

DEVELOPING THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE, HEART AND MIND

INSPIRED EYE

ISSUE CVX



TO INSPIRE AND TO BE INSPIRED BY ALL OF THE PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY



NOT **QUITE** YOUR TYPICAL MAGAZINE

It has a traditional + interactive philosophy

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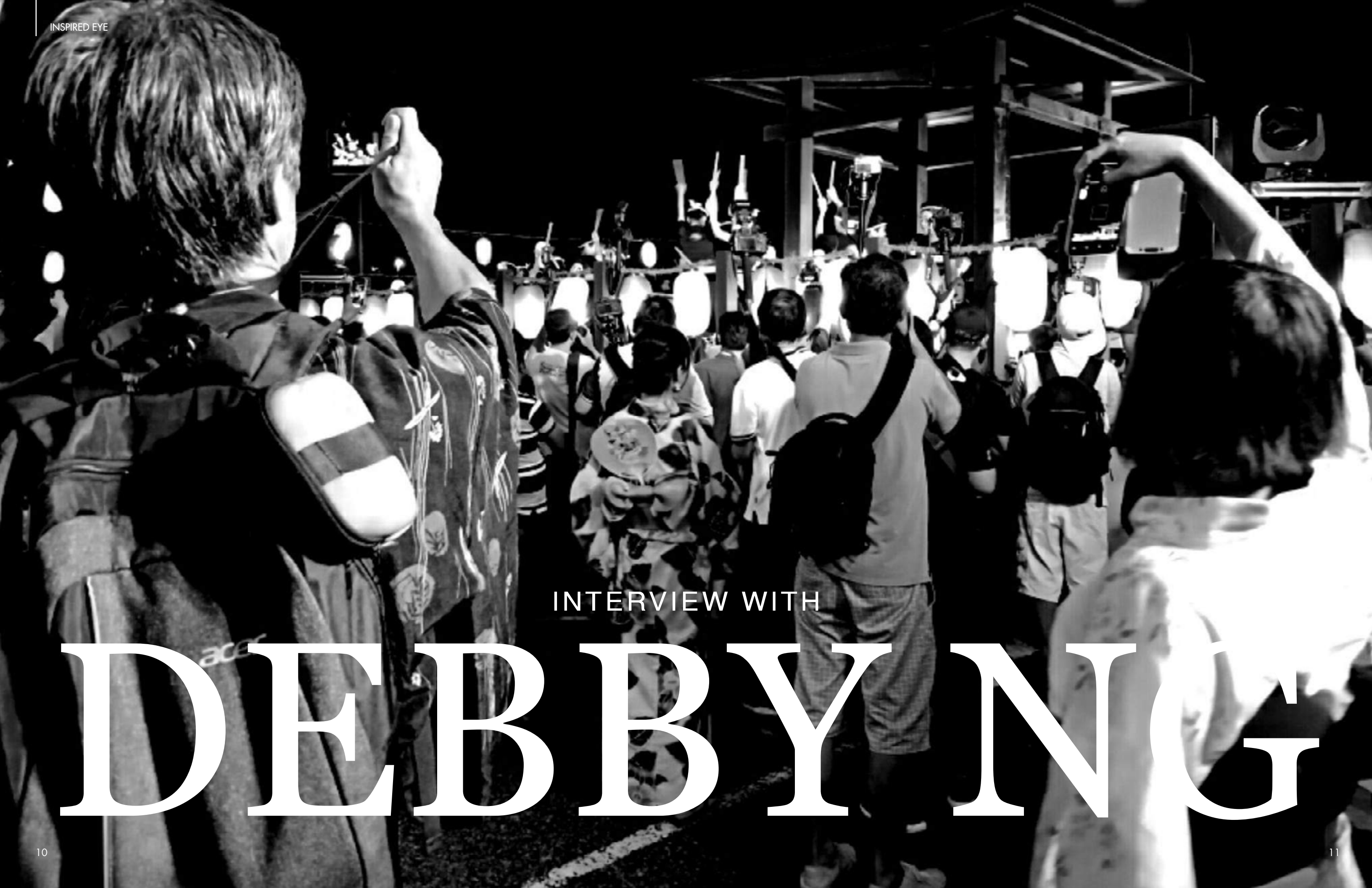
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INSPIRED EYE

10 points to understand our mission and what we are doing

1. **I**nspired Eye exists to showcase the work of the photography community, to learn, to teach, to inspire and to be inspired from it.
2. **I**nspired Eye is a platform for photographers. We believe in an ongoing relationship with the community, so expect to see recurring photographers.
3. **W**e put the spotlight on photographers at large. We're not concerned with whether they're famous or unknown, professional or amateur, full-time or just shooting after work.
4. **W**e feature photographers of all different skill levels. Everyone started somewhere, everyone has something to say, and everyone needs some attention.
5. **T**he format, the selection, and the design are geared toward developing your eye, your heart and your mind.
6. **W**e repeat our questions in order to see the different answers that can come from the same question – we see this as a teaching tool.
7. **E**ach question is about the photographer, but the answers are puzzle pieces that the reader can pick and choose for themselves. By relating (or the opposite), readers can form their own view of photography.
8. **A**s much as possible, we try to preserve typos and mistakes, and we minimize editing. We do this to preserve the voice of the photographer and to show that English is not the universal language – photography is.
9. **O**ur readers' gallery is thick because we want to showcase the most work possible by our community.
10. **W**hile we do not focus exclusively on street photography, it's the most accessible form of photography and the most practiced by the community.



INTERVIEW WITH

DEBBY NG

Please tell us something about you, your life and interest, etc. Put as much detail as you like and then we will start the questions.

I am Debby Ng, I like singing, dancing, and cats.

What inspired you to become a photographer?

Capture priceless moments and documentation.

What age are you and at what age did you start your journey as a photographer?

I am 51. I got to know photography from my father when I was 10 years old.

Would you mind sharing some of the things you feel helped you along the way with your photography, (lessons, workshops, books, etc)....

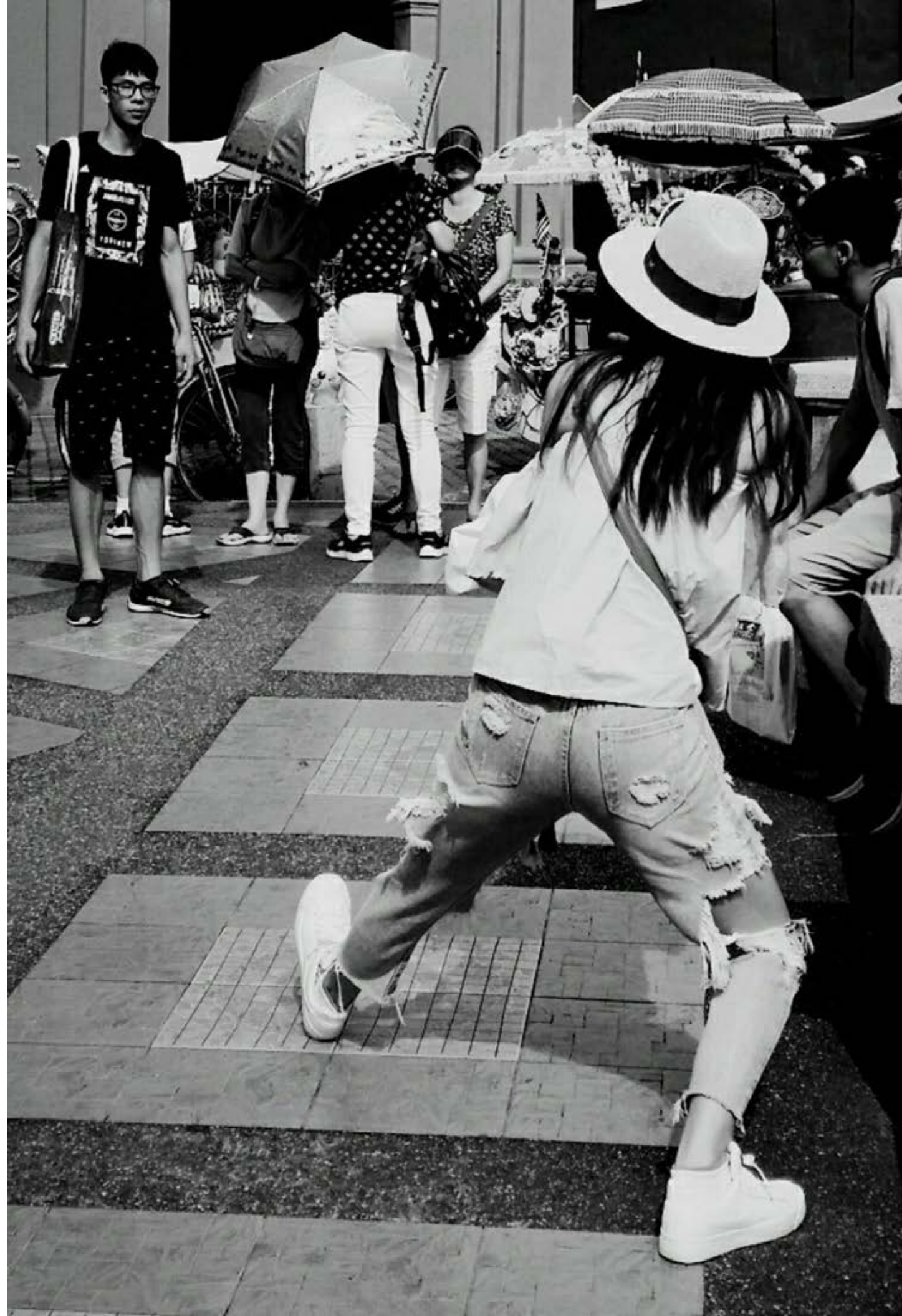
Friends from various photography groups give me a lot of additional knowledge.

and also some of the things that may have hindered you, that you overcame on this journey?

No comment.

Do you feel photography enhances your life? If so, how?

Yes.



It helps me to remember places I went to and the people I met.

If we are speaking specifically of photographers, which are the ones of the past and present do you admire?

Too many to be mentioned. Each photographer has his/her own specialty.

What purpose does photography serve for you?

Documentation and entertainment.

Do you do photography for hire or as an art form?

Art form.

What do you do for work and how does photography fit into that?

More than half of my working experience is in the construction line and photographs need to be taken regularly as proof of work progress.

What genre of photography are you most comfortable working in?

Street.

When you work, are you working on different series or just finding photos that fit the way you feel at the moment?

Just finding photos that fit the way I feel at the moment.

Can you describe a few of the trigger mechanisms that make you want to stop and shoot?

A lot . . . but mostly something beautiful.

How strong of a connection do you have with your subject matter and can you describe that connection?

It feels like the subject is calling: Capture me now ;)

What are your recurring themes?

Water and human interaction.

What camera are you working with currently?

Canon

What is your favorite Focal Length or Field of View?

