

7 TENANTS OF A GREAT PORTFOLIO

LET'S GO BIG, ON POINT, AND PROFESSIONAL

FIND PHOTO CLIENTS **NOW**

THE 7 TENANTS OF A GREAT* PORTFOLIO:

1. EXCEPTIONAL IMAGES
2. A BODY OF WORK
3. CONSISTENT STYLE
4. A VARIETY OF IMAGES WITHIN THE STYLE
5. SHOWS THE ABILITY TO SOLVE A PROBLEM
6. SHOWS SOMETHING THEY HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE
7. LET'S THE PHOTOGRAPHERS PERSONALITY SHOW

* We will define great to mean a successful body of work that intrigues clients to hire you

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EXCEPTIONAL IMAGES

What do we mean by “exceptional”?

Images that combine a uniqueness of subject, time, production, and presentation.

“WOW” images.

Photographs that are not easily duplicated by non-professionals and copycats.

If this photograph can be made by anyone, then “anyone” will probably do it - and not get paid.

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EXCEPTIONAL IMAGES

Review each image you have currently in your portfolio.

Question each:

Does this image feel exceptional to you (feel, not 'look')

Does the image support your photographic goals?

Could the image have easily been made by 'anyone'?

Does it work within your "body of work"?

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A BODY OF WORK

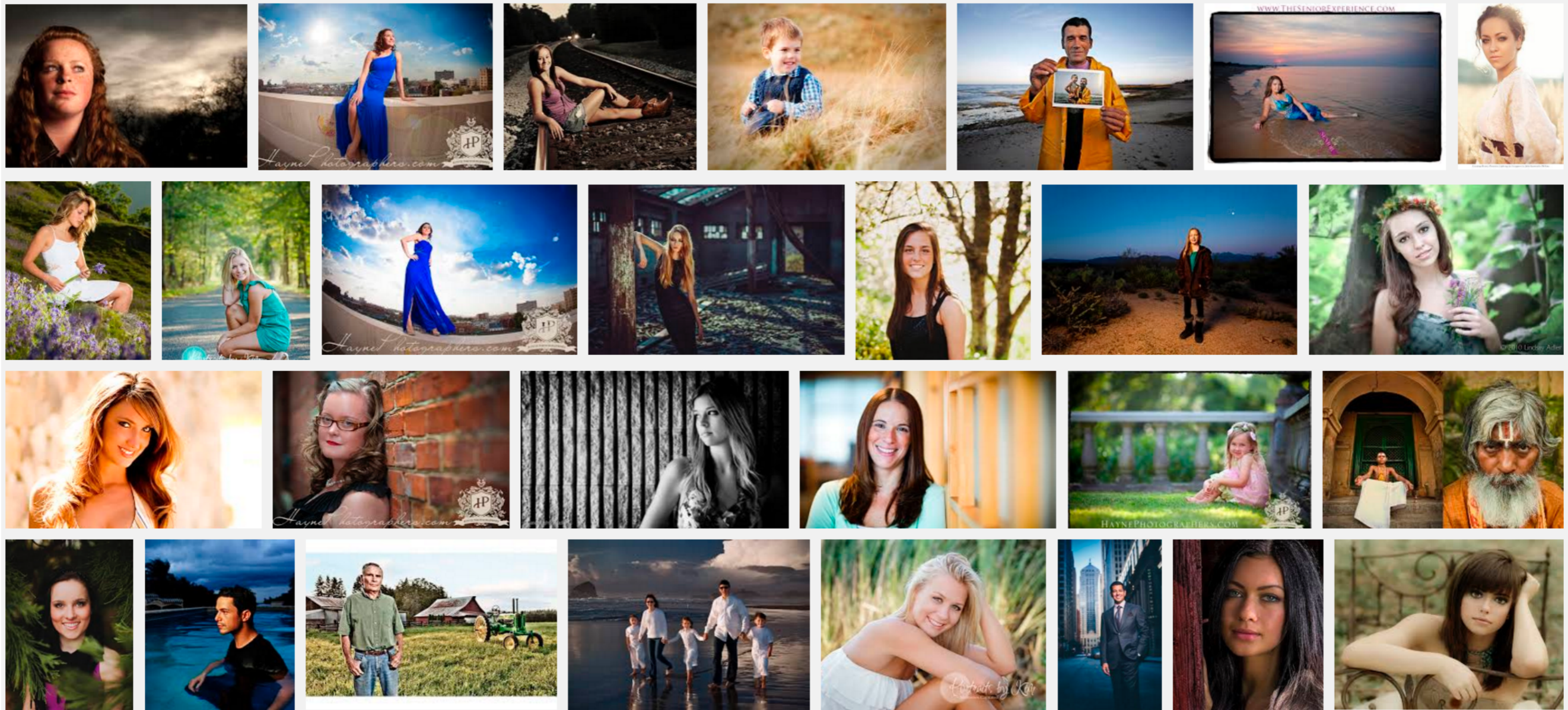
A Body of Work is more than a collection of images. Much more.

