

Exposed

JRC fotocineclub's journal
Vol. 4, April 2020

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Editorial

Dear readers,

it is always an exciting period when collecting the contributions for the next number of 'Exposed'. Seeing all the beautiful photographs and learning about the different approaches taken (the famous photographer's intent). There are so many stories to be told and even if we all concentrated on the same object, the resulting stories would be very diverse. Writing articles goes well beyond showing disconnected pretty photos, thus helping the photographer to condense the images along a real storyline.

These days, a good number of members of our photoclub have started to come together in virtual meetings. It is so much fun to meet everybody, see them well and chat about this and that, but above all about photography. The possibility of sharing images and ideas is also a great feature of these conference calls. The photoclub is therefore proposing to work on a 'home&garden' theme thus creating a mini project for sharing. Use #FCC_Home-photography to tag your photos.

We really enjoy preparing the FCC journal EXPOSED for you. Please keep submitting your interesting articles and stunning photos. But please let us also know what you would like to read about and what you think about our journal or single articles. The photoclub really depends on your active collaboration.

Rudolf



ideas, tips and tricks

abstract

Abstract, non-concrete, conceptual, experimental, non-objective. In whatever way you prefer to classify certain types of photography there has been no commonly-used definition of the term “abstract photography”. I started trying to take abstract images some years ago when certain photos were not giving me the feeling of the scene in front of me. The scene appeared emotive to me at the time but the resulting photo appeared a bit bland, unbalanced or over analytical. I first experimented with Intentional Camera Movement (ICM). This could be, for example, using a relatively long shutter speed and moving the camera to obtain an almost painted effect,

or, as some would just say, blurred! It’s not so easy to get the desired effect but with some experimentation you can obtain nice images. And it’s fun to try. I find that one good abstract image can often give me the emotion and character of a location more than several traditional photographs. Another form of abstract photography, made much easier with modern digital cameras, is the use of multiple exposures. It’s possible to make 2,3,4 or more overlaying photos to produce one final image. I am still experimenting and learning from my attempts to produce satisfying images; my idea is to include several aspects of a scene, layered, so as to produce one image as a kind of summary of the

location. For example, on a beach I could overlay several exposures of the sand, sea sky and anything characteristic of that location.

While isolated at home I have also enjoyed experimenting with everyday objects (such as furniture) and existing images in the house, taking two of more over-layered photos to produce often disappointing but sometimes exciting results.

Have fun and enjoy your abstract photography!

Kevin









Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up. P. Picasso



pursuing a photo project

anthroposeeds: imagining a better future

A few years ago, I discovered -or rather rediscovered- my passion for photography and started practicing and taking some short courses. During this time, I developed a particular interest in pursuing a personal photo project connecting my scientific background and environmental concerns with my interest to explore more subjectively the relationship between humans and the environment.

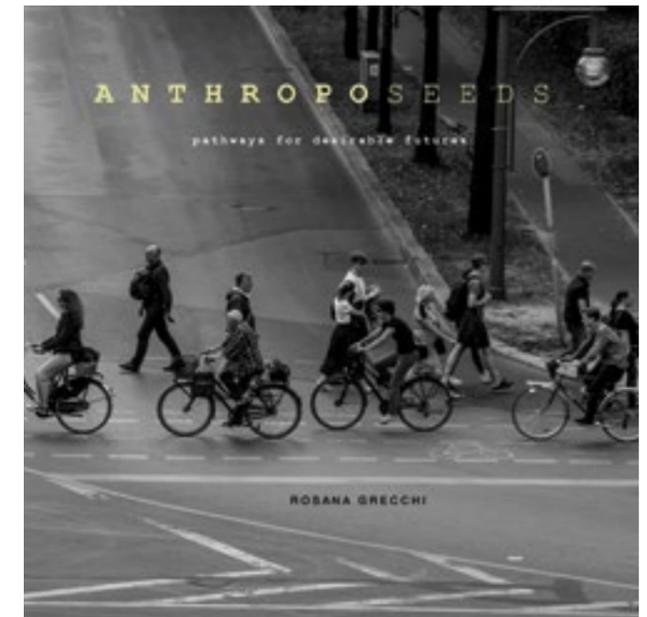
Working professionally on environmental change-related issues for many years now, I became more and more emotionally connected to this thematic especially considering the challenges of the climate crisis and our failure to act accordingly.

I was noticing that the constant negative narratives about the future in this context are causing more fear than action.

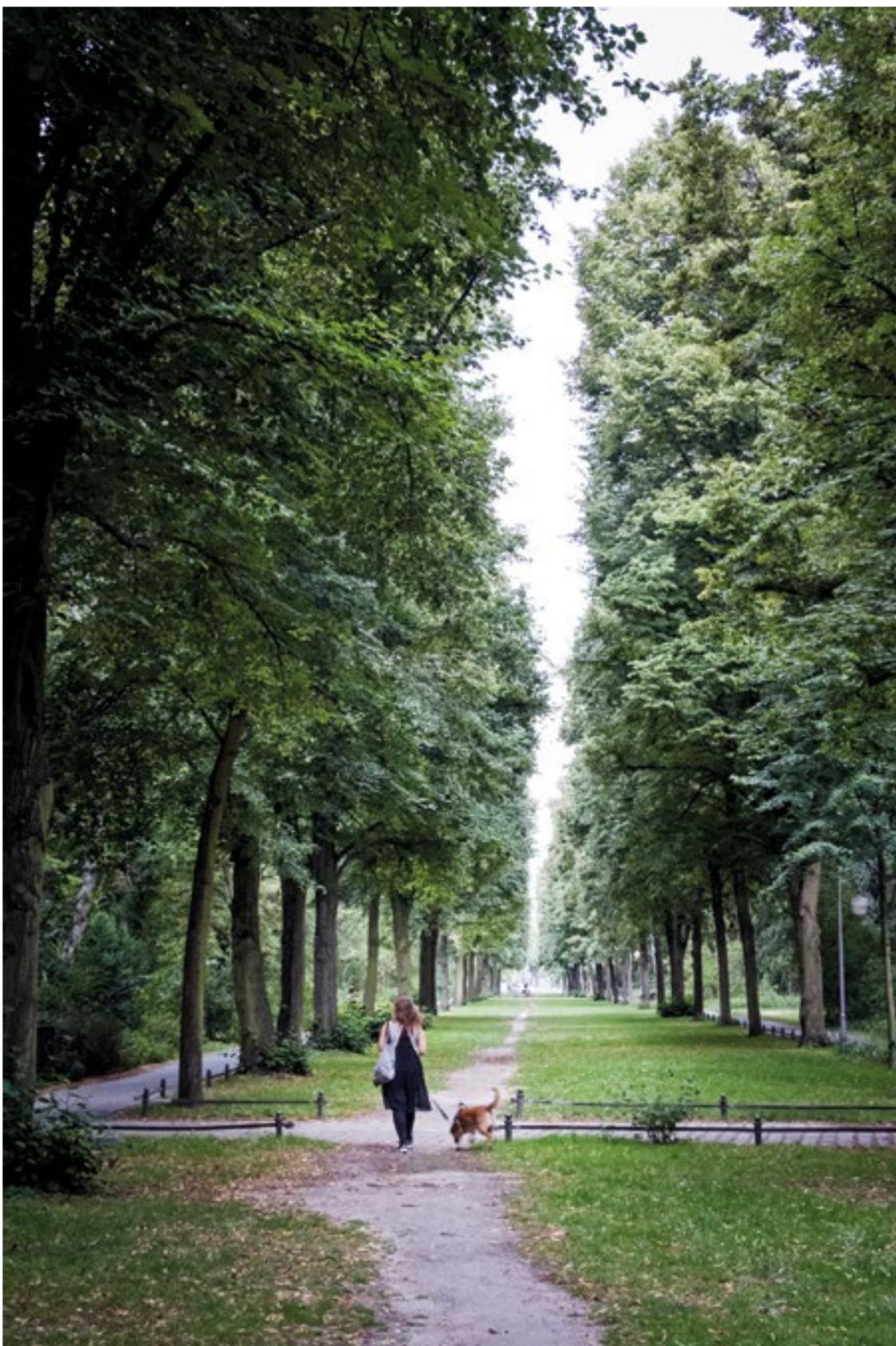
Then I came across the “Seeds of a Good Anthropocene” project (<https://goodanthropocenes.net>), which is based on the premise that “*people choose their actions based on their view of society and their expectation of the future. If our only views are negative, we’re likely to steer towards a negative future*”.

“in order to make change happen, we
have to be able to imagine it”

(Amanda J.-Aceituno)



The cover of my photobook “Anthroposeeds:
pathways for desirable futures”







Inspired by this scientific project and its goal of collecting “seeds”, defined by them as “existing initiatives which hold potential to shape the future”, I tried photographing ongoing interactions within the urban environment that could help envisioning more sustainable pathways (a visual and personal view of “good seeds”).

I explored themes such as urban green spaces, green buildings, active mobility (walking and cycling), public transportation, organic urban food markets and other aspects such as public water fountains (avoiding plastic) and kids in the urban environment, issues that emerged when reflecting on sustainable futures.

Most photos were taken in 2018/2019 in a few European cities. This project is still in its early stages as I expect to continue improving and collecting more “seeds”. However, last autumn, during the FCC book-making course, I used the images already available to produce a photo book entitled “a n t h r o p o s e e d s: pathways for desirable futures” under the guidance of photographer and course instructor Ricardo Silva. The course helped me, among others, to select a subset of photos from my existing collection, to decide on the best way to arrange and sequence them as well as to decide on a title for the entire project.

Rosana



“a shift in consciousness is the beginning of change”
(Anthropocene: The Human Epoch)

exploration

fog

I like fog as it modifies reality and it creates a special atmosphere in landscapes. Below are examples from my collection of “Fog” photos representing the “Oneiric”, the “Patterns”, and the “Generic Fog Landscape” subsets.

Daniele

Photo 1: Fog turns landscapes into magical places where the photo elements can be discerned but not completely, it feels like being at the edge between dream and reality.

Photo 2 (next two pages): Fog also creates a graduation of tones - that suits my interest in representing patterns that are best rendered in B&W .







Photo 3: Fog may be just one additional element of interest in an already complex composition, in this case fog on the river.

Photo 4 (next two pages): Three favourite themes come together in this picture: fog, river and symmetry.



cave tour in Southern Italy, part 1

Puglia: In search of a new Castellana

In Italy there are 33000 caves and for me these caves are awe inspiring and beautiful, and are witness of our earth history. Many of the caves are still undiscovered and our cave group travelled to the south of Italy in search of a new cave. The first stop was Minervino Murge, a small town in Puglia. Nearby is one of the most beautiful tourist caves in Italy, the Grotta Castellana. As stalagmites grow only one centimetre in 100 years, we know that this cave is already 90 million years old. We made an excursion to the fantastic world of the Castellana with its white hall, the most “shining” cave on earth.



Yes, it's true, it takes a lot of luck to find a new cave entrance, and you have to walk and walk and search and search, but at the same time, it's good not always walking on predetermined paths. This is where we were walking along a rock face.

After searching for some time, we came across a crevice, which was easy to reach. We saw a nice colourful entrance into a cave, but unfortunately the opening was far too small, so we decided not to proceed but to look further for another one.



In this region, many more beautiful and undiscovered caves are still believed to be hidden, so we started to search for a new small “Castellana”. The question was how could we go about finding a new cave? We decided to wander further afield over meadows and along rock faces, always looking for new entrances. We spoke to locals, who were happy to give any information they had and also the local Carabinieri were of great help too. We even managed to get permission to search a closed quarry, which had been closed, due to new caves being suspected there. It was fascinating to see how a drone could facilitate the exploration.

A professional photographer was in our group, who was very interesting to watch, especially in the caves where the right lighting was very important. In my case, all the photos were taken with my cell phone. I did not want to use my equipment in such a rough terrain.





Here we were at the quarry. There were many rock openings, which were already exposed during the work on the quarry. Quickly an entrance was found, and preparations were made for us to let ourselves down into the cave. It was quite a complicated cave passage, so I decided to stay on the outside. Difficult and narrow passages, plus a vertical pit of 120 meters had to be overcome.



After many hours, Carlo returned to the surface, and as he's a freelance plumber, he immediately had to make contact with a client from Milan. The others worked for 2 days in the cave system, but in the end, however disappointing the answer to our question was: Had we found a new little Castellana? No, we had not. After very strenuous crawling and climbing all the cave passages came to an end.

We had crawled into many holes and crevices, but the conclusion was no new caves were found, but we were so lucky to have experienced the fantastic landscape, and its people. The unforgettable adventure would remain in our memories, forever. Our final visit was to the Cave di Bauxite, with its beautiful red colours and following this a cheerful Festa del Cardoncello in Mirnervino after which we said our goodbyes. We know that we will return next year and who knows, maybe we will find...

Ute



Lunch break at the almond tree: fresh almonds and a panino gave us strength for another cave tour



technique

high-resolution black and white printing

A great colleague of mine back in Hungary (*J*) is a fan of old photos. He is fond of their incredible detail, despite their small size. Portraits may be small enough to fit into a pocket, yet, one can make out details in the hair. On wide cityscapes, one sees details in the horse carriages or people at a distance. However, *J* does not have the same experience with regular prints made from digital photos. From the recommended distance (equal to the diagonal of the image), they look fine- but this is mostly true for big prints. The curious, holding the photo close to the eye, is not satisfied with the smaller-sized ones. Neither is *J*, nor am I.

Is it impossible to get the feeling of the old high-resolution black and white photos? Using existing tools in a smart way allows us to achieve a quality similar to that of old photos.

One tool is a modified printer using only inks of different shades of grey. To cover a wide tonal range, a special algorithm lays out ink dots on the paper. The idea is exactly this: by going monochrome, this process

does not have to deal with the reproduction of colours and tones, but only the latter. This increases resolution visibly. As a plus, inks are often carbon-based, offering deep blacks. In the end, the print has the resolution and tonal depth of a good traditional, silver-gelatine print.

I wanted to try this method but I do not have a spare printer to modify and around €250-€500 to invest into the starting ink set. As a substitute, I have used a commercial printing service specialised in piezography®, an implementation of the idea I explained above.

I had a portrait printed in A4 size using a lower and a higher resolution – you see a crop of this on the page to the right. Also, I printed the photo on the FCC printer using a colour profile and a black and white one. On the next page, cut-outs of these prints are shown at 100%. Prints made on the FCC printer are to the right and left, respectively, in the top row. To my eyes, the one based on black and white profile has higher resolution, maybe due to relying more on grey inks. However, both show the use

of some colour inks. This in itself, as colour noise in photos, decreases the resolution one perceives. The bottom row shows the piezography® prints. The native black and white process rids colour noise and this makes even the lower-resolution print (bottom row, on the left) more appealing. Its shades are better defined, but I am not sure if the resolution is higher than those coming out of the FCC printer. This would not be surprising: I sized the file so that it matched that resolution. The one on the right was printed from a higher-resolution file and apart from all the benefits we saw earlier, this print has a visibly higher resolution. Perhaps the difference is subtle, but it is there – both I and the model for the photo could tell instantly which was which when we looked at them.

Piezography®, after all, has the power to bring back old times' feel in detail and tonality. One only needs high enough resolution photos processed in the usual way and has to use a service or a specialised printer and ink.

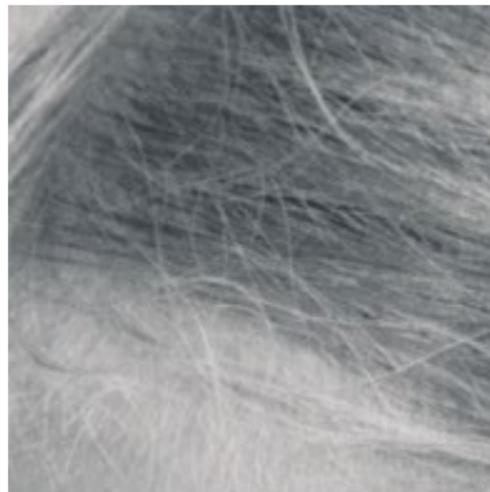




Canon, colour profile



Canon, black and white profile



Piezography, 300dpi file



Piezography, 600dpi file

For my experiment, I have chosen a Hahnemühle photo rag paper. (I guess this was only snobbery: photo rag has texture, which is not a good choice for a resolution exercise.) I had a tack-sharp 36-megapixel shot as a source that is perfect when printed at A2 size the usual way. I took it with a Sony 7R mark I and a Voigtländer 65/2 APO-LANTHAR MACRO lens at iso100.

I processed the photo in Lightroom 6.2 to a 16-bit colour tiff file and then converted to black and white using Silver Efex Pro. To see the resolution gain, I prepared two tiff files for A4 printing. One at 300dpi and another at 600dpi resolution. The latter requires a photo of about 36 megapixels, which is exactly what I had. I used the service of <http://www.fineartconnection.it> (and was pleased).

They use the process of <https://piezography.com> (I am not affiliated with any of them though.) I have also printed the same image twice on the really good FCC printer, a Canon Pro1000, using the same paper. I used the Canon plugin for Lightroom and I have not limited resolution artificially. Finally, I scanned the prints on a Canon ImageScan9600 using the Canon scanner plugin at real 1200dpi to a 24bit colour tiff file.

Technical details

Today one prints colour photos with tens of millions of colours. But a desktop photo printer uses only a limited number of inks: four, five, or perhaps nine. The printer cannot mix these as one would mix watercolours. Instead, it sprays tiny ink droplets in the amount and pattern needed to create the desired colour. The software defines the size and relative position of the resulting dots. The pattern created gives the impression of a full spectrum of colour in our brain.

This colour printing method -that we most often use today- has however some limitations. The tiny nozzles spraying the ink droplets are sitting in a printing head. Each coloured ink needs a set of multiple nozzles; however, within the printhead, there is a specific number of total nozzles available. This means that the number of nozzles that can be used by each ink will depend on the number of different inks used. One can thus create colours using many inks that can each exit from a set of fewer nozzles, or fewer inks that can use larger sets of nozzles per ink. The density of the nozzles has a great impact on the detail of a print.

But there is another factor that affects resolution. Since the printhead needs to move over the paper, the precision of the motor moving the head is important, effectively limiting visible detail. It is easier to create a printhead with densely positioned holes than moving it precisely.

Due to both these limitations, detail in a modern print is often below that of the old photographic process. Advertising high, sometimes 9600 dot per inch (dpi), resolution for printers is misleading. The machine uses most of this "detail" to create colour and shades. The level of detail one perceives is usually around what old laser printers could once achieve with line art. In numbers, this is around 300 dpi - well below the current 600 or 1200 dpi resolution of good laser printers. No wonder one assumes even today 250-300dpi resolution for inkjet prints! Higher-end desktop printers use not only black, but also multiple shades of grey. When compared to using colour inks only, one sees an improvement in resolution and also in the shades. Yet, the printer is not used to its full potential in terms of resolution. This is the limitation, that high-resolution black and white printing, piezography® overcomes.

Having written all the above, Kevin drew my attention to the excellent blog of Ming Thein (<https://blog.mingthein.com/category/prints>), who has exciting material on printing. He refers to his high-resolution colour prints as "Ultraprints". Ming claims that these prints reach a resolution of somewhat above 700 lines per inch (lpi), which is just a tad higher than what I eyeballed for piezography®. I have not yet found a technically accurate description of Ming's process, but it seems to be a complete overhaul of the printing workflow: from processing the image, through modification of print hardware (printer) and software (raster processing) to selecting the optimal paper and tuning the whole process image by image. I like piezography® better. It might be monochrome only, but it is just easier and works out of the box. Now, I am shooting black and white to explore the full potential of this wonderful world.

Zsombor

meet our members

Andreas

I started taking pictures at young age in the good old analog era (yes, I'm getting old) when my father gave me an Agfa foldable camera. My father loved taking pictures, he had a great Zeiss Contaflex with a removable "cassette" system which allowed you to swap films, fantastic. Another inspiration was my Grandmother who was a professional photographer in the 1920's. She was also the first woman in Germany taking aerial images. So somehow photography is in my genes and maybe it's no surprise I work with aerial and satellite images. When I was a teenager, photography became increasingly important to me. During trips with my family I started taking landscape pictures, now with the famous Nikon FM2 which I bought with my first earned money. We were often in the mountains and I got attracted by the power of nature. It's not a coincidence that the first photographer that influenced me was Ansel Adams with his stunning landscapes images. I still remember the first photo exhibition I visited; I was on a school trip in Venice and went to see one of his exhibitions.



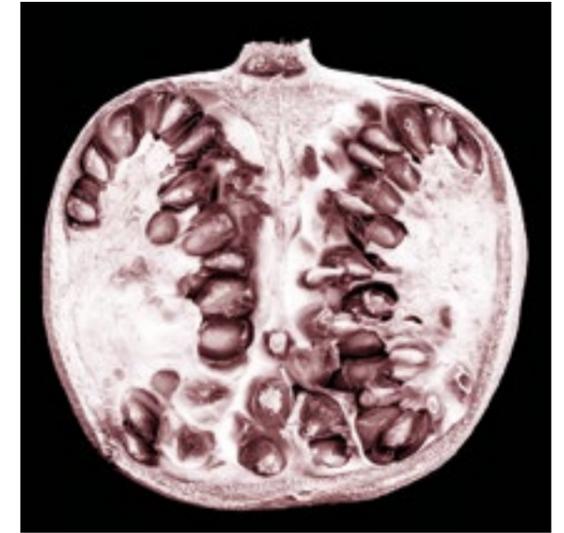
Patchwork. Aerial image taken in DR Congo, 2017



Mountain trilogy 3. Great landscape in Island, 2019



Agave 1. Monochrome detail of lines and forms in nature, 2017



Melograno, 2015

At home, I experimented by improvising my own studio and working with objects and macro images. I focused on forms, shapes and details. I worked both with color and black & white.

