



Left: *Peculiar Fishing* © Amberly Valentine.

Opportunity knocks for young photographers

Free Range, the Art & Design degree show extravaganza, returns at the end of this month, with photography taking its turn in the spotlight for a fortnight from 11 June.

This is the ninth renewal of the event, which has grown exponentially over the years into Europe's largest such gathering of final-year exhibitions. And it's not just popular with the colleges and their graduates; last year more than 150,000 visitors thronged

the galleries of the Old Truman Brewery in London.

But Free Range, which also takes in design, art and architecture shows, is not just some glorified massaging of young egos. It represents a valuable opportunity for potential employers and commissioners to scout rising talent, a factor all the more important in these recessionary times. One of those rising stars is Amberly Valentine, a 22-year-old BA Photography graduate

from the University of Central Lancashire in Preston. Originally destined for medical school with no artistic or photographic background, Valentine has found her niche in fashion photography with a narrative twist. Her carefully wrought fantasies are reminiscent of Neil Jordan's 1984 film, *The Company Of Wolves*, all fairy-tale with a hint of menace. Attention to detail also characterises her work, as she tackles costumes, set design,

and prop-making.

And she has her admirers, *Vogue* and *Hearst* in New York and *Dazed & Confused*, among others, closer to home. Valentine, however, has no intention of resting on her laurels. Of her near-theatrical approach to her shots she says: 'This doesn't mean I wouldn't like to hear from people who could do it better! I am looking to work with all other creative people on shoots.'

Sean Louth

Free Range

**11 Jun 2009
– 15 Jun 2009**
University for the Creative Arts, Maidstone, Swansea Metropolitan University, Amersham & Wycombe College, University for the Creative Arts, Farnham, University College Falmouth, South East Essex College, Plymouth College of Art, University of Central Lancashire.

**18 Jun 2009
– 22 Jun 2009**
University of Westminster, University of East London, City of Westminster College, University of Derby, Wiltshire College Salisbury, Roehampton University, Nottingham Trent University.

free-range.org.uk

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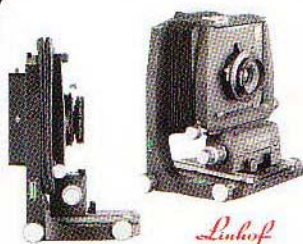
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