A Body of Work ties the style, presentation, and subject matter of the photographer across the images in the portfolio so that the aggregate presents as consistently as the single image.

From POV to lens choice, color pallet to lighting, subject matter to post-production, the body of work seeks to define the photographer by the group of images, while allowing a single image to stand alone on its own.

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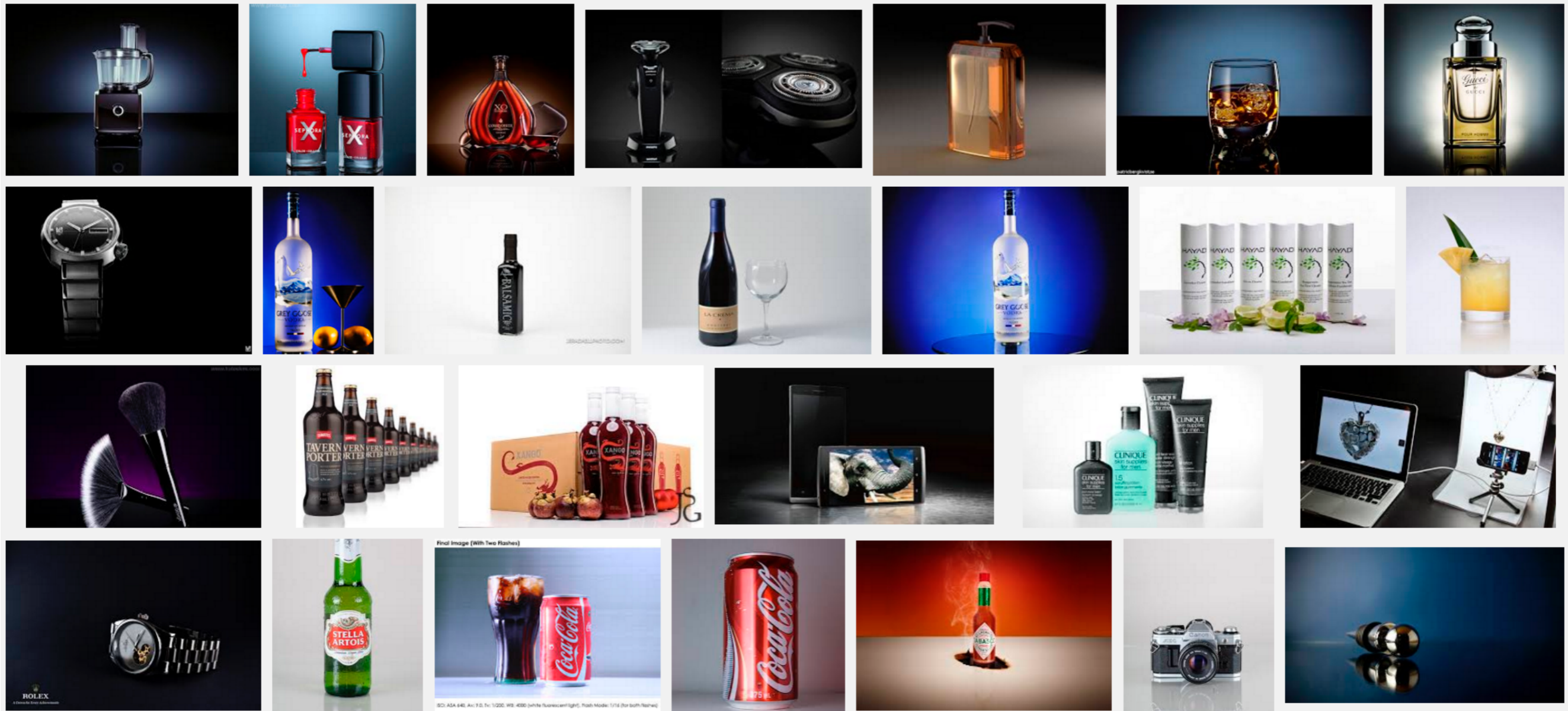
A BODY OF WORK



GOOGLE: PORTRAITS ON LOCATION
We get a collection of images.

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A BODY OF WORK

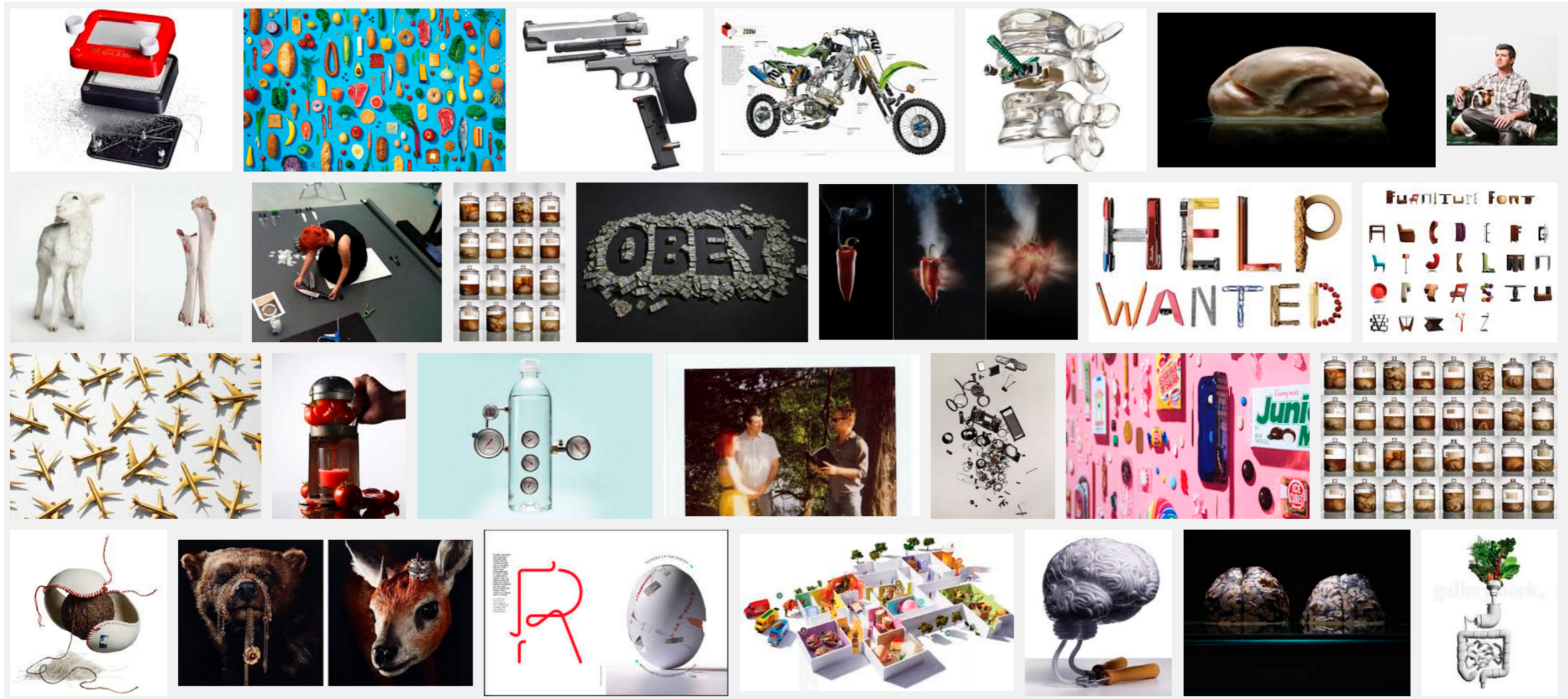


GOOGLE: PRODUCT SHOTS