At university, I was fortunate to have free access to a dark room. Here I started not only printing my own images, but also experimenting with masks, filters, photomontage, etc. I got interested in artists

such as Man Ray. By then I had bought my second FM2 body which allowed me to avoid manually swapping between films. Later I got into slide shows.



Sunrise, Moonset. Beautiful landscapes are just around the corner. Lentate, 2011

I bought an excellent (and expensive) Rolleivision Twin projector and started to arrange visual stories accompanied by music. Initially I presented these among family and friends, later also in public. I guess this was when I began to not just take single images, but to think in sequences and stories. With the end of the analog era (and I was certainly one of the last surrenders) photography was already part of my life and so I didn't dive into the digital era with just any camera, it had to be a good one.

So I selected the now almost legendary Nikon D700 (which has now made space for the excellent D850 including some top lenses). In recent years, thanks also to my wife and my photo friends, photography has reached a new level in my life. I still take pictures of anything that attracts me, but I do it in a more conscious way. More and more, I take pictures with a purpose, I think in terms of stories that I like to convey. My style hasn't really changed from when I started, I still love

big landscapes for instance, but more and more I try to capture the essential elements in the environment looking for detail and composition. Finally, what I like in photography is the power an image can have in telling a story, in giving a message, in creating discussion, but also in transmitting a sense of peace, quietness and beauty. This is what I aim for with my photography.

Andreas



Stoneway to heaven, Öland, 2016



Into the jungle, Cote d'Ivoire, 2019

intent

looking at your face

*“Man shouldn’t be able to see his own face – there’s nothing more sinister.
Nature gave him the gift of not being able to see it
and of not being able to stare into his own eyes.
Only in the water of rivers and ponds could he look at his face.
And the very posture he had to assume was symbolic.
He had to bend over, stoop down,
to commit the ignominy of beholding himself.
The inventor of the mirror poisoned the human heart.”*

— Fernando Pessoa, The book of disquiet



In my photos, faces are difficult to distinguish; identities are transient, vague and maybe unimportant.

What is important to the photographer may be inessential to the viewer. An awareness by the viewer of the specific circumstances and details in which the photo was taken, would limit their imagination and confine the picture to the photographer’s point of view.

Konstantinos



mini project
in my garden

These days spent at home give me the chance to explore what is happening in the garden. Instead of being busy and out and about, I take the time to patiently observe. My prime objective are the birds coming to the feeder, but I will not ignore action elsewhere. Thus, my working title is 'Around my yellow globe' which makes reference to the bird ball, which is regularly restocked and attracts quite a variety of birds. I am planning to

make a small book, maybe self-printed and bound, telling the story of my observations. Amongst other birds, Crested Tits and Long-tailed Tits visit, which I have not observed on the feeder before. All the antics of the birds, how they approach, how they interact, and being able to determine a clear hierarchy within each species but also between the species. To see how the Marsh Tit approaches the ball in a very aggressive, near

'bird of prey' like flight, in order to frighten even the much bigger and normally dominant Great Tits away. But evidently, there is other wildlife beyond. One night the garden was visited by three Roe Deer, two male and one female. Beautiful to see. But when the two male ones started to 'play'-fight in the twilight; what a spectacle. I was not aware of all these visitors and all the things I might learn, just by observing my garden.

Rudolf



Crested Tit: what a beauty



Reversed roles: Coal Tit pulling off the Marsh Tit's strategy



Evening play-fight of two male Roe Deer



FotoCineClub

FCC

The FotoCineClub (FCC) is a COPAS-supported club at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Ispra, Italy. We invite all interested persons to join our activities and meetings, as well as our email distribution list and the WhatsApp group. Paying members can additionally participate in group decisions, use the club's equipment including our photo studio, receive photo journals and participate in courses (additional course fees apply). Membership fee for the year 2020 is 30 Euro.

committee: Gabi Breitenbach (president); Rudolf Hummel (vice-president); Eckehard Rosenbaum (treasurer); Ralf Steinberger (secretary); Kevin Douglas, Rosana Grecchi, Katja Neugebauer, Ute Stips (consiglieri).

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about this issue

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