35-70

What is the distance to your subject you are most comfortable with while working?

4-5 m

How do you see the relationship with your camera? Is it a friend, tool, or whatever?

Friend.

Do you have a preference for Black & White or Color? Please explain why.

No.

Are you self-taught, educated, or a little bit of both?

Self-taught

How do you feel about being photographed?

Like

Do you like to work by yourself or to have someone with you? Please explain why.

Both. There are times to work alone and there are times to work in a team.

Do you listen to music while you are shooting?

Not on purpose.

How do you feel the music enhances the visual experience?

It does affect the mood.

Do you have a preference for images in an analog or a digital state?

No.

How important is the post-processing of the pictures in your work?

Depends on the purpose and theme.

Where in the world are you located?

Johor, Malaysia

Where is your favorite place to work?

Home

When you're feeling somewhat slow or lost, how do you find your way back to find inspiration to get working again?

Have a walk in the park.





Do you exhibit your work in any form?

Not formally.

Do you go to exhibitions or do so on the web?

Yes.

Do you collect other photographers' work?

Yes.

How do you feel about the current state of photography?

Great.

How satisfied are you in your current state of photography and what would you like to improve upon?

I need to keep on learning.

Can you describe how you judge the success or failure of your work?

It's not a failure but it is still far from success.

What would you be doing now if you had not picked up the camera?

Probably painting or cooking.

What do you dislike about photography?

Nothing. Photography is very useful.



Is there a question that you would like to answer that I haven't asked?

No

If you would like to make a closing statement, we'd love to hear what you have to say.

I would like everyone to appreciate photographers more than just hobbyists. The same as other professions exist in this world, being a photographer is an important role.

 FACEBOOK

 FACEBOOK









INTERVIEW WITH

INBAL KRISTIN

Street photography captures important events or moments in the life of a person, group, family, community. Behind every picture there is a story. Every picture raises feelings, questions. When I walk down the street, I am very aware of my surroundings, noticing everything that is happening. On the street, things happen quickly, so it's important to take many photos in order to capture a really good moment. You have to pay attention to the light, the colors and the composition, but of course understand that unlike other types of photography, street photography is very spontaneous and requires speed and there is really no time to plan

Sometimes I stand at a certain point and from there I wait for the objects to approach in my direction and take a picture and sometimes I take a picture in motion, while walking

In my opinion, street photography is very important thing, it captures moments that pass and will not return but it is not easy at all. You have to overcome the barrier of fear: taking pictures of people on the street. This is a kind of invasion of people's privacy in the public space. Sometimes they notice you, cooperate and smile and sometimes you have to deal with unpleasant reactions. Of course, every country has different laws regarding street photography .and you must be aware of that.



My Street photography images include also Architecture and Patterns, not only people

I like to pay attention to different details on the street, interesting buildings, textures and shapes.

Since I am a multidisciplinary artist, I tend to edit the street photos I take in an artistic way, .emphasizing colors, shapes

 WEB PAGE

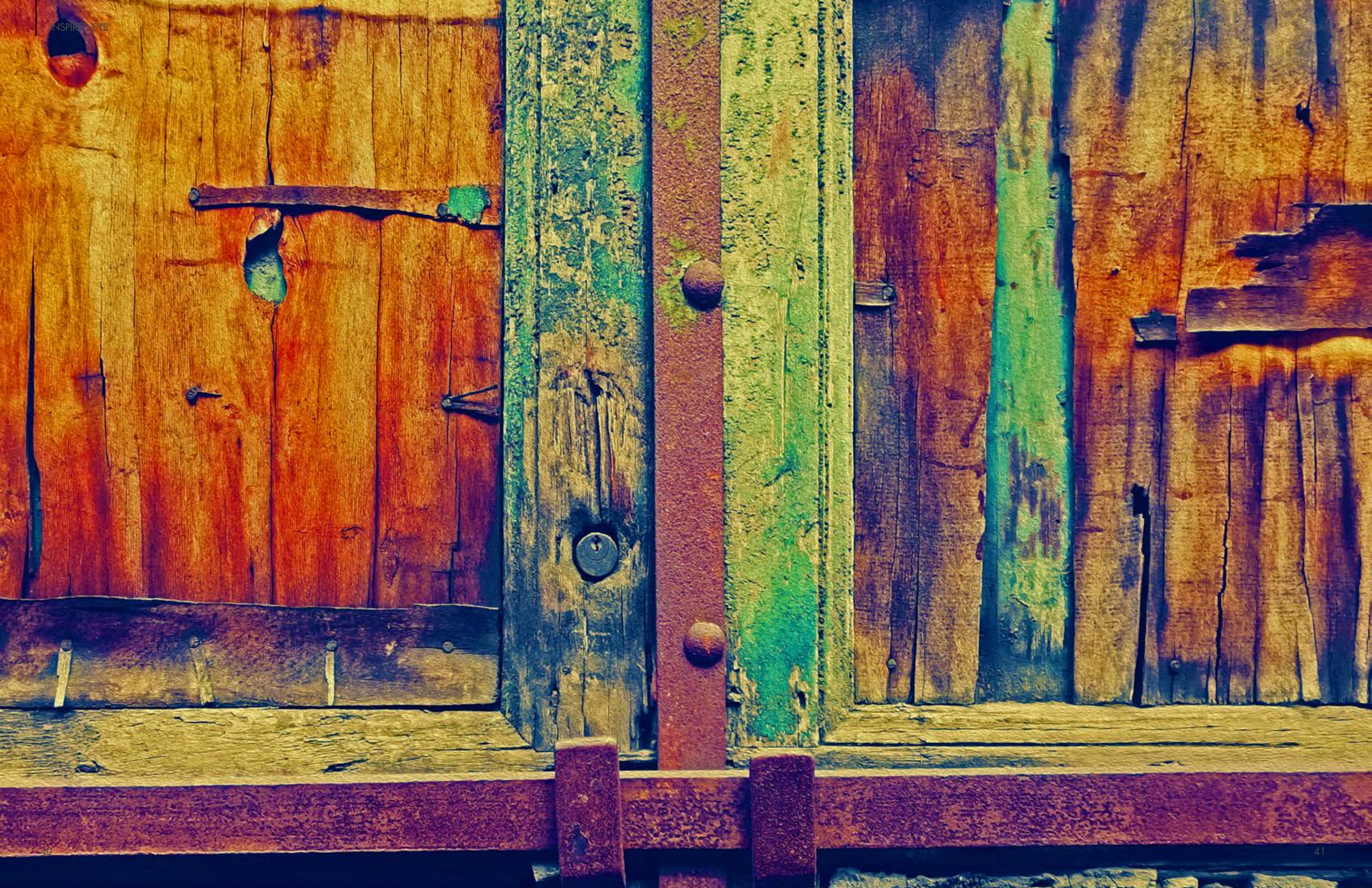




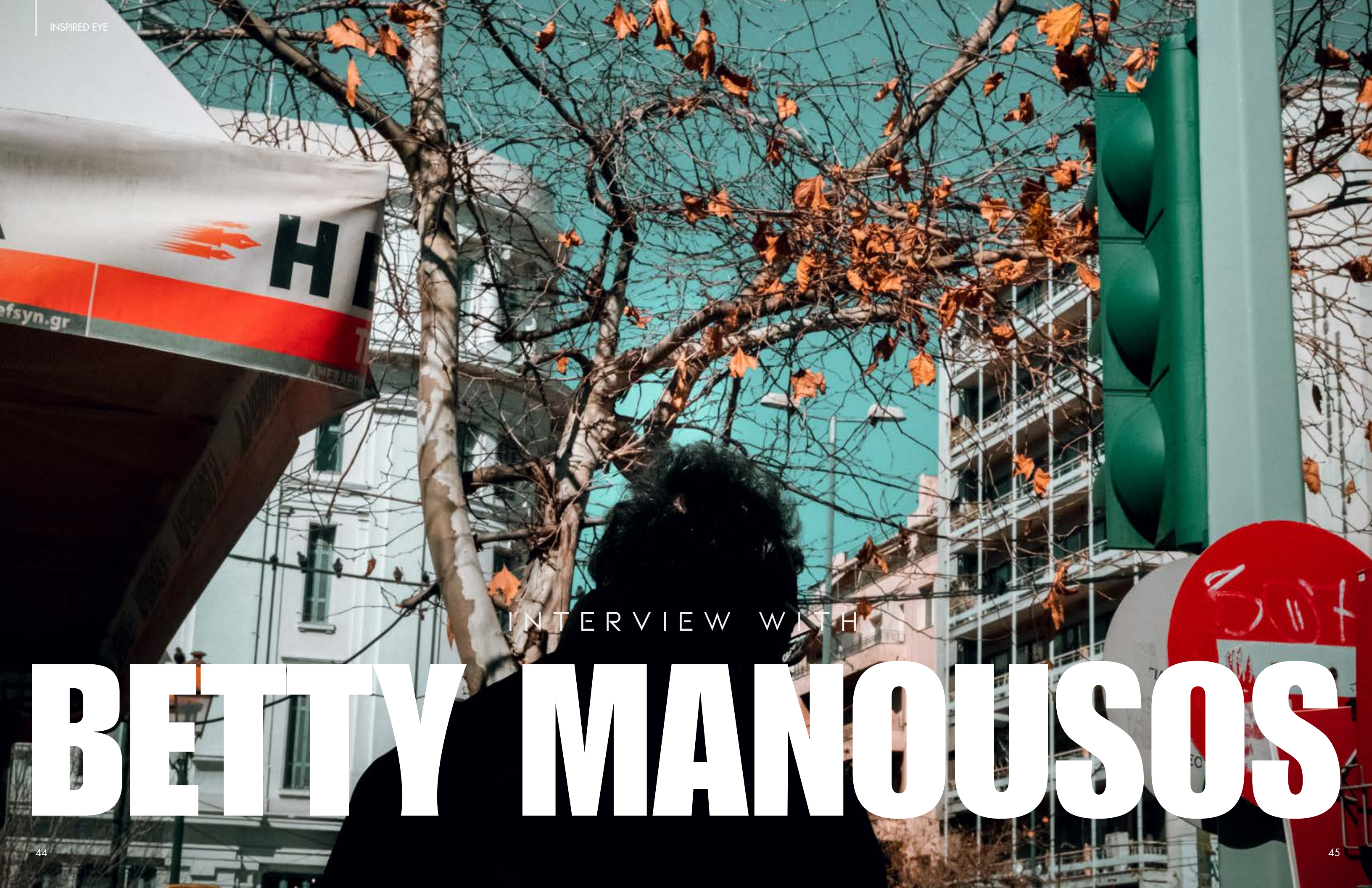












INTERVIEW WITH

BETTY MANOUSOS

What is Street Photography nowadays? This is a big question. Well, the first answer to this question is there's no single answer to this question.