We get a collection of images.

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A BODY OF WORK

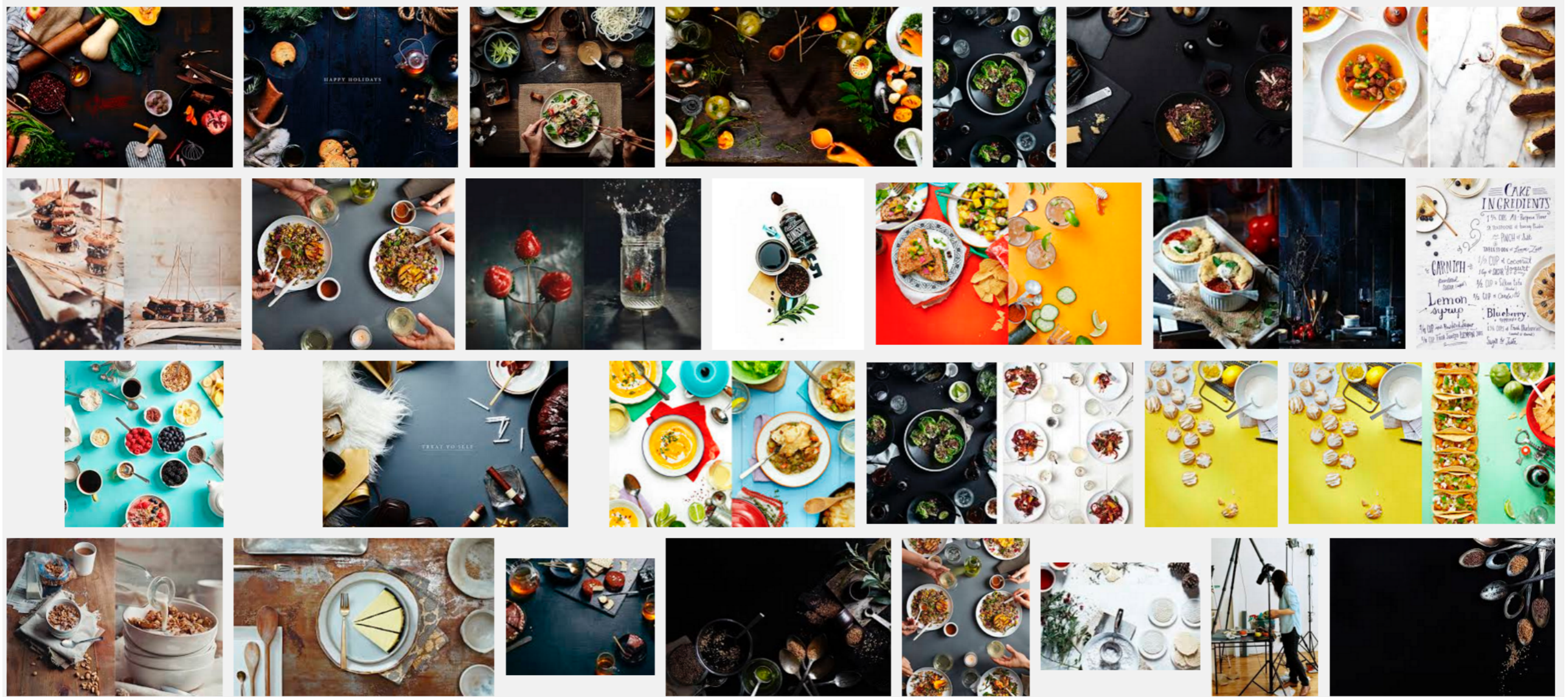


GOOGLE: ADAM VOORHES

We get a Body of Work that jumps off the page.

