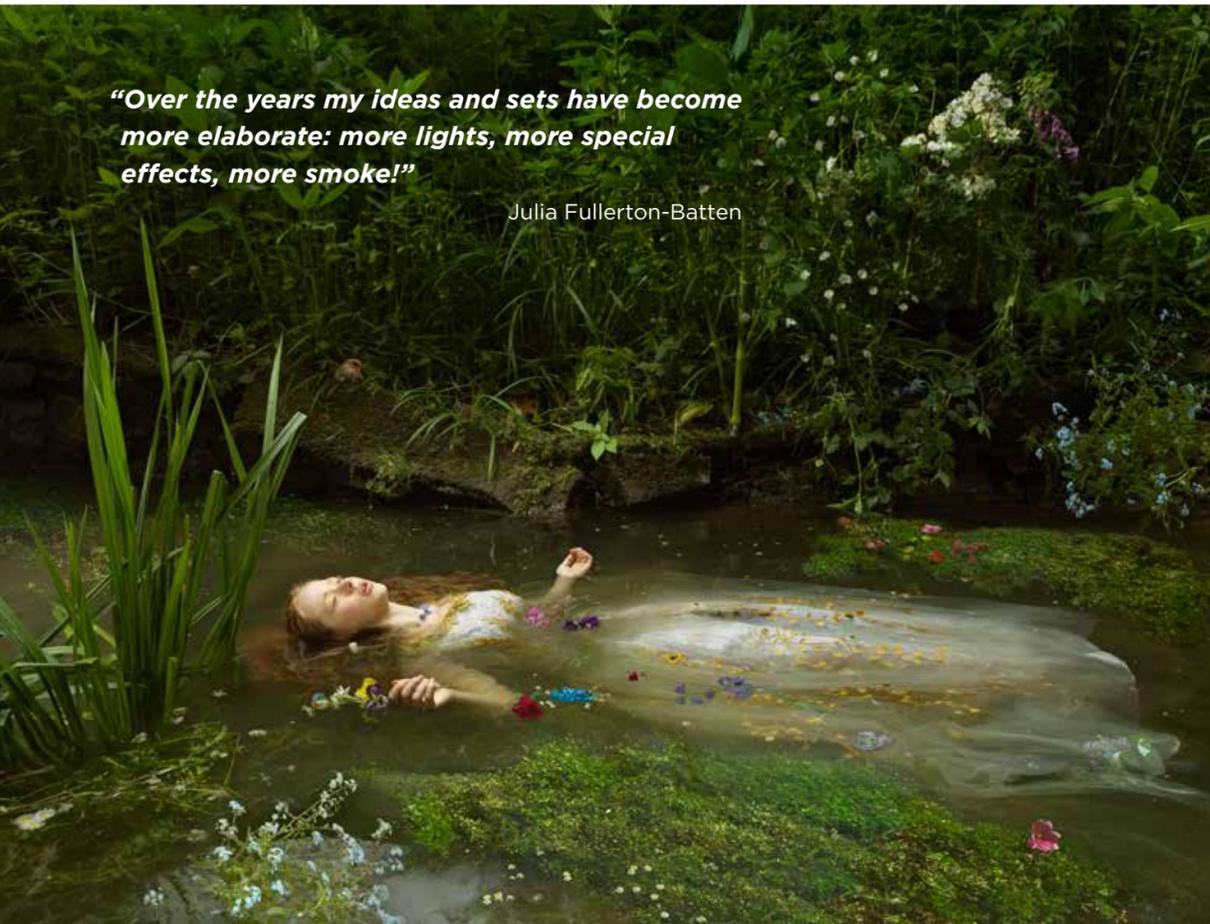


**“Over the years my ideas and sets have become more elaborate: more lights, more special effects, more smoke!”**

Julia Fullerton-Batten



# ART/SCENE

Julia Fullerton-Batten is as comfortable breathing new life into Old Master paintings as she is shining a spotlight on Britain’s sex trade. As a globally acclaimed fine-art photographer, her macro-scale work scrutinizes human beings in micro-detail, and always through the prism of wildly diverse themes. The results are both dreamy and disarming.

“When I lived near New York City as a child, I remember my father running down 5th Avenue taking pictures of people,” says Julia, “He processed and printed the images in his own darkroom, and I was fascinated. He gave me an old Minolta camera when I was 12, and from then on I couldn’t imagine doing anything else.”

After Julia’s parents divorced four years later, she moved to Oxford with her father and siblings. A diploma in photography propelled her to London, where she worked as an assistant for several photographers, including Mario Testino. “After five years lifting and shifting as an assistant, I was craving my own commissions,” explains Julia. She entered the UK Association of Photographers award for assistants in 1998 and won.

## BRAVE NEW WORLD

Advertising campaigns for the likes of Lavazza, Sony and BMW followed, but her own creative ideas were bubbling. Her emotionally tumultuous teenage years became the inspiration for her first narrative, ‘Teenage Stories’ (2005), in which adolescent girls are juxtaposed against a model village as if having ‘outgrown’ their surroundings. The series won an HSBC award, was exhibited in five countries and became Julia’s key to the art world. Her work now straddles both advertising and fine art, with her limited edition prints sold through international galleries.

The scale of Julia’s projects has mushroomed since that model village. Her highly atmospheric images are like movie stills and require a similar production scope to cinema. “It starts with the seed of a story, followed by up to a year of research on the theme,” says Julia, “Then I’ll find a location, actors, costumes, props for the era, a creative team of assistants and stylists, and tons of lighting.” Julia uses a Hasselblad H6d 100c – the best digital camera on the market – and shoots it tethered to an EIZO monitor so that she can pore over the pixels: “Every part of the image tells a story, so every detail is important. I place everything in the scene meticulously.”

## ELABORATE FURTHER

After Julia’s initial autobiographical work, an interest in social issues sparked her next phase: from the large contemporary nudes of ‘Unadorned’ (2012) that comment on our obsession with body weight, to the disturbing ‘Feral Children’ (2015) that depicts historical cases of children who have been lost or abandoned.

In ‘The Act’ (2016) she explores the UK sex trade in a series exhibiting pole dancers, pornstars and slaves in highly stylized and seductive scenes. “I wanted to approach ‘The Act’ from a woman’s point of view,” Julia explains, “using sets according to their lives and career. A career that they have very much chosen.”

Julia’s current project, ‘Old Father Thames’ is her most ambitious to date. It charts historical narratives from the banks of the River Thames, including ‘Frost Fair 1814’, a re-enactment of a party on the river frozen solid. “We had 95 people on set for this photograph,” says Julia, “I used fake snow and ice, and smoke machines to create the misty London of the Old Masters.” Curiously, an African elephant was led across the frozen Thames to Blackfriars Bridge in 1814, so - committed as she is to realism - Julia even tried to hire a live elephant for the shoot: “People are surprised to hear this,” she laughs, “but it’s only the second time in my career I’ve ended up using CGI!”

[www.juliafullerton-batten.com](http://www.juliafullerton-batten.com)

## For Print Requests:

- Mc2 Gallery, Milan
- Camara Oscura, Madrid
- Galeria Impakto, Lima
- Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco