





# All Love is EQUAL

By Andrea Milam  
Photography by Braden Summers

Same-sex love got an incredible boost into the mainstream media's spotlight when photographer Braden Summers released his All Love is Equal project in 2014. Crisscrossing the globe in a journey that took him to Paris; Mumbai, India; Beirut; Johannesburg, South Africa; Rio de Janeiro; New York City; and San Francisco, Braden photographed gay and lesbian couples in stunning productions evocative of high-end advertising campaigns.







“My good friend Hannah Vanderlan put it perfectly—I am ‘using the language of a dominant culture for the purpose of a repressed culture,’” Braden says of his choice to use models for the project. “Beauty is a universal language, beauty gets noticed, and gay romance deserves to be seen in a beautiful light.”

The project wasn’t an easy one. With an international gay organization at the ready to financially back the project and only a week left week before he was set to fly to Paris, the organization backed out, leaving Braden

facing a difficult situation. Continue with the project using his own funds, or give up? He chose to press on.

Some of the shoots came together more easily than others. With setback after setback, the Mumbai shoot had Braden questioning his sanity. From models who backed out upon finding out the shoot was LGBT-themed to an oncoming monsoon to a bed high atop an elephant that threatened to succumb to gravity, a stunning shot eventually was captured despite the chaos.

“The whole time I felt this sense of









wonder from the world around me and thought to myself, 'Is this real? Am I insane?'" says Braden. "I was surrounded by so many elements that could easily turn against me, and yet it was one of the most thrilling moments of my life."

From a dapper gay couple strolling across a London bridge to striking ebony-skinned lesbians showing their affection in Johannesburg, the photos that resulted from Braden's globe-trotting project stand up to the traditional highly produced images of straight couples that burrow into the public's subconscious, whispering that straight love is the norm while leaving gays and lesbians in the shadows.

"My hope is that not only are my images inspiring romance for the queer community, but inspiring the acceptance of same-sex romance on a global-scale," says Braden. "All love really is equal. Don't let fear, judgment, or ignorance stop anyone from finding his or her own unique love."

The inspiring images in the All Love is Equal project have been featured internationally in mainstream media, undoubtedly opening the door for a normalized view of same-sex love.



*Braden Summers is an artist and photographer, whose work alerts the viewer to the beauty in people and their environment. The undertones of his portraits are appreciative of diversity and acceptance, ideas that are fundamentally supportive of a more positive lifestyle.*





