

A woman with blonde hair in an updo is walking down a wooden staircase. She is wearing a white, off-the-shoulder, lace-trimmed dress. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

how to plan your
FINE ART
WEDDING

LIZ BAKER
FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

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there are all
kinds of love
in this world,
but never the
same love
twice

f. scott fitzgerald

how to plan your
FINE ART
WEDDING



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one.
THE FILM PHOTOGRAPHY
REVIVAL

First and foremost, the fine art wedding movement stems from a revival of film photography. Pioneered by film photographer Jose Villa and spearheaded by blogs like Wedding Sparrow, film photography is at the heart of fine art wedding style. Few would argue that there is exceptional beauty found in a good film photograph, that draws the eye and touches the soul.

A photograph of a bride and groom in a stone-walled conservatory. The bride, in a white gown, stands behind the groom, who is in a blue suit. They are positioned in front of a large, arched floral arrangement filled with pink hydrangeas and green foliage. The background shows the stone walls and glass windows of the conservatory.

whatever our souls
are made of, his
and mine are the
same

emily brontë

Film photography produces unrivalled tone and depth, colour and contrast - exploding as the light hits the film. It's famous for producing images that leap off the page and the kind of creamy skin tones you can only dream of.

It is, quite literally, chemistry.

Like love and marriage, film photography and fine art weddings go hand in hand.



The fine art genre is sweeping through the world of wedding design. It encompasses every aspect of a wedding. It features an elegant, pared-back style with a strong emphasis on seasonal, loose, floral design. Colours, dresses, accessories and makeup vary but tend to lean towards soft, natural and organic looks.

This guide will take you through the five most important keys.

Above all, it is the look and feel of overexposed film tones that is the defining factor of a fine art wedding.



how film works

the process

1. Your photos are taken using a range of different professional film stocks and film cameras.
2. A light meter helps determine the best camera settings to use during shooting, to get that classic, painterly fine art look.
3. Exposed film is sent to a professional, world-class lab to be developed.
4. The processed film negatives are then scanned according to specific instructions regarding colour, tone and contrast.
- Professional scanners (made by Fujifilm and Kodak) are used to turn your negatives into high-res digital files. (Steps 3 and 4 take around a week.)
5. Basic edits are made if necessary (very often none are required).
6. You receive your beautiful, digitised film stills to view and share on your phone, laptop and social media. And they can (and should) be printed and mounted in an album, or framed and hung on the wall.



i must have
flowers, always
and always

claude monet



two.

FLOWERS, ALWAYS AND ALWAYS

Monet's famous sentiment is shared by many.

Flowers are the crown jewels of a wedding design, and our eyes are drawn to flowers wherever they are placed.

Fine art flowers aim to recreate the beauty and wildness of nature in your bouquet, at your ceremony and on your tables. Seasonal or locally grown flowers are often chosen for this reason, and to be gentler on the environment. Asymmetric designs, colour blocking and arranging stems in the way that they naturally grow in the wild are all ways that a talented florist will elevate your floral design.



key pointers

fine art florals

A bundant use of foliage has grown in popularity in recent times. It's a great choice in the green and pleasant UK, it compliments all colour schemes and it enables you to keep your flowers minimalist (more on that in part three.)

If you love flowers as much as Monet and me then design-wise they are pretty much all you need and the more you can budget for them the better. Think foliage arches, doorways and mantels. Picture unstructured table centrepieces, bouquets and urns.

Go large and your florist will recruit a team to bring it all together on the day.

If you're stopping at bouquets and buttonholes, with perhaps a few buckets to arrange yourselves there are some great florists and growers in the UK (check the directory for details).

Alternatively why not send a green-fingered relative or two on a workshop, where they can learn how to create your bouquet from their own flowers?

three.
THE TIMELESS AESTHETIC





The timeless aesthetic is achieved by paring everything right back to a minimum and then carefully choosing elegant details that you really love.

Less is more.

Yes, it can be difficult to resist the temptation to add lots of aspects to your wedding decor. Less is more is very definitely a good maxim here. Try to work with the layout, colours, and style of the backdrop or venue that you are using.

This will help to bring coherence to the whole design.

Another helpful test of each detail before you add it would be: is it beautiful and useful? Much like when you update a room in your house, everything should be pleasing to your eye but also have a purpose or be meaningful to you in some way.

Location, location, location.

Destination weddings are very often fine art weddings. It's the epitome of romance to bring your nearest and dearest abroad to a beauty spot you both love for a party and a holiday in one. For an easier time of it, marry first at home then plan the nuptials you desire on the continent. Bear in mind that you will need to depend on local suppliers for catering and entertainment - so a local wedding planner can be a great help.

Photographers are often delighted to travel, and it is better to have a photographer who speaks your language well. If you can give them full board they may only charge the extra to cover their travel & insurance.



