

Under One Roof  
Jonathan Ellery



Publishing  
Design  
Art



# Under One Roof Jonathan Ellery

by Lydia Fulton

The most ancient of all building matter is the brick. Formed in the most elementary of methods, this unassuming material simultaneously suggests strength and fragility, protest and creation.

For a thoughtfully constructed studio in Bermondsey, South London, the tactile medium is not only apparent throughout the ancient architecture of their space, its varied attributes manifest as a firm foundation for their approach to work.

The site of a former warehouse, this multi-functioning three-floored practice was converted by the architects Duggan Morris for British artist Jonathan Ellery. The carefully considered space, connected through an external staircase, provides a fertile setting in which Ellery's home and art studio, design studio Browns and publishing house Browns Editions, interweave to form a trio of simultaneous components under one roof.

Founded some twenty years ago the independent design studio Browns has continually stacked accolades and world-wide recognition to their name. In 2005 the publishing arm, Browns Editions, was formed from a fascination with the materiality of books, manifesting with an on-going series of collectible artist publications. In addition to this is Ellery's own multi-faceted art practice.

The tireless outcome of two decades of steady output is revealed in this creative building. Ellery's method of thinking is concerned with (re)defining a new working process, one that is immersed in freedom as opposed to being driven by a finite selection of known working parts. This ability to approach the work with an artistic mind, that is open to unknown qualities, results in an ambition of longevity over the fleeting and artificial: a richness of artistic beliefs that cite cultural values on a par with economic.

This considered approach has aroused attention in the art, design and publishing industries, specifically in Japan, where the distinction between such fixed categories has long been disregarded.





# Browns Editions

Successful practices are born of the ability to adapt to new terrain.

The twenty-first century is filled with disposability and instant gratification. As digital and technological advances have aided our potential and increased our output there is a tendency to seek only the fleeting, aspirational image.

Browns Editions functions inside the tensions of these times, but through their ability to work across multiple disciplines, they are able to form a structure that allows for a more complex working model – to work as a comprehensive whole. The studio can design, publish, distribute and sell its sculptural printed matter, enabling an intimate understanding of the entirety of the work.

In November 2019, Browns Editions was honoured by the renowned Tokyo Type Directors Club with the Book Award. This most recent of awards comes on the heels of much success in Japan, where the selection of stockists has spread to include the celebrated Dover Street Market Ginza. In addition to international launches and book signings, the studio travels world-wide to participate in book fairs in Tokyo, NYC and LA.

Browns Editions seeks out the tools and matter to craft its vision. This dedication to research and intuitive understanding of materials has resulted in an acclaimed portfolio, working with a collection of internationally acclaimed artists, photographers and designers, counting Martin Parr, Susan Meiselas, Paul Graham, Felice Varini, the late Storm Thorgerson and Lawrence Weiner amongst others. From many of these collaborations long standing working relationships formed. The acclaimed body of work created with American Street photographer Bruce Gilden stretches from the inaugural collectible hardcover, Coney Island, 2002, to a full sized billboard proclaiming Only God Can Judge Me, 2018.

The studios methodical, thorough explorations of projects continually unearths new possibilities for publishing, simultaneously capturing the attention of the press, from spreads in Wallpaper\* magazine to The Guardian, The Washington Post and The New York Times.



Online articles	
The Guardian	→
Wallpaper*	→
BBC	→
AnOther	→
The Washington Post	→
Found in	
TATE	
SERPENTINE GALLERIES	
THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY	
MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY	
LOUIS VUITTON	
Dia:	
MoMA	
The New York Times	
REGEN PROJECTS	
Printed Matter, Inc.	
MAGNUM PHOTOS	
JEU DE PAUME	
PARIS PHOTO	
TOKYOTDC	
DOVER STREET MARKET GINZA	





Tom Seymour  
The Guardian

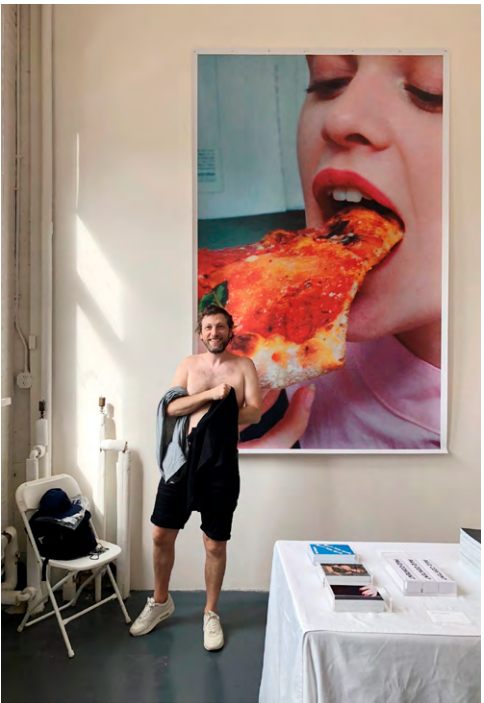
“Gilden is well known for taking stark, uncompromising portraits. It’s a signature that has served him well, and his photographs are frequently exhibited in some of the world’s biggest art institutions. But he has taken plenty of heat, too.”

Jonathan Ellery  
Browns Editions

A tattoo inked across the breast of a woman named Jessica gave the series its name: Only God Can Judge Me. That’s also the title of a book of the images, published by London-based Browns Editions, run by artist and designer Jonathan Ellery.

“By talking about what happened to his mum, Bruce is showing us where his photographs really come from,” Ellery says. “He didn’t need to give us that insight. It was his decision to do so. And it changes everything.”

The  
Guardian



Aaron Easterbrook  
Browns Editions

“We’ve removed all the space usually taken up by adverts, right down to the back cover. The title you’ll find hidden in a sea of white on page seven,” Aaron Easterbrook, creative director of Browns Editions says. “The white space is the counter blow, the sentiment being: it doesn’t have to be this way.”

AnOther





# Browns

Browns achieved critical success from their founding in 1998, and since then have sustained a stream of work from clients across the world, a feat few studios manage. Some of their contemporaries have swollen in size to satisfy commercial demands, but as their successes, output and reputations have faltered over the decades, Browns has never wavered.

There is an innate gravitas and creative and cultural significance to their twenty year work. Forming weighty identities and communications for an array of global clients such as Hiscox, Invesco, Climate Group, Dries van Noten and law firm Rosling King through to FIFA, Channel 4, the FA World Cup Bid and Mulberry: the stream of commissions is a testament to their capacity to fulfil the most multifarious briefs.

In spite of being located in one of the busiest boroughs of London, Browns feels far removed from the turmoil of the neighbouring streets. The ground floor acts as an intermediate space between the exterior and interior: the studio doorway, cut into the courtyard facade, allows natural light to flood the expansive concrete floor inside. Seasonal blossoms are situated throughout the space and coffee is constantly brewed and shared from the communal kitchen.

The sepia brickwork of the interior walls are saturated in a memory that is inherent in the atmosphere of the studio. The soul of the building is subtly evident through soot-stained corners, traditional archway windows and metal bars. A steel wall separates the space, functioning as a magnetic board on which to resolve current projects. The attraction to materials and a sensitive understanding of physicality is apparent, from the symmetry of furniture and the collection of tactile artifacts to the skylights: small apertures to the terraced rooftops outside.

The daily workings of the studio are intimately managed by Creative Director, Aaron Easterbrook, whose instinctive understanding of the functioning of each discipline allows him to nurture and lead the team through every brief. The natural, organic growth of the studio, instead of expanding at an artificial rate, has assured an uncompromising attention to detail. The small team efficiently delve into a thorough understanding of the clients needs. In addition, the studio hosts educational events, welcoming university students to participate in thoughtfully constructed dialogues and presentations, further maximising the alchemy of the space.



Found in
V&A
the DESIGN MUSEUM
Brooklyn Museum
Museum für Gestaltung Zürich
WHITNEY
333 ginza graphic gallery
Centre Pompidou
Lars Müller Publishers
MONOCLE
TOKYOTDC
idea 7177
Wallpaper*
The Guardian
VOGUE HOMMES
office
CREATIVE REVIEW
ELEPHANT
Graphis
i-D





Kylie O'Connor  
Head of Group  
Hiscox

"We have a long and valued relationship with Browns. Hiscox has a very distinctive culture and brand and Browns have managed to navigate our story effortlessly, making every step of the process smooth for our internal team. Browns have a deep understanding of our identity and at times are more passionate about it than even our own staff. The brand identity guidelines that Browns have developed with us will help modernise our systems and communications internally and externally, the end result being a positive effect on how we are perceived, which will ultimately benefit our bottom line."



Pat Pacchiarotti  
Head of Brand Marketing  
Invesco

"Browns have been instrumental in creating a confident, distinctive and consistent identity to set us apart from our competitors, increase brand awareness and help drive new business. They are smart people doing smart work, they have been an indispensable partner to us for over 10 years. The work has been impactful and inspiring, Browns has helped us cut through the visual clutter and stand out amongst our peers. Great partners, very professional, easy to work with... they are extremely creative and meticulous about execution."





Jonathan Ellery.

Since Ellery’s first solo show fifteen years ago, his art practice has repeatedly turned back upon itself, re-examining past issues in a new manner. It constitutes a unique exploration of themes which have interested the artist from the first: themes of the human condition.

Through means of condensed forms he presents the viewer with a work which at first seems neutral in meaning, only to arrive at the actual significance on another level of understanding, one complemented by evocative elements like the title and the choice of material. Tape, marker pen, cloth, brass, rubber, Portland stone, charcoal: numerous materials whose everyday context provides a wealth of allusion. The mystery of the technique and material has been eliminated. The process is straightforward and so the viewer’s attention is engaged by other factors, which is part of the exploration. Ellery does not raise questions about the nature of the world in order to answer them. The questions do not determine the work, but are a result of it; they are posed by the works themselves.

Ellery has held solo exhibitions at galleries across London and internationally and produced a remarkable series of collectible art books. A collaboration with the conceptual artist Lawrence Weiner culminated this year in the release of a silkscreened, clothbound book and full colour billboard. Remnants from former works and material explorations fill Ellery’s art studio. Shapes are flattened and oversimplified into abstract collage, spun aluminium sculptures sit alongside sketches in soft yellows and notes on future works.

The thread which binds these three components, Browns, Browns Editions and Ellery the artist, is Ellery’s ability to scrutinise the framework of a traditional design studio and his faith to tread this new terrain. This stance is not a measured middle, but a true balance between art, design and publishing. This considered structure may, in the future, be regarded as a sutra of multi-discipline studio.



## Online articles

The New York Times



© An Rong Xu

Randy Kennedy  
Hauser & Wirth

“The highly anticipated book, Here It Is, Here It Aint, is an elliptical 68-page waltz of words and images that shimmies poetically away from attempts to elucidate narrative or metaphor, though it may be offering some considerations about the present political climate.”







View performance  
Constance





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