

Rhonda Wilson - Photographer

BORN IN BIRMINGHAM ON 17 AUGUST 1953, RHONDA BEGAN HER CAREER IN THE 1970s AS A TRAINEE JOURNALIST WITH D.C. THOMSON & Co. LTD. IN DUNDEE, WORKING ON THE POPULAR JACKIE MAGAZINE AS A

MUSIC EDITOR, STYLIST, PHOTOGRAPHER AND PROBLEM PAGE AGONY AUNT. RETURNING TO BIRMINGHAM IN 1980, SHE WORKED AS A GRAPHIC DESIGNER, MOVING ON TO DEVELOP HER SKILLS AS A PHOTOGRAPHER AND SUBSEQUENTLY BUILDING AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION FOR PROGRESSIVE PHOTOGRAPHIC CAMPAIGNS AROUND LOW PAY AND HOMELESSNESS. THE AGE OF THE ELDERS EXHIBITION SHOWCASED PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES GROWING OLD IN THE CITY TOGETHER, FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE FROM THE HEART OF THE CITY DREW TOGETHER 80 PORTRAITS OF WOMEN, WHILE WORTH PAYING FOR WAS COMMISSIONED BY THE WEST MIDLANDS LOW PAY UNIT. RHONDA ALSO PARTNERED WITH MING DE NASTY IN 1989 TO ESTABLISH THE POSEURS STUDIO AND GALLERY IN BIRMINGHAM'S BALSALL HEATH AREA, WHERE SHE CURATED AND HOSTED PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITIONS UNTIL THE EARLY 1990s.



EARLY ON IN HER CAREER AS A LECTURER RHONDA WROTE SEEING THE LIGHT: THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GUIDE TO ENTERPRISE, PUBLISHING IT IN 1993. THE PUBLICATION SOLD OUT QUICKLY AND SPURRED THE FOUNDING OF THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, SEEING THE LIGHT. WITH RHONDA AT ITS HELM, THE COMPANY PRODUCED AGENTS OF CHANGE – THE

5TH NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY CONFERENCE, THE PAGE, THE WALL, THE INTERNET CONFERENCE, AND MANY MORE PROJECTS IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER BIRMINGHAM-BASED COMPANIES.

ONE OF ITS MOST NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS WAS THE RHUBARB-RHUBARB INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THE IMAGE – AN ANNUAL, THREE-DAY PORTFOLIO REVIEW THAT BROUGHT HUNDREDS OF PHOTOGRAPHERS AND INDUSTRY SPECIALISTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO BIRMINGHAM. IT WAS CONSIDERED THE BEST OF ITS KIND IN EUROPE, AND QUICKLY BUILT UP A RESPECTED INTERNATIONAL PROFILE. THROUGHOUT THE EARLY 2000'S THE COMPANY WAS GIVEN MANY DIFFERENT AWARDS FOR ITS ACHIEVEMENTS; IN THE NEW YEAR'S HONOURS LIST OF 2005, RHONDA WAS AWARDED AN MBE FOR HER CONTRIBUTION TO PHOTOGRAPHY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE. RHONDA'S COMMITMENT TO PHOTOGRAPHERS WAS MATCHED BY HER COMMITMENT TO THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM. SHE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN PRODUCING THE PEOPLE AND THE CITY EXHIBITION TO SUPPORT BIRMINGHAM'S BID FOR CAPITAL OF CULTURE, WHICH WAS STAGED IN LONDON IN 2008. A YEAR LATER SHE CURATED AND PRODUCED THE OBAMA'S PEOPLE EXHIBITION AT THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, ATTRACTING MORE THAN 100,000 VISITORS.



RHONDA DIED ON THURSDAY 06 NOVEMBER 2014 AFTER A DEBILITATING ILLNESS.

