

FUJILOVE

ALL THINGS FUJIFILM X AND GFX

56 / November 2020

Jens Mathiasson

**Natural Light Portrait
Photography**

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FUJILOVE MAGAZINE
ISSUE 56

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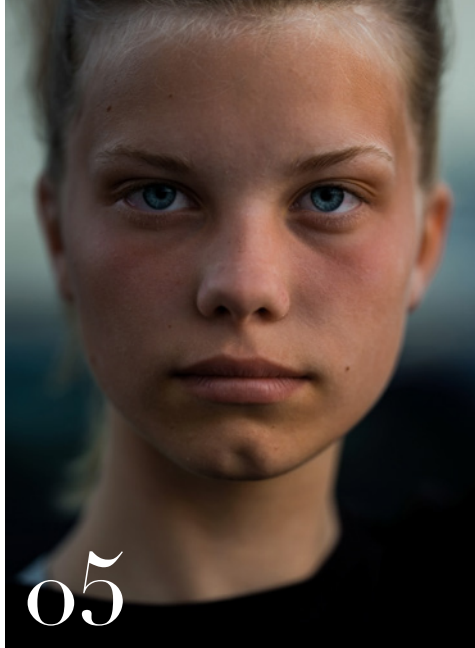
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FUJIFILM X AND GFX



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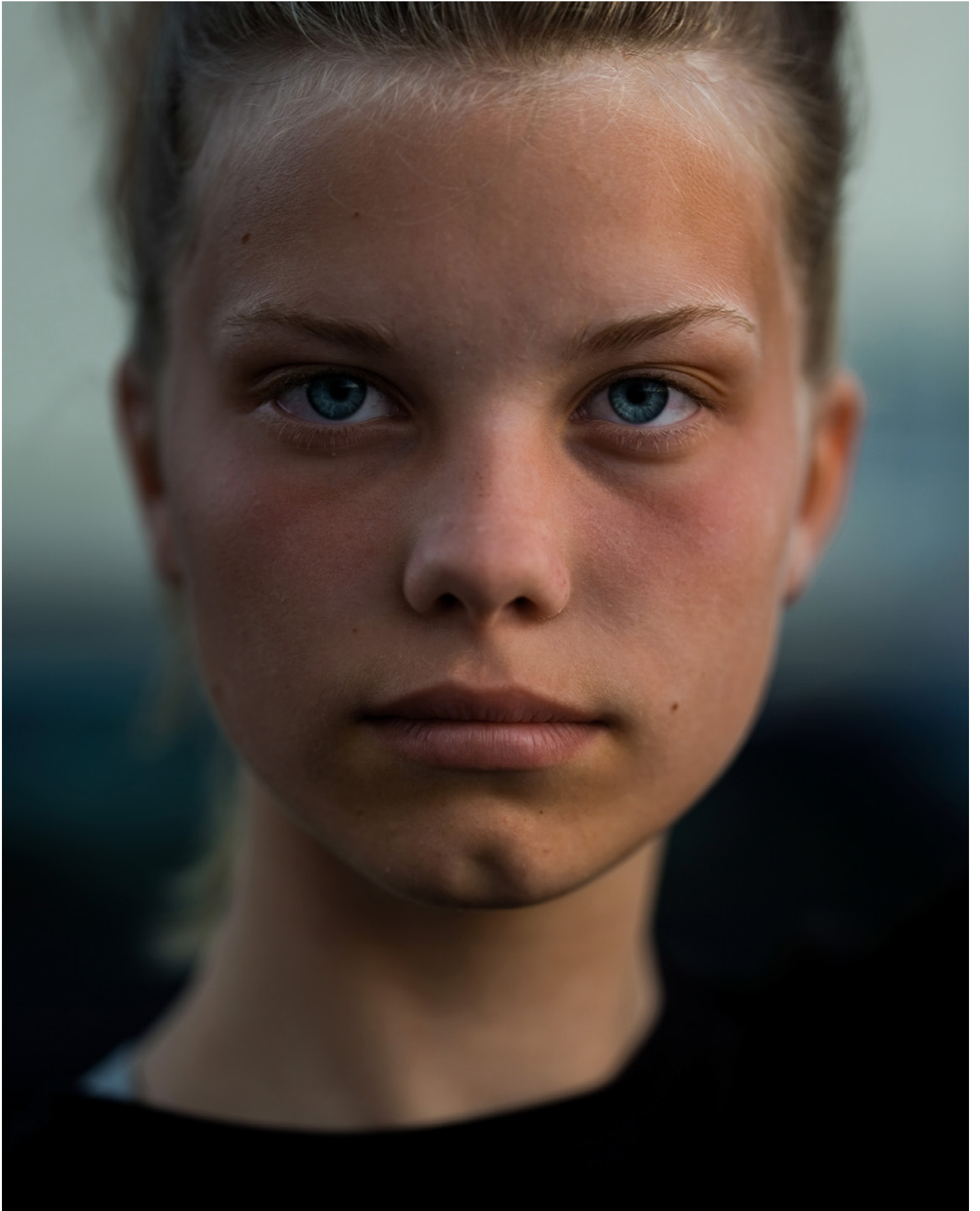
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Natural LIGHT PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

Jens Mathiasson

A few years back I decided to change brands and become a Fujifilm user. I also decided that I would try to develop the skill of portrait photography, falling in love with both the camera and natural light in the process of doing so.



GFX 50R + GF110mmF2 at f/2, 1/70 sec, ISO 100

I don't really consider myself a photographer. I just found a way to express my creativity through a medium that happened to involve a camera, although by definition that might just be a photographer! I have been taking photos for many years, but lost touch with it in 2015. For a while I didn't ever want to touch a camera again. I felt as if I had hit a dead end; I thought my images were poor and I had lost the creativity for it. It was a struggle, for sure.

During a very inactive (photographically speaking) period of my life, I came across the X-T1. I think I was just browsing YouTube for videos about mirrorless cameras and I found this camera extremely compelling; I remember wanting it so much. But, being short of money, I couldn't buy it at the time. I had also invested money in more lenses for my previous system, so it wasn't possible to change at that moment in time.

By 2017 I finally had enough money

and I decided to switch brands by purchasing the the Fujifilm X-T2. I immediately felt that I had levelled up just by holding it in my hands! It was small, handy and beautiful. I also decided at the moment of purchase that I would only carry one lens at this time as a limitation to develop my skills. Then and there, my Fujifilm journey began.

So why just one lens? It all boiled down to me falling for the false illusion that more lenses meant better images or more options. The latter could however be true in many ways for many photographers, but for me it was just confusing. By buying a new system, I could completely restart my journey and try to become a better photographer.

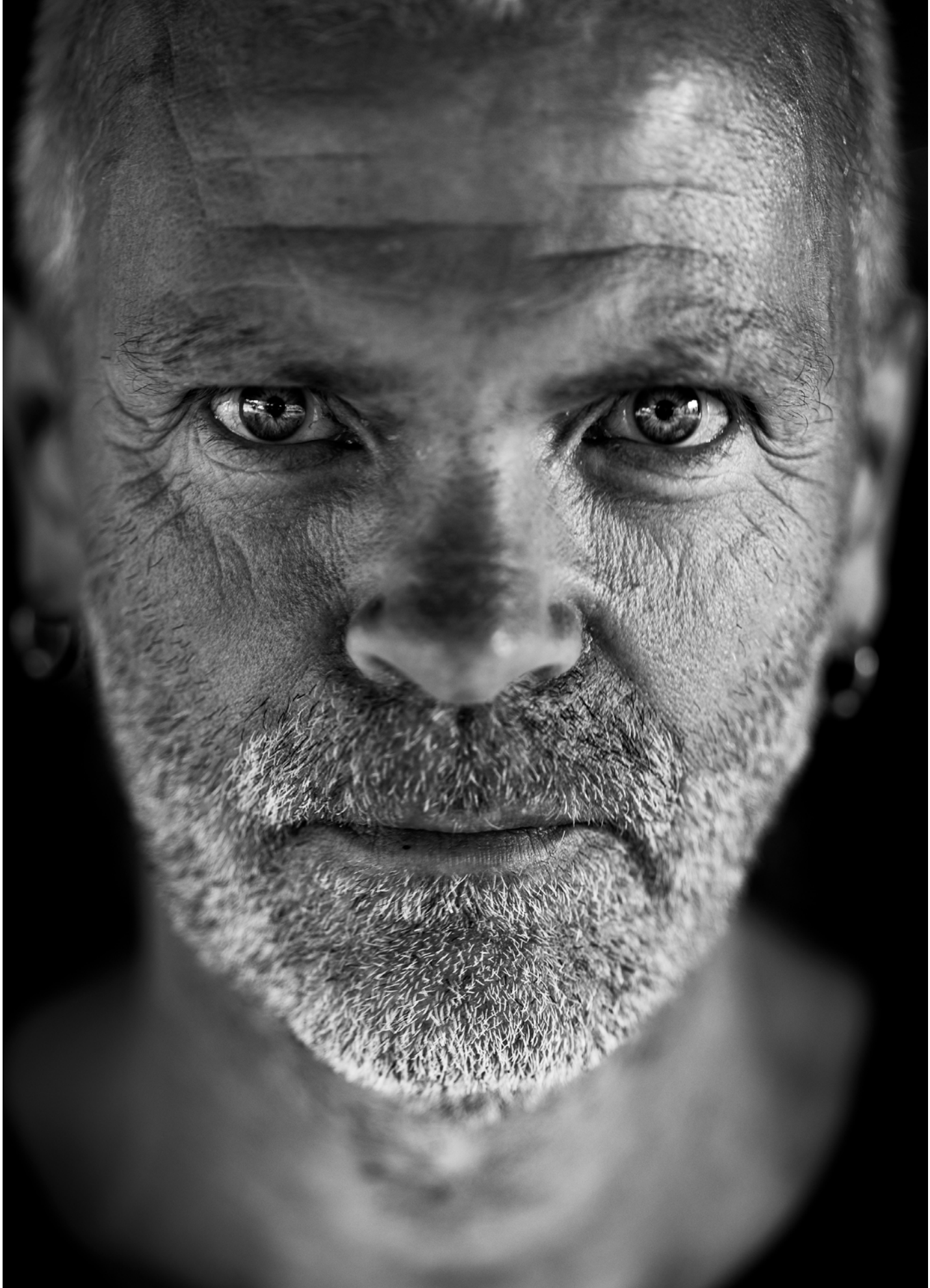
Fast forward to today and I have also invested in the GFX 50R, together with the GF110mmF2 lens. And because Fujifilm is what Fujifilm is, I feel they made a camera just for me. I feel it covers my needs perfectly: large sensor, huge images for prints and that Fujifilm feeling. Prior to this investment I shot

mainly with the XF56mmF1.2, and occasionally with the XF50-140mmF2.8 if I was outside and wanted to control the background. But I love the equivalent of 85mm on a full frame, so the GF110mmF2 is perfect for me as a companion to the GFX 50R.

