

RESTRAINING ORDER

ONO LUDWIG'S PHOTOGRAPHY SAMPLES THE DARKER FLAVOURS OF DESIRE (SORRY – NO VANILLA).

GALLERY ONO LUDWIG
TEXT TROY GURR

THE inherent eroticism in Ono Ludwig's photography stems not from something he does, but from something he sees in the model: something about their swagger, their body art or their anti-commercial appeal.

It is this latter quality which drew Ludwig to Merik, a 51-year-old model who appears in this series, entitled *Fallen Angel*. Falling well outside the conventional age bracket of your average male muse, he remains a potent sexual figure. Ludwig presents him (opposite) bound and exposed, fragile but bold: an angel compromised by his own sexual appetite, perhaps.

"Sometimes I get asked why I selected [someone] as a model, because they may not have the popular ideal of beauty," Ludwig says – or, more accurately, emails (he claims that he writes better English than he speaks). "But I see more than the outward appearance. I don't depend on the 'beauty' of [models], but rather what is interesting and charismatic about them.

"The globe is populated with so many interesting people. I get excited by people who touch my soul, through whatever means. How they move, they speak, they look, how they adopt an attitude, how they communicate with others. It's their lifestyle that thrills me. I can see it all in a split second when I see a person."

The 37-year-old photographer and freelance illustrator says he prefers the simplicity of analog cameras and dismisses digital out of hand. Despite lacking any of his own, he also admits to a fascination with tattoos, and laments their long-past historical significance, when they were regarded (in Tahitian and other

Pacific cultures) as symbols of achievement.

"If it's done very well, it has almost a bestial attraction to me," he says.

But far from being bestial, his tattooed models express a curious vulnerability: sometimes in the literal sense of being bound and gagged, but more often through the simple domination of being on the other side of the lens.

"Each model has his own personal sense of power," Ludwig says. "Everyone shines with natural self-confidence, in part because I create a moment without enforcement or stress, where the model can just be himself. But my photos have a magic point: the beauty of being brought under complete control." ♠

