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## Sophie Gamand Photography



by Rachel Sanzone — 07/31/2015 in Art

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A picture is worth a thousand words. For some, it's the only thing they have left after memories fade. We photograph important moments and the people we love, so why not photograph our dogs as well? They're just as important and formative in our lives after all. And for New York based award-winning photographer, Sophie Gamand, it just made sense.

Though **Sophie Gamand** was always an artistic spirit, it wasn't until 2010 when photography her career would become her career. But the journey was not easy. After moving from Europe to New York City to pursue her passions, she found photographing strangers difficult and uncomfortable. It was an assignment in a photography class that turned her camera lens from people to dogs.

She's been gaining momentum ever since.

"I went out with sweaty hands and for some reason was pulled to a vet clinic," said Gamand. "While I was waiting to speak to a manager, a bulldog with the bluest eyes peeked his head out from behind a wall and something about him looked human to me."

It was that moment she began her career.

Living in New York City, Sophie sees the connection dogs have with their owners and explores all realms of that connection. With publications like *Doggie Vogue* and animal pageants, dogs become social anchors for their owners.

Sophie captured something very unique her *Watchdog* series. This series features dogs wearing jewelry and elaborate outfits that consequently make them look like little warriors. The inspiration? Gamand noticed that women in New York would carry around the dogs in their purses. She wondered, "Aren't these dogs becoming some sort of emotional ramparts against the world? Security blankets for women who are afraid to go into the world alone?"

Ponderings and thoughts like these are what propel Gamand forward in her artistic expression. However, she does not only view dogs as objects to photograph. She also takes a sincere interest in their health and wellbeing and is an animal activist. She volunteers at Animal Haven in New York City in addition to the Sato Project, a rescue group founded by New Yorker Chrissy Beckles which focuses on rescuing abandoned and abused dogs from Puerto Rico. I cannot help but wonder: Aren't these dogs becoming some sort of emotional ramparts against the world? Security blankets for women who are afraid to go into the

world alone? They are like little soldiers, sidekicks, confidants, best friends. With them by their side, these women never have to feel alone and exposed anymore.

Considering her enormous talent, it was only a matter of time before Sophie Gamand found considerable success. In May of 2014, she won the Sony World Photography Award for *Wet Dog*, a series of photographs taken while the dogs were receiving baths.

“I was honestly ready to hang my camera up,” said Gamand. “I was in Europe visiting my family and my visually savvy father who used to work at an ad agency was looking at my images from the *Wet Dog* series and said it was going to make my career.”

Needless to say, her father was right.

She also signed a book deal in late 2013. Sophie always had a soft spot for animals and before she started taking pictures she never understood why. The more she photographs dogs, the more empathy she feels towards humans. For Sophie, dogs have become mirrors for the human condition. And that reflection is what she captures in her photography.

Sophie Gamand’s book will hit shelves this fall. It will focus on her *Wet Dog* series, and is something you won’t want to miss. To satiate your need for epic dog photography until then, please visit her website and follow her on Instagram @sophiegamand

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**Rachel Sanzone**

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