I shoot portraits and I try to harness light at the same time, which might be one and the same thing, actually. I don't have many models but to be limited, as previously described, has been a good thing for me. I am forced to think outside the box all the time. If I can make the people I shoot look completely different with every single image, I must be on to something; either I am changing something all the time or they are, and I manage to catch it.

I also always look for good light. I want the light to look and feel natural, and I want the person I shoot to feel natural. That's my main objective, really, and most of the time I have been lucky enough to get an image that I like.

"I DECIDED AT THE MOMENT OF PURCHASE THAT I WOULD ONLY CARRY ONE LENS AT THIS TIME AS A LIMITATION TO DEVELOP MY SKILLS. THEN AND THERE, MY FUJIFILM JOURNEY BEGAN."



X-T2 + XF56mmF1.2 at f/1.2, 1/80 sec, ISO 100

More recently I have also started to ask questions in order to spark a reaction. I got that approach from Willy Ronis. He would ask a person strange questions just to get a response and then capture it. It's a great way to make a portrait have feeling and stand out. This is what intrigues me.

I love natural light more than anything, but I do take the occasional studio image as well. Natural light is easier for me to control, though, because it's constant. I tend to use my home and nearby places for my shoots. Many of my favourite images have been taken at home, in the doorway to our porch or in the stairway to the second floor. It wouldn't have mattered who the subject was – the light would still be the same and equally beautiful.



GFX 50R + GF110mmF2 at f/2, 1/80 sec, ISO 50



X-T2 + XF56mmF1.2 at f/1.2, 1/120 sec, ISO 100

We have this semi-transparent roof on our porch that acts like a large soft box, and it works really well. Depending on the weather and the position of the sun, it's just a matter of moving the subject further or closer to the light. Being shot in a doorway also limits the light since the posts act like flags that you would use in a studio and the falloff will be beautiful.

The small window we have in the stairway is facing north, so at a certain time of the day, the light is magical and very soft, and makes for a great portrait location. The light from the north in the morning or evening where I live in Sweden is amazingly beautiful.

I look for something in a portrait, but it has nothing to do with who I am shooting, but it's rather what they transmit. I can't really pinpoint exactly what that is, because I honestly don't know, but it's something. A thought, perhaps? A feeling? Could be. But when it's there, it's there. And if I'm lucky, I manage to catch it since it's often only there for just a tenth of a second.

For my portraits, I try to make things as simple as possible. I don't try to make an image extravagant with complicated composition or artificial light setups. I am more into getting the person I shoot to feel at ease and relaxed, and let the light and camera do the rest. Because it's what I do, and it is what we should do: let the light create the image. The feeling that comes out of the picture is what the subject is creating.

I'm not an expert when it comes to light, and even less of an expert when it

comes to cameras; I just shoot and I don't think about it too much. But I would say I know the basics.

When I first started shooting with DSLRs, I would shoot 200+ images each time, but today I limit myself to 36. It's more than enough, in fact. This is a workflow I have, somewhat. I try to talk to the person I shoot, and I usually don't tell them what to do or think about, but occasionally I tell them how to pose. I also want the shoot to be swift, not wishing to take too much time from a person. Many times, my models are surprised that we are done with the shoot because it ended so fast!

I don't strive for perfection. Nothing is perfect or everything already is – one of the two! We are what we are, and I think this is one of the things I look for when I take portraits. This is also the reason for me not doing any extensive post-processing or trying to complicate things with more lights or other means of technology. I do, however, understand and respect that other photographers love this. For me, though, I like the way skin looks. I like wrinkles. I like impurities. And I find all these things beautiful. They define us and if I am allowed to photograph it, I am very happy man.

So how do I shoot my portraits? I love eye contact and I love the atmosphere it creates. The camera is just there to freeze the moment that is created. So, we talk a bit, and I might tell them what to do ("chin down", "move here", etc.) and, all of a sudden, it's there – the image, that image – and we take it. Shot and caught somewhere in time.



GFX 50R + GF110mmF2 at f/2, 1/45 sec, ISO 100



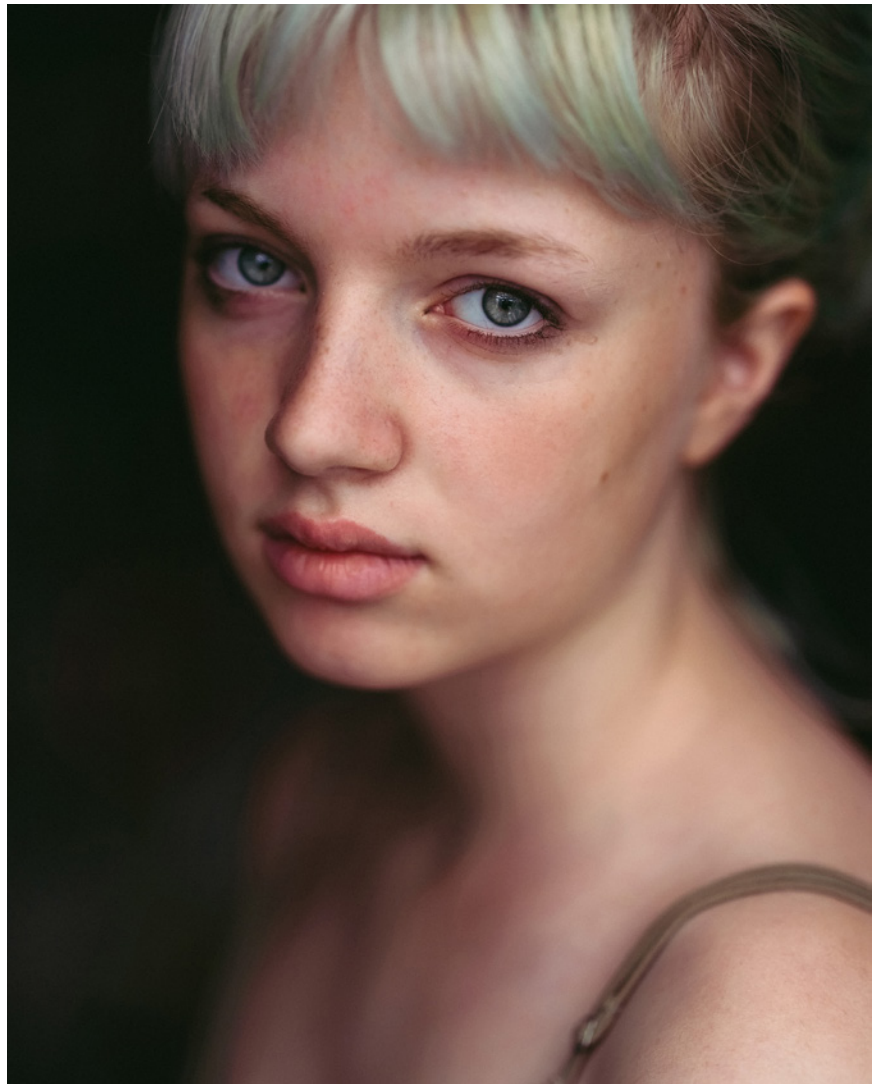
*GFX 50R + GF110mmF2 at f/4,
1/80 sec, ISO 400*

As mentioned before, I try to let natural light do its job, and I guess it's the biggest difference from shooting with studio flash. Since I am not really technical with my camera and off-camera flash, I run with natural. And for me there is nothing more compelling than an overcast sky. The possibilities are endless. You have all this great light for portraits with just a simple window or makeshift flags like a door post, for example. And when the sky is overcast, the falloff will be lovely.

That said, there are moments where slightly harsher light is beautiful. But I often take portraits in the light between buildings and I bounce the light on a wall before it hits the subject. I rarely use reflectors, even though I have in the past. Most of the time I find the ambient light to be just enough of what I need since I'm capturing feelings more than anything.

My images are also often dark and moody because I want my subject to more or less appear out of the darkness. In my opinion, it looks and feels more flattering to lighten a person's key features rather than the entire face or body. Therefore, I tend to underexpose my images or bump the ISO to use a faster shutter. I know, it's breaking the rules! Exposure is supposed to be key. But I am very careful with the shadows, since they sometimes make up for 70% of my image.

To summarise, I think I have developed my skills quite a bit with Fujifilm and the community that surrounds it. From taking very few portraits in the past, to more or less only doing portraits, it's been a great voyage, for sure, especially over the past three years. What the future holds for me, I don't really know. But I try hard every day to develop the craft even further. I believe that my Fujifilm gear and I will have a bright future together.



GFX 50R + GF110mmF2 at f/2, 1/200 sec, ISO 100

GFX 50R + GF110mmF2 at
f/2, 1/950 sec, ISO 800

JENS MATHIASSEN

www.instagram.com/jens_m_photo

Venice:

A CITY CREATED FOR THE FUJIFILM X-PRO2

André Wagenzik

My name is André Wagenzik and I've been working as a freelance photographer in my hometown of Berlin since 1992. After my apprenticeship as a photo technician at the state college for photo technology and optics in Berlin, I initially had a job in a well-known photo shop in Berlin before I started working as a freelance photographer – initially analogue – in the early 1990s.