As a Chinese proverb goes "There are many paths to the top of the mountain, but the view is always the same."

Street photography is a form of art, no matter how you decide to present the final "product".

Ming Thein once said: "Having your own style is good, but at the same time, that style has to evolve and grow in order not to get stale or boring."

I've always approached my street work with an experimental mindset.

I try my pictures to fit my artistic expression and allow the viewer to give their own interpretation.

For me, Street Photography is ultimately liberating because it is an expression of my need to look at things differently. I've always been drawn to the power of imagery as a way to express my own completely subjective interpretation of what I feel rather than what I see. I firmly believe that every image is a documentation of our era's changing visual culture to some degree, whether it is a surreal, sometimes unreal, abstraction, or social "straight" picture.

SP literally has changed the way I see things. It made the unseen visible. It did open a view into my mind and sparked my creativity and imagination. Actually, my involvement with SP made me predominately step out of my comfort zone. I would say that Street photography is my creative outlet. In my mind,



I was going to be a professional movie director but I've realized that visual art is that creative outlet for me. Hitting the streets gets me to my calm place and gives me an escape from the tiring issues of everyday life. Practicing street photography has also helped me see the world through more appreciative eyes.

There's a strong bond between me, the photographer, and my subject. It might sound strange but the human figure I encounter on the street becomes somewhat a familiar figure.

In fact, although my work is candid I feel a strong connection with the people I photograph. I feel like they are my "people" and I love them, in some way.

I firmly believe that what we see in others is a reflection of ourselves. I could see myself in them.

Street Photography has changed over the years - photography is an ever-changing art form in general. Recently the most obvious one is the change in daily life from the existing pandemic. In other words, our ever-changing world, urbanization, as well as crucial global circumstances are drastically transforming street photography as well.

Street photography is an international language that can change the world as it can be such a powerful tool for good cause. And that makes me happy.

 WEB PAGE

 FACEBOOK

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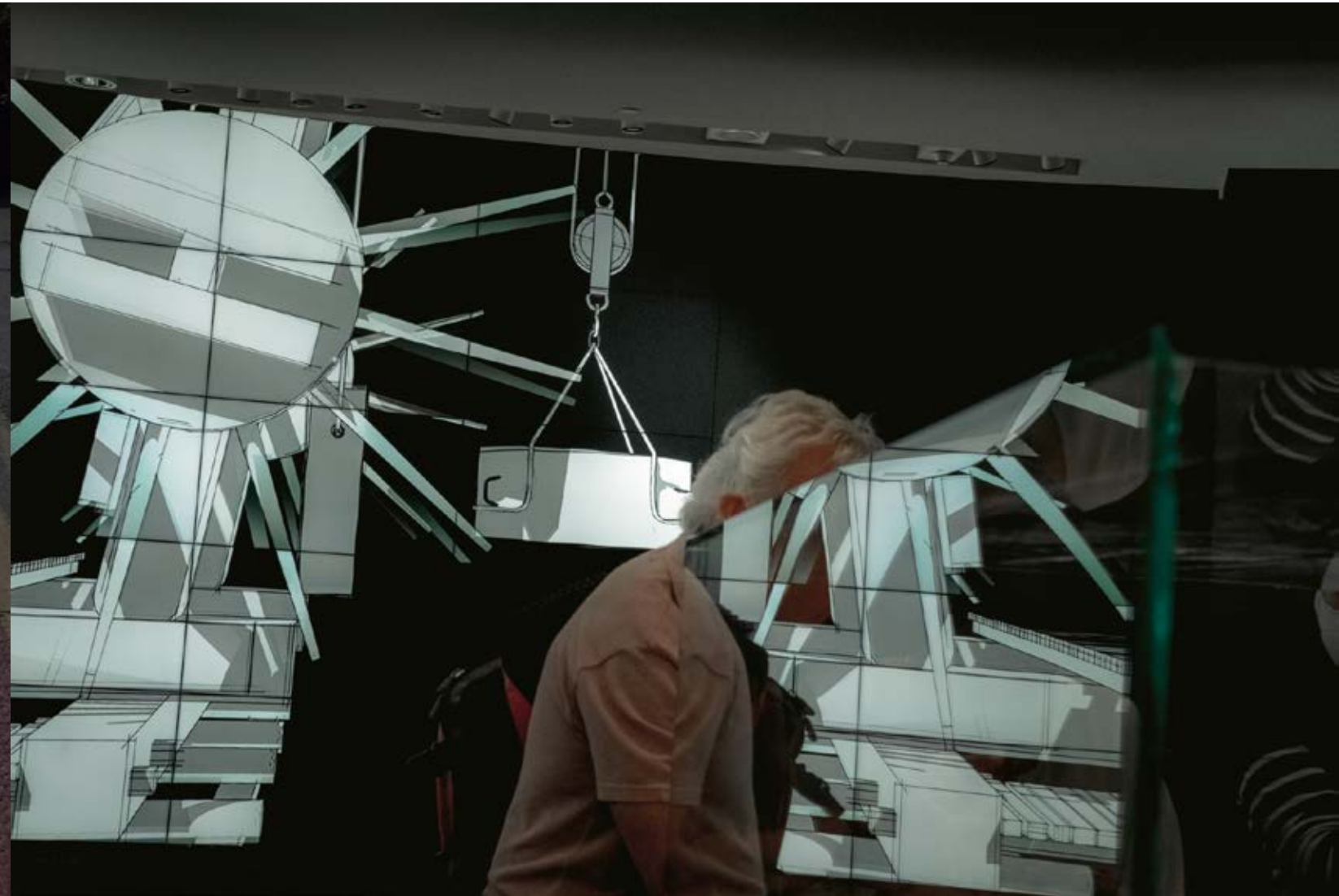
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INTERVIEW WITH

JOAN LÓPEZ



Please tell us something about you, your life and interest, etc. Put as much detail as you like and then we will start the questions.

My name is Joan —Catalan equivalent of John in English— and I'm 47 years old. I'm married and I have a wonderful daughter of 2 and a half years. Actually, my wife and my daughter are my joy, my fortune, my unconditional love, my emotional sustenance, and my very essence. All that remains of me is for photography. Well, I don't want to forget that I also dedicate part of my time and my heart to Bri, our elderly husky and Belgian shepherd mix. We don't know true love until we are loved by a dog. Professionally, I have been a language and literature teacher in secondary school for 20 years, but it has not been my only dedication, since I have driven a cab in Barcelona for four years. At times, I pick the steel strings of my Fender Stratocaster and my Dean Vendetta with relative success and I immerse myself in the pleasure of reading everything that awakens a certain interest in me. Other passions? Knowing places, breathing environments, observing trends and cultures, and

everything that life gives me. I guess this is what any addicted photographer needs to quench their thirst. Finally, I cannot finish my presentation without mentioning a voluntary photographic collaboration that I have just launched with Fundació Roure, a charitable foundation that carries out different social projects in the Old Town district of Barcelona and that lets me give true meaning to my passion for photography.

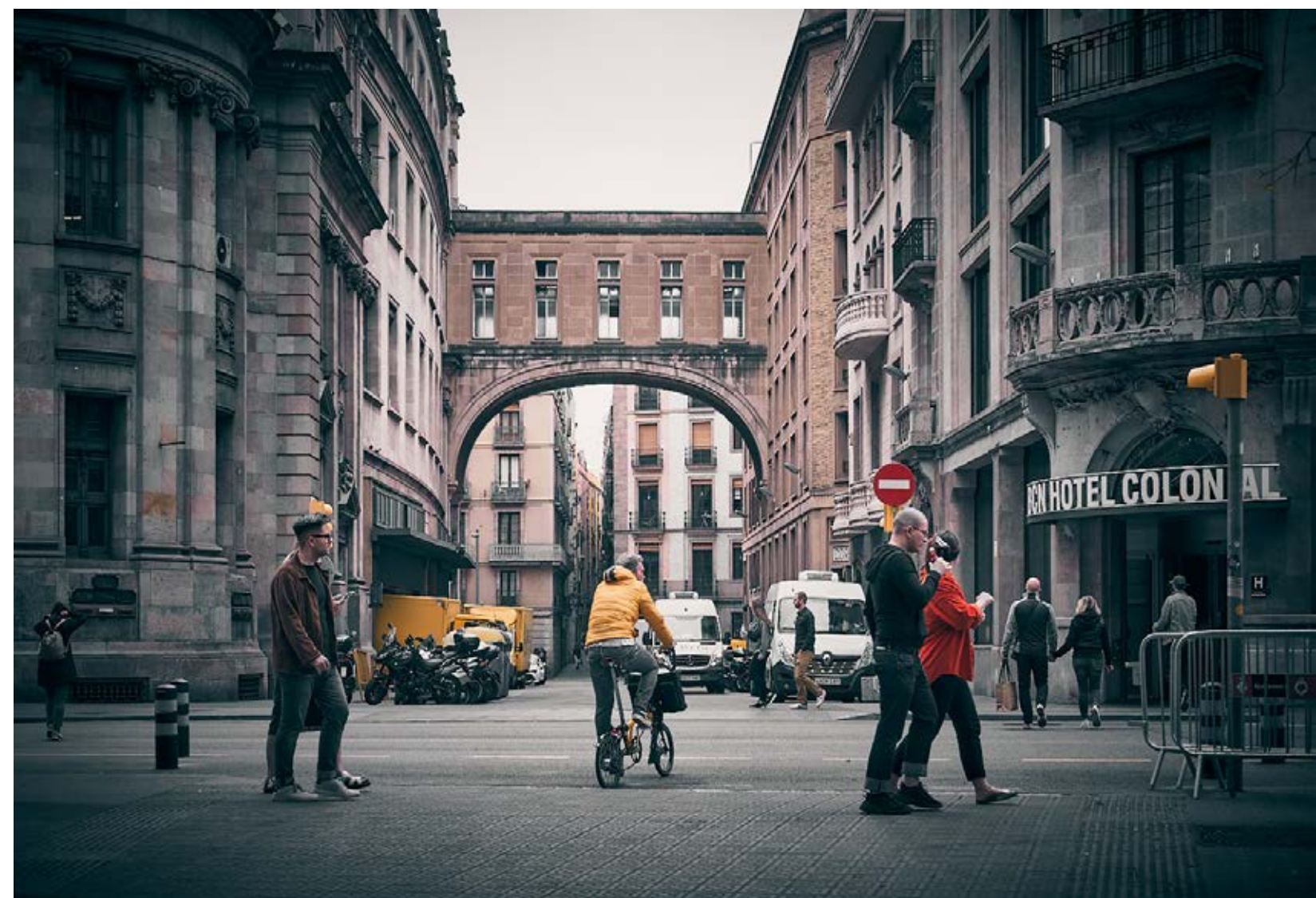
What inspired you to become a photographer?