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A BODY OF WORK



GOOGLE: VK REES

We get a Body of Work that jumps off the page.

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CONSISTENT STYLE

“STYLE” is that almost magical combination of subject matter, point of view, personality, and presentation that works across the genres and becomes a unifying factor.

Your “style” is what helps the body of work stay strong. Style can change with genre or subject matter, but should be unified within subject matter or genre.

A note on style:

Style is what we find when we look back on our work. It is not something to consciously try to apply when starting out since that would be an artificial starting point, and not a completion of the photographers quest for vision.

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A VARIETY OF IMAGES WITHIN THE STYLE

Too many images from the same shoot, or too many images that are very similar will weaken the presentation.

You should be able to show how your style can be used in many different situations so keep variety in mind while you plan your portfolio shoots.

Keep your variety of images to a manageable, and identifiable range of subject matter. Going too far off the beaten path can confuse the buyer and make the body of work seem wide, but thin. The goal of the book is to provide the art buyer with your sense of style and a desire to hire you for their project.

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SHOWS THE ABILITY TO SOLVE A PROBLEM

This may be one of the most important facets of your portfolio: can you solve visual problems. You must show that ability, as it is the heart of what we do as commercial photographers.

The problems can range from complex sets, to celebrities, to simply shooting a couple engaged in realistic conversation. If you shoot product, can you keep all the LED's lit, and make sure all the surfaces are lit and in focus?

Not every shot has to be a "problem solver" but I would prefer you had more of them than the static "magic moment" type of images. The challenges do not have to be 'epic' but they should show that you can put together a set of images or a production that has complexities that were met with a visual solution.

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SHOWS THE ABILITY TO SOLVE A PROBLEM



Pleasing photograph



Created mystery and dynamics by POV, lens choice and light.

FIND PHOTO CLIENTS **NOW**

SHOWS THE ABILITY TO SOLVE A PROBLEM



Simple, pleasing photograph



Created mystery and dynamics by POV, lens choice and light.

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SHOW THEM SOMETHING THEY HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE

This is where it begins to get much more challenging. While not all of your images can show us something we haven't seen before, at least a few of them must. This shows our visual expertise and superiority. We ARE better than non-professionals and we must embrace that and show it off.

Perhaps you use humor, or juxtaposition to show us something we are familiar with in a new way. Maybe it is lens choice, or composition or lighting that makes us take a second look to see something we may never have seen before.

And again - not every shot has to do this, but a few do. Images that will make us remember you because of the unique way your presented something we see all the time in a way we have never seen before. That makes an impact... impact is good!

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While it is a nice portrait, we have seen this composition before



This composition, using empty space, and a dynamic crop is more interesting

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LET YOUR PERSONALITY COME THROUGH THE IMAGES

It's your work. It should look like you. Having your personality show through the work means being authentically involved in the creation of the images.

The personality of the photographer may not be the personality of the person who IS the photographer by the way. You can be total extrovert while shooting people, and an introvert when you are holed up with a good book and wanting to do anything but go to another "industry" party. It is the personality you exhibit while working with clients that is of prime interest.

Remember that people hire people, not portfolios. Your book/website is a surrogate for you when you are not available. AD's, editors, art buyers and designers want to get a sense of the person behind the camera as well as the images they produce.

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LET YOUR PERSONALITY COME THROUGH THE IMAGES



While I can be seriously working hard for the image, I am also easy going, and having fun. I want my work to show that.

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Remember we are talking about the aggregate portfolio here. Not every shot will show us something we haven't seen before, or solve a problem or be exceptional while showing your personality. But if each image does one or two of these things, the portfolio will be more body of work than collection of images.