At that time, shortly after the Berlin Wall fell, there was a lot of building and restoration going on in Berlin and my first jobs were mainly architectural recordings. My first professional equipment included a Sinar large-format camera, but even then I was working with two Fujifilm medium format cameras (the GS 645 W and GW690) and was very impressed

with the overall quality of the cameras. A Canon T90 served as a 35mm camera. Due to the increased demand for digital photographs, I bought a Fujifilm S1 Pro in 2001, but mainly worked with Nikon cameras (D1x, most recently D4X). Nikon was very innovative in its system cameras at the time, but the equipment was heavy and unwieldy.

*X-Pro2 + XF14mmF2.8 at
f/5.6, 1/100 sec, ISO 400*

X-Pro2 + XF23mmF1.4 at
f/2.5, 1/250 sec, ISO 3200



Over time, my focus of activity changed, I began to specialise more and more in press and public relations work for companies and institutions. Today I work for PR and advertising agencies, federal ministries, foundations and companies. The focus here is on public relations, press, portrait, reportage and, above all, event photography.

A few years ago, due to a lot of travelling, I was looking for a new focus and lighter photographic equipment. I came across a Fujifilm X camera by

chance and what can I say? It was love at first sight. The design of the cameras immediately appealed to me, as well as their small, compact size and the fact that they are very quiet. After the first test runs with the X-Pro2 and the XFmm23mmF1.4, I quickly realised that this would be my new camera system. So, about five years ago I switched completely from Nikon to the X Series and have not regretted it to this day.

Architectural photography with a large format camera has shaped my way

of photographing buildings today. I'm not a fan of falling lines and, for me, a graphic structure is an important part of my work. It took me about three years to find a shift lens solution for my X cameras. With a tilt-shift adapter from Fotodiox and the Nikon AF20-35mmF2.8 I finally found a flexible solution to enable professional architectural photography. I think Fujifilm will never have a shift lens. The target group is just too small.

X-Pro2 + XF23mmF1.4 at f/3.6, 1/8000 sec, ISO 3200



X-Pro2 + XF23mmF1.4 at
f/4.5, 1/125 sec, ISO 400





Over the past few years I have had opportunities to work for two different clients in Venice, including a reportage about two Venetian gondola builders. Luckily, I had enough time to explore the city photographically for myself as well. Both trips to the lagoon city took place in the winter months and both times I was welcomed by fog and bad weather. Since I'm not a fan of fair-weather photography, I immediately felt very comfortable. There are very few tourists in town at that time of year. The squares, even St. Mark's Square, are

almost empty and the few locals slowly recapture their city.

A less touristy and more urban Venice can be found on the offshore island of Il Lido. There I had, among other things, the opportunity to take photos from the roof of an old factory. Most of the images were created with the X-Pro2 (and occasionally the X-T2) and mainly with prime lenses. I completely dispensed with the classic gondola motifs with a tripod and long exposure. I found it very attractive to look for other perspectives of this city.

*X-Pro2 + XF23mmF1.4 at f/4,
1/200 sec, ISO 1600*

X-Pro2 + XF10-24mmF4 at f/4, 1/15 sec, ISO 3200





*X-T2 + XF50-140mmF2.8 at
f/8, 1/500 sec, ISO 1600*



*X-Pro2 + XF50-140mmF2.8
at f/4.5, 1/500 sec, ISO 800*

The Fujifilm cameras that I use are very minimalist and I know every detail. This enables me to concentrate on the essentials of photography, the subject and the light. I particularly appreciate the small and light prime lenses for my projects. Many colleagues have already expressed their opinion positively about the Fujinon lenses and I would have to agree with them. No Fujinon lens has disappointed me so far, and the fixed-focal-length lenses especially, which I use again and again in my projects,

reports and portraits, have an excellent optical quality. My prime lenses include the XF14mmF2.8, XF23mmF1.4, XF35mmF1.4, XF56mmF1.2 and the XF80mmF2.8, with the focal lengths of 23mm, 35mm and 56mm being my absolute favourite lenses. For me, it's not about the speed of the autofocus, but rather the possibility of taking photos in poor light conditions and at the same time achieving optimal imaging performance.

1463



LEONARDO PISA
SEMPRE PER VOI
TRATTAMENTO
IN 2000 2079

X-Pro2 + XF23mmF1.4 at
f/2.2, 1/250 sec, ISO 1000

X-Pro2 + XF10-24mmF4 at f/7.1, 1/8000 sec, ISO 2000



X-Pro2 + XF10-24mmF4 at f/5, 1/4000 sec, ISO 400





*X-T2 + XF50-140mmF2.8 at f/6.4,
1/400 sec, ISO 640*

I mainly use my three zoom lenses because of their flexibility. For commissioned work (e.g. event, congress and press photography), I also have a Godox flash system and a small Apple laptop. Meanwhile, I also work with an X-Pro3, X-T4 and an X100V, the camera for when you're 'on the go'. I think I'm still one of the few photographers in Berlin who makes a living with X Series. At first, I was ridiculed by my colleagues. But since, they, too, have discovered the benefits of a mirrorless camera, even if it's not a Fujifilm. I'm a friend of the RAW format and I usually have the cameras

in manual mode, except for the autofocus. All my equipment is half the weight compared to my old Nikon equipment. My back thanks me!

Shortly before the Coronavirus crisis, I ordered the X-T4. As a videographer, I was excited about this camera and have not been disappointed. Just the brief switch from the 'Movie' to the 'Still' setting and the two corresponding separate setups are perfect for my needs. I always missed IBIS on the X-T3. By installing IBIS in the X-T4, I now have a perfect camera for photographic and video work.

X-Pro2 + XF23mmF1.4 at f/2,
1/1600 sec, ISO 400





X-Pro2 + XF10-24mmF4 at f/4.5, 1/3200 sec, ISO 400



*X-Pro2 + XF23mmF1.4 at
f/5.6, 1/640 sec, ISO 400*

Unfortunately, I was not able to test the X-T4 properly due to COVID. Many of my jobs have been cancelled since the beginning of the crisis. After a slight recovery in the summer, some customers were again booking small jobs, mainly events with limited participants and strict hygiene concepts.

These circumstances have completely changed the workflow for such jobs. Photographing people with masks has become a challenge for us photographers. You have to catch people's smiles in their eyes. You can no longer move freely and you have to keep your distance. Wearing a mask as a photographer with glasses did not make working through the eyepiece of a

camera very easy. All the new conditions truly took time to get used to, like the constant fogging of the eyepiece!

Much is written about the magic of Venice, but also about its slow decline. I tried to capture this beauty and melancholy photographically. It's sad to see a historical place literally being scorched inexorably by human hands. As I look at my Venice pictures now, I ask myself whether I could still travel and take photos so freely.

Travelling to Venice again, for example, I would be attracted to certain sites in order to take a photographic inventory of this change of public life due to the pandemic. But I wouldn't have a good feeling about it!



X-Pro2 + XF10-24mmF4 at f/11, 1/500 sec, ISO 400

ANDRÉ WAGENZIK
www.wagenzik.de



RAPASELET, SAREK NATIONAL PARK, SWEDEN

GFX 50S + GF45-100mmF4 at 51mm, f/29, 1/50 sec, ISO 800

Mosquito

MEETS MEDIUM FORMAT

Bernhard Labestin

Bernhard Labestin brings us a field report on the Fujifilm GFX50s, testing the medium format camera on one of his regular hiking tours over the Arctic Circle.



FX 50S + GF45-100mmF4 at 94mm, f/16, 3.5 sec, ISO 100

Sleet! Wrapped tightly into my Gore-Tex apparel, I'm sitting in North Sweden's Sarek National Park, above the polar circle, watching my son cross a ford in a glacial stream. As icy wind whips the rain across the landscape, I ask myself the question that's always been the same for the last 35 years.

“Thirty years—has it really been such a long time since I first toured these highlands?” Back then, optimising your equipment was already vital: small, lightweight and, at the same time, high-quality and reliable. During my first tour in the Sarek in the mid-80s, I was accompanied by my newly acquired Olympus OM4. Battery life wasn’t something to worry about with the button cells of those days, and with 20 rolls of 35mm reversal film for more than 700 slides, I was considered overequipped. Shutter speed and

aperture were good friends and ISO was dictated by the film which had to be changed after 36 shots. And above all, film was a resource to be used consciously and sparingly.

Today, this has changed. A camera that needs a fresh battery after 400 shots is seen as an electricity hog, or simply impractical. Today’s film spools, SD cards, hold photos in the range of four-digit numbers. Instead of roll film cartridges, you pack batteries or Power banks.

SKIERFFE OVER RAPADALEN

GFX 50S + GF45-100mmF4 at 90mm, f/16, 1/200 sec, ISO 1000





When I first came across the APS-C System and the X-Pro2 a few years ago, I was instantly in love – a system that not only offered high quality in compact forms but also reliability and a retro design that made it a source of joy whenever I took it up. The camera was a perfect fit for my way of photography, which, strictly speaking, is neither documentary nor landscape. Rather, you encounter the impression of the

moment with an inner attentiveness. Thus, photography is not only a form of art for me, but also a form of philosophy. The aim of many documentary photographers to capture the ‘atmosphere’ on film is normally not mine; in the act of photography, I’m more interested in ‘feeling’ the own inner perspective of the objects – to ‘empathise’ with them.

RAYS OF HOPE

*GFX 50S + GF45-100mmF4 at 64mm,
f/22, 1/7 sec, ISO 100*

That way, I understand selfies not as images of oneself, but rather of the 'I' – to recognise, understand and uncover the inner core of an authentic self that had lain buried beneath the social conditionings of milieu and upbringing. Thus, my photos don't show the classic German 'Sehnsuchtsort', the place we long to be. Instead, they serve as a backdrop in front of which our everyday life emerges from the mist of the unconscious and sharpens its contours.