When I was a child, there was always one or another analog camera at home. My father and aunt used to take pictures at significant family moments, or when they went on trips. Their cameras were always simple, and both one and the other had no knowledge of photography beyond using the automatism of their cameras so that their product was something decent. My aunt even dared to take the step into digital photography and bought a Sony compact which I inherited when she couldn't shoot anymore. Without really being aware, that family interest in the image and in the immortalization of important moments left a certain mark on my inner self. I started to become aware of

that imprint with the arrival of the first smartphones. The truth is that I started taking photos with a certain creative interest with the first smartphone I had. It must be the year 2010. The certainty that this was not authentic photography worried me, but, due to professional and personal circumstances, I was not able to satisfy that concern until eight years later, when I took the first introductory classes on photography and digital image processing when I first heard about concepts like diaphragm/aperture, shutter/speed, ISO/sensitivity, white balance... Luckily, those years of self-teaching with the smartphone let me begin to observe reality from another perspective, with a new view, to the point that I began to appreciate details that previously went unnoticed.

What age are you and at what age did you start your journey as a photographer?

As I told you before, I'm 47 years old at this moment. I was born in Sabadell, a city very close to Barcelona, in January 1975. Although I have already advanced some of the answers to this question in the previous one, answering it fairly means saying that my first photography lessons took place



in February 2018, just over four years ago.

Would you mind sharing some of the things you feel helped you along the way with your photography, (lessons, workshops, books, etc)...and also some of the things that

may have hindered you, that you overcame on this journey?

Without a doubt, the first milestone was getting to know the Institut d'Estudis Fotogràfics de Catalunya (IEFC), located in the educational complex of the Escola Industrial de Barcelona. There I took my

first introductory classes in photography, with a teacher who really motivated me, Dídac Cortina. And also digital image processing, with Adriana Olsina. Both deposited a seed of enthusiasm regarding the photographic event. The next no less significant step was meeting, on Dídac's recommendation, the friends of Casanova Foto, a benchmark in Barcelona and Madrid in

the supply of photographic material. Ramón Serra sold me my first camera, an X-T2, which meant my immediate surrender to Fujifilm products and its X series. I could not forget Sam Moreno at this point, who was of great help in solving a specific problem that I had with an X-T4. Or Eddy Toral, in the lighting department; and the technical service staff. However, I must reserve a prominent place for Adrià Linares and Jordi Gratacós, whose professionalism, unconditional dedication, and expert advice gives me the peace of mind of knowing that I'm in the best hands, apart from the fact that at times dealing with them goes beyond the strictly commercial relationship. And I must assert at this point that I'm not an agent of Casanova or Fujifilm nor do I receive any kind of commercial privilege from either.

It was in Casanova Foto store where someone introduced a tool to my catalog of photographic resources that I didn't know before and that became another turning point in my photographic evolution. In an informal conversation after buying a neutral density filter, one of the members of the staff whom I have not seen after told me about Capture One, a photographic development program from the firm Phase One —of which

I'm not a representative nor do I receive favored treatment—, which has since become my only RAW developer. I spent all of August 2018 messing around with its interface and its tools to learn what was necessary so that my photographs are what I post today in my photo galleries on social media. Of course, I cannot fail to mention at this point another genius who, in this case without knowing it, helped me in such a process: Antonio Prado, the owner and developer of the YouTube channel and web Processing Raw, a true marvel of didactics of digital image processing in which, as far as I'm concerned, I found a free Capture One course that allowed me to delve into the secrets of the program and then to go on learning in a self-taught way.

I was always tempted to write to Antonio to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude, but it's something that, unfortunately, I still have pending and that I will do soon. Well, my last memories are again for the IEFC family, since in the academic year that we just finished, I studied photojournalism specialization with professor Pere Virgili, a freelance photojournalist linked to the ARA newspaper, who revealed to me the secrets of an exciting profession and who, with his expert advice and his invaluable and selfless

insistence in improving his students, has revolutionized my photographic gaze and has allowed me to emphasize what he calls 'intention', which lets capture acquire an added value, since, almost magically, they take on true meaning and go beyond the simple anecdote.

In addition, in order to subsequently obtain a postgraduate degree in documentary photography, I also took two more specialization courses, one about the magazines and the media which publish documentary photography, with the photographer Núria López Torres, and another about photographic editing with Maria Rosa Vila, director of photography of the magazine 'Descobrir Catalunya'. As for readings, I read several things in the last four years related to photography that, in all cases, marked my way of framing, exposing, and selecting the images appropriate to the context and the specific moment, but, if I had to highlight one, I would quote two of them: 'Photojournalism', by Kenneth Kobre, and 'Fotografía con una Sonrisa, by Tino Soriano.

Currently, I am about to start 'The Passionate Photographer by Steve Simon. Yes, it is true, there were things that

hindered me and there will be, but I am one of those people who think that this self-help manual slogan that obstacles are nothing more than opportunities to overcome ourselves and to learn is not a simple cliché. At least I try to apply the concept to myself, even if I manage with doubtful success.

It's also true that I consider the main hindrance is myself, and that inner and unconscious sabotage that human beings tend to do to ourselves with such care and almost relish: 'will you be good enough?'; 'you have started this at a very old age'; 'how are you going to get to capture wonders like that?'; 'today everything is invented and photographed'; 'remember that you will always be an intruder in all this... Damn inner dialogue with oneself! What will all that sabotage matter when your only intention is to enjoy a passion?! That I discovered it late? Yes, but I discovered it. I can go on enjoying it or surrendering to something unreal and stop enjoying photography.

Do you feel photography enhances your life? If so, how?

Of course, it enhances my life. Josep Vicenç Foix, a Catalan poet of the 20th century wrote in some verses 'it's when I sleep that I see clearly'. Without

wishing to pervert his words, I would say something like 'it's when I look through the viewfinder of my cameras that I see clearly'. Indeed, when I look through the viewfinder, my field of vision is reduced and it's as if the external noise disappeared to allow me to concentrate on what had previously caught my attention.

Then the miracle happens and I manage to connect with everything I see as if I were part of it, or rather as if I were integrating myself with everything I see and everything I see was penetrating to the depths of my being. Since all this can be naive and even esoteric as well as presumptuous, I will try to be a little more practical. My cameras follow me wherever I go. Hurting my back, yes, but adding value to whatever I'm seeing or doing at that moment. The fortune is that I can combine my passion for photography with my passion for the family when I go out with them. When I haven't been photographed for a while, I feel incomplete. When, finally, I get a moment to enter the world that the viewfinder of my cameras offers me, my worries are postponed and that chronic pain in my knees that has tortured me since I was 34 years old for having played so much football gives me a therapeutic break. My sessions are an emotional revitalization,

Popeye's spinach to assume commitments and existential obligations with better spirit and mood.

If we are speaking specifically of photographers, which are the ones of the past and present do you admire?

My photographic gaze has been influenced by Catalan masters such as Antoni Campañà, Joan Colom, and Isabel Steva 'Colita'; and the Balearic master based in Barcelona Toni Catany. Of course, the international figures that every photographer would quote: are Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, Richard Avedon, Ansel Adams or Diane Arbus. I would reserve a special place for Henri Cartier-Bresson, more for the inspiration of his photographic concept of the 'decisive moment' than for his captures, to be honest, and Brassai, for his innate talent for composition and creation of fascinating atmospheres which denote a perfect mastery of lighting. Even so, my honorable mention would go to Fan Ho and Steve McCurry.

As for the Chinese master, I'm absolutely fascinated by his use of contrasts between the highest lights and shadows to generate the shapes, often geometric, that best suit the



composition, and his treatment of the human figure, between paternalistic and critical, which I think that suggests a mentality between that of an archaeologist and that of a costumbrista painter. Regarding McCurry, I'm more interested in his attention to detail than in his work itself. It's true that this tendency caused him problems with the limits of the manipulation of photographic work, but I think the compositional details and

the aesthetic dimension of the captures contribute to their intention and to reinforce the message which we want to convey with them.

What purpose does photography serve for you?

As I told you before, mainly for enjoyment. But it's much more than that. Also for a greater and better connection with

nature and with the human condition. For a greater and better understanding of both. For the expression of my inner interpretation of both. For the material expression of my creative self, of that creative part that every human being treasures and that would drown inside without a specific artistic discipline to express it. For the appeasement of an overflowing sensitivity.

And, ultimately, for the dignity of reality and for the artistic recreation of a reality that could apparently be trivial, anodyne, and even ugly, but that, observed in another sense and from another perspective, is sublimated. I'm not trying to idealize anything, but to give it meaning and the dignity it deserves. Nor do I mean to be presumptuous or vain. Nothing is further from reality or from my intention, but when we talk about photography, for me it's as much as talking about art, and, therefore, giving true value to reality and transporting it to a more spiritual than material dimension.

Do you do photography for hire or as an art form?

I'm lucky I don't work for anyone. Jordi Gratacós, from Casanova Foto, once told me that Elliott Erwitt said something like 'to enjoy photography, you should find a job'. I can't remember if it was really Erwitt, but the message struck me. And the message made more sense as I progressed through the photojournalism course I mentioned earlier. It's true, I'm lucky: I usually capture with my cameras whatever catches my attention. At home, I delete a lot of shots. Maybe they were interesting during the magic interval between looking through the viewfinder and the instant the finger presses

the shutter button, but they missed it on the way home. That's because they were never interesting, because the magic interval is just like that, magic, and, therefore, fictitious, unreal, misleading.

The subsequent conscious and deliberate analysis of the product of that magic interval during which the reduced and circumscribed gaze of the viewfinder intoxicates the intellect lets us rescue from intoxication only what it's truly interesting and which would not exist without such an elaborate process. If I worked for someone, I couldn't be faithful to this process or to myself. At least not enough. In the specific case of what I do for Fundació Roure, everything is frankly simple from an emotional and practical point of view due to the fact that it's a volunteer job in which, even receiving guidelines to know what they need me to photograph, I feel completely free and I always have the perception that everything is like when I photograph for myself.

What do you do for work and how does photography fit into that?

We are entering an era in which the audiovisual absorbs the rest, so it's not difficult to use photography as a tool to stimulate the creative minds of teenage students.

Image is a magnificent ally of linguistic communication, to work with more abstract contents such as semiotics or as a stimulus of expression, both oral and written. Even the reverse process, which starts from linguistic expression and produces images, can be downright creative and stimulating when left in charge of open minds like the teenager's ones.

What genre of photography are you most comfortable working in?

Without any kind of doubt, street photography. When I am shooting in the streets –mainly in Barcelona– it's when I mostly enjoy that magic interval which I told you about in a previous question; it's when I mostly connect with my essence and feel that my viewfinder reduces the entire world to what it's framing and that, after the pressure of the finger on the trigger and the opening and closing of the shutter, it will be printed on the sensor of my cameras. That magic interval is sensory indescribable. Time moves much faster than usual and, strictly punctual as I try to be, I end up running late wherever I need to be after a photo session.

