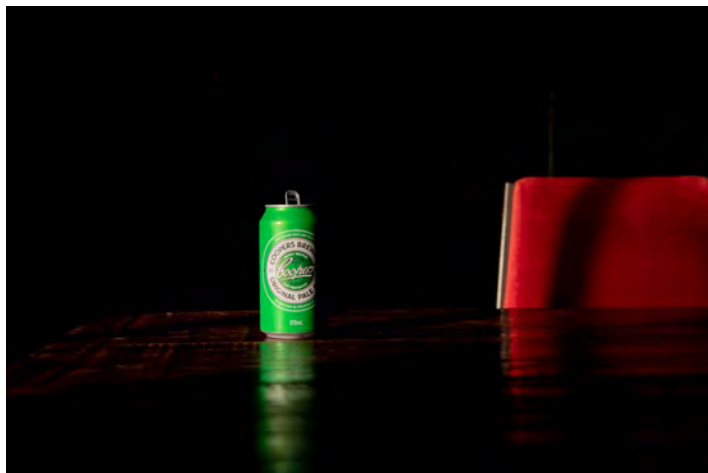












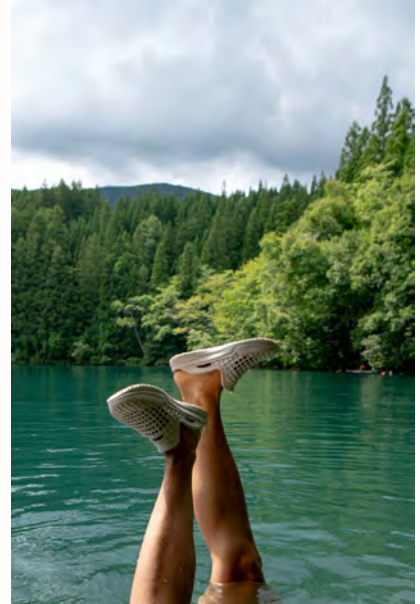
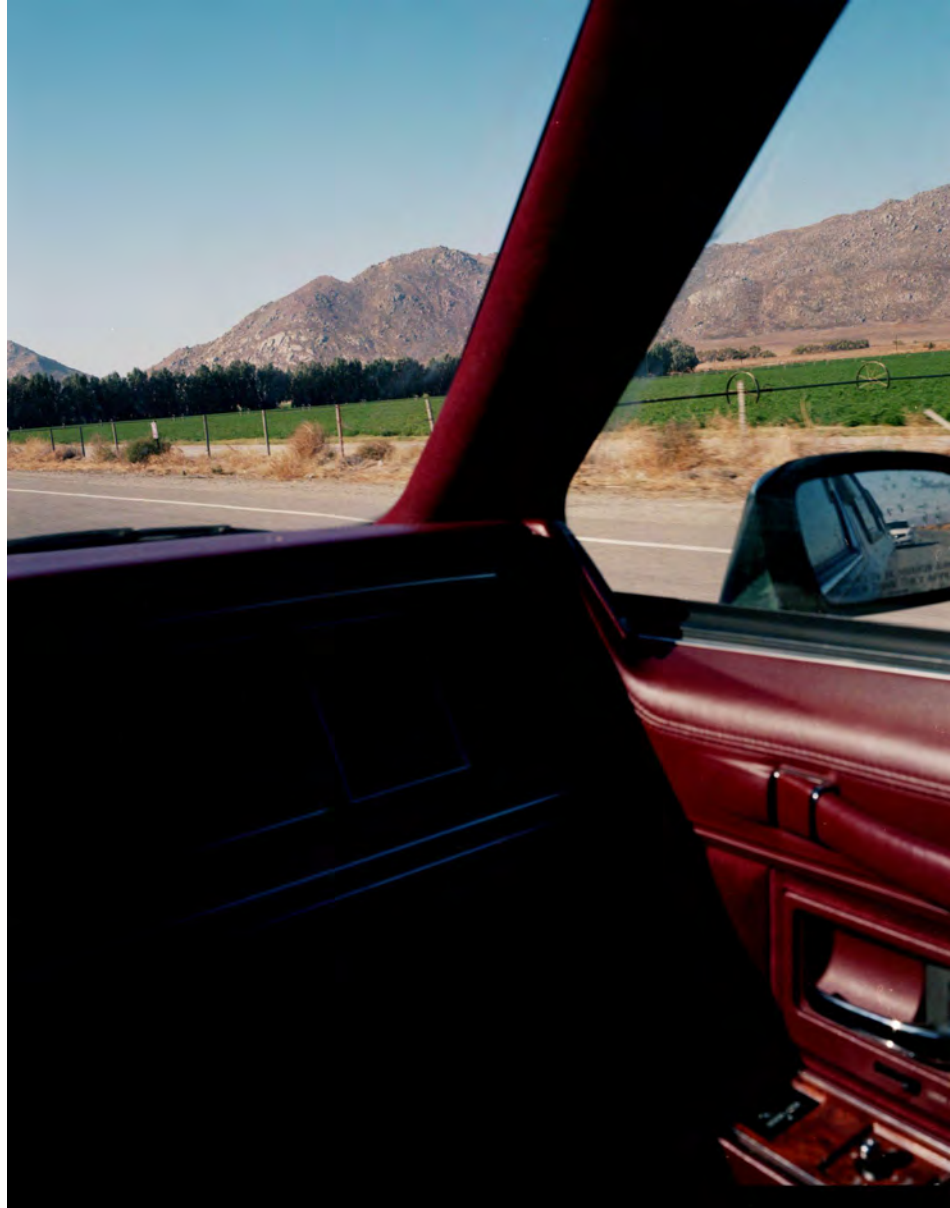


AR: Given inspiration can come from anywhere, are there any contemporary artists you feel inspired by in any medium? And are there artists that first "got you going" that you still return to?

WG: A handful of artists I seem to carry with me always animate and stimulate my thinking, but they vary across different forms. I've always been seduced by the rich colours that infuse Jamie Hawkesworth's photography. On the other hand, Glenn Murcutt's architecture also means a lot to me — the connection is more abstract, but I like the way it invites daydreaming and the way the space lives and breathes as if in its ideal location.

The artists who have continuously inspired me were those who could open up a small crack into the moment they were experiencing and then leave it available for others. That's the same for me. I like looking at moments that are not necessarily as interesting when you take a step back. These moments are so day-to-day, but they represent a broader feeling. As I spend a lot of time on my own, travelling with work, I become more outward-looking.









The Pool Collective studio and workspace, Enmore.



The **POOL COLLECTIVE** is a group of highly skilled artists and makers focused on creative expression and production excellence. At POOL, the skills of the artist and producer are equal, where creative vision and creative solutions sit side by side. Raw talent is nurtured through the pursuit of personal projects, and large-scale commercial projects are executed with confidence and professionalism.

POOL began effortlessly and organically as a collective of artists, each with their own unique creative vision. Given the freedom to spontaneously explore their aesthetics, The Pool Collective became known as a place defined by long-standing relationships based on trust and transparency.

Carefully curated, our artists and makers are a highly creative people with vision, experience and unmatched skill. They see what others don't, have the imagination and wherewithal to pull it off, and maintain a mutual respect for both art and making. **[@thepoolcollective](#)**





The Pool Collective, 2023

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To explore the work of our artists, visit thepoolcollective.com