

# LADY GAGA: LESSONS FOR JOURNALISTS?

LE 2 AOÛT 2010 ALEX WOOD

When I heard that Gaga's latest video was directed by a Steven Klein, a leading photojournalist, I couldn't wait to see how this photojournalistic approach to composition and style would translate into the moving images of a music video.

Alex Wood is a multimedia journalist turned entrepreneur from the UK.

She's shaken up the world of pop music... can she do the same with online video?

The art of **photojournalism**, which I've recently been exploring, teaches you to treat an image, moving or still, as a statement – a crucial segment of the story you are telling.

Just like television, those images form part of a sequence, but the similarity ends there. So can Gaga's latest music video - *Alejandro* – help us reinvent news?

Instead of being lead by soundbites of interviewees, photojournalists let their images tell the story. It's often more subtle and forces the reader to make their own judgements. As a trained broadcaster - this completely new way of working has pushed my understanding of the storytelling process.

So when I heard that **Gaga's latest video** was directed by a **Steven Klein**, a leading photojournalist, I couldn't wait to see how this photojournalistic approach to composition and style would translate into the *moving* images of a music video.

*Alejandro* is 8:43 of painstakingly lit shooting. It may not be to your musical tastes, but there's no denying the magnetic appeal of this carefully composed and considered piece of video:

## Telling a story

To start with, consider the first two minutes of the video carefully. No words are uttered, and yet as a viewer you're still experiencing "a story".

It's in complete contrast to traditional television where the viewer is drowned in soundbites and drawl from the reporter. Pictures are often an afterthought referred to as "wallpapering" in the industry.

This video is nearly nine minutes long and yet has 17 million views, while no piece of online

journalism has this. Could this pictures-led approach become a new way to tell news stories?

## Isn't this Videojournalism?

In a word, no.

**Videojournalism** has often focussed on letting the subject tell their stories; by doing that they are typically led by the soundbites of the interviewee. It's a growing area and one that I have a lot of respect for.

But photojournalism is more about creating a moment, a situation, an experience inside an image. These moments can often be staged, just like a film, in order to convey the artist's vision.

Purists might say this goes against the journalistic values of truth, but when you strip a story down to its bare components, is there not something more powerful in these moments than simply following an audio track?

This is not an argument for this style of video to replace current television news conventions. But it's clear that those **current conventions struggle to work online**. And many younger people no longer engage with online news... but can you blame them when the conventions are so clichéd that **Charlie Brooker** has parodied them in this clip:

Gaga's video will have benefitted in terms of hits from the fact that it's a pop music video. But Klein's approach to engaging with the audience using imagery is worth careful study.

If a respected photojournalist is making music videos for Lady Gaga, what can other journalists learn from this?

That they too can make music videos? No. That their craft is more closely related to other popular artforms? Quite possibly.

When journalists start thinking outside the box of our own conventions, we'll be able to reinvent the news package into something more engaging; something that challenges audiences through pictures as well as audio.

### Story initially published on Not on the Wires

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**HIRONDELLE**

le 26 août 2010 - 18:37 &bullet; [SIGNALER UN ABUS](#) - [PERMALINK](#)

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VOUS AIMEZ



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VOUS N'AIMEZ PAS



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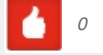
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*very good post, i certainly love this website, keep on it*

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## 2 pings

Les tweets qui mentionnent Lady Gaga: lessons for journalists? » Article » OWNI, Digital Journalism -- Topsy.com le 2 août 2010 - 17:46

*[...] Ce billet était mentionné sur Twitter par Claire Huysegoms et Dobby Tictocard, Owni. Owni a dit: [#owni] Lady Gaga: lessons for journalists? <http://goo.gl/fb/QFJlv> [...]*

Lady Gaga: lessons for journalists? » Article » OWNI, Digital ... | Celebs in the City ! le 2 août 2010 - 18:28

*[...] the original post here: Lady Gaga: lessons for journalists? » Article » OWNI, Digital ... August 2, 2010 // celebs // No Comments [...]*