Knee pain disappears as if by magic. The world continues to spin out there, but my world is restricted to what the

viewfinder captures. People who wander within the limits of my viewfinder –some of whom will remain forever in my photographic world– are not them individually, particular entities with names and surnames, with personal experiences and concrete feelings, but rather they will become expressions of humanity as a whole, allegories of everything we all feel, live and experience equally. That gives them the greatest dignity and importance, the greatest possible meaning, and true sense. It may be a naive, unreal, and pretentious approach, but magic exists when life has given you the privilege of being able to experience it. I'm sure it's the same magic that the dancer feels when moves around the stage, the athlete when her action has deserved a triumph, or when the scientific researcher observes the results of the experimentation. However, street photography is not the only genre I like to indulge in.

The landscape also attracts me a lot: urban photography and architecture, cityscapes, mountainsides, forests, and, above all, seascapes. And it's also true that the internships I did throughout my specialization in photojournalism discovered contexts that really captivated me: concerts, shows and sports. It can't be surprising

that someone who loves live music and who played football non-stop until the age of 34 has found these visual contexts to be a particular attraction.

When you work, are you working on different series or just finding photos that fit the way you feel at the moment?

It depends on many factors and fundamentally on the circumstances. The fact of not having orders makes things easier to work freely. When I work for the foundation that I told you about earlier, I have to focus on their needs, of course. Sometimes I go to concrete places with specific intentions, but what I like the most is getting lost in picturesque urban nooks and letting myself be surprised by what I find along the way. When I least expect it, an attractive scene emerges. I wait there with my eye on the viewfinder for something interesting to happen, and the miracle occurs. Or not, because I also ended up leaving some photogenic places without the desired capture and with the frustration of the loser. I must confess, although it's easy to see in my street work, that I have a special predilection for bicycles and cyclists.

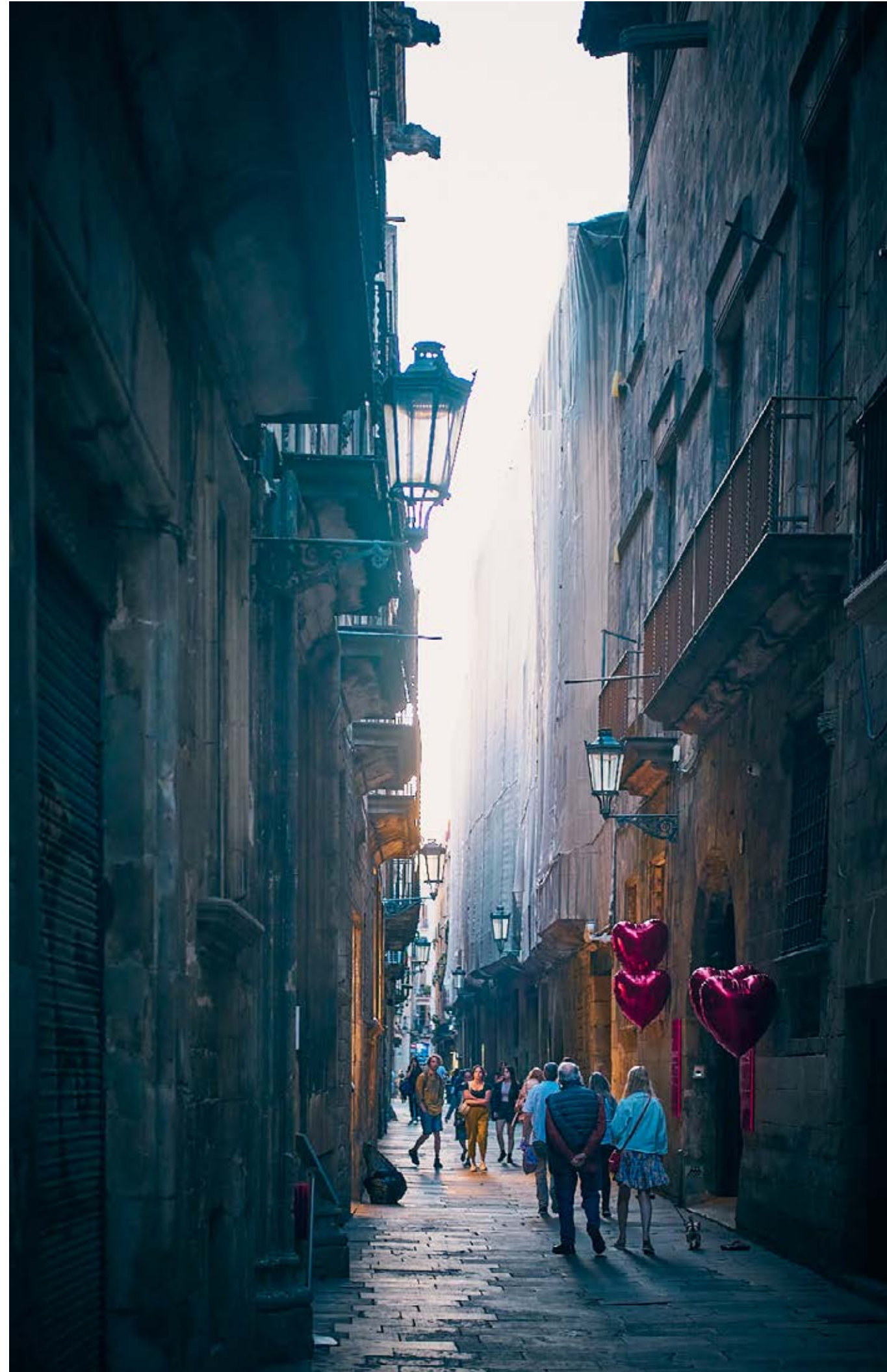
Can you describe a few of the trigger

mechanisms that make you want to stop and shoot?

First of all, the scene must be picturesque or photogenic, as I told you in the answer before. Sometimes a person can also convey that same feeling to me despite having found him or her in less attractive scenery. Fortunately, there are compositional resources to highlight the character. On the other hand, the sine qua non requirement is, of course, the catalyst of photography: light. There are locations that seem amazing to me and which I end up leaving because the light which falls on them at that moment is not the most appropriate. In street photography, I'm especially keen on the contrasts of sunlight and shadow. In cases where the stage gives me that contrast, I tend to push the shadows even more for a more dramatic effect.

What are your recurring themes?

In scape photography, seascapes, sunrises, and sunsets. In street photography, I look for especially attractive scenes in the architectural sense: cobblestones, serpentine asphalt 'decorated' with arrows and other traffic symbology; arches, stone walls, moldings, alleys, balconies, clothes drying on clotheslines... As for people,





I love those scenes in which they walk away from behind with a certain melancholy pose, and colored clothes –if I'm not going to process the capture in black and white–, I already highlighted bicycles and cyclists... I'm also attracted to emblematic monuments, certainly, but, if I can, I prefer adding the human factor.

What camera are you working with currently?

Fujifilm X-T3 and Fujifilm X-T4, and I'm pretty sure the next one will also be an X series release.

What is your favorite Focal Length or Field of View?

For street photography, Fujinon XF 35mm F2 R WR, because its field of view is the closest thing in the X series to the view of the human eye. Nevertheless, I also work in the streets with two zooms, Fujinon XF 16-55mm F2.8 LM WR for short and medium distances, because of its versatility in comparison with the fixed focal of XF35 F2; and Fujinon XF 50-140 mm F2.8 LM OIS WR for longer distances and, above all, when I want that effect of depth due to the stacking of planes so characteristic of longer focal lengths.

What is the distance to your subject you are most comfortable with while working?

The truth is that I have no preferences in this regard. I try to adapt to the subject and the context.

How do you see the relationship with your camera? Is it a friend, tool, or whatever?

Honestly and with complete respect, I feel exaggerated talking about friendship with the camera as the soccer genius who tells you that you have to fall in love with the ball to be a good soccer player. Even so, I would not define it as a simple tool like the smartphone. My cameras are tools, yes, but for that activity that makes me feel what humanity calls happiness beyond my family, that regenerates me and transports me to a unique dimension, so I can't simply call them tools either. Neither are my Stratocaster or Vendetta. As I already told you, I go everywhere with my cameras, but I don't take them to the beach to spend some time in the bathroom with my wife and daughter. I only step on the sand with them if I have a specific photographic interest, and not to have a bath and risk damaging them with sand and seawater.

Do you have a preference for Black & White or Color? Please explain why.

The scene dictates the processing: there are scenes that ask me for color and scenes that ask me for black and white. No more.

Are you self-taught, educated, or a little bit of both?

I belong to the third group. As I told you, I learned my first photography notions at Institut d'Estudis Fotogràfics de Catalunya in the first half of 2018, and it also was there where I got the specialization in photojournalism between October 2021 and past May 2022; and it's where I intend to postgraduate in documentary photography next academic year. I also explained before that, regarding digital image processing, my main learning consisted, in the summer of 2018, in the free online course of Capture One of Processing Raw, by Antonio Prado. As you will understand, it's not possible to venture into a photojournalism specialization course without advanced control of the camera and at least minimal photographic concepts. The point is that, between the summer of 2018 and last October, when I started the specialization, I



didn't stop working with my cameras. In fact, even the lockdown due to the pandemic was an incentive in this regard, and let me dedicate time to my passion that, perhaps without the pandemic, I would not have been able to dedicate to it. During the progressive opening of the lockdown, daily walks with my dog around Barcelona gave me the opportunity to practice more than ever. As you can see, my learning consisted –still consists, and will always consist, because we never finish being apprentices– in an academic and self-taught mix. It couldn't be otherwise.

How do you feel about being photographed?

I don't care at all. But I don't need it either. I don't ask for it. If someone wants to photograph me, I'm glad, but I don't demand it unless it's a necessity. In any case, this is not usual either.

Do you like to work by yourself or to have someone with you? Please explain why.

I work alone. My cameras, my lenses, my viewfinder, my places, my characters... and me. All in one. It's part of the magic. It's my communion with the world that surrounds me so that this world is limited to what appears in the viewfinder and that, after the magic

interval that I have been talking about during the interview, it will be printed on the sensor of my camera and that, already at home, I decide if it becomes part of my photographic world or not. It's also true that when I photograph on a family outing, my family is with me, but they are my companions, sometimes my characters or models, but not my partners.

Or one of the two communication technicians of the foundation with which I collaborate as a volunteer, Laia Pujol, who so kindly goes with me to the spaces where I have to work. I don't feel any interference. Quite the opposite, because she's an invaluable help to focus on what they really need right and not have to deal with practical details which she knows how to solve with greater excellence and speed.

Nevertheless, nobody participates in the photographic fact itself.

Do you listen to music while you are shooting? How do you feel the music enhances the visual experience?