On the other hand you can have a perfectly beautiful fine art wedding at home. Whether you choose a centuries-old palace or your parents' garden (or anything in between), read on to discover what is going to set your wedding apart.



Colour your world.

Colour is a whole science in itself of course, but keep a couple of factors in mind. If it's large, keep it pale, and save bolder, brighter colours for the pops and details. Keep your colour palette to just a few key colours, then add in some variants of one or two of them plus some textures. Spend some time browsing blogs like Wedding Sparrow and Magnolia Rouge for ideas, and then be true to what you love as opposed to the latest trend.



four.
KEEP IT NATURAL

How to keep everything natural.

Together with film photography, natural light is key to achieving a soft, organic look across the board. Try to look for spaces at your venue that are filled with natural light as this is by far the most flattering light.

Consider in particular what natural light is available for bridal prep. Look for a space that is neutrally decorated, not too cluttered, and with as large a window as possible.

This will make life so much easier for both your hair & make-up artist, and your photographer.





When it comes to choosing your dress, accessories, hair and makeup, try to stick to natural, understated looks. Bridal fashions vary widely - consider what suits your shape and your personality. Lace and tulle fall in soft lines and are enduringly elegant. Silk has just the right amount of sheen that screams luxury!

Choose your makeup and hair stylists carefully. Look for those whose work features fresh-faced makeup and loosely styled hair, avoiding the heavier stage makeup with gallons of hairspray! Find some of the best British dress designers in the directory, along with some tried and tested expert HMUAs.



key pointers

fine art lighting

Lighting has a huge impact on the look and feel both on the day itself and afterwards in your photo album. There's nothing more timeless than natural light, and, surprise surprise, this is found in abundance outdoors!

Outdoor ceremonies and wedding meals are simply stunning and on the increase in the UK during the spring and summer months, but you'll always need a plan B. Unless it's a hurricane, grab those group shots and portraits outside no matter what. If you build just a little flexibility into your timings you can make the most of the dry spells when they come.

For a large, beautiful set-up indoors where there aren't lots of large windows, then

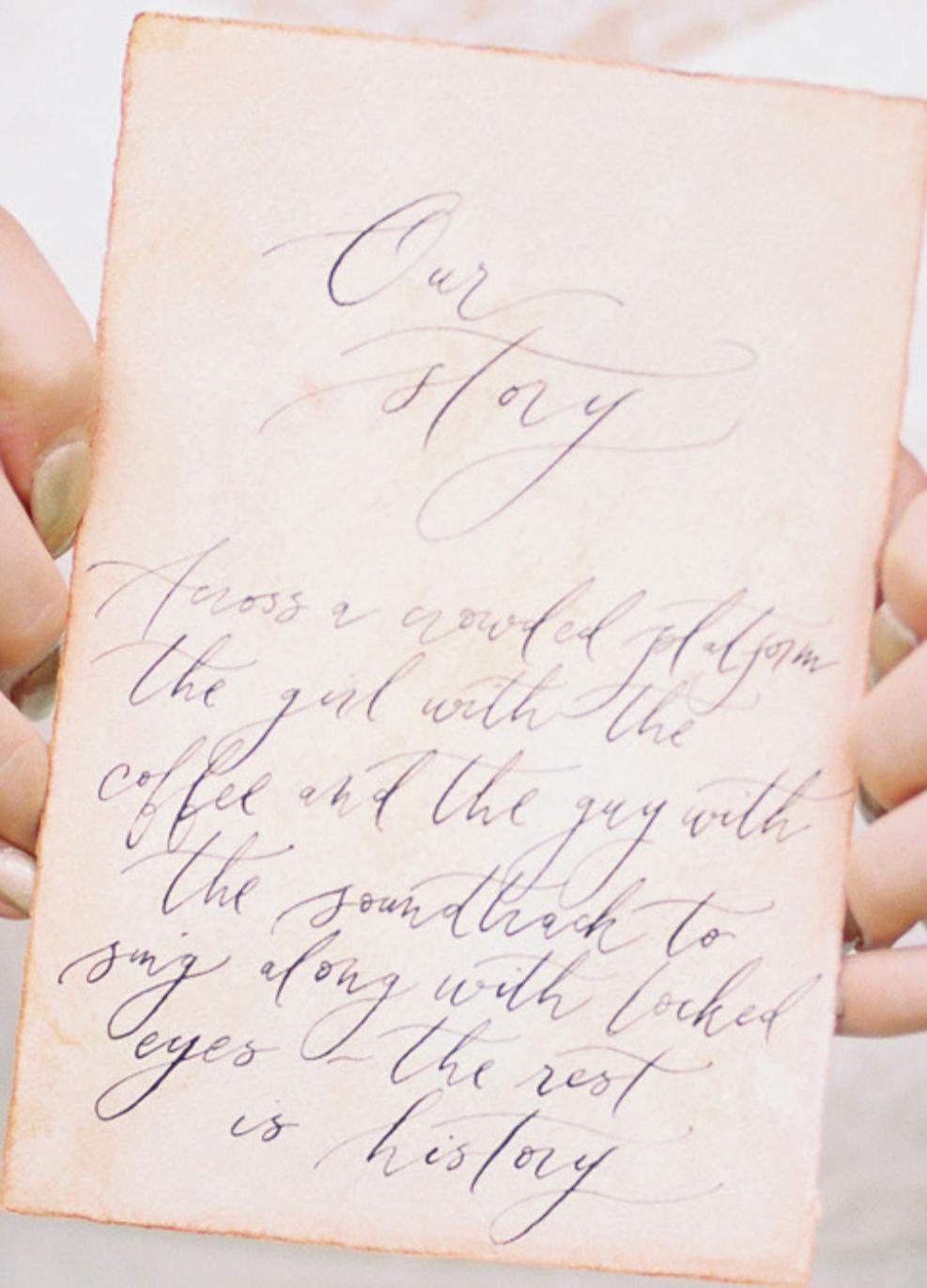
consider hiring in event lighting. Film can be exposed perfectly well with artificial light if natural light isn't available - white light is the best as it mimics natural light. Tungsten gives a strong yellow tint (on film or digital) which is hard to remove, so black and white film makes a superbly romantic alternative. It's all about keeping it as natural as possible.

