

# Alec Soth's Archived Blog

March 12, 2007

## Nixon

Filed under: [photographs \(not mine\)](#) — alecsothblog @ 9:16 pm

Last week there was [some discussion](#) on this blog about the randomness of great pictures. What makes a picture great? Who knows? But you know it when you see it. And this week I saw a real doozy:

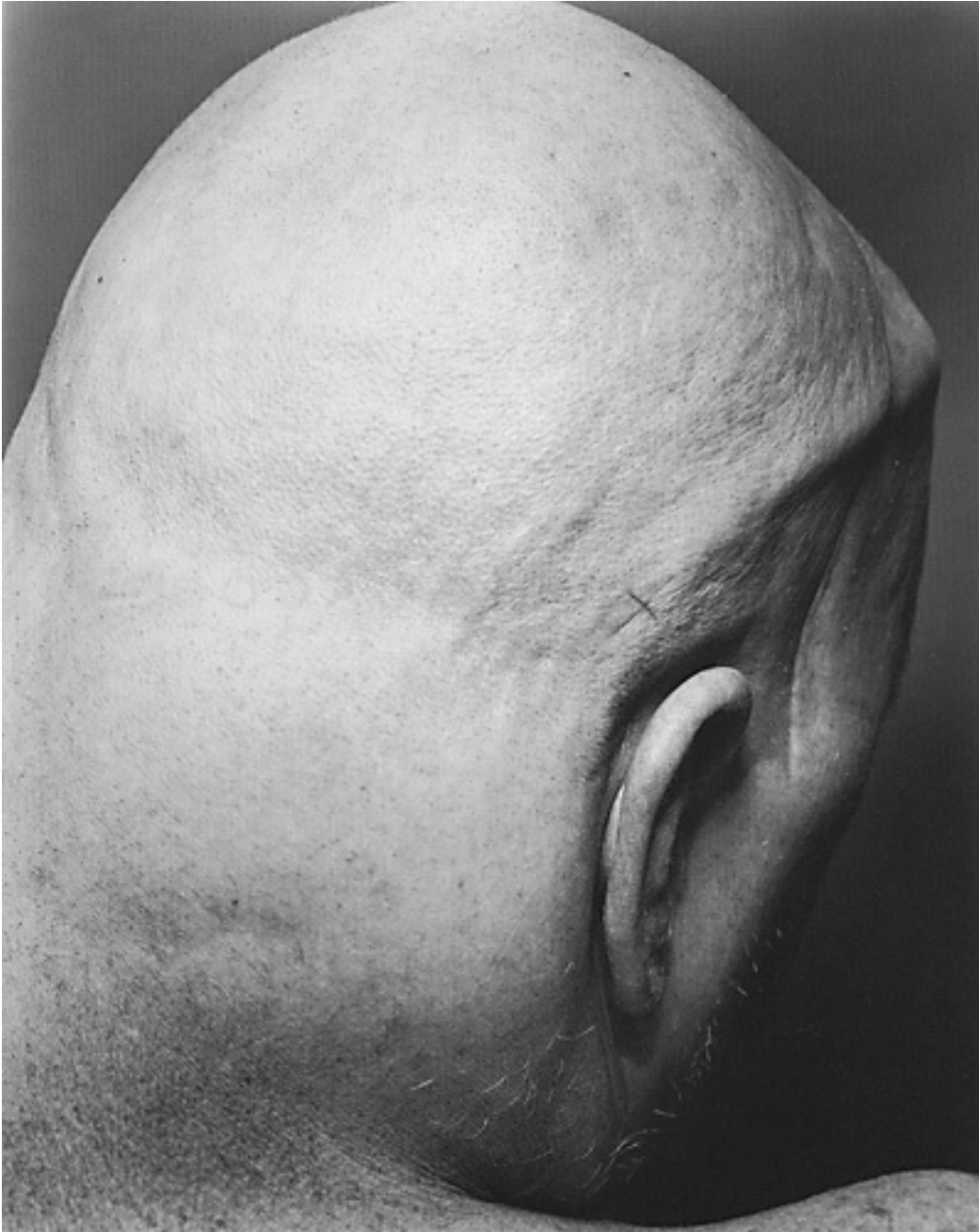


image by Nicholas Nixon from the series *Patients*

## 13 Comments

1. Holy FUCK! Thanks for pointing out this work Alec. This photo is phenomenal.

*Comment by [Zoe Strauss](#) — March 12, 2007 @ [11:35 pm](#)*

2. I thought you could tell me what makes a photo great. Just the the day, I got an email from someone who wanted to know from me what makes a picture great, and I said I was writing a post about it (which is kinda true, except that it will never get published since whenever I re-read what I wrote I delete everything and write the opposite).