I'm a music lover. And music usually goes with me wherever I go. Without wanting to seem presumptuous again, I decided to change my earpieces for

wireless ones just because of the inconvenience the cables caused me at the time of photographing. At first, I couldn't imagine going out to photograph without music in my ears. On the go, I have been adapting this dynamic to the circumstances. Sometimes I still listen to music while I photograph, but less and less. It helped me to isolate myself and concentrate on my magic interval, but as I have evolved, music has been relegated to spaces where it cannot interfere. For magic to occur, my five senses must be aware of what produces it. The world is limited to what the viewfinder offers me, yes, but the magic interval vanishes in a matter of seconds and my being must go on being connected to the outside world for a new magic interval to be triggered.

Do you have a preference for images in an analog or a digital state?

My last contact with analog images and film reels was when I was a teenager messing with my father's and aunt's cameras. Even at 47 years old, I'm a photographic digital native. I'm not saying that one day I won't do a romantic back somersault, because I know myself and that kind of romanticism attracts me, but I feel that I still have a long way to go in the learning process to dare with something



so pure without feeling even more intrusive in an art in which I have delved too much older.

How important is the post-processing of the pictures in your work?

Perhaps this is the most controversial question I have answered so far in the interview. Not because of the question, of course, which is

obligatory, but because of what it entails. This is a question I presume no one would have asked an analog photographer before the advent of digital photography. It's demanding because the limits of photo retouching aren't at all clear and everyone can place them where they want. There are press agencies that ask their photographers for the JPEGs as they come out of the cameras, thus ensuring

the fidelity of the shots. Other photojournalists prefer to take care of the aesthetics of their photos and risk being branded fakers, as I commented before when talking about Steve McCurry. What about my point of view regarding this matter? First, I never use Photoshop. I haven't even had the Adobe package since I learned about Capture One. And, I insist at this point that I have no commercial relationship with

Phase One beyond being a user of its digital image processing program.

Personally, I set my limit on verisimilitude and loyalty to reality. In fact, it wouldn't make sense to falsify or fake an image when my intention is to reproduce the reality that the viewfinder of my camera offers me during that magic interval that I have been talking about for a while. On the floors of the city of Barcelona, there are cans, bags, plastics, and waste. If I didn't want them to appear in my images, it would be enough to ignore that scene in which there is garbage and dedicate my efforts and my time to finding another one. Or reframe so that rubbish doesn't show up. It's not my philosophy. If the stage attracts me, it does so with all its 'majesty', with everything that human beings and nature have placed there. Just by taking a walk through my galleries on social media, you will see how waste, bins, and garbage containers are just where someone placed them.

All this doesn't mean that, in the process of processing my images, I cannot retouch certain aspects of the RAWs from which I start. I will try to explain them as thoroughly as possible below. After a few years of working with Capture One, I have already created some presets in my interface

which makes my job easier depending on whether I'm processing a landscape, a portrait, products, a cityscape, architecture, or, of course, street photography.

In fact, I consider that Capture One and Fujifilm are the perfect combination to work with the color palette that most and best personalizes my style. My main adjustments, therefore, are limited to suitably balancing, according to my style, color, exposure –where I include contrast and brightness, of course–, dynamic range, levels and curves, amount of focus, clarity and, finally, noise reduction, but only when I had no choice but to raise the ISO when shooting. Regarding the composition, my intervention is reduced to retouching the perspective if I consider it convenient that the architectural elements remain straight, to a moderate reframing if there are external elements that distract, and to vignetting when I consider appropriate focusing on the subject.

At best, I apply some layers on my street shots to enhance shadows for greater contrast and remove distractions in negative space. Also to boost the highest lights and spotlight the subject in portraits. And also to dramatize skies. Perhaps it's all this I'm

explaining about layers that can give my captures the greatest sense of unreality, but if they were not there, it would not be my style and my captures would not respond to my aesthetic concept of photography. I don't intend to express in it what the rest of us see, but what the experience of my magic interval with my eye glued to the viewfinder has asked me to pass through the filter of my emotions, my visual baggage, and, deep down, my essence. I could also shoot in JPEG

–Fuji JPEGs are really amazing– and post on my social media what comes straight out of my X-T3 and X-T4, but then it wouldn't be my photography exactly; it would be a surrogate that the camera decided for me. In this sense, perhaps, my Fujis and I are not quite friends, but we are condemned to get along and, in a certain sense, that is how we have managed to respect each other.

Where in the world are you located?

Although, as I told you, I was born in Sabadell, a few kilometers from here, I live in Barcelona, in the Guinardó neighborhood. I have the fortune to be able to arrive in a few minutes in one of my



photographic sanctuaries, the Old Town district.

Where is your favorite place to work?

Barcelona Old Town, but, if you want me to be more concrete, I would mention Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i la Ribera, el Born, and the Gothic Quarter. They have a special taste which makes them unique. However, if I want to be really honest, I think, among the cities I know, Barcelona is not the most attractive one for street photography. If I had to choose, I would definitely go to Prague. The cobblestones of its streets, the trams with their rails and their hanging power lines, its monumental architecture, the color of its facades, the river, the hills, and its intense meteorological phenomena –mainly fog and snow– fascinate me.

When you're feeling somewhat slow or lost, how do you find your way back to find inspiration to get working again?

Going to the sanctuary I was telling you about: the Old Town. Maybe I won't find the inspiration at first, but, with a little patience, the spark will soon flare up again. In fact, my creative crises don't usually have so much to do with the

photographic fact as with other existential questions which the photographic fact unlocks. Photography is definitely therapeutic for me.

Do you exhibit your work in any form?

Social media: mainly Flickr, Instagram, and Twitter, although I also have a Facebook profile that I don't take much care of. I don't post family captures on social media if it's not for a specific purpose: product shots of a handmade sewing project of my wife, for example, but not much else. As for my work for Fundació Roure, they got the captures and they decide where it's most suitable to publish them for the diffusion of their social and charitable work.

Do you go to exhibitions or do so on the web?

I have never exhibited. I could have taken an interest in it and probably done it in local halls and civic centers, for example, but I haven't. On the one hand, I find it difficult to sell myself. On the other hand, there's that thing about my intrusive complex. I don't know if one day the opportunity will arise, but, as in the case of this interview, it will most likely have to come as if from nowhere, by surprise. At the moment, I find social media an

easy showcase in many ways; whoever wants to watch your work can do it. Who doesn't want to watch it can pass by and everyone is happy.

Do you collect other photographers' work?

I don't collect them because I am a great lover of libraries and there I devour the photography books that fall into my hands. The web makes the rest. And the exhibition halls which we are fortunate to have here in Barcelona.

How do you feel about the current state of photography?

I think one day the media will realize that they have to take care of their photographers as they used to do in other times. Of course, anyone with a smartphone can take an attractive, interesting, and even revolutionary snapshot. Surely we all have a certain talent for visual composition and for selecting an attractive piece of reality to show, but I think the charm lies in continuity, in the constant expression of that talent for a specific purpose. Sorry, I refuse to feel the future of photography goes through a selfie in every place we pass by. I'm not condemning the democratization of photography or



communication, nothing is further from my intention.

What I don't share is the fact that photography is limited to the dictates of human vanity; that remains only at the service of frivolity, posturing, or superficiality; that travels along the same paths where it seems to me that those who pull the strings want to lead modern society. I want to think, on the contrary, this new artistic dimension that I observe is being given to photography at the moment in which spaces that till now were exclusive to the visual arts began to be granted to photography – art galleries and exhibitions – can open a new era for our discipline. What I hope, in any case, is that photography continues to be endowed with true meaning and a critical spirit, far from emptiness and futility that only benefits a few. I like that photography serves for the evasion of the spirit, without any doubt, but with a ticket back to reality to be able to transform it into a peaceful place for everyone, far from the world of manipulation and confrontation where it seems that those few want to take us. So that I can be better understood, I will refer to that wise topic coined by one of the greats, Ansel Adams, about the projection in our captures of all the people we loved, of all the images we saw, of the books that we read or the music we listened to.

As long as it goes on being so, as long as there goes on being something of us in our works, as long as we go on projecting all our cultural baggage and all our emotionality in our images, photography will go on being a tool to transform reality and a shelter for the spirit. If we turn it into a space for the fixation of aesthetic clichés of dubious utility and less transcendence, for the diffusion of propaganda, or for the expression of the ephemeral and the volatile, that is to say, in any fashion with no greater intention than personal exhibitionism or vanity, then we go wrong. I'm sure I will be one of the first to get out of the moving car.

How satisfied are you in your current state of photography and what would you like to improve upon?

It's difficult for me to think that I could ever feel dissatisfied with photography. Of course, I would like to improve, but I'm not anxious about it, since I'm convinced evolution is inherent to human beings; at the same time we never stop being learners. I'm not in a hurry, since I would run the risk of taking the wrong path. Deep down, I don't want to be better for the sake of being better; I just want my photography to go on saying something about me and my way to comprehend reality.

Can you describe how you judge the success or failure of your work?

With the fact that only one human being has been able to feel an emotion when seeing one of my captures, my work will have been worth it. Perhaps it sets the threshold too low, but I think we cannot underestimate the power of emotions. Not long ago I received an occasional assignment from a person who met me through social media and with whom it later turned out, talking to him, that we were connected by people we knew in common without us having met before. His assignment was to capture an emblematic monument of my hometown. Before taking the picture, I needed to ask him a few questions that took me to emotional regard, sometimes difficult to navigate. It was not difficult to understand the true value that the image of that monument meant for him. When, having already taken the picture, he told me that it was just what he needed to have on a wall of his home, I understood I had managed to press the correct button of his sensitivity. Could it be more magic? Could I ask for more? I don't ask for 'likes' on Twitter or Instagram. I don't desire 'favs' on Flickr. Just feeling I connected with the sensitivity of someone, my time was worth it. Much more than worth.



What would you be doing now if you had not picked up the camera?

Enjoying a family moment with my wife, my daughter and my dog.

What do you dislike about photography?

I cannot understand this question. I'm joking, of course. Perhaps the inability to transmit smells. I have a highly developed sense of smell,

and sometimes I can mentally recover what I smelled when I took a photograph, with which I would like to convey even that sensation with the capture. As always, to contribute to emotion, of course.

If you would like to make a closing statement, we'd love to hear what you have to say.

My entire and sincere gratitude to Don Springer and Inspired Eye for the chance of featuring

me in its pages through this interview and for your work of great value in favor of photography diffusion. It has been a great honor answering your questions and reflecting on photography and my concept of it. My best wishes to all and many shots.

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 FACEBOOK

 INSTAGRAM

 TWITTER



INTERVIEW WITH

ANN NGUYEN



Please tell us something about you, your life and interest, etc. Put as much detail as you like and then we will start the questions.

Hello, world, from the perspective of an introvert. I started photography as a hobby and still do. Due to shyness and introvertedness, I don't normally appear in photographs, I prefer to be behind the camera and use the images to speak my view of the world and the feelings I have for them.