Golden hour - the hour before sunset - is renowned as the prettiest. It's that flattering, golden light from the side, with its hazy, dreamy tones. Your photographer should note sunset time and, if the weather is changeable on the day, she should insist on breaking away from the schedule briefly to incorporate those beautiful portrait shots. Don't let a schedule dictate your album.



i fell in love with her courage, her sincerity, and her
flaming self respect. and it's these things I'd believe in,
even if the whole world indulged in wild suspicions that
she wasn't all she should be.
i love her and it is the beginning of everything.

f. scott fitzgerald



five

UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY

It's all about you.

Even with flowers & foliage as a focus, and with a pared-back design, it's still important for you to inject your own personalities into your plans. You can use your whole wedding day to tell a little of the story of your romance and relationship.



Tell your story.

Consider how and where you met, your shared passions and interests, your hopes and plans for the future. Did you meet through your work, friends or abroad? Do you both love travel, architecture or the natural world? Try to include references to any of these in your design and timeline for the day. Stationery, seating plans, food/wine choices and entertainment are all great opportunities for you to do this in an understated way. I've worked with a couple who designed their own stationery and votives inspired by their love of Portuguese tiles. Another bride was a talented baker and created her own wedding cake.



A helping hand.

If you're short on time a good wedding planner or stylist can really help out here. They will take on board your personalities and styles and bring together talented creatives to execute your vision. Take a look through the appendix of carefully curated vendors - most of whom I have personally worked with already. You should find their websites and Instagram feeds great sources of inspiration!



directory.

A CURATED VENDOR GUIDE

WEDDING PLANNING

Studio Sorores
Emma Joy the Wedding Planner

VENUES

Brympton House
St Giles House
Pennard House
Babington House

FLORALS

Bramble & Wild
Real Cut Flower Garden
Garden Gate Flower Co.
Fleur Provocateur

SILKS

Lancaster & Cornish
Kate Cullen Styling

STYLISTS

Sundari Ferris
Toast Event Design

FOR HIRE

Virginias Vintage Hire
Wedhead

FAVOURS

Grace Alexander Flowers
The Chocolate Society

STATIONERY

Laura Elizabeth Patrick
Bureau Design
Beautifully Lost Studio

CAKES

Baking Chick
Elizabeth's Cake Emporium
The Bakemonger

BRIDAL FASHION

Sassi Holford
Naomi Neoh London
Cherry Williams London

HAIR & MAKEUP

Sanni Sorma
Tracy Pallari
Laura Le Page
Abigail Constanza Bridal

JEWELLERY

The Antique Jewellery Company
London Victorian Ring Company
Victoria Fergusson Accessories

RING BOXES

Bride to Bee

VIDEOGRAPHY

Baxter & Ted



Liz Baker

I am a fine art wedding photographer based in the south west of England, and available throughout the UK and Europe. My work has been featured in major wedding publications both in the UK and internationally, including Magnolia Rouge, Wedding Sparrow, Love My Dress and Perfect Wedding, among others.



WEB lizbakerphotography.co.uk

EMAIL info@lizbakerphotography.co.uk

PHONE 07419 819988

INSTAGRAM @lizbakerphotography

FACEBOOK /lizbakerphotographer

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