GFX 50S + GF45-100mmF4 at 100mm, f/29, 1/3 sec, ISO 100





RAPASELET, SAREK NATIONAL PARK, SWEDEN

GFX 50S + GF45-100mmF4 at 100mm, f/32, 1/6 sec, ISO 100

What, then, are my pictures? Are they 'honest'? Or are they manipulated and retouched? If we agree that the choice of lens already influences the 'message' of the image, software retouch is not the issue. And even there, the influence of creativity doesn't find its limits. In this day and age, as most pictures are viewed on a smartphone screen, it becomes necessary to recall. The 'message' also changes significantly with the medium a photo is printed on – paper, glass, metal or wood. The biggest influence on the effect of a picture, however, are the viewers themselves, their emotions, their experiences, their own way of life.

As I strove to amplify the interaction between the image's subject and the inner sensations, I decided to present oversized prints in my next exhibit. This I wanted to do with a GFX 50. The GFX 50R appeared to be more suited for documentary photography, but I found the angle finder EVT-TL1 (which was probably rather designed for use in a studio) to be an extremely useful tool. The case against full-frame, and for Fujifilm and medium format was argued by the fact that on the GFX 50S I could program the FN-buttons just the way they worked on my X-Pro2 – a clear advantage when switching between the systems. Bye-bye readjustment time! Additionally, the GFX would accommodate my way of 'attentive shooting' very well.

Planning my yearly tour through the far North, away from the internet and cell phone reception, I concluded it

would be promising to combine the aim of 'finding oneself' on the hike through the lonely northern wilderness with 'focusing oneself' on the object using my new medium format camera. Of course, this contradicted the basic rule of leaving at home all unnecessary load.

The X-Pro2 with the XF18-55mmF2.8-4 weighs approximately 1.5kg, the GFX 50S with the comparable focal width of the GF45-100mmF4 about 3.5kg. How many luxury items could I pack into my backpack for 2kg more weight? Chocolate, whisky, cigars or simply the XF100-400mmF4.5-5.6 in addition? In the end, the healthy unreason that makes life worth living decided: I would be going to test the GFX 50S on a tour north of the polar circle.

The camera was joined in my backpack by angle finder EVT-TL1, the GF45-100mmF4 and GF23mmF4 lenses, the

reversing ring MCEX 18G, six extra batteries, several neutral-density filters and, for long-exposure, a carbon tripod and a Platypod max. Suddenly my backpack, optimised from 30kg down to 16kg during the last years, gained 7kg in photo equipment. I decided to ignore the fact that I had achieved the weight reduction by literally going on a diet, lowering my daily rations from 800g down to 350g.

Strong and icy rain, frost, storm and sunshine were waiting for me and my GFX 50S. At least water condensation due to the change between inside and outside temperatures wouldn't be an issue – the camera would spend the night with us in a tent below freezing point. I honestly didn't worry whether I could take photos at all under these conditions, putting my entire trust on Fujifilm's team of developers.

“THE GFX 50R APPEARED TO BE MORE SUITED FOR DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY, BUT I FOUND THE ANGLE FINDER EVT-TL1 (WHICH WAS PROBABLY RATHER DESIGNED FOR USE IN A STUDIO) TO BE AN EXTREMELY USEFUL TOOL.”

Two other thoughts I found more troubling: first, how can I carry camera and accessories so that I have them at my fingertips at any time and second, how can I, at the same time, keep them safe from damage during a possible fall in rough terrain? After spending some time on the search, I came across LowePro's easy-access camera case Pro 75 AW II, which is able to hold the entirety of my equipment, the interchangeable lens and the tripod excluded. In order to avoid having the weight constantly dangling from my neck, I tinkered around a bit with the eyelets on the shoulder straps of my backpack until I could attach the bag there. The interchangeable lens was carried in a container fastened to my hip belt – loaded but still mobile, even in rough terrain.

PASS OF THE SNAVVAVAGGE

*GFX 50S + GF23mmF4 at 51mm, f/22,
1/160 sec, ISO 1250*



The very first day already gave me a chance to test my camera in heavy rain. It did its job without a squirm, even in the absence of a rain cover. The only challenge was composition: the speed with which new drops appeared on the front lens after I had just wiped it dry seemed to significantly surpass even that of the shutter. In almost horizontal rain, a cover doesn't change much anyway.

The second day, at least, started off more auspicious with a sky of solid grey, but almost windless. At breakfast, we discussed whether we should prolong today's leg to make up for the distance we couldn't cover the day before due to the heavy rain. A challenge of hikes like

this one is that you cannot return to a place from previous days for new pictures, as well as the fact that you have little time to concentrate on individual shots. After all, there's a daily distance you just have to get behind you.

When I worked out the route at home and chose the spots for our tent to be set up at the end of a day's leg, I considered possible scenery as well as the sun. I had noted the solar positions and times of sunrise and sunset down in our maps, as well as the blue hours. Above that, I had factored in the irradiation angles in relation to the orientation of vales and hills. However, today's solid blanket of clouds seemed

to mock my planning skills. Towards the afternoon a steady wind arose and, while it dispersed the clouds, it also grew into a storm until the evening. With the gale tugging at my backpack, being unable to work with a tripod due to time pressure, I was quite happy about the built-in OIS. Having finally succeeded in putting up the tent under storm conditions, lying in a warm sleeping bag and drifting off into sleep, the question emerged from my unconscious why nobody had yet come up with an ATS (automated tent stabiliser). The night would have been so much calmer.



MORNING AFTER THE STORM

GFX 50S + GF45-100mmF4 at 57mm, f/29, 1/10 sec, ISO 100



2CM ABOVE SEA LEVEL

GFX 50S + GF23mmF4 at 51mm, f/29, 30 sec, ISO 100



BEHIND THE SCENES

Contrary to my expectations, the next morning was wonderful. As I peeled myself from the sleeping bag, the sun approached the horizon from below. Like every morning, I wanted to take a few pictures before breakfast. Leaving the inner tent, I accidentally kicked against our water bottles in the vestibule. With a certain irritation, I realised that they were frozen solid. But the GFX didn't mind these conditions either. It's a fantastic tool even if metering is cumbersome wearing gloves. In the flow of shooting I randomly noticed that my breath didn't only condense on the camera, it froze right away. A positive side effect of the night's low temperatures was that it didn't really agree with the mosquitos; the constant waving and wagging before the lens could therefore be dispensed with.

Time and again on our hike we had to scramble down slopes that had been cut into the terrain by glacial run-off; and it wasn't always clear from the

outset how we would manage to ascend again on the other side. Oftentimes we would use these moments to rest at the beautiful streamlets – the perfect opportunity to test the Platypod. This is basically a metal plate with adjustable spike feet for balancing, upon which a tripod head can be mounted. In seconds you create a stable position for your camera just a few centimetres above ground. I was sceptical at first, but the speed at which it is ready-to-use and its small footprint as opposed to that of a full-size tripod convinced me in the end. Without any reluctance, I placed it in the middle of the stream and entrusted it with my \$8000 equipment just 2cm above the ripples. Thus, the angle finder could be used to its full potential since the camera didn't have to be placed upside down as with most regular tripods. For shots in portrait orientation, just add an L-shaped mount. I love it when I don't have to waste time worrying whether my equipment will do the job.



**RAPASELET, SAREK NATIONAL
PARK, SWEDEN**

*GFX 50S + GF45-100mmF4 at
51mm, f/18, 1/200 sec, ISO 640*

But where's my son? Ah...he finally reached the other bank, too! Perhaps I'm feeling warm right now in the middle of sleet raining down on me because I realise how much harder it is to cross a fjord in icy rain than to settle down and simply let the thoughts wander off to the question (always the same for the last 35 years): "Why the heck am I doing

this?" And while I shoulder my heavy backpack, I conclude: "Because it's worth it, finding the focus: of the picture and of one's inner self."

You can find a selection of my travel photography on Instagram under @trekking_and_travelling and the online exhibition of my other pictures on my website.

BERNHARD LABESTIN

www.nes-lichtbilder.de

FUJILOVE
INTERVIEW

Emily Renier

In the first of this month's interviews, Stephanie Baxter is chatting to Emily Renier, an ex-teacher turned documentary photographer based in Hertfordshire, England, with a passion for trying to figure out who we are and why we do what we do.



Emily, welcome to FujiLove! Can you tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do?

Hello! Thanks so much for getting in touch! I was born in Belgium, spent parts of my childhood in southern Spain and took roots in England 20 years ago. After spending 12 years as a hyperactive and over-ambitious teacher and deputy-head, one day my mind and body gave up and I hit the 'pause' button.

That was three years ago, and I am

now a documentary photographer (or aspiring to be!) covering weddings, maternity, births, newborns, families and, occasionally, funerals – the full circle.

My personal projects are also hugely important to me. The spectrum of 'documentary photography' is huge and when it comes to paid work, this spectrum gets a little interesting, so my personal projects enable me to do what I really love doing.

*X-T2 + XF56mmF1.2 at f/4,
1/400 sec, ISO 200*



*X-T2 + XF56mmF1.2 at f/1.8,
1/100 sec, ISO 250*

What has your journey with photography been like?

Full of surprises and self-discovery! Although I picked up my first camera 25 years ago, I really only properly started to get to grips with photography three years ago. So, not long at all compared to the grafters out there who've been doing this job for decades.

It's definitely early days for me, but what I can say about the journey so far is that it enables me to break down my

own rules. Every single day it forces me to take up opportunities, to stop saying "no" and instead constantly push my own boundaries.

It's been tough, absolutely; going back to square one in any career is hard work. This industry is also so incredibly 'noisy,' so finding my own voice and sticking to it has been a challenge, for sure. But I am happy to make mistakes. I make them every day. It's actually quite liberating to make mistakes and make them openly!

How would you describe your photography in a way that encompasses the different genres that you shoot?

I turned to documentary photography because of the journey I was personally going through. I had spent my 20s and early 30s trying to 'overachieve' in every respect and had totally forgotten the point of being. Personally, documentary photography is a way to share my vulnerability and enable my clients to do the same. I want us all to feel that

"we are enough". So, shooting weddings, births, families and funerals, for me, makes total sense. It's documenting life's journey and its many obstacles.

Like I said, though, documentary photography has such a huge spectrum. I don't think there is a right or wrong process, but just our gut instincts. It's a relatively new genre and it's therefore difficult to develop a portfolio that errs on the purer side of documentary photography. I don't have kids and thus

capturing the real, gritty, warts-and-all images when only spending a limited amount of time with paying clients you hardly know is proving tricky.

I hope that my portfolio will evolve with time as my clients feel more and more at ease with me and feel more and more empowered to share their vulnerability. I am starting to get 'Year in a Life' clients, which I know will help me develop the purer side of the genre that I love so much.

X-T2 + XF56mmF1.2 at f/1.2, 1/200 sec, ISO 400





X-T2 + XF56mmF1.2 at f/1.2, 1/2500 sec, ISO 320

What has your experience of Fujifilm cameras and lenses been, from when you first became aware of them to what you are shooting with today?

Well, let's put it this way: when I owned a DSLR, I went a whole year without taking a single photo. Back then, I had a Nikon D7100 and taking it out became a chore. Then I came across Fujifilm one day, bought my first X-T2 and have not gone a day without taking a picture ever since.

I have an X100F now, too, which more or less lives in my back pocket. I am not much of a technical person; I can't

explain how cameras or lenses work (if am honest it bores me a little!) but Fujifilm cameras produce files that I love and that's good enough for me.

Because a lot of my work involves fast-moving children, my control of focus still has some way to go. The latest X-T3 firmware update is going to help hugely here, I think (and hope). I think any camera, any gear, is going to have its strengths and weaknesses. I remember what it feels like to have lost my photography mojo and I don't want to lose it again.

Let's talk about birth photography. How did you come to start shooting it and what is the process like compared with other shoots that you do?

Why birth photography? Very good question. A tough one, though! I am going to be totally honest here. I lost my son at 38 weeks 16 years ago and had another six miscarriages in the following 10 years. Being a family photographer, one day I came across some birth photographers on photography forums and something clicked.

I had always associated births with trauma. And I wanted to see

whether there was a way I could get full closure, close a 'lid', find peace on what happened to me by celebrating a life being born with my photography. I contacted a friend who was pregnant and asked if she would be interested and she took me up on my offer more or less straight away. She knew vaguely of my background. It could have gone either way, I know. It could have been incredibly tough. But it wasn't. There is something about turning up on a job as a 'professional'. An automatic barrier and sense of detachment goes up.

X-T2 + XF56mmF1.2 at f/3.2, 1/250 sec, ISO 400





X-T3 + XF23mmF1.4 at f/1.6, 1/60 sec, ISO 200

Anyway, after shooting for over 27 hours, I went home, picked up a photo of my Alexander and felt like, yet again, his death had given me something utterly beautiful: an ability to appreciate life's miracles and capture them.

And yes, birth photography really is something else. There is nothing more incredible than seeing human beings be at their most real, at their purest, at

their most 'primitive,' if you like. There is a moment in a woman's eye when the realisation hits that there is no going back. I think this quote by Anita Diamant sums it up beautifully: "Birth is the pinnacle where women discover the courage to become mothers". What can be more amazing than witnessing and capturing that very moment? What a privilege indeed.



Tell us about your signature films. Where did the idea come from, what is your creation process like and what has been the reaction from clients?

The idea came from Neale James, the original inventor of photo films and boy, does he do them well! I knew he did them for his weddings and the idea one day came to me in the shower (don't all the best ideas come to us in the shower?!) that maybe I could document family life using sounds, interviewing parents about their parenting journey, children talking, etc.

This evolved and now I also do this for my birth photography where I capture parents talking to their child for the first time or a baby's very first cry. There is something about sound that I think complements stills like nothing else. A good sound transports you; it can connect our deepest emotions to those of others. Hearing someone cry, hearing someone laugh – they are emotions that automatically remind us that despite all our differences, we are all the same. And for me photography is exactly about this – it's about connecting all of us.

*X-T3 + XF16mmF1.4 at f/4,
1/100 sec, ISO 640*

What advice would you give to other newer photographers?

I would like any other FujiLove readers as relatively new to the game as me to know that we are all in the same boat. We all struggle every day with our craft, figuring out what works and what doesn't. We know that what makes us feel good is when we surround ourselves by people who give us energy, who encourage us to follow our gut instincts

and remind us that we're okay. We could do things in a million different ways, for sure. Kevin Mullins always says, "A photo doesn't have to be good; it has to be important". For me, this means that I try to remind myself that my photographs don't need to compete with anything or anyone, they just need to be important to someone, even if many times that someone could just be me.

*X-T3 + XF23mmF1.4 at
f/3.6, 1/80 sec, ISO 640*



EMILY RENIER

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FUJILOVE COMMUNITY FROM THE FEED

Welcome to our community feature for FujiLove Magazine! Each month, we're taking you behind the lens of some of the most popular photographs shared on our Instagram feed taken by members of the FujiLove community using #myfujilove.



My family and I have a country house in a small village in south-eastern Sweden. Among all the picturesque and charming buildings, many built almost 100 years ago, stands this particular house. I have passed it many times but have never seen anyone enter or leave. The garden is always deserted but perfectly restrained. While other buildings have open and inviting flower gardens, this one is closed, silent and green. It's a building that triggers my imagination.

The image was shot on my X-T2 with the XF16mmF2.8 at midday using the Classic Chrome simulation as a base. I like to think I was able to capture a soft, clean and poetic image.

*X-T2 + XF16mmF2.8 at f/5.6,
1/950 sec, ISO 200*

Marc Zetterblom
[@marczetterblom](#)



The photograph was taken through a restaurant window during lockdown in Jersey. I used my X-T2, which is a fantastic camera for pounding the streets, being lightweight and unobtrusive.

On this occasion I had the very underrated XF18-55mmF2.8-4 lens attached – ideal when I am wanting to compose the scene a little wider. My go-to lens for street photography would normally be the XF23mmF1.4, which is perfect for zone focusing. This is actually my favourite lens.


I was passing the restaurant with my camera in hand, which I always do when walking around in case I need to grab a quick shot. As I was passing the restaurant the shaft of light hitting the stacked chairs caught my eye. The main focus for this image was the stack of chairs so that is what I focused on. I knew because the scene had high contrast areas that if I exposed for the highlights, the shadows would fall dark, which would, in turn with the vibrant colours, make the chairs stand out more.

It can be quite challenging photographing in these conditions because of the dynamic range of the shadows and highlights, but if you get it right it can really make your photograph more vibrant and help the colours pop. To get the composition I had to get down low, but using the X-T2 flip screen made it a breeze. I wanted to compose to get part of the sign in the upper right of the frame to add a bit of interest and also to get the reflections at the bottom left of the frame, which added more depth and interest.

The photograph was taken in the morning; my favourite time to shoot is daytime with harsh sunlight. I had to take the photograph fairly quickly before the sun went behind the clouds. I really like how the image turned out. The chairs were stacked randomly with an abandoned feeling and the deep shadows helped isolate the chairs by making them stand out.

*X-T2 + XF18-55mmF2.8-4 at f/5.6,
1/250 sec, ISO 200*

Nigel Grieves
[@iamnigel_photos](#)



In the summer of 2019, I decided to travel to the U.S. for a long road trip starting from the city of Chicago. Chicago's metropolitan scenery offers a great dose of inspiration for unique and creative shots. The photo was taken on the second day of my stay in the Windy City while I was wandering amongst the iconic skyscrapers of the Chicago Loop. I used my X-T3 with the XF18-55mmF2.8-4 and on that particular day, the sky was the limit! I wanted to capture the city's architectural style while taking advantage of the shadows created by the tall buildings during this sunny afternoon.

I used the multiple exposures feature, at a focal length of 18mm, f/7.1, 1/250s and ISO 160. On my first shot I pointed at the tallest skyscraper while I took the second one at a 45° angle in order to create the rhombus shape in the sky, in the middle of the picture. I also chose to shoot black and white since I wanted to create a noir atmosphere and place my picture viewer in front of an imaginary cityscape and make him feel like he's in the middle of Fritz Lang's futuristic sceneries, like a time traveller from the Metropolis of 1924 to the Metropolis of 2019.

*X-T3 + XF18-55mmF2.8-4 at 18mm, f/7.1,
1/250 sec, ISO 160*

Tasos Papaioannou
@ sosatas



*X100V + TCL-X100 at f/2,
1/2500 sec, ISO 160*

Octavio Lepe
@ultra.92

Joshua Tree National Park was always a place I wanted to visit. It was not until earlier this month that I finally got my opportunity. To prepare for this shot, I went on Instagram and scouted the National Park using the places search feature in Instagram to get an idea of what others were photographing. This was really useful because I was able to see the National Park at different hours of the day. This helped me figure out that photographing in the park was best captured during the late morning.

My vision for this image was always a minimal approach from the first time that I became aware of the park. As beautiful as all the life that Joshua Tree National Park offers is, I found the landscape as a whole too distracting from the actual trees themselves.

Driving to the park was quick, but looking for the right tree was not! My father and I must have driven for close to two hours in 96° heat and stopped about ten times looking for the right Joshua tree. It wasn't until we reached the end of the park when we saw it there: the perfect Joshua Tree with the sun shining on it just right.

I remember walking around the tree about six times looking through the OVF of the Fujifilm X100V for the right composition. My ideal photo was always a slanted tree with character in its branches under the strong California sun, with some shadows on it.

I am very happy with the final image. I did try to edit it in Acros, but I felt it took all its character and features away.

FUJILOVE
INTERVIEW

Felix Ferstera

In the second of this month's interviews, Stephanie Baxter is chatting to Felix Ferstera, a landscape photographer, Fujifilm enthusiast and diehard Borussia Dortmund fan based in Hanover, Germany.



*X-T20 + XC50-230mmF4.5-6.7
at f/14, 20 sec, ISO 200*

Felix, welcome to FujiLove! Can you tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do?

Hey everyone and thank you for this opportunity, Stephanie! My name is Felix, I'm 30 years old and I am living in Hanover, the capital of Lower Saxony in Germany. I studied Business in Hanover

and graduated in Economics from Imperial College, London. Currently, I am working as a manager at an international operating insurance company. Besides photography, my main interests lie in my lovely girlfriend, my family, cycling and being a big supporter of the German football team Borussia Dortmund.

What led you to start doing photography and how has it changed the way you see the world?

Multiple things – for certain the main trigger was the need to balance out my working hours with some kind of creativity. Photography allowed me to go out into nature with a purpose and not to just to stroll around. The clear

focus on composition helped me to calm my mind by focusing on something different. Photography therefore allowed me to see more by looking around than ever before. Maybe many people who shoot nature make this statement. Nevertheless, for me it was remarkable to capture so much more in the same surroundings and my daily life.

*X-T20 + XF18-55mmF2.8-4 at
f/3.2, 1/110 sec, ISO 200*





X-T20 + XC50-230mmF4.5-6.7 at f/4.5, 1/60 sec, ISO 200

*X-T20 + XF23mmF2 at
f/5, 1/800 sec, ISO 200*



Your images are a beautiful mix of wide-angle landscapes and close-up detail shots of nature. How would you describe yourself as a photographer to encompass the two, and how is your approach to shooting both types of images similar and different?

I love to develop further and further. The stated mix is more a result of my habits than a clear intention. I like both styles, and what I don't like is to focus on only

one style when there is so much more potential to be seen and to be captured. In my opinion, I am shooting nature in a wide sense, in combination with a view for minimalistic compositions, although the tendency towards details respectively close-up shots is increasing. In the end, the photos are also always a result of the travel destinations my girlfriend and I choose.

X-T20 + XC50-230mm F4.5-6.7 at f/6.7, 1/1250 sec, ISO 200





X-T20 + XC50-230mmF4.5-6.7 at f/5.6, 1/100 sec, ISO 200

What do you typically look for when you go out to shoot?

This is always changing and depends on the surroundings. In general, I look for minimalistic compositions, be it landscapes or close-up images such as flowers in combination with a clear background. The pictures shall direct the viewer to certain aspects. I love to capture multiple things in a picture but still having a focus on one or two details. At the moment, I try to shoot much more during certain times, and the colours of the late golden hour, especially, have begun to play a bigger part in my shooting.

X-T20 + XF23mmF2 at f/5, 1/800 sec, ISO 200



Talking of which, colour seems to play a big part in your images in general. Has that been an intentional choice or something that has evolved organically? That is more part of the evolution. At the very beginning I really used less colour in order to edit large landscapes or wide-angle views. Nowadays, colour is essential to enable the aforementioned direction within close-ups or minimalistic compositions. Above all, I just love warm and bright colors – it just feels good to look at them and as emotion is an essential part of images, that is also vital to my photography.

*X-T20 + XF23mmF2 at f/2.5,
1/4000 sec, ISO 200*





X-T20 + XC16-50mmF3.5-5.6
at f/22, 1/30 sec, ISO 3200

How did you come to start using Fujifilm, and what camera and lenses do you shoot with?

A good friend of mine was absolutely fanatical when it came to Fujifilm cameras. He basically evangelised to me about the unique colouring of the cameras. Above that, the possibility of

switching to a wide range of lenses without changing the body was important to me. When I bought my Fujifilm, I had been shooting for one year only and was still on my journey of exploring photography. Thus, this was an important factor for my choice. Finally, I just love the design and the

excellent feel of the cameras!

I have an X-T20 and recently had the opportunity to test an X-T3 for Fujifilm Germany. My lenses are the following: XF23mmF2, XF18-55mmF2.8-4 and XC50-230mmF4.5-6.7.

Thank you for the interview, FujiLove!

X-T20 + XF23mmF2 at f/3.2, 1/2900 sec, ISO 200



FELIX FERSTERA

www.instagram.com/felix_ferstera

RICO'S QUICK TIPS

Each month, Rico Pfisteringer brings us his quick tips to answer your most-asked questions related to Fujifilm gear.

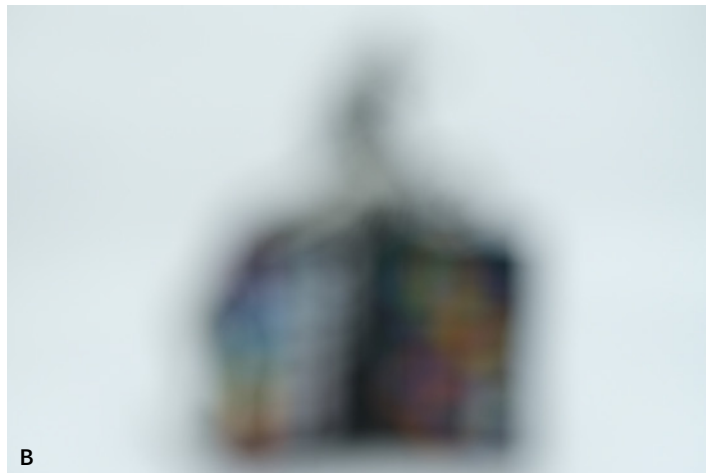


Fig. 1: AF-S Focus Priority (A) vs. the 'improved' version of AF-S Release Priority (B). In this test, I autofocused starting at the minimum focus distance of the XF90mmF2 lens and fully pressed the shutter button. In AF-S Focus Priority mode (A), the camera and lens take the time they need to finish and confirm the focus run when the shutter button is fully pressed. With the new version of AF-S Release Priority mode (B), pressing the shutter button stops the autofocus in its tracks and the camera immediately takes the shot, whether or not it is in focus. In this case, it clearly is not.

X-T4 + XF90mmf2 at f/2, 1/400 sec, ISO 160 (SOOC JPEG)

QUICK TIP 1 CHANGES TO AF-S RELEASE PRIORITY

If you use an X-T4 or X-S10, or an X-T3 with the latest firmware 4 that was released on 28th October, you might be in for a surprise: Fujifilm has quietly changed the workings of the AF-S Release Priority setting. Previously, the only difference between AF-S Release Priority and AF-S Focus Priority was that Focus Priority mode would confirm the focus after autofocusing, and it wouldn't take a picture if the autofocus couldn't find a target. Instead, it would display a red AF warning in the live view.

While this is still the case, selecting AF-S Release Priority in the three cameras mentioned above now has a further implication: the camera will stop autofocusing as soon as the shutter release button is fully pressed. Yes, that's

right! Fully depressing the shutter button stops focusing and the camera will immediately take a picture using any arbitrary focus distance that happened to be set when the autofocus was forced to stop searching. Obviously, this means that in many cases, you'll end up with your subject not being in great focus.

It also means that the 'autofocus trick' (also known as 'shutter mash technique') no longer works in concert with the new AF-S Release Priority mode. Previously, you could shoot moving subjects in AF-S mode simply by fully pressing the shutter button and waiting for the camera to take the shot, all the while training the focus frame on the moving subject. This method still works, but only if you set your camera to AF-S Focus Priority. It won't work in concert

with AF-S Release Priority.

There's more: as you may know, selecting AF+MF ON forces your camera into AF-S Release Priority mode, even if AF-S has explicitly been set to Focus Priority. This wasn't much of a problem in the past, but it is now because you have to decide between using AF+MF or enjoying accurate autofocus in AF-S mode. You can't have both.

To avoid unnecessary complications, I recommend the following AF configuration with the affected cameras:

- Set AF/MF SETTING > AF+MF > OFF
- Select AF/MF SETTING > RELEASE/ FOCUS PRIORITY > AF-S PRIORITY SELECTION > FOCUS

With these settings (and only with these), the AF-S will not stop its focus run as soon as you fully press the shutter release button. Instead, the camera will

continue to focus until the correct distance has been determined and confirmed, and then take the shot.

According to my sources, Fujifilm did not change the workings of the AF-S Focus Priority setting, only Release Priority. Additionally, I expect that in AF-C mode, the Focus Priority and Release Priority settings also still work as always. By the way, my favoured setting for AF-C RELEASE/FOCUS PRIORITY is also FOCUS, as it improves the hit rate.

QUICK TIP 2 THE 'AUTOFOCUS TRICK'

Since Tip 1 is connected with the so-called 'autofocus trick', I'd like to use this opportunity for a quick reminder. Here's the deal: basically, we use AF-S (Single) for stationary subjects and AF-C (Continuous) for subjects that move toward or away from the camera. But, as usual, there's no rule without an exception. Meet the 'autofocus trick' or 'shutter mash' technique:

- Set the camera to AF-S and single shot drive mode. Where available, make sure that High Performance or Boost mode is on.
- Where available, set AF+MF to OFF and AF-S RELEASE/FOCUS PRIORITY to FOCUS.
- Use Single Point AF or Zone AF. Select an AF frame or zone position and size that covers the part of the moving subject you want to be in focus.
- Set a suitable exposure and make sure that the shutter speed is fast enough to avoid unwanted motion blur. Most action shots require shutter speeds of at



Fig. 2: A running horse captured using the autofocus trick or shutter mash technique. With older X camera models like the X100, X100S, X-Pro1, X-E1, X-M1, X-A1 or X-A2, this method is the only way to autofocus on subjects that are moving toward the camera.

X-E1 + XF18-55mmF2.804 at 55mm, f/5.6, 1/800 sec, ISO 800

least 1/1000s.