*Comment by [JM Colberg](#) — March 13, 2007 @ [8:24 am](#)*

3. "Art is not the application of a canon of beauty but what the instinct and the brain can conceive beyond any canon. When we love a woman we don't start measuring her limbs."  
-Pablo Picasso

*Comment by [Annabel](#) — March 13, 2007 @ [11:28 am](#)*

4. Nicholas Nixon has an extraordinary sense of form and composition. Even if one looks at some of his early group compositions the same sense pervades as in this c/u. A 'sculptor' with the camera.

And by the way...for those of you not familiar with his series 'The Brown Sisters' check it out. He photographed his wife and her 3 sisters over a 25 or 30 year period. Very interesting... and a throw back to that earlier portrait thread on this blog.

*Comment by [Frank](#) — March 13, 2007 @ [8:34 pm](#)*

5. at first glance of the photo (looking at the top) i was sure I'm looking at a photography of a male statue -and was admiring the light and texture etc.. then while rolling down the page (my screen doesn't permit me to see the hole photo at once) i realize little by little - I'm facing a photographed portrait of a living man ( it was the sort sparse hair on the back of his head - who made me realize my mistake and then i experienced a glimpse of a strange uncomfortable sensation -while realizing it is not a statue but a human been - reminded me of the unease -while observing some of Magritte's and other surrealist artists) in any case this is a phenomenal photo indeed!!!

*Comment by [moon](#) — March 15, 2007 @ [5:02 am](#)*

6. Nick Nixon. True OG in the game. End of story. Thank you.

*Comment by [Sam Logan](#) — March 15, 2007 @ [11:53 am](#)*

7. Word.  
Never understood why Nixon isn't a household name, even among photographers he's a little unknown.

*Comment by [phil](#) — March 15, 2007 @ [4:16 pm](#)*

8. Soth,

I name is sun yan chu (???)  
I,m from china. I really love your work .  
Sleeping by the Mississippi is my so love .

I wanting your email to me

Thanks!!!  
Sun

*Comment by [sun yan chu](#) — March 16, 2007 @ [11:30 pm](#)*

9. nick was my photography professor in college and one of my biggest influences and champions. ive always been astounded by his work and this is just another in a long career of fantastic images.

*Comment by [Jennifer](#) — March 17, 2007 @ [1:12 pm](#)*

10. wow... like stone.

*Comment by [Katia](#) — March 17, 2007 @ [3:30 pm](#)*

11. I had Nick Nixon for a photography professor at Massart and he is definitely one of the few people I know that I would consider a 'true artist'

He's continually an inspiration and a great guy...he's incredibly honest and a really compassionate person.

*Comment by [Dan Otranto](#) — March 19, 2007 @ [3:06 pm](#)*

12. of course a lot of things go into what makes a photograph great, but first and foremost i think if it accomplishes any sort of feeling for the photographer itself than no matter people's opinion its a great photo. However, i know sometimes audience's opinions are more valuable than youre own, like if your trying to make money, i still think if the photograph is an honest portrayal of what the photographer was seeing or feeling, its a great shot to me.

*Comment by [whitmanm](#) — March 26, 2007 @ [11:55 am](#)*

13. What a complex and wonderful meshing of form and content – that's all there really is. Astoundingly beautiful and sad. Imagine... that is a person. Nick was my teacher as well and I've always marveled at his productivity! I see him around on his bike and he is a great guy. Very honest and direct, just like his photographs.

*Comment by [Edward](#) — March 29, 2007 @ [9:49 am](#)*