

Contacts

The story behind the picture

The forgotten first appearance of Kate Moss

Photographer *Tony McGee*

Year *1989*

Location *London*



COURTESY LITTLE BLACK GALLERY, LONDON (WWW.THELITTLEBLACKGALLERY.COM)

Tony McGee thought he was going to spend the day photographing a boxer, Luke Massey, for Italian men's *Vogue*. Then Storm model agency called and asked if he'd see a girl they had just signed up. She was 15 years old and called Kate Moss.

"She appeared that afternoon looking very poor and young and beautiful," McGee remembers. "She was like a little waif, completely opposite to the supermodels. But she was so charming that I said I'd take a quick photo of her with Luke. They'd struck up a conversation because they were both from South London. There was a real chemistry there." McGee photographed them in his 1969 Mercedes convertible (which he'd bought from David Hockney, and which is now owned by Jay Kay).

"Kate was fantastic. Her concentration was extraordinary. You can see in her eyes how determined she was. I thought she was incredibly attractive and realised that although she was shy, she was confident in front of the camera. I had a sense she could be huge." Although to his regret he's not photographed her since, he thinks she'll never stop working and says everyone in the industry adores her.

While Massey went on to become a bodyguard for the Gotti family, McGee never developed this roll of film. Until a month ago, when he was moving studios, the first professional photo of Kate Moss (now on display at the Little Black Gallery in London, until March 28) languished, forgotten and never published, in a cupboard. **HILARY ROSE**