- Follow the moving subject in the viewfinder, making sure that the selected AF frame or AF zone always covers the part that needs to be in focus. Do not half-press the shutter button!
- Fully depress the shutter button in one swift motion when you want to take the shot. The camera will need some time to focus, so make sure the focus frame remains positioned on the moving subject while the camera is focusing. As soon as the camera can lock the focus, it will automatically take the shot. Depending on your X camera model, the time between fully depressing the shutter and the camera taking the shot can extend to a good fraction of a second.

The AF trick, also known as shutter

mash, is based on the camera's autofocus priority logic. When you release the shutter, the camera first attempts to lock the focus, then take the shot. Since the delay between having locked the focus and releasing the shutter is very short, the moving subject ends up being in focus most of the time. This means that the AF trick works best with aperture settings that offer sufficient depth of field, and with subjects that don't move too fast toward the camera.

A negative aspect of this method is the delay between fully depressing the shutter button and the camera taking the shot. This makes it challenging to hit decisive moments and requires some amount of foresight from the photographer.

www.fuji-x-secrets.net

BEING CANDID PART 5: *Storytelling*

Welcome to part five of a six-month series on the topic of candid photography. I will be investigating the area of candid shooting in the realms of weddings, street and family, as well as commercial and social photography. Last month, we discussed the moment, so don't forget to check that out if you haven't already.

If you have read this series from the start, you will know that there are three core elements to any great photograph:

- Light
- Composition
- Moment

We have discussed these elements fully in past issues. This month, I want to talk to you about the art of storytelling.

If you ask somebody, "What is your

favourite story?", they will likely tell you about a novel they have read or a film they have seen. Has anybody ever answered that question by referring to a body of photographs, or even an art installation of some kind?

A story doesn't have to be just words. It's doesn't have to be something that manifests itself in the mind of the person consuming that story. It can be, and often is, a pictorial essay.

There is a beautiful interview with the great Joel Meyerowitz on Lens Culture, and in it, he says:

“An ordinary life isn’t ordinary when you put a frame around a moment. Well, we all – without a camera – live our lives looking at everything. We’re just constantly swiveling our head and seeing things, but we’re not making anything out of it. And for me, photography is the act of making something out of the fluid reality that’s scrolling by us all the time.

We individually have some sense of what’s important to us. And by carrying a camera, you have this fluid frame. And if instinct – you know, gut instinct or gut recognition – raises a moment of consciousness, the camera comes up and you’re in that moment and the frame gets rid of the stuff all around that you don’t want.

Of course it’s a moving frame when you bring up the camera and you are impulsively moving things to put more space left-right, top-bottom, include-exclude. But that’s a decision and a conscious decision. Even if we make it on impulse, it’s still our decision. And there’s a certain kind of consistency to that over time. Just look at Robert Frank. Cartier-

Bresson, Garry Winogrand.

Anybody who shoots regularly has a point of view, a way of referring to the world that they see, that we identify after a while.”

When I think of this sentiment, I think of individual images – the instinct to shoot, as Joel refers to. Singular photos can also tell a story, you see.

Art history is littered with iconic singular photographs, many of which tell a story in an instant. And that is the beauty of photography for me.

Stories can be told in singular form or in more detailed long-tail photographic essays.

For me, photographic stories can resonate on a personal or public level. By that, I mean an image I take may make a lot of sense to me personally, and less so to the casual observer. But the story is still there.

And remember, we are all snapshotographers to a certain extent. Not every single picture we take is being taken to make art. Our everyday lives are often captured in simple, candid shots, and that’s where the beauty of unposed photography can lead.

So here is a thing. This picture here is candid, in that I snapped this photograph from the window of a fast-moving train into London a few weeks after the main lockdown was lifted.

It tells a story, but probably only to me, as I was there. I know the context. I know what I was thinking at the time of shooting it. The photograph was taken as we whizzed towards London and in my mind, I was thinking, "What a beautiful world we have when we can

sit and enjoy it."

Of course, the sub-story here is that I'm heading to London, a hotbed of Coronavirus. I'm taking this photo with a mask on and freshly sanitised hands. In hindsight, perhaps the story could have been stronger? Maybe I could have got a reflection of my masked face in the train window too? Who knows. But, ultimately, our mind plays a substantial part in telling the story of an image.

X100V at f5.6, 1/1000 sec, ISO 160





START, MIDDLE & END

If you ask a novel writer or a journalist what the core structure of a story is, they will likely tell you that it has to have a start, a middle and an end.

That seems obvious to us but it's not easy to implement. A good writer will understand how to anchor these parts of a story together, whether it's fictional or factual, and the same principles apply with photography.

This can manifest itself in the simplest of forms, for example, at a recent wedding I shot for a neighbour. It wasn't a paid event for me (sadly, it looks like

I'll go at least 14 months between my last and next wedding). But I wanted to paint a picture for them.

I wasn't allowed into the ceremony, but my instinct was still to tell a story. In wedding photography, it's relatively easy.

- The start: bride arriving.
- The middle: newly married couple emerge.
- The end: bride and groom drive off into the distance.

It's simple but does what it needs to do.

*X-Pro3 + XF50mmF2 at f/2,
1/2000 sec, ISO 160*



100V at f/f, 1/480 sec, ISO 160

X100V at f/5, 1/800 sec, ISO 160



THE FIVE WS

We can take this a little further by explaining the concept of the Five Ws, which is another common way of helping to construct a curated story. Again, it doesn't matter whether it's photographic or literary; the principle is sound for both.

The five Ws are:

- Who
- Why
- What
- Where
- When

When I'm shooting a story or assignment, whether family, wedding or street, I'll usually try to remind myself of the five Ws always. It does help when constructing a story, and it's especially

helpful when shooting candidly.

Here is a series of images I took at a commissioned family shoot last summer. It was for a beautiful family and the setting was a remote beach in southern Spain.

We all know how to take pictures in these environments, of course. However, what I wanted to do was emphasise the remoteness, the light and the emotion between the family. The entire sequence is well over 100 pictures, and if you are interested, you can see it in its entirety [here](#).

I've selected a few images from the shoot for this article to try and give some idea of how I tried to manifest the five W's in my story. All of these images were shot on the Fujifilm X100F, which is perfect for this kind of storytelling.

X100F at f/2, 1/125 sec, ISO 200





X100F at f/2, 1/400 sec, ISO 200

KEVIN MULLINS BEING CANDID

X100F at f/5.6, 1/200 sec, ISO 2000





X100F at f/2.8, 1/125 sec, ISO 400

X100F at f/2.8, 1/400 sec, ISO 200



CANDID STORYTELLING

Remember, this entire series is about telling stories through pictures. So far, we have established the core attributes of a good picture and now we understand the building blocks of anchoring the images together.

Always remember, though, that photography, especially if it's not for commercial reasons, should be fun. Don't think of these attributes and techniques as barriers to shooting. You can make the best photograph of your life on a mobile phone. If it makes you smile every day, that's all that matters.

Where will this take you on your photographic journey? How will this change the way you look at candid photography? And remember, candid is an adjective – it's either candid or it's

not.

Many of the points we have discussed in the series can be applied to any kind of photography, but the storytelling element, especially, is where I think we have the most enjoyment.

I hope this series has given you a few tips and tricks and ideas and motivation to start telling more stories with your photography. I'd love to see some of your images – I'm on Instagram (@kevinmullinsphotography). Please do tag me.

Next month is the final part of this series, and I'm going to summarise a little and share with you some stories behind some of my favourite candid photographs.

See you then.



X-Pro2 + XF16-55mmF2.8 at f/4.5, 1/250 sec, ISO 800

HAVING *Faith*

In this time where we are challenged, we have but one way to hold it all together and come out a better people.

“Being human is a given, but keeping our humanity is a choice.”

— Unknown



X-Pro2 + XF16-55mmF2.8 at f/7.1, 1/60 sec, ISO 1600

Being asked if I could write six articles on a single, overarching theme was, at first, a daunting prospect. But really, when I thought about it, there was only one theme to which we as a civilisation could relate: life in the age of COVID-19. From Ilulissat, Greenland to Yunnan, China, to Mardin, Turkey and beyond, we as a human race have our differences and our likenesses, but the one thing that we require is faith in each other.

It was at his graduation ceremony at McGill University for his studies in microbiology and immunology that Jeff Rock made a life-changing decision. When his parents made the trip from Red Deer, Alberta to Montreal, Quebec, Jeff had something to announce: "I think I want to be a minister, not a medical doctor." He laughs about this shocker from across the table in his office at the

Metropolitan Community Church in Toronto's Leslieville neighbourhood. The red brick, 113-year-old church integrates naturally into the leafy green, mature trees of the neighbourhood. Since 1973, this church has been a world force for human rights through multiple outreach projects and ongoing initiatives. It is also a safe and inclusive place of worship and celebration for all, including its predominantly LGBTQ+ community.

For scientist-then-pastor, Jeff, this is now home. He has risen to the challenge of ministry during this age of COVID remarkably well. Technology and a very engaged congregation has meant he is reaching large numbers of parishioners both locally and now, abroad via video messaging. Whereas before a church would be local, now this community can truly embrace the world.

Just west of Toronto, surrounded by light industry buildings and offices is the Sayeda Khadija Centre, a quiet and understated mosque that fits with its surrounding buildings. One could drive past the mosque and mistake it for another office, but what one does not see is the splendour inside.

Presiding at this mosque is a dashing and charismatic Imam with piercing lively eyes and a broad smile that speaks to his quick wit, and genuine ease and charm. With some rapid-fire back-and-forth, we establish how best to address him! In the end it is simply 'brother'! Imam Slimi is many things; in addition to more traditional degrees, he also holds two masters degrees from Morocco and the USA, and a doctorate in Islamic law from the UK. Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. has also said he is one of the 500 most influential Muslims in the world.

After our portrait session (he proudly wore the vestments his mother made!), we slumped back on the squeaky sofas in a lounge, many feet apart and yacked as though we were hanging out at a

campfire!

Due to COVID, the carpeting in the mosque has been removed, revealing the beautiful and intricate tiles on the floor that also adorn the walls of this space.

If you have ever taken a child to learn to skate, you will be familiar with the small orange cones they put on the ice to teach the youngsters how to manoeuvre around them. Same here in the prayer area. At the time of photographing, congregants were still not able to return, but when they do, in a much-reduced capacity, they will need to manoeuvre into position at each cone to adhere to local health regulations for physical distancing to pray.

Asked what brother Slimi has observed in his community he is quick to say, "I think the world, the majority is good. And in our religion, we believe that human beings are good by nature." This was evident in the active and multiple fundraising and outreach programmes for the greater community of the rapidly-growing city of Mississauga.

SPENCER WYNN LIFE IN THE TIME OF COVID



X-Pro2 + XF16-55mmF2.8
at f/4, 1/125 sec, ISO 800

Originally from Massachusetts, United States, Rabbi Howard Morrison began his ministry at this voluminous synagogue in the summer of 2000. Widely educated in the United States and Israel, after ordination Rabbi Morrison held positions in Union, New Jersey and in Long Island, New York. A streetwise and confident man with a commanding voice, he also was a reserve Chaplain for the U.S. Air Force out of McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey.

The image of Rabbi Morrison was created in the empty synagogue so that the volume of this 1200-family

congregation could suggest the size of the beautifully carved space. But make no mistake on the impact and leadership he has in the community.

The camera, positioned well-up the centre aisle includes rows of pews that lead the eye to Morrison with a gridded Godox AD200 camera-left and a Godox AD200 in a large Octabox box 10 above and forward, precariously balancing between two pews right of the camera.

Just as Pastor Rock and Imam Slimi has said, the technology used during this time at the synagogue has also been a significant part of the ongoing work in this community.



Asked about the technology and outreach, Rabbi Morrison expands: “With the gift of modern technology, we are still connected. We can still see each other’s faces and know how we are doing. This technology does not replace in-person contact. But could one imagine having this virus 10 years ago, before we had this visual audio technology? What is interesting are little silver linings.”

Interesting that when asked the same questions, regardless of what community, all express the same sentiments of kindness between members and the untold thoughtfulness shown to those who never asked for it, though in some cases were not physically able. Rabbi Morrison again expresses what the Pastor and Imam also said: “There seems to just be more kindness, more generosity in the air during these last three months.”

I am deeply grateful for the time I had with Rabbi Morrison; he was unrushed in his manner even though he had actually put off a funeral for an hour in order to speak with me for FujiLove so that he can share the beautiful qualities and outreach he has witnessed.

As we bumped elbows in the parking

lot, my wagon of gear trailing behind me, he headed to his car and called out, “Thank you, this was fun, and you are welcome to come any time for a service!”

Whether you are spiritual or observing, one cannot help but notice that there has been a slight shift in how we see each other and how we ourselves take on a more caring role. After all, regardless of our beliefs, there is one unifying sentiment: we are all in this together.

Faith is, of course, much broader than attending a church or other house of worship. Faith goes to community at its very core. We must have faith. We need this to find the good in others and hope for the future. Faith, whether it is organised or a quietly kept belief in our hearts, is what will see us through this time of life in the age of COVID.

For my part, I am not a necessarily spiritual person, though I do indeed respect the traditions and beliefs of others. I value faith communities, and the work and impact they have and the capacity to make change. As I explore life around me and beyond, I see great beauty in the world. That beauty need not be epic and grand; it can be found in the reflection of the rising sun on the shadow side of a building.

X-Pro2 + XF35mmF1.4 at f/16, 1/500 sec, ISO 200



I often marvel at the little things that present us with glimpses of wonder such as the grass picking up light between graves in a cemetery or the stirring clouds above the intricately carved Baps Shri Swaminarayan Hindu temple out near the airport in Toronto. Seeing scenes of wonder do not need to be in a traditional setting; it is found everywhere, if we only we would take the time to see it and recognise it.

X100F at f/11, 1/1000 sec, ISO 400





X-Pro2 + XF16-55mmF2.8 at f/3.6, 1/640 sec, ISO 250

It is no surprise to many that I love the land and the people of Turkey. The experiences I have had there makes me feel connected, like family. My most favourite building in Istanbul is the Hagia Sophia. Prior to it becoming a museum, it had been a mosque and a Byzantine Basilica dating back to 537 AD.

In the Hagia Sophia there are many windows that allow light to stream into the interior. But it is one very specific window that allows one to look out and have an almost spiritual experience, as the view is truly sublime. The view has the architecture of the Hagia Sophia in the foreground and, in the distance, the popular Blue Mosque. For me, the much older Hagia Sophia is like a well-worn

sweater. It is rough around the edges from wear, it is in need of mending but aside from that, it feels just right.

Just as in this very rare image of the Blue Mosque with not a soul inside, faith is also something that is remarkable and comes in many forms. The real trick is to see it, feel it and return it. For it is up to all of us to embrace – for the good of us all.

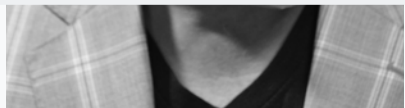
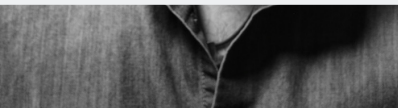


X100F at f/11, 3 sec, ISO 640



READERS' GALLERY "SELF PORTRAIT" ASSIGNMENT

HAVE A LOOK AT OUR FAVOURITE PHOTOGRAPHS





WINNER
Luiz Henrique Xavier
X-T1 + XF23mm f/1.4

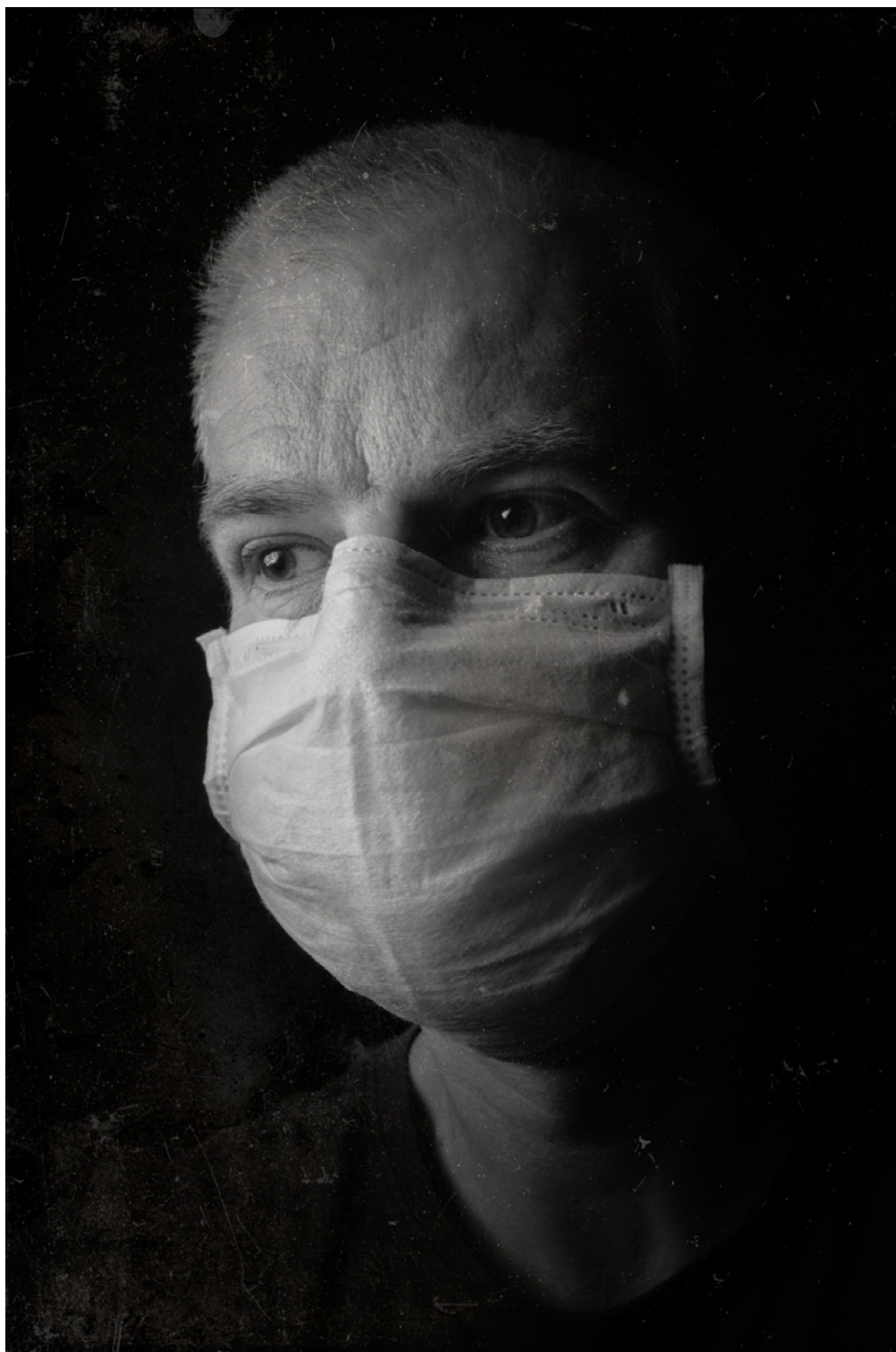
The winner will be featured on the FujiLove YouTube channel in the upcoming weeks.



Maureen Page
X100F



Tony Martin
X-Pro3 + XF23mm f/2



Martin Šimun
X-T3 + XF16mm f/1.4



Danielle Charron
X-T3 + XF16mm f/1.4



Claudio Ulloa
X-T2 + XF35mm f/2



Eric Bromeey
X-T2 + XF35mm f/2



Jeff Bertie
GFX 50R + GF63mm f/2.8



Pericles Lavat Guinea
X100F



Cory Ingram
X-Pro3 + XF56mm f/1.2

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