

# Intimacy

Guide to Unique Photography #49

We need to talk.

The more I hear this word 'intimacy' being thrown around, the less I feel it. An intimate portrait, an intimate series, an intimate subject. Do these words already trigger you? Do photo constructions pop into your head, some generic archetypes for what an 'intimate' image is?

When we at GUP started to talk about intimacy around the office – what it is and what it isn't – we encountered some seriously uncomfortable territory, each of us defending what we thought counted as intimacy, and to some degree feeling inadequate for our (in)ability to touch with accuracy such an overwhelmingly meaningful, yet universally basic, emotional phenomenon.

As living creatures, each of us has a different threshold for experiencing intimacy, the pressure point where we start to *feel* a connection with such clarity and intensity that the sudden exposure of ourselves almost burns. Like sensitivity to the sun, for some of us, even a grazing of the skin is enough.

But let's get real about this – to achieve intimacy, scratching the surface isn't enough. Imagery needs to deliver a virus, something that invades. Something that the viewer feels in their blood and bones, something that attacks defence systems and demands adjustment and enlightenment. It's not about getting closer, it's about getting deeper.

Now, make yourself uncomfortable, and let's get into it.

**Katherine Oktober Matthews**, Chief Editor



Two minutes after she left. (2016) © Danny Griffioen. danny.am

How do I feel?