What inspired you to become a photographer?

I started with painting and that was still my passion. What I find next is photography and the light and shadow, the expression of human beings, all that fascinated me in a way that I really want to express in the photography work.

What age are you and at what age did you start your journey as a photographer?

I started quite late in life, after the 30s, and never had the experience nor asked anyone to be my mentor. Maybe because of my algebraic mind and the precision of it, I am more drawn to the compositions, later I learn to break the rules and just follow the instinct, the feeling of what and who I photograph.

Would you mind sharing some of the things you feel helped

you along the way with your photography, (lessons, workshops, books, etc)....and also some of the things that may have hindered you, that you overcame on this journey?

Indeed, probably the best I have learned is reading, practicing, and more practicing. Find your own style and what works best to show the mind of creativity through the images. Simplify the composition to the most important elements you want to express .

Do you feel photography enhances your life? If so, how?

I certainly feel photography enriches my mind and lets me speak the language of mind expression, the pain, the suffering, the happiness all through images. I like to see my images speak for themselves without my explanation, or the viewers can interpret the way they see them from happiness to depression .

Also , my ability to create visual stories from my inner experience of my own life .

If we are speaking specifically of photographers, which are the ones of the past and present do you admire?

I would say light and shadow from Rembrandt . Forms and shapes from Bill Brandt . Imaginative sensuality from





Georgia O’Keeffe. I should mention Mary McCartney for stylish modern portraits. Currently , I follow the photographic work of Trine Sondergaard. And many many more old Masters that I adore .

What purpose does photography serve for you?

They enrich my life with things sometimes I just could imagine having.

They express my own thoughts and feelings about all human beings in the not-so-permanent circle of Life.

Do you do photography for hire or as an art form?

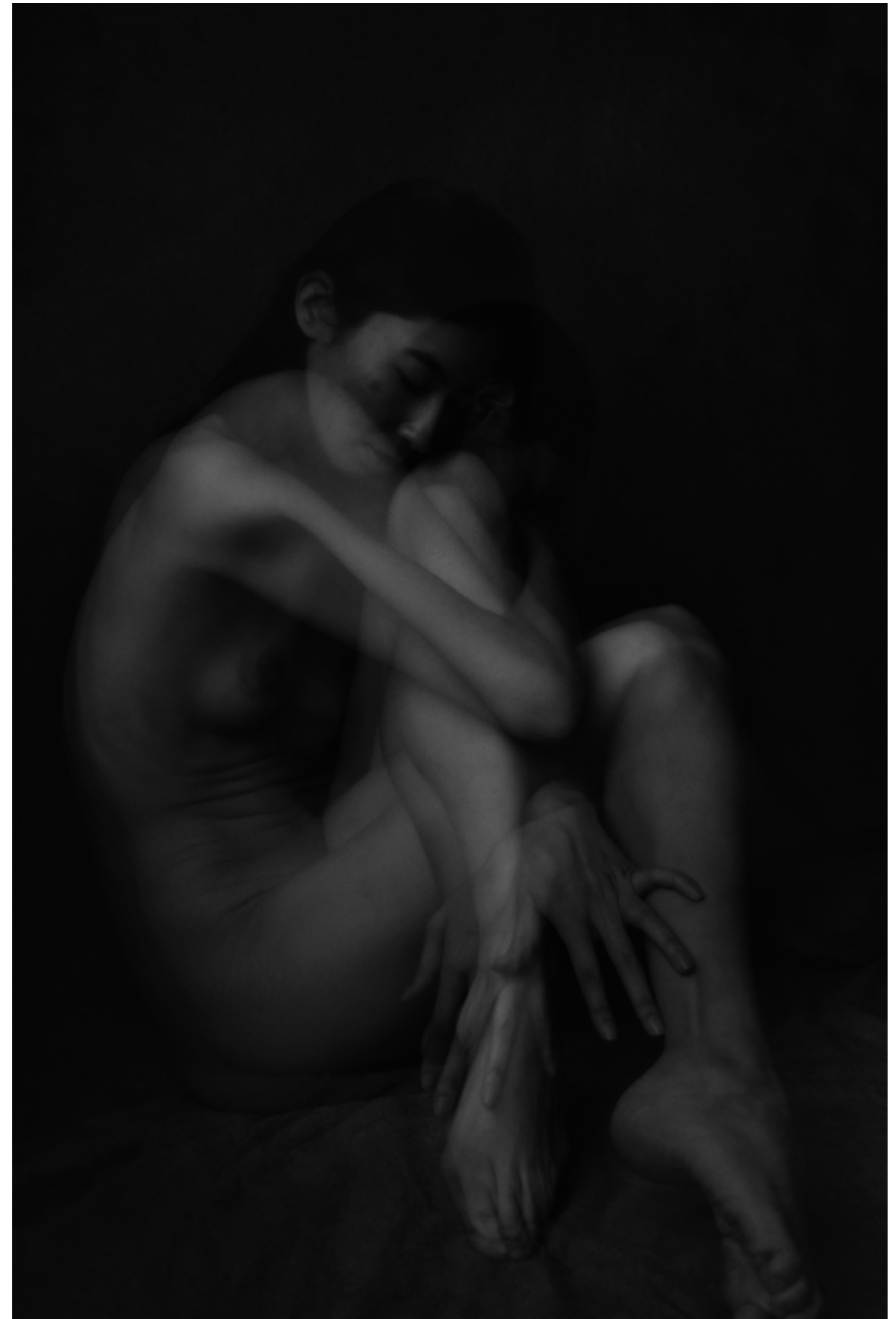
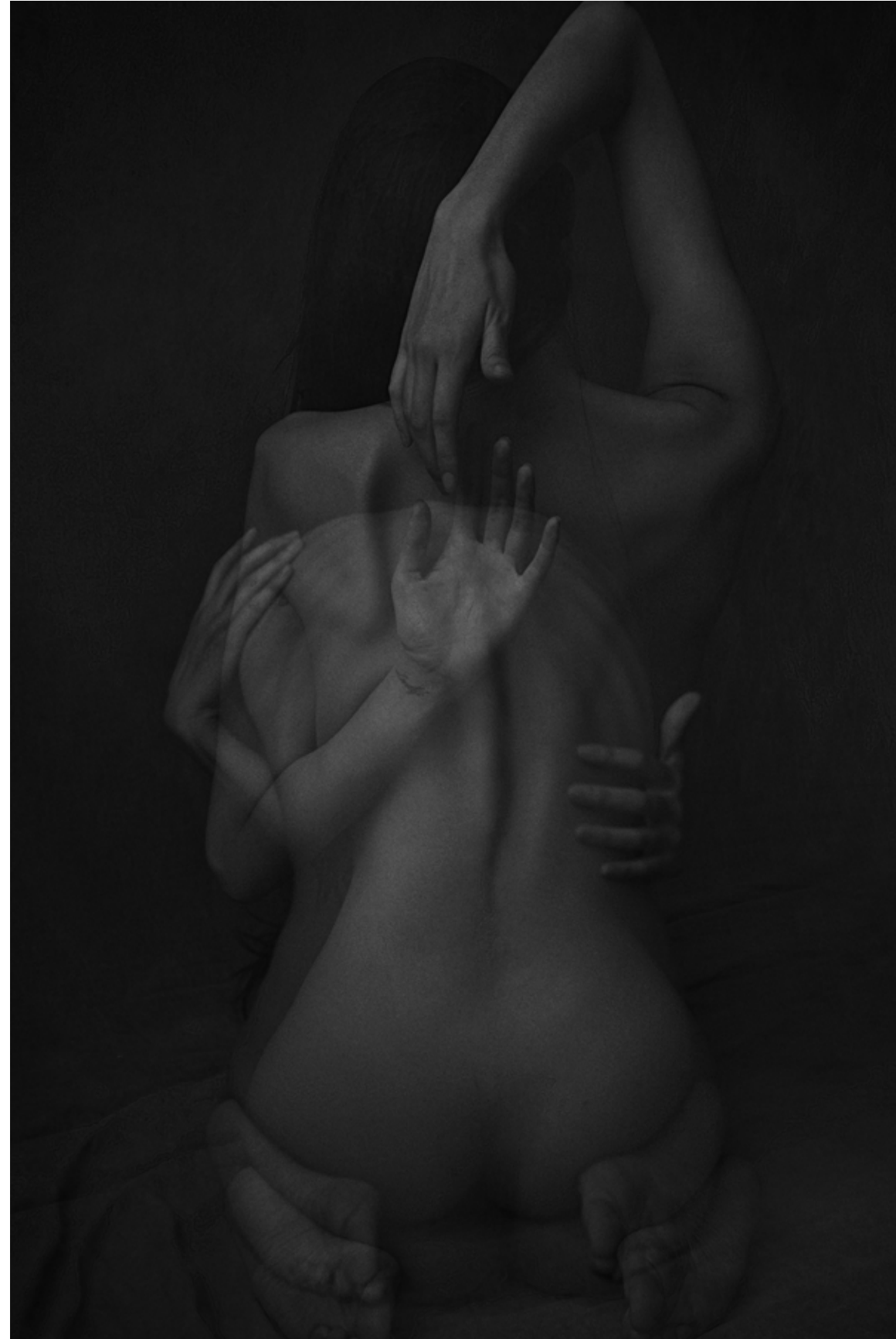
I do think and put a lot of myself into each of my photographs and I still learn more about myself through pictures , so photography is still a hobby and let it be for another while .

What do you do for work and how does photography fit into that?

My bread and butter is from working as a healthcare professional, not as an artist even though the word artist is appealing and I like the title of the latter one .

What genre of photography are you most comfortable working in?

Generally, portraits and human expression are my preference, but I do travel and love landscapes too. But for landscapes, I prefer





abstract landscapes, so they sort of imitate paintings.

When you work, are you working on different series or just finding photos that fit the way you feel at the moment?

The series of photos I work on should fit the way I feel at the moment

Can you describe a few of the trigger mechanisms that make you want to stop and shoot?

I like music, plays, and poetry, especially Leonard Cohen, and every time those lyrics, song notes, and words in poems, they all triggered me to shoot some photos and display my emotions at that time .

How strong of a connection do you have with your subject matter and can you describe that connection?

Very strong connection, I would ask the model, or person I photograph about the story, the song, the poem, etc.. and read for them those words and ask them and also collaborate with them to show the expression. So the model has a free spirit to express those feelings

What are your recurring themes?

Maybe I would say human expression from happiness to depression



What camera are you working with currently?

Nikon D750 iPhone 13 Pro Max

What is your favorite Focal Length or Field of View?

I would definitely say 50mm F1.4, 85mm F 1.4

But I do believe creativity is boundless , no fixed or zoom lens or any devices can change the vision when it is in a severe inspiration mode .

What is the distance to your subject you are most comfortable with while working?

