

FAME | JUNE 30, 2013

See Artist Alison Jackson's Imagined Portraits of Prince William, Kate Middleton, and the Royal Baby

By Christopher Bonanos



Photo: Alison Jackson/New York Magazine

"I chase people down the street and go up to people in restaurants," says the London artist Alison Jackson about her endless search for perfect celebrity look-alikes. "And every agency possible, and Facebook and Twitter, and Skype castings." Since her series *Doubletake* aired on BBC Two in 2002 and then won a BAFTA, Jackson has become well known in the U.K. for these *faux* tableaux, involving familiar faces of every kind: sports, Hollywood, Angela Merkel. (*New York* readers may remember her paparazzi-style "first photos!" of Brad and Angelina's baby in 2006.) She's exhibited at SFMoMA and the Centre Pompidou, as well as at New York's International Center of Photography.

Jackson's work gets right at the nub of our imagined relationship with celebrities: We project surprisingly complex lives onto people we don't actually know. (You may well come away from these photos considering whether Queen Elizabeth would carry an iPhone.) This series, of course, carries the added frisson of being about a clan that—unlike, say, the Kardashians—would never allow such images to exist. They feel forbidden, illicit, even though the scenes are basically affectionate toward William and Kate and their family. That's a point Jackson hastens to make: "I'm not going to do anything horrible," she says. "I don't really like using ridicule as a form of humor." The fun, and the effectiveness, comes in the just-at-the-edge-of-plausibility details: the queen with her *Times* crossword, the prince's pocket square incongruous over a fresh diaper. Speaking of which: Jackson hedged her bet on the gender of Not Baby Windsor. "I couldn't tell while I was shooting," she jokes, adding that she cast an infant who could pass for either a boy or a girl.