No distance that I would think of, but i would ask if I can use a certain movement to express my thought

How do you see the relationship with your camera? Is it a friend, tool, or whatever?

The camera is an extension of my thought and creativity.

The camera is a tool to extend my imagination in photography to the reality of what you see . A friend , yes , certainly I like to think it is .



Do you have a preference for Black & White or Color? Please explain why.

Black and White or Color are just the personal preference of how to present the pictures. The art of photography is not limited to any. I love them all.

Are you self-taught, educated, or a little bit of both?

Self-taught mainly, educated me yes.

How do you feel about being photographed?

I don't do well with that mainly because I don't find I can express myself in self-portrait enough to cover what my thoughts would be.

Do you like to work by yourself or to have someone with you? Please explain why.

I like to work by myself.

As said before " She is an introvert " taking pictures with her soul. The soul render is endless, formless, and faceless.

What is visible here is an effort of putting the "invisible" in a form and because the soul is colorless therefore it is associated with ephemeral, impermanent, and evanescent life as it is .



Do you listen to music while you are shooting? How do you feel the music enhances the visual experience?

I live by music, especially Jazz. It formalized my thoughts on artwork and it guided me to the direction of the main subjects I envisioned .

Do you have a preference for images in an analog or a digital state?

I do love analog film, Polaroid, all that, but currently just mainly digital

How important is the post-processing of the pictures in your work?

Believe it or not, i use minimal postwork to all my pictures

Where in the world are you located?

I currently reside in Toronto, Canada for the past many moons. Traveling around but home is always Toronto , where I find inner soul peace and physical happiness .

Where is your favorite place to work?

For photos, anywhere would do but preferred somewhere that light and shadow prevailed



When you're feeling somewhat slow or lost, how do you find your way back to find inspiration to get working again?

Yes, I may take a break sometimes to find new inspiration, but I always come back feeling fresh and my perspective may change as well.

Do you exhibit your work in any form?

Contrasted Gallery on Flickr is the newest solo one, from April 20 to May 20

Do you go to exhibitions or do so on the web?

Mainly on the web

Do you collect other photographers' work?

Not really, I change my perspective about photography quite often.

But I do love portraits of Amy Winehouse by Bryan Adams in her happier time .

How do you feel about the current state of photography?

The sad thing is everyone with a phone camera thinks they are professional photographers and they can do all the hard work the old Masters did.

How satisfied are you in your current state of photography and what would you like to improve upon?

The main thing still remains with the person behind the camera and what will not change ever. Post work in a way you can modify and small things, but the whole issue is with the creativity and the soul expression

Can you describe how you judge the success or failure of your work?

I don't judge myself, the photographs are the moment of my feelings and my thoughts about life in general. They could be so different 10 years from now as I grow older. Also , art is a very subjective and personal feeling and connection . It is hard to judge , because once you judge the artwork or photography , you then put a standard on it as to what is right or not . The artist has a free spirit to express herself the way she sees the world not by any standard per se .

What would you be doing now if you had not picked up the camera?

I might pick up the paint brushes and some spatulas and some colors maybe.

What do you dislike about photography?

I just find mass production of AI in photography may kill the creativity of



original artwork .

If you would like to make a closing statement, we'd love to hear what you have to say.

Art is not permanent, and so is everything else. Just enjoy the moments that inspire you to create something that enriches life spiritually .

Let them flourish and others can see them and express their own thoughts about what they see and let the pictures speak themselves about how the feelings would be.

Let the inner soul speak through the photograph and the feeling hopefully lingering longer or maybe forever .

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 WEB PAGE

INSPIRED TRAVELLER

STREET NOTES

BY VALENTINA D'AMATO



HUNTING URBAN VAMPIRES

They appeared in that twilight from the fog and walked towards me through the dark alleyway, like out of one of Anne Rice's gothic novels. The dark-dwelling bloodsuckers have been the inspiration for disturbing urban legends since "Nosferatu" (1922), the first adaptation of Dracula, in silent cinema. Shooting this photo was thrilling and unpredictable, I had hunted urban vampires.



THE SIGN

In a second, I saw him through the window. The Jesus Christ Superstar of modern life was passing before my eyes, surrounded by lights and rock n' roll. After I clicked, he was gone, but I had the photo and looked for a sign. The little bubble of light was separated from the rest as if it came from inside him and was blowing it with his mouth. That was my sign.



REAR WINDOW

Sometimes, what you don't find face to face, you find it through the window. A timeless character with a particular body language, a gesture of looking into the distance avoiding eye contact. A little intimidated, but not as much as being face to face on the street, in front of my camera.



MY HOMAGE TO REMBRANDT

In photography, like in all forms of realist painting and true life, all is a matter of light and shadows, happiness and pain. I find it very stimulating the parallelism between realism in painting and street photography.



IF LOOKS COULD KILL..

Sometimes, a powerful expression can cut you like a knife. Her gestures (eyes, mouth, eyebrows, and nose) and body language tell us a lot about her strong emotion. I consider her reaction a legitimate part of street photography, an everyday reality that we must deal with.



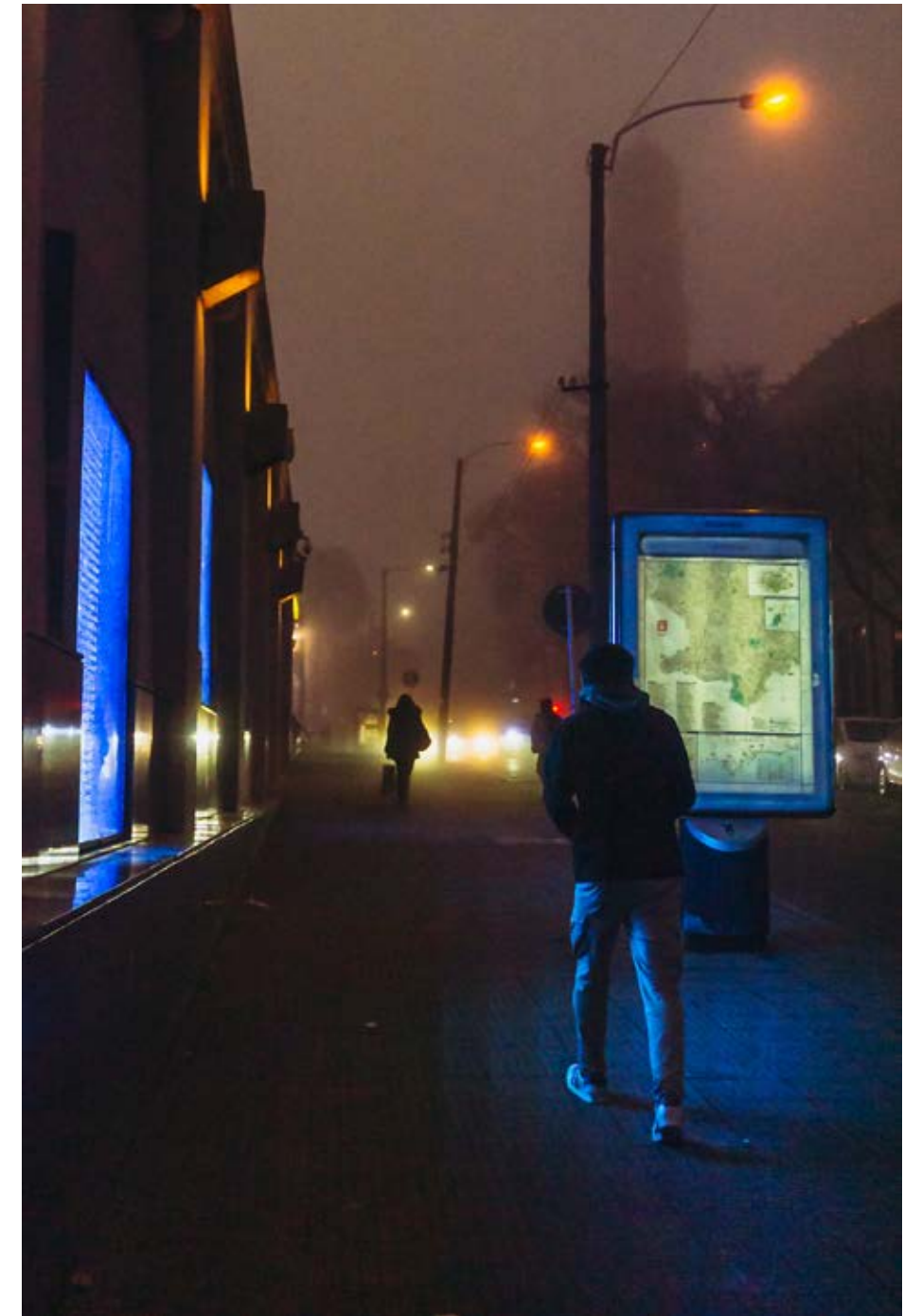
FISHING PICTURES

A lot of luck is involved in fishing. Sometimes you catch and sometimes you don't. We could say the same about street photography. The fisherman hasn't the certainty of catching fish, only the possibility, but when it happens, the thrill is great. Also the process of fishing is the fun part, and the same happens with photography. I really enjoy getting out on the street, changing the scenery, interacting with strangers, capturing truly spontaneous decisive moments and emotions, always experiencing new things, and engaging with life.



LET YOUR INSTINCT BE YOUR GUIDE

This magical character appeared out of nowhere, with determined and hurried steps, like a human Jiminy Cricket. And if he were our conscience when we are in the street taking pictures, sure he would tell us: “Let your instinct be your guide”.



INTO THE NIGHT

At night, the city turns into a different place you will never see in bright daylight. Cities sparkle and wake up at night, everything melts into an irresistible mixture of lights, shadows and silhouettes, colors and contrasts, and endless mystical stories.



SCHOOLGIRLS

Teenage girls are carefree and almost always want to be photographed. The sustained eye contact of one of them while the other speaks without caring about me, adds to the moment's spontaneity, transmitting an immediate human connection as if she wanted to tell us something.



“Sometimes we need the fog to remind ourselves that all of life is not black and white”



GOOD FEAR

Screaming with excitement is ok, you can let yourself go and release a healthy level of adrenaline. Have fun, be happy.



REMEMBERING HOPPER

Many people feel lonely, even in a chaotic city, in the streets and bars among other people.

E.Hopper has represented in his paintings the urban solitude with cinematic compositions and contrast of light and shadows, in a marvelous way. Hopper is like a street photographer with a brush instead of a camera.



“The best dreams happen when you are awake”.



Putting the focus on the background and not on the form of the urban environment, distances us from the known and brings us closer to the unknown, the daily and deeper part, the heart of the city with its everyday life.



Photographing people in the street makes me enter their inner words, they become my friends and a part of my fascinating universe of characters which I adore.

DEVELOPING THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE, HEART AND MIND

INSPIRED EYE

ISSUE CVX



TO INSPIRE AND TO BE INSPIRED BY ALL OF THE PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY