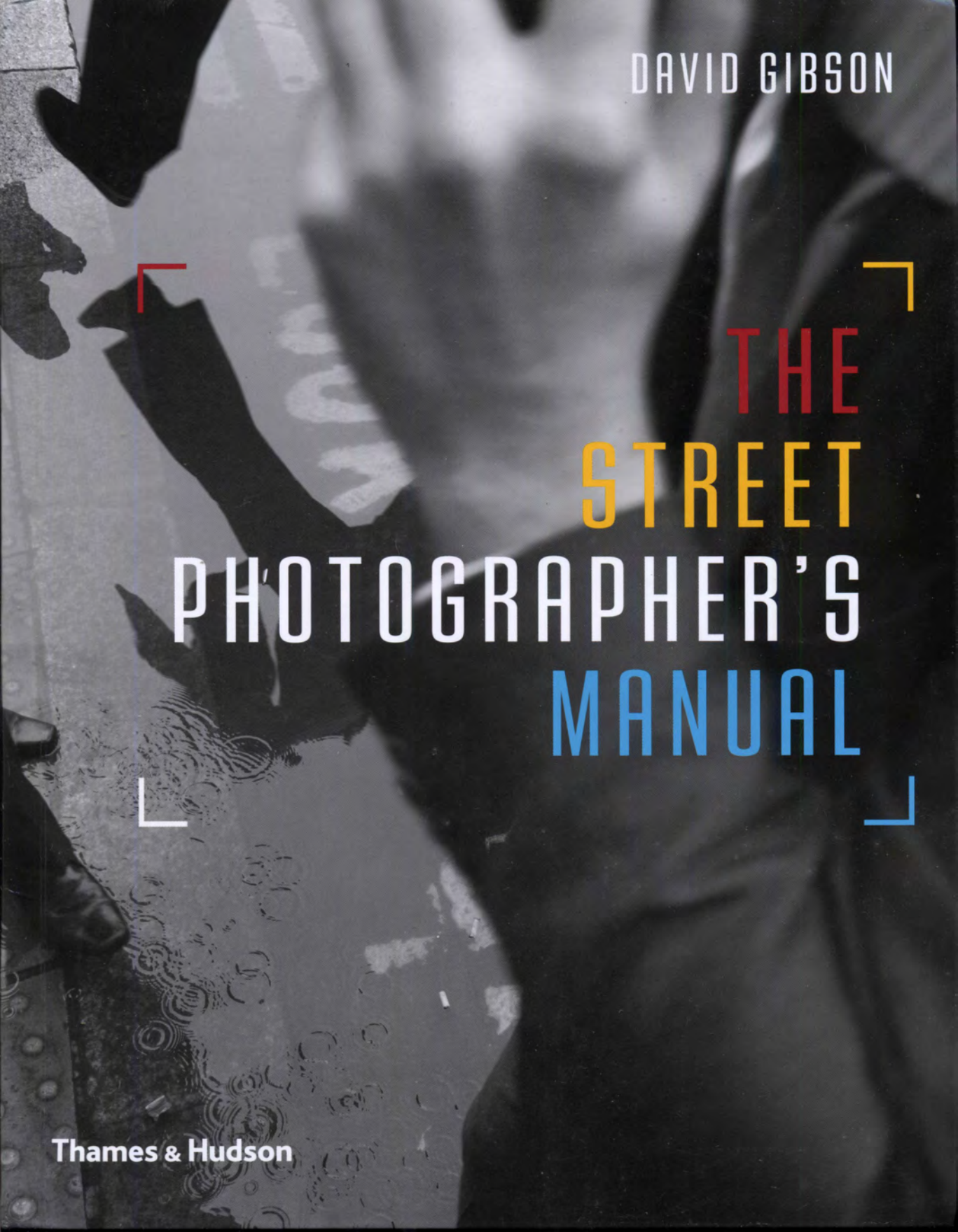

DAVID GIBSON

THE STREET PHOTOGRAPHER'S MANUAL

Thames & Hudson

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The Street Photographer's Manual celebrates the spirit of street photography with inspiring instruction to help you capture the perfect urban moment. Through 20 simple project tutorials on subjects such as 'Sequences', 'Shadows' and 'Objects', as well as captivating illustrated profiles of 20 internationally acclaimed street photographers, including Bruce Gilden, Nils Jorgensen and Saul Leiter, author David Gibson gives you a visual tour of the medium – perfect for the aspiring street photographer.

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DAVID GIBSON is one of the founder members of In-Public, the first modern international collective of street photographers. In-Public, which was founded in 2000, has been a pivotal influence worldwide on the growing popularity of street photography. A practising photographer himself, David is also a well-known and highly respected photography tutor, and has led workshops in London, Bangkok, Beirut, Athens, Amsterdam, Warsaw, Singapore and Stockholm. He has also taught a course on street photography at Central Saint Martins in London.

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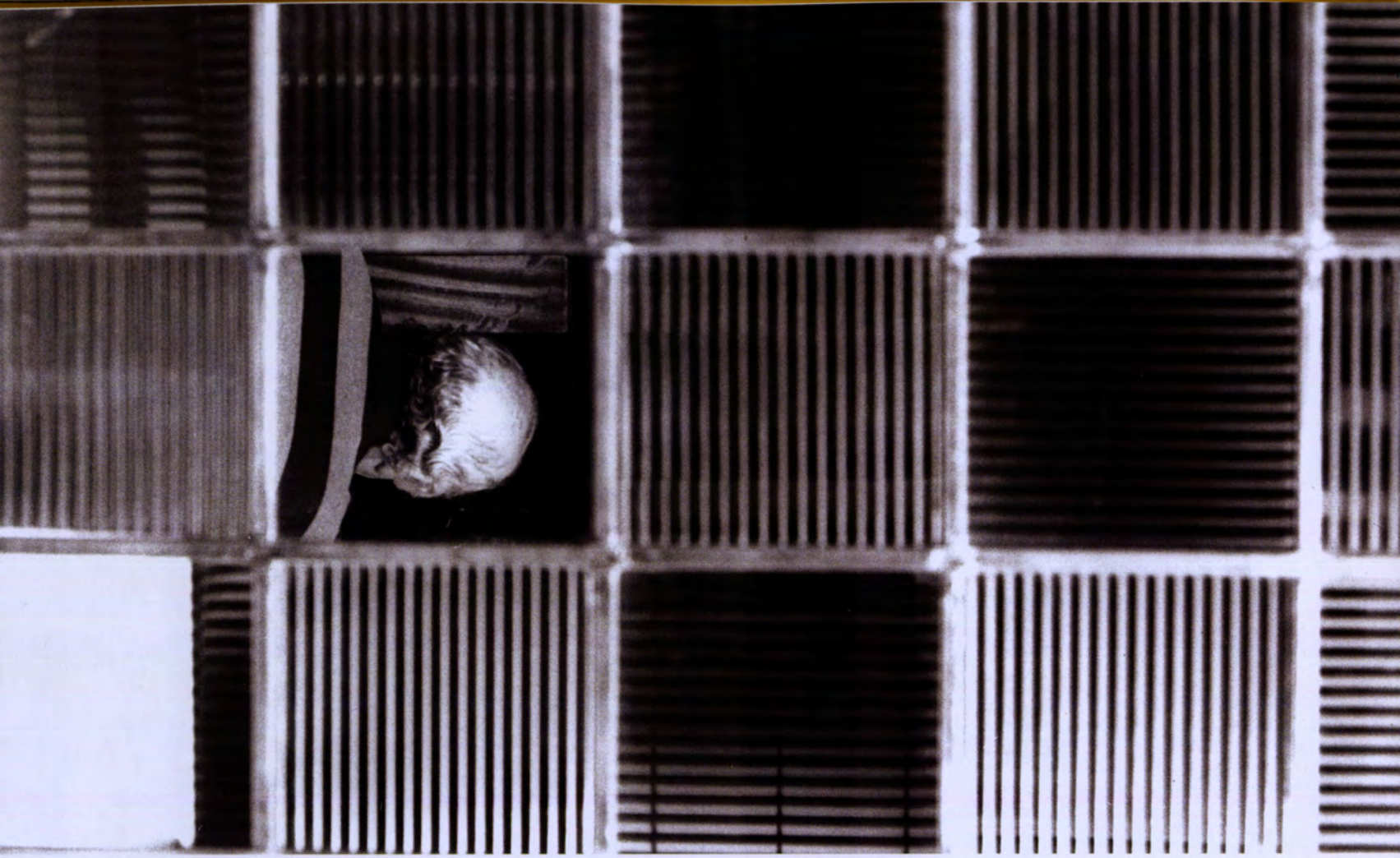

David Gibson, London; 2003, page 1: David Gibson, London; 2004

THE STREET PHOTOGRAPHER'S MANUAL

DAVID GIBSON

Thames & Hudson

For my Mother: Margaret Gibson (1923–2008)

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION		6
CHAPTER 1 / BUSY	INTRO	46
	ELLIOTT ERWITT	50
	ORDER	52
	KAUSHAL PARIKH	56
	EVENTS	58
	BRUCE GILDEN	62
	SEQUENCES	64
	MATT STUART	66
	LINING UP	68
	MARIA PLOTNIKOVA	72
CHAPTER 2 / QUIET	INTRO	74
	LUKAS VASILIKOS	78
	WAITING	80
	BLAKE ANDREWS	84
	FOLLOWING	86
	NILS JORGENSEN	90
	BEHIND	92
	MARC RIBOUD	96
	LOOKING DOWN	98
	SHIN NOGUCHI	102
CHAPTER 3 / ABSTRACT	INTRO	104
	BLURRED	108
	GUEORGUI PINKHASSOV	112
	LAYERS	114
	JACK SIMON	118
	SHADOWS	120
	SAUL LEITER	124
	REFLECTIONS	126
	TRENT PARKE	130
	DOUBLES	132
	JESSE MARLOW	136
CHAPTER 4 / STILL	INTRO	138
	EMPTY	142
	JOHANNA NEURATH	144
	OBJECTS	146
	CASPAR CLAASEN	150
	GRAPHIC	154
CHAPTER 5 / SUBJECTS	INTRO	158
	CHILDREN	162
	DAVID SOLOMONS	166
	PROJECTS	168
	NARELLE AUTIO	172
	VERTICAL/HORIZONTAL	174
	OLIVER LANG	178
	ETHICS	180
REFERENCE	CONCLUSION	182
	GLOSSARY	184
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	186
	INDEX	188

INTRODUCTION

Wandering around with nothing particularly in mind to photograph may seem strange, but when that bit of magic happens, it becomes the most natural and wonderful thing to do.

WHAT IS STREET PHOTOGRAPHY?

In the photography section of a bookshop, the least interesting shelves for me are those with the instructional and technical books. I do not understand these books, either practically or emotionally. When I first studied photography in the late 1980s, the theory almost put me off taking photographs. It stifled my confidence and this is still deeply ingrained in me. I am much more interested in looking at great photographs, especially street photographs. That is where I have learnt photography and I wish to set that as the tone for this book. Indeed, I hope that the photographs alone in this book will be an inspiration to readers who may already be curious about street photography.

I should insert another caveat early on – that personal opinion is probably unavoidable, such as my dislike of technical matters, for example. In writing this book I have become more aware of intolerance and how easy it is to become rigid in your views. Everyone has different opinions about pictures, including how they come about. Henri Cartier-Bresson was intolerant towards some photography; he had discipline and high aesthetic standards, yet he distrusted colour photography intensely. That was his view, but he was not necessarily right.

This book could well be aimed at my younger self – an innocent who had just embarked on a life-long interest in photography, hungry to soak up more and find a direction for my own practice. Innocence is meant in the sense of a child-like wonder, which invariably becomes challenged and changed as you grow older. I am acutely aware of this initial learning period, this obsessive steep learning curve that I can never quite return to. Yet through teaching workshops on street photography, I have encountered a similar hunger in others. Someone else's fresh enthusiasm is a great tonic.

This book is about looking at and recognising the process whereby street photographs come about. You cannot teach luck, you cannot teach passion for street photography, but if the seed is already there this book might clarify or even accelerate the process.

My copy of *The Complete Photographer* by Andreas Feininger (1968) has a striking cover portrait of an Asian woman, with her black hair merging into the background with splashes of red light. I'm hooked on the design of this book with its distinctive font; it is an impressive tome on the technical aspects of photography, and includes numerous diagrams, charts

and equations. Feininger was a fine photographer but he does concede:

'Photography can be taught only in part – specifically, that part which deals with photo-technique. Everything else has to come from the photographer.'

I find this admission reassuring, yet ironically this book will probably end up in the 'how to' section in bookshops rather than amongst the collections of great photographers' work. In truth this is an in-between book; it deals with the practicalities of street photography but attempts to break down the different approaches into clear concepts that photographers can use. I was fearful that some of these concepts might be obvious, but then remembered a casual piece of advice I once gave to someone struggling with what to photograph on the street. My suggestion to get on a bus, watch the world go by and get off when he saw something interesting, was a revelation to him. I was surprised because I have done this for years; it seems obvious to me but it can be helpful to others.

While covering some of the general history of street photography, I have also found it fascinating to consider the eyes and minds of 20 individual photographers. They bind this book together; they show what is possible and how photography gives greater meaning to their lives. Overall I hope that this passion for street photography, which is shared by many others around the world, shines through.

Henri Cartier-Bresson, Shanghai; 1948

In his musings on the meaning of subjects and personalities in photography in *The Ongoing Moment* (2005), Geoff Dyer asks the intriguing question, what is the difference between a road and a street? He concludes:

'It is not a question of size (some urban streets are wider than country roads). A road heads out of town, while a street stays there, so you find roads in the country but not streets. If a street leads to a road, you are heading out of town. If a road turns into a street, you are heading into town. Keep on it long enough and a road will eventually turn into a street but not necessarily vice versa (a street can be an end in itself). Streets must have houses on either side of them to be streets. The best streets urge you to stay; the road is an endless incentive to leave.'

This is a delicious prospect but ultimately it leaves you confused about where you might be, quite literally. However, the point is who cares if you took the photograph on a road or a street? Furthermore, street photographers sometimes take road trips but they are not road photographers.

Dyer also wrote a very moving book about jazz – *But Beautiful* (1992) – a genre to which street photography has some kinship. Both forms of art were developed by mavericks. I make this seemingly odd connection as a prelude to offer an alternative name for street photography, which relates to jazz and how it plays around with melodies. Above all, I identify an empathy with the mindset of jazz musicians. They get lost; they have an idea where they are going, they are in control but they are open to chance and what feels right in the moment. That alternative name for street photography could be 'lost photography' – street photographers need to get lost.

Many street photographers allude to this mental state of getting lost – of finding a portal or being in the zone. It's almost a rite of passage, a secret knowledge that can only be experienced in the practice of it. Nick Turpin, the founder of In-Public, the international collective of street photographers, offers his own sense of wonder on the process:

'How many other forms of photography essentially have "wonder" at their heart? That's what makes street photography almost a spiritual process for many because it is so personal and so akin to a kind of photographic enlightenment. Street photography helps me understand the nature of my society and my place in it, I do it more for myself than I do for an external audience and like Buddhist enlightenment I do achieve a happiness through gaining that understanding. I have certainly experienced Matrix-like moments of revelation when in a public place I see things; moments just reveal themselves because I have put myself in the right situation for it to happen.'

WHAT IS STREET PHOTOGRAPHY? THE QUESTION IS BEST ANSWERED BY FIRST CONSIDERING WHO DOES STREET PHOTOGRAPHY. IF YOU DELVE DEEP INTO MOTIVATIONS, EVERYTHING BECOMES CLEARER.

Offering a definition of street photography, both spiritual and prosaic, is one of the underlying themes of this book. A quick description is that street photography is any kind of photography taken in a public space. It is usually of ordinary people going

about their everyday lives. Street photography's core value is that it is never set up; this aspect is 'non-negotiable' because the guiding spirit of street photography is that it is real.

The word 'street' itself suggests this authenticity: it is 'streetwise', it has attitude but, equally, public spaces can offer a whole range of poignant human moments. Street photography can be dark, edgy and surreal but it can also be light, warm and joyous. Crucially, street photography does not necessarily require people – evidence of people is just as valid. Everything goes into the pot and this is clear from the 20 photographers profiled, a fact which also highlights the difficulties of defining street photography. The choice of profiles set a tone, and I gladly concede that the process was a little haphazard; it grew organically and became a mixture of 'big names' and those more connected with the online growth of street photography. It is a democratic mix although I acknowledge that there should be more female photographers. Democracy perhaps does not always provide the right results.

A few of documentary landscape photographer Kate Kirkwood's photographs are taken on the street but the majority of her work – and that which is by far the most memorable – is taken on the Lake District farm in the UK where she lives. Her series *Spine* is basically the hide of cows interwoven with the hills and sky. The colour photographs are astonishing and people invariably respond to them with wonder, but when I showed them at a workshop in Athens, one of the participants exclaimed, 'this is not street photography', and he had a point. Street photography is any kind of photography taken outside of your front door, but does it extend to farm animals and landscape?

Paul Russell, who is based on the south coast of the United Kingdom, has a liking for agricultural shows. These involve people and show the eccentricities of the English at play. Russell is regarded as a quintessential street photographer with a quirky sense of humour, even though his territory is not usually urban centres. The idea of street photography can extend far beyond the big city.

Paul Russell, Bristol; 2007

LOCATION AND COMMUNITIES

Location is a factor in street photography, and arguably some countries are more 'advanced' than others. Africa appears not to be on the street photography map, but this could be a blinkered view. There is regrettably an absence of street photographers profiled here from Scandinavia, and also South and Central America, although street photography is certainly active in those areas. There is a very focused community in Stockholm, for example, led by CUP (Contemporary Urban Photographers), who invite photographers to conduct workshops and organise exhibitions there, which have included their own work. CUP is a fairly typical community of street photographers: they are a small core of local enthusiasts who, buoyed by the Internet, decided to group together to promote the genre more effectively in their home city.

I have without doubt and for various reasons left out some great street photographers. I am aware of Invisible Photographer Asia (IPA) in Singapore, the hub of Asia but also the hub of photography in Asia. IPA, which was founded in 2010 by Kevin WY Lee, already has a massive following in the region and reaches out online but also personally. Lee has a strong belief in tangible contact, seeing and sharing physical prints on the wall of the IPA gallery, appreciating and producing photographic books, and also through organising workshops.

In 2012 IPA produced a fascinating list of the twenty most influential photographers in Asia, which placed Daido Moriyama, Nobuyoshi Araki and Raghu Rai respectfully as numbers one, two and three. Also in the list was Fan Ho, a photographer, actor and filmmaker from Hong Kong. To me, and many others, Fan Ho's finely tuned black-and-white photographs of Hong Kong from the 1950s are a revelation. To discover a fairly obscure photographer with such beautiful work strengthens your belief that there is always more to discover.

Raghu Rai, Mumbai; 1995

Fan Ho, Hong Kong; 1956

A separate but related point is the prospect of street photography being located in commercial galleries. This is a complex issue about perceived values, hype and presentation – or maybe just plain luck or ambition. The photography market is a big subject; I would venture only to say that street photography ends up in highly priced galleries more through luck than design.

THE ENERGY OF STREET PHOTOGRAPHY VARIES FROM CITY TO CITY AROUND THE WORLD. SOME ARE MORE PROMINENT THAN OTHERS BUT THE POTENTIAL IS ALWAYS THERE.

Nick Turpin, Artemare, France; 2010

SUBJECTS

What word best describes aspects of street photography that might be at the edge or don't quite fit? Perhaps fiction, although that suggests something made up, which is unpalatable for many street photographers. It is a grey area. However, there is a place away from the centre of street photography that does need mapping. Not everyone will go there, but it is important to acknowledge that other places, with possibly different cultures, exist.

You might call one region 'distortion', anything that moves away from what the eye sees naturally. Extreme wide-angle and long lenses come within this area, although at least these lenses are still looking at reality; they are not setting up or rearranging reality.

Some years ago, I was wandering the streets of London with fellow photographer, Matt Stuart, when we saw a sign by some roadworks that read 'Extreme Danger'. In a light-hearted moment, I asked Matt to stand on his head behind the sign so that only his legs were showing. It's a funny photograph but I hardly ever show it because it was set up. I am acutely aware of this. I rarely show it, and like a pack of cigarettes it requires a health warning writ large – 'this photograph was set up' – because to present it as a real moment would be deceitful; it would break trust both personally and in the wider community of street photography. This might sound dramatic but there are definite codes of conduct and a sense of responsibility within street photography. It could best be described as 'zero tolerance'.

A well-known photographer allegedly once said that looking for his type of photographs 'is like looking for a needle in a haystack, but sometimes it helps to throw another needle in the haystack'. This is a little ambiguous. Every street photographer at some point has probably been 'tempted' when it comes to still life on the street. How many street photographers can honestly say that they have never kicked away a small distracting element from their intended framing?

David Gibson, London; 2001

Matt Stuart, London; 2006

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHOTOGRAPHS THAT ARE SET UP AND THOSE WHICH ARE COMPELLINGLY REAL. LOOK FOR MARGINS – THOSE THINGS THAT DON'T QUITE FIT.

There is also the prospect of adding to a scene, or making it just right. A photographer once told me of his fascination for a poster that had two pigeons in it. Close by were some pigeons so he scattered some bread just below the poster and discreetly stepped back. Two pigeons, one black and one white, in perfect unison with the poster, duly obliged. The photographer got the shot that he wanted. This is arguably only mild interference, although some photographers might be reluctant to admit to such a deed.

This is a very sensitive issue and hugely important when interference goes beyond a certain point, but it essentially revolves around honesty. The consolation hopefully is that the trained eye usually sees dishonesty – what is unnatural in a photograph – whether a photograph has been set up, or worse, when digital manipulation has completely falsified it.

The latter is a separate and even more sensitive issue but again it comes back to honesty. 'Digital manipulation' are not dirty words. They are part of what was once the wet darkroom, which was also

vulnerable to 'abuse'. Printers fiddled in the darkroom, sometimes too much. So, use digital manipulation reasonably, but do not 'move the pyramid' and present it as real. This is absolutely unequivocal. Elliott Erwitt holds a commonly shared view on the subject:

'I'm almost violent about that stuff – electronic manipulation of pictures. I think it's an abomination. I reject it all. I mean, it's OK for selling corn flakes or automobiles or for taking pimples out of Elizabeth Taylor's face, but it undermines the thing that photography is about, which is about observation and not about manipulation of images.'

In the digital age, art and photography coexist, and it is an uncomfortable mix for many photographers. These two worlds sometimes collide when an artist 'who uses photography' plays around with the two mediums. I personally dislike this type of 'photographic art' – what might be called composites – but if the artist is honest in what they are presenting and the work comes with a 'health warning' that is absolutely fine.

The worst scenario is one where photographers, as opposed to artists, 'cheat'. Hopefully there are not many such photographers, but inevitably some dubious photographers will overly move or add things. Again, it is acceptable if they are completely open about their methods, but they must not hide those methods in the small print. It is usually only the detectives – other photographers – who hunt for clues.

Fashion photography has its critics; models are digitally made slimmer, for example, but generally it is honest and you accept it at face value. The clothes on

Ferdinando Scianna, Sicily; 1987

the models are the purpose of the shoot and you know it's not quite the real world anyway.

One of the constants of this book is resisting labels because inspiration can visit from many different areas. Street photography has a core list of important photographers, but inspiration can as easily come from the margins. Sometime former model Sarah Moon turned to fashion photography in the 1970s, but even that label is misleading. She was the first woman to shoot the Pirelli calendar, but her atmospheric photographs, many taken on the street, are a hybrid of fashion, film noir and documentary.

Street fashion and street photography might appear surprising bedfellows, but the pairing only emphasises the constant cross-pollination within photography. David Bailey is forever branded as the doyen of the 'swinging sixties', but what photographic label would you attach to him? Certainly portrait and fashion but he also did documentary work, and was an admirer of Henri Cartier-Bresson and Picasso. Fashion photography on the street is clearly a collaboration between model and photographer, but its spirit is within 'proper' street photography. William Klein, David Bailey, Terence Donovan and Ferdinando Scianna are just a few of the photographers who have led or responded to this free and real way of shooting fashion.

STREET PORTRAITS

A genre of photography that should arguably be consigned to the margins of street photography is street portraits – where the subject consents to be photographed. It is one of the most common misconceptions about street photography, where photographers believe they are practising street photography even when they interact with their subject who might acknowledge and approve of being photographed and even pose for the shot too. This is not street photography; it's taking a staged portrait. Unfortunately, street portraits are ubiquitous on street photography blogs and web pages, which is misleading and somewhat false.

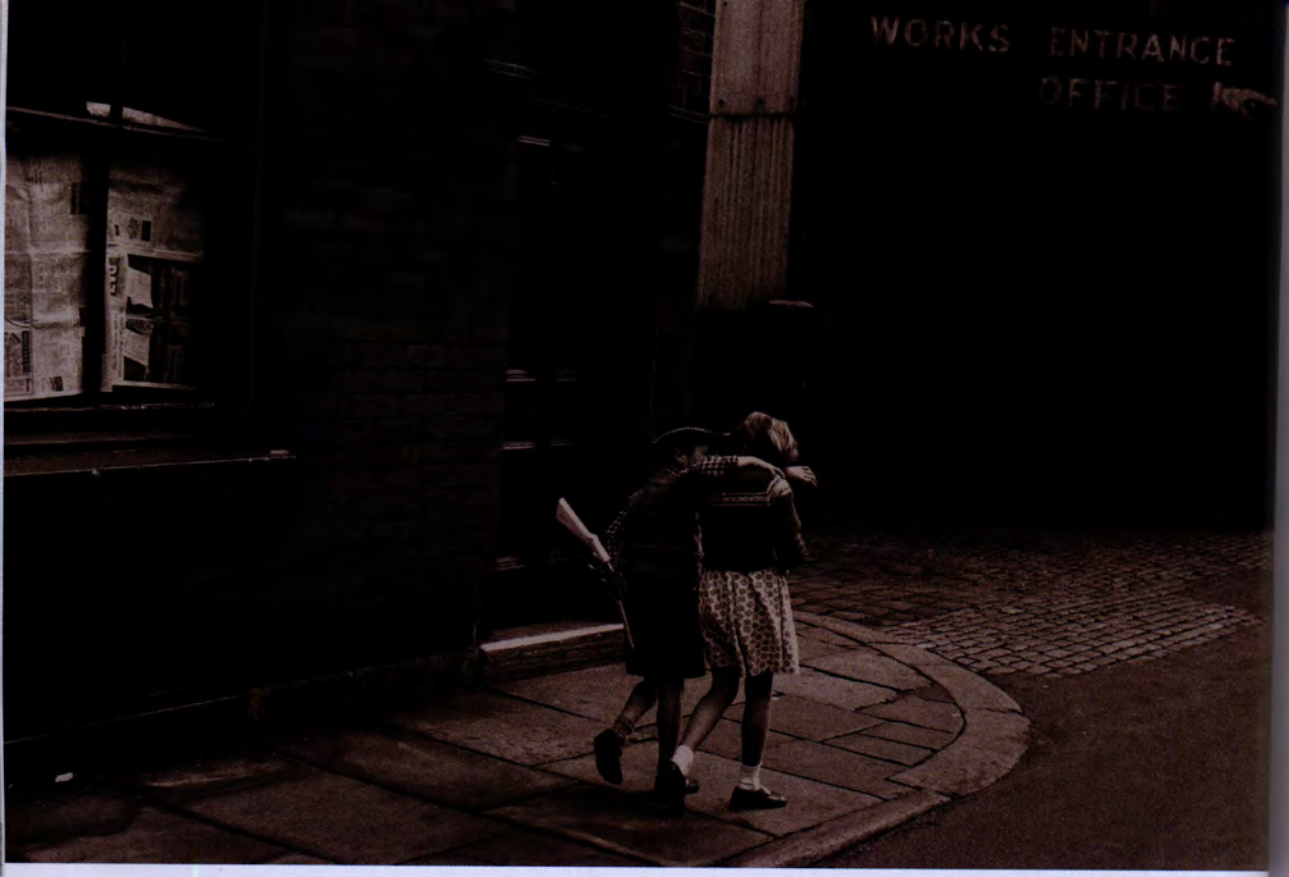
Street photographers can include the occasional street portrait in their wanderings. Jack Simon in San Francisco, for example, occasionally asks permission to take someone's portrait. Some street photographers are very sociable and taking the occasional portrait on the street comes naturally, but they are usually aware that it is a separate discipline. Cartier-Bresson took portraits but they were not street portraits; he was interacting with the subject and quite often it was a commissioned shoot.

Shooting from the hip is random and serendipitous, but there is some reluctance to push it wholly to the margins because it is such an irreverent approach to street photography. It is loose and random and in keeping with the true spirit of the genre, but does it result in many great images? Arguably, street photography is controlled luck with the camera held to the eye to give you at least a chance. Shooting from the hip on a busy street is fun, but ultimately there are far more misses than hits.

Alias Johnny Stiletto's book, *Shots from the Hip: Another Way of Looking Through the Camera* (1992), is idiosyncratic and infectious, and certainly raises questions about how to take photographs. He breaks the 'rules'. His technique was 'firing blind', which is contentious, but the book is unpretentious and oddly very wise about photography. Sometimes you have to consider what is at the edge to understand better what is at the centre.

I wanted to include more of Fan Ho's work in this book and also extend an appreciation to Germany's Erwin Fieger's colour photographs. These two photographers are not big names and they have widely contrasting styles. Fan Ho's photographs are graphic and lyrical, while Fieger, who died in 2013, has a rare colour palette and significantly used a long lens creatively. I have mixed feelings about the use of long lenses for street photography. I'm usually quite damning – it is lazy and the pictures look bunched

Henri Cartier-Bresson, Hyeres, France; 1932



Colin O'Brien, London; 1960

up – but with Erwin Fieger I'm suddenly curious, and inspired.

One of my most prized books is Fieger's *London: City of any Dream* (1962), which I picked up in a second-hand bookshop many years ago. It's a beautiful and surprising book about another London, the majority of it shot with a telephoto lens. One of the projects I have left out of this book is one using a long lens. Fieger's words in his book set the challenge:

'The telephoto lens proved to be immensely useful for my particular method of working, since it made it possible to isolate the significant details from the midst of a bewildering profusion.'

Colin O'Brien is another obsessive London photographer whose archive goes back to the late 1950s. This evocatively titled photograph, 'The Cowboy and His Girlfriend', perfectly captures the time when children played cowboys and indians on the street.

I am often asked if people have ever objected to being photographed by me on the street. This is a loaded question and immediately tells me that the question comes from someone who is anxious about photographing people. My instinct is to sidestep the question because if you ask such a question your

YOU CANNOT DO STREET PHOTOGRAPHY IF YOU ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT PEOPLE'S REACTION.

approach is already set. This mindset needs to be undone completely, otherwise you will not be doing street photography properly.

This may sound harsh but there are two approaches to street photography – the desire to do it or a half-hearted interest in it. Of course, part of this is an awareness that there might be legal issues or actual restrictions in taking street photographs. You could fill a book with the legal aspects of privacy and photography, which, crucially, varies around the world, but that is not this book. My only comment on the subject is that common sense should always prevail.

MOBILE PHONES

One of the most fascinating and troubling issues for me has been how to address mobile phone cameras; whether to treat them as just another camera or as a powerful new movement with different attitudes. Photography has always sat on the edge of upheaval and mobile phone photography could be likened to finding a parallel universe. Put simply, another audience with different values has recently come to photography. This is not just the world of the Internet but a vast 'mobile phone' audience who might drag photography through some interesting changes.

The overriding question is whether mobile phone cameras will release a new creative energy, or deaden or ignore a tradition that is precious to many serious photographers. What would Henri Cartier-Bresson think of mobile phone cameras, or more precisely, what would he think of the people who use them? His world was shaped by the technology available at the time. He was born in 1908, not 2008. The profound hope must be that mobile phone cameras are in reality just another tool, which, in the right hands, carry on a tradition, spiking it with different styles and attitudes but basically continuing the aesthetic. The 'right hands' motif applies to all cameras because surely what always matters is the images produced. That belief underpins this book; it may veer slightly towards naivety because technology does alter the aesthetic, but photographers will always hopefully remain more interesting than the equipment they use.

CATEGORISATION

Some of the profiled photographers are 'proper' street photographers, who sit comfortably with the label of street photography, not least because they are obviously part of that community. With others the label applies less surely, and a few photographers might even resist what they consider an easy or ill-fitting categorisation. I remember hearing a Magnum photographer talk a few years ago at a street photography festival; he was happy to be included but also slightly bemused at being considered a street photographer. There are several Magnum photographers in this book – if you consider the best in photography, you have to consider this legendary agency. Ultimately, the best photographers make nonsense of labels.

It is easy to go round in circles trying to prise street photography away from documentary photography and vice-versa. It is a fruitless exercise, but it should be acknowledged that the recent online revival of street photography drives this book. The rise of the Internet has produced a new energy and community for street photography which embraces all the great photographers of the past while also acknowledging both the present and future.

The choice of 20 projects in this book highlights even more the difficulties of breaking down 'how to do' street photography. A paradox is always at play – being open to luck and just wandering, yet also absorbing and being consciously aware of the process. In a sense, street photography is always about soaking up what is possible – like learning to play a song – but then, with the learnt chords, producing your own song. It is important to remember that street photography is not an exact science, so perhaps this book is a selection of different guitar chords – and tunings – with a few suggested songs.

Trent Parke, Sydney; 2001

COLOUR VS BLACK AND WHITE

An issue I should address early on is the use of colour or black and white, specifically when they appear in close proximity; in this book both are appreciated but I confess to being wary of mixing them because I know that it simply does not always look very good. The mediums clash and send out a confused message. This is not an absolute and any kind of history or instructional book is probably excused this aesthetic, but this consideration – some would call it a rule – is important.

So to some extent I have side-stepped this issue and would add only that virtually all the photography books that I mention are either entirely colour or monochrome because it is a rare ability for a single photographer to mix the two comfortably in one place.

OBSESSION

You could assert that British documentary photographer Martin Parr has balls (see page 25). He gets close. But it's not for everyone. Obsession, however, is a prerequisite; nothing comes from half-heartedness and it is common for the best photographers to have had an early period of intense learning. This 'apprenticeship' can be several years. The veteran *National Geographic* photographer William Albert Allard reckoned that it took roughly seven years to 'get there'. There are no short cuts, but if you're hooked on something, obsession has little regard for time.

'YOU NEED OBSESSION, DEDICATION AND BALLS. GET OUT THERE WHILE YOU STILL CAN.' **MARTIN PARR**

If you want to delve into the driven mind of a photographer and taste that obsession, you cannot do better than Australian photographer Trent Parke (page 130) as an example. Parke is restless and demands a lot of himself:

'It's always difficult talking about old work. I live in the moment of right now, this very second, and trying to talk about work I made even a month ago is difficult. It comes down to the fact that at the very moment I am making work on a new story, every single thing around me is important. Once I am in the zone of something, every daily occurrence, influence is or could be, vital to the outcome. One thing leads to the next. And then once I finally find an answer, I move onto the next thing and start again…'

Parke considers himself to be foremost a storyteller, where the single picture has a transient value:

'Single pictures are not enough to keep me interested these days. Yes there is a great challenge in street photography – in capturing a fleeting moment – and I did this for many years. I absolutely respect the craft and the time it takes to come up with these great single images but those stand-alone photographs are hard to work into narratives. They become collections of photographs, of a place or a city, which of course are important. But I am interested in emotion. How you can change the context of say forty photographs that bear no real relation to each other but when sequenced in a particular way can tell a very different story. For me this is the greatest challenge. The book is the work. I am always learning. This is what drives me forwards. Making new discoveries. I have always used the camera as a way of exploring the world around me and questioning everything. And I am still learning my craft. The day I know everything is the day photography dies for me. Coincidence, chance, mistakes and luck play a big part in what I do.'

Martin Parr, Benidorm, Spain; 1997

Parke was a recipient of the W. Eugene Smith Memorial Award in 2003, which is totally appropriate because Smith, an American photojournalist famous for his Second World War photography, was an obsessive, too. He pursued the story in the format commonly referred to as the photo-essay, which on several occasions resulted in a singular iconic image such as that on pages 22–23.

Obsession can sound a little joyless, but I came across the book *Occam's Razor* (1992) by Bill Jay years ago, which touched upon this subject. Jay recalled a television interview with a great violinist in which the violinist described a typical day:

'The musician said he read scores over breakfast, then composed music in the morning, thought about music during a walk, practised the violin in the afternoon, played a concert in the evening, met with musician friends to play together, then went to bed dreaming of the violin. Asked if this seemed a narrow life, the violinist said, "Yes, initially my life was becoming narrower and narrower in focus but then an extraordinary thing happened. It is as though my music passed through the tiny hole in an hour glass and it has become broader and broader. Now my music is making connections with every aspect of life".'

INSPIRATION

Inspiration is the single most important factor in any artistic endeavour; it is not necessarily an explosion of energy, but more a measured determination to achieve something. Photography can draw inspiration from many artistic fields; the struggles or achievements of any artist can be reassuring and give fresh impetus. Inspiration for photography can also be specific because any true beginning requires a direction and it is not uncommon for photographers to recall a particular spark that ignited their future path. It is important to recognise this potential 'eureka' moment because if you sense that something is there, you start to look for it more consciously.

Photography books are the lifeblood of any serious photographer, and you can just as easily mention looking at photographs online because there is a profusion of inspiring websites. The Magnum website should always be bookmarked, but it is worth remembering that Magnum photographers work towards producing books because that is the most satisfying presentation for their work. There are exhibitions, beautiful magazines, websites and apps, but books are more tangible. If you see an inspiring exhibition your thought will surely always be to buy the book.

This might be a traditional view but arguably you cannot surpass looking at photographs on the printed page, away from the distractions of a computer screen. Photographic books are produced specifically to allow the work to be fully absorbed. It is also the most respectful and personal way to engage with a photographer's work. Books can also be beautiful objects, just like cameras. People spend a great deal of money sometimes on photographic equipment but would never really consider spending a sizeable percentage of it on photography books. A camera is a tool, but a small library of photographic books contributes far more towards the goal of taking meaningful pictures. It can constantly be referred to and functions as an excellent source of inspiration.

Should a fledging collection of photography books include Robert Frank's *The Americans* (1958)? The answer is definitely 'yes', and not least because it is easily available and good value. A book recommended to me long ago is *On Being a Photographer* (2001) by Bill Jay and David Hurn; it is still one of the most clear-sighted on what is required to be a photographer, but beyond that, as with technical advice, I hesitate to offer specific recommendations.

Several other photography books are referenced throughout the text and a comprehensive bibliography can be found on page 186.

YOU CANNOT DO STREET PHOTOGRAPHY IN ISOLATION, YOU WILL ALWAYS NEED DIRECTION OR REASSURANCE. ABOVE ALL, YOU NEED INSPIRATION, AND BOOKS PROVIDE THAT.

David Gibson, Henley-on-Thames; 1997

Richard Bram, London; 2004

ONLINE COLLECTIVES

In his book *Why People Photograph*, Robert Adams wrote: 'Your own photography is never enough. Every photographer who has lasted has depended on other people's pictures too – photographs that may be public or private, serious or funny, but that carry with them a reminder of community.'

This was written in 1994, a good few years before the Internet first gripped people's lives, but the word 'community' is, if anything, even more relevant. There have always been groups of photographers who might be just friends, but sometimes it becomes more than that. There is strength in numbers and groups provide support, but crucially they become a focus or even a movement. In short they become important, which was not necessarily the original intention, but groups and schools of photography as they become known, and now online collectives, fix attitudes and effect change.

Nick Turpin, a successful advertising and editorial photographer in London, formed In-Public in 2000 with the desire to bring together like-minded photographers. In-Public was billed as 'the home of street photography' and it quickly gathered a nucleus of committed street photographers in London, New York and Australia. The fledgling collective had a raw energy, but its destiny was really tied to the Internet; as the new medium started to enter everybody's lives, In-Public reached out to more photographers around the world. It became both a reference point and a source of inspiration. The first of its kind, it has inevitably spawned imitators in a similar spirit. Being the first at something does not necessarily mean being the best, but In-Public undoubtedly has a core of very talented and enduring photographers. The group has had an immeasurable impact that continues to play out and Turpin deserves credit for initiating such a vital platform and gallery for street photography.

Although In-Public now has 22 members worldwide, it does not have a carefully thought out system for recruiting new members. The process has always been haphazard and organic, which reflects the nature of street photography. Certainly an acquired responsibility rests on their shoulders, but they remain at heart a group of like-minded street photographers who have witnessed a huge popularity surge in what they do. Richard Bram, left, is one such member, as is Andy Morley-Hall whose work is featured on page 31. Morley-Hall's capture is one of his most enduring; air cadets in London's Berkeley Square present a very surreal scene. What has happened; is someone to blame? A long-time member of the In-Public collective, Morley-Hall is now based in New Zealand.

Street Photographers is another more recent collective that already has a large following, especially on Facebook. They currently have 21 members, which perhaps hints at a natural number that collectives should reach. If a collective gets too big, it becomes unwieldy and is in danger of losing touch with its original aims, and, more importantly, letting standards slip. Street Photographers has maintained a very high standard and declares a simple manifesto on their well-designed website:

'Street Photographers is an international collective of photographers, whose members carry on the tradition of street photography. They capture unposed moments, interpreting life around them and challenging our perceptions of the world. The collective also aims to bring an appreciation of street photography to a wide audience. It does so through public forums, exhibitions and publications. Street Photographers believes that its efforts can inspire a growing interest in the genre and encourage the development of emerging photographers.'

The common aim of the online collective world is always to translate its energy into a tangible form, through books and more frequently with workshops and exhibitions. Workshops can be the currency and the voice for collectives but they are very dependent on reputation. The yardstick is probably Magnum, whose photographers regularly conduct workshops around the world.

One of the most interesting collectives is Un-posed, because it is wholly made up of Polish photographers. Set up in 2011, the ten photographers are not all based in Poland – Damian Chrobak, for example, is in London – but the unifying spirit is commendably Polish. Indian collective That's Life, while smaller, is in the same vein. There is something pure about this approach; That's Life, in particular, because its photographers interpret just India, and it would conceivably lose its identity if it showcased photographs taken away from India.

ONLINE COLLECTIVES ARE AN UPDATE OF THE INSTINCTIVE NEED FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS TO GATHER TOGETHER WITH OTHER LIKE-MINDED PHOTOGRAPHERS.

All of these collectives have originated in the last five years or so and could well be attributed to Thames & Hudson's *Street Photography Now* book (2011) and its ensuing online energy. Burn My Eye, like Street Photographers, has a strong Greek presence – three of its photographers are Greek – yet it has since recruited widely and not stuck with one generation. The recent addition of Don Hudson from the United States, who was born in 1950, has given the collective access to work taken in the 1970s. Burn My Eye are clearly being both imaginative and careful about whom they add to their numbers.

Maintaining a tight edit of members is just as important as the folios being edited tightly. I remember a Magnum photographer once being asked about the difficulties of recruiting new members. The reply was that the 'real problem was getting rid of members'. I suspect that he was only half-joking.

The collective communal world of street photography naturally extends to blogs and inevitably Facebook. All the collectives have a Facebook page but there are significant individuals too – who act almost as one-man collectives – and Eric Kim deserves credit there for his social media skills, which he has brought to the street photography world. His Facebook page is a hub of information and is followed by many thousands of people. US-based Kim is a devoted and knowledgeable fan of street photography, who is also known for the workshops he does around the world, often in collaboration with others. It is the collaborative element of his energy and his generosity that has marked him out. He has brought a lot of people to street photography, not necessarily the so-called advanced photographers, but he has certainly raised the banner for street photography.

If a new street photography collective forms you can guarantee that Kim will probably know about it from early on. An interview with one of its members will suddenly appear on his blog, which will be flagged up on his Facebook page, where he enjoys compiling lists on all things related to street photography. Generally 'Facebook photography' could be seen as being a mixed blessing. It does far more good than harm but it is disconcertingly random and lacking in quality control. Arguably it rivals Flickr in that it provides both a forum for feedback and a platform for sharing, but how many photographers want to 'work' on their Facebook page rather than on their photography?

Andy Morley-Hall, London; 2000

The below extract, taken from Kim's piece *103 Things I've Learned About Street Photography*, gives a flavour of Kim's ethos and exemplifies some of his more useful words of wisdom.

Joel Meyerowitz is a positive example who, like Kim, understands the potential of Facebook to reach out to people. It's a promotional tool but when it's done sincerely, it is rewarding for everyone. Just look at Meyerowitz's page – people follow his photographic diary because they respect what he stands for.

Similarly, the Paris-based photojournalist and self-declared street photographer, Peter Turnley, regularly updates his page with photographs and commentary. Facebook does not necessarily belong to a younger generation and it is heartening to see an articulate photographer share his photographic life with others. Like Meyerowitz, Turnley dips into his archive; not everything is from last week. Both these photographers – who are actually behind their pages – have depth, and they raise the standard for photography pages on Facebook.

Chilean photographer Sergio Larrain on the other hand, whose work features opposite, avoided the spotlight during his later years, which he chose to spend in spiritual retreat. Facebook or Tumblr would have been the wrong communities for him; Larrain was a man who wrote letters, not emails. Paradoxically, his photos now reach an online audience. Clearly communities of all kinds have provided artists through the ages with both interaction and solace.

ERIC KIM'S ADVICE FOR STREET PHOTOGRAPHERS

- It isn't the quantity of social media followers you have that matters, but rather the quality of followers you have that matters.
- Buy books, not gear.
- The only way money might make you happier in photography is if you invest it in experiences (travel, workshops, teachers) rather than material things (cameras, lenses, gear in general...).
- Most famous photographers are only known for their two or three most popular images after they die. If you accomplish this you have made your contribution as a photographer.
- Street photos of people just walking by billboards are boring.
- No amount of post-processing will transform a mediocre photograph into a good photograph.
- Watermarks in online street photographs interfere with the viewing experience of your audience.
- Spend 99 per cent of your time editing your photos (choosing your best images) and only 1 per cent of your time post-processing them.
- Avoid the easy lure of capturing homeless people and street performers. Despite their assumed exoticism, like any other subject they rarely make good photos.
- Don't respect the critique of other photographers unless you have seen their portfolio.
- 99 per cent of people on the Internet don't know what a great street photograph is. Don't always trust the comments, likes and favourites you get from the Internet on social media sites. Rather, stick around in public street photography critique groups (or private ones).
- If you are working on a project and photographers discourage you by saying 'it has been done before', ignore them. Nobody has done it like you before.

Sergio Larrain, Valparaiso; 1963

Alex Webb, Mumbai (Bombay); 1981


TOPAZ
STAINLESS
TOPAZ
STAINLESS
TOPAZ
marches ahead ... others trail behind

CAMERAS

The technical aspects of photography are very important for some people; they might even enjoy cameras more than the pictures they take. I sometimes encounter these people in the workshops I conduct and as we walk and talk I am aware of possible pictures coming together. I am listening to them, but the street distracts me. Isn't that the idea of street photography, wandering and being distracted by potential photographs?

Cameras excite photographers because they enjoy equipment, but also because they offer impetus to their photography. There is nothing like having a new camera to make everything seem fresh and full of potential. There is always the latest 'must have' camera, but would it be interesting if the actual cameras used by photographers appeared on the covers of their books rather than the images they take?

I am always reluctant, except for the basics, to give technical advice, particularly when it comes to camera settings. Paradoxically, some sound advice given to me recently was 'keep the technical jargon free from opinion', which clarified for me the pitfalls of entering into this very personal aspect of photography. Years of experience amounts to little sometimes, except to say find a camera that you are comfortable with and understand. You may have several cameras, and there is no right or wrong type or make. Too much technical advice is like telling someone what food they should like.

However, there are some common things to consider. My technique is to get the technique out of the way so that I can take pictures.

When I began photography seriously, I shot exclusively in black-and-white with a manual Nikon FM2 camera. I constantly had the shutter speed at 1/60 or 1/125 of a second and I nearly always used a yellow filter and that was it. I should add that I used three lenses, a 35, 50 and sometimes an 85 mm lens. An 85 mm is a slightly longer lens and certainly not extreme, but I was often grateful to get a little closer. This range of lenses was fairly common and has just been translated to digital cameras. When you start to consider simple film cameras, you realise how complicated digital cameras have made photography. They have many advantages, but they do not take better pictures. I admit to being spoilt by digital cameras and have occasionally felt that I might have lost something in the transition from film. Film is a good habit because each frame is precious. You might only have one film of 36 exposures, which seems ridiculous when you consider that now a typical memory card routinely has at least ten times that number.

An online discussion on my early black-and-white work observed that I did not seem too concerned about my images being in sharp focus. I was a little startled by this comment, but have to agree that this is a valid point. I was never that interested in taking absolutely sharp images, partly because the film speed in low light conditions dictated a slower shutter speed, but mostly because my concern was just getting the picture. My photography has evolved and digital cameras have made it far easier to shoot in low light conditions, which is a huge difference. Consequently, my images have become sharper but not necessarily better.

I now mostly use a Canon 5D with a standard pancake lens. I usually have the camera on the 'P' (programme mode) setting – allowing the camera to 'decide' – but will sometimes take photographs using the shutter speed priority (or 'Tv' mode on a Canon). I will set the 'Tv' at 1/250 or 1/500 of a second, for example. So my technique is 'P' or 'Tv' and I use the auto-focus on the back of the camera.

Yet these considerations are all essentially habits – what I feel comfortable with – to enable me to take photographs. I know that many photographers would give far more consideration to the depth of field by

adjusting the aperture setting, but that is not my habit. I am often surprised by people who are just starting with street photography, who decide to shoot film, especially black-and-white, and even decide to do darkroom printing. They sense a tradition, and if I were to venture any advice to a serious beginner, I would suggest that at some point they shoot black-and-white film and follow the journey of that film. Learning to process film and printing is a very thoughtful experience – everything is slowed down and more appreciated. It used to be a necessity for many photographers, but to experience a wet darkroom, even briefly, connects you to what photography really is.

Many photographers steeped in the workings of a darkroom now habitually use desktop editing suites, such as Photoshop or Lightroom. But photographs are prints – we should never forget that. We see photographs all the time but we seldom hold them. Books can be precious but there is nothing better than a photographic print.

I have allowed some of my personal preferences to seep in here and not just with regard to equipment and technique. There are commonalities but every photographer is different.

This is the post-analogue photographic life of In-Public member Paul Russell:

'When digital came along, it re-ignited my interest in photography – the instant feedback from the LCD plus the ability to take a huge amount of pictures without worrying about cost spurred me on…I bought the digital Nikon D70 when it came out in 2004 along with the 18–70 mm kit lens, and I still use that lens today. I also switched from predominantly black-and-white to colour with the advent of digital.

With compacts I end up with a lot of pictures, a tiny percentage of which are acceptable to me, whereas with SLRs I take very few pictures due to the camera's size but get a much higher proportion of "keepers". There are situations where you want to look like a complete bumbling amateur, and compacts are good for that.

An additional point to consider about compact digitals is that they usually give a 4:3 aspect ratio instead of the 3:2 ratio of digital SLRs (and 35 mm film). This difference in image shape can cause a headache when building consistent collections of photos.

Currently I'm using an inexpensive Nikon digital SLR with my old kit zoom and a manual focus 20 mm Voigtlander lens. I've also used a 28 mm lens a lot on my "crop" SLRs. As an equivalent to 42 mm on a full-frame camera, it's the closest thing to a lens where the view matches what the eye sees (43 mm being a "standard" lens on a full frame or 35 mm film camera).

I go with APS-C SLRs – full-frame models are too big for my liking. I walk around in aperture priority mode, keeping an eye on the ISO and shutter speed at all times.'

'IF YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND APERTURE, SHUTTER SPEED, ISO AND EXPOSURE COMPENSATION, YOU CAN'T GO WRONG.' PAUL RUSSELL

Another In-Public photographer, Nils Jorgensen (pages 40–41), has arrived at a similar point of comfort and familiarity:

'After years of trial and error using almost every camera and lens ever made, I have found my dream street kit. I am currently using a DSLR with a 28–300 mm zoom lens. Mostly I put my camera on "P" (for "Professional" of course) mode.'

Jorgensen, I suspect, wants to keep technical concerns at arm's length and just get on with taking pictures. Not all photographers are comfortable with a zoom lens but many settle for the 'P' mode on their camera.

Marc Riboud, Istanbul; 1955

SOME TECHNICAL TIPS

DIGITAL CAMERAS

- The ISO setting is important on the camera. The best digital cameras allow you to shoot in very low light conditions. Even on a fairly bright day you may still set the ISO at 400, or even 800, to get a decent shutter speed. You can still get good-quality pictures with a setting of 1600 or 3200, but keep an eye on the setting during the day as you move in different light conditions.
- Be aware that the auto-focus on digital cameras has a red-eye beam. Flash may not be allowed in some places, such as subway systems, but the red-eye beam can be a distraction to drivers, too. In some situations it is better to focus manually.
- With a digital camera, always shoot in RAW mode. Many cameras allow you to shoot in RAW + Large Fine JPEG, which is good, but the priority is RAW. Shooting in RAW provides the best 'negative'.
- It is better to slightly under-expose.
- Many photographers frown upon using long lenses, especially zoom lenses, rigidly preferring a standard lens, which is close to how the eye sees things. This is debatable, but do try to use a longer lens creatively, rather than because you do not like to get too close to people. It is better to start with a standard lens and then experiment later with a long lens.
- Don't convert colour digital files to mono in an ad hoc way. If you mix them, it causes confusion for everyone including yourself. It is much better to group them separately.

EQUIPMENT

- Always format a blank memory card when you use it again.
- Most photographers prefer quiet, unobtrusive cameras, which usually means small. It is common for photographers to tape over brand names on cameras to reduce every potential distraction.
- Black cameras are preferable because they're less visible. Cartier-Bresson allegedly carried his Leica camera in a handkerchief in his pocket; he did not have the camera round his neck. I personally try to have my camera out, held discreetly in my hands because I am aware that the process of taking my camera out of my bag announces my intention to take photographs.
- Carry a spare battery with you and a few memory cards.

TECHNIQUES

- Magnum photographer Alex Webb uses an amazing depth of field (see his photo on pages 34–35). That's his style and it might be yours too.
- Don't crop your images. This is arguably one of the most important rules of street photography. It is far better to crop in the frame of the camera than afterwards.

Nils Jorgensen, London; 1979

THE WIDER CONTEXT

When I first became serious about photography, the label that I related to was 'humanistic photography'. It was the Magnum photographers that inspired me and my memory is that the term 'street photography' in the late 1980s was not prevalent. My perspective could be a little narrow, as I was just beginning to catch up on all the history, but I suspect that the term 'street photography' was in the doldrums.

In-Public's Nick Turpin (pages 12–13) advocates that street photography is photography itself and that every other strand of the medium should be arranged around street photography. He asserts:

'Now I understand that "street photography" is just "photography" in its simplest form, it is the medium itself, [and] it is actually all the other forms of photography that need defining: landscape, fashion, portrait, reportage, art, advertising…these are all complicating additions to the medium of photography, they are the areas that need to be defined, ring fenced and partitioned out of the medium of "street photography".'

In some ways the history of photography has been unfair on street photography. If you take three of the important histories on the medium by Beaumont Newhall, Helmut and Alison Gernsheim and Ian Jeffrey, none of them use the term 'street photography'. Nor does Susan Sontag in *On Photography* (1978), a stalwart book on course reading lists, but this is being a little pedantic.

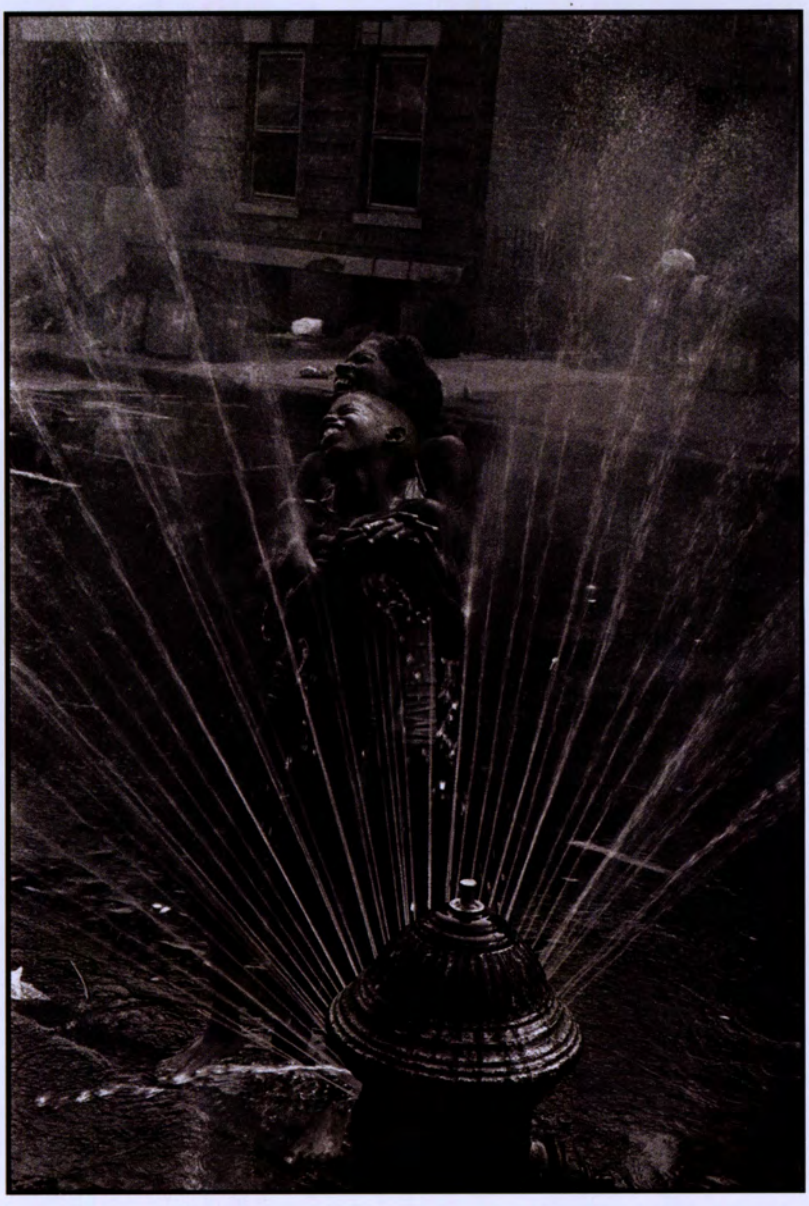
Of course, street photography is there; you just have to extract it from the bigger history, which has tended to ignore the term more than the photographers who take photographs on the street.

WHY SHOULD STREET PHOTOGRAPHY, WHICH HAS SUCH A STRONG SPIRIT AND FOLLOWING, BE BURIED IN THE GENERAL HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY?

It is likely that street photography has unsettled historians because they don't know where to put it or how to attach a purpose to it. Street photography has functioned too long in disguise but arguably there is a new history being written by the Internet, which separates it more clearly from the general mass.

Street photography began with the advent of the lightweight 35 mm camera and specifically the original Leica camera, which first appeared in the mid-1920s. Hungarian-born André Kertész was one of the first photographers to realise its potential. Cumbersome big cameras prevailed in the 1950s, but by then they were like leftover dinosaurs. By the 1960s, the 35 mm camera was the norm for most photographers outside of the studio. New technology, as it often does, produced a new attitude, which was embraced by another generation of photographers. The photograph opposite by Magnum member Leonard Freed perfectly sums up that new freedom.

Something of this history that includes the important influences inevitably comes out in



Leonard Freed, New York City; 1963

Roger Mayne, London; 1956 © Mary Evans Picture Library

the projects presented here and especially in the profiles. There is a grapevine testimony that pushes the same names, which cannot be a coincidence because photographers are always sincere about the photographers who have moved them. I therefore make no apologies for punctuating much of this book with references to Henri Cartier-Bresson.

However, I actually delight in the alternative view, and reading, for example, about photography classes conducted by the Swedish photographer Christer Strömholm, I was struck by the stance he took on Cartier-Bresson. Strömholm's classes began in the late 1950s – the perfect time, when it was all beginning – and they covered amongst others Robert Frank's 'studies of American society', Edouard Boubat's 'sensitive, poetic images' and Robert Doisneau's 'charming but arranged pictures'. W. Eugene Smith ranked high for his 'moralism and involvement' and they admired the work of Kertész and also Cartier-Bresson, whom Strömholm regarded as 'great but restrained'. This is refreshing and a perfectly valid assessment of Cartier-Bresson's work. Yet Strömholm's classes were not strictly about street photography, they were an immersion in the emotion of photography, with strong references to documentary and art photography too. Once again, the extraction process applies.

It is hard to imagine the world of the 1950s for a fledgling photographer; there were virtually no bookshops with a well-stocked photography section, not to mention something as science fiction as Google, which puts history and inspiration at your fingertips. In the austere European 1950s, everything photographic was tactile, including the darkroom, and 'sharing' photographs was a tangible experience. Photography books were shared at camera clubs and a pivotal book, such as Cartier-Bresson's *The Decisive Moment*, published in 1952, would have been a rare treat. I have heard the British photographer Roger Mayne talk of this moment in photographic history at a symposium on Cartier-Bresson, and you sense just how precious that encounter was to him and others at the time. Mayne (opposite) subsequently photographed one street close to Notting Hill in London over a prolonged period in the late 1950s.

The received history is that *The Decisive Moment* and Robert Frank's *The Americans* in 1958 were the catalysts for a new kind of photography. Frank's skewed and loose photographs were a departure and took some years to actually make their mark. But the history of street photography cannot be overly attached to those two photo-books. It is as likely that street photography, as we know it today, simply emerged out of a changing society, from the formal to the informal. The parallel might literally be the freedom of taking photography out of the studio and onto the street. Lightweight cameras were available, together with faster film speeds, but also a less reverential society that wanted something less starchy. Street photography in many ways responded to a change in social attitudes.

The 1960s were especially a time of change, and it was during this decade that some of the most influential street photographers emerged. Cartier-Bresson's influence never wavered; his precise geometry and startling echoes continued to set a standard but it was another generation inspired by Cartier-Bresson and Kertész that fixed street photography more in the mainstream.

Bystander: A History of Street Photography by Colin Westerbeck and Joel Meyerowitz diligently chronicles the rise of street photography, and it is a very enjoyable and reliable resource. However, the 2001 paperback edition seems out of date for a phenomenon such as street photography. The book ends tentatively with the Internet on the verge of transforming everything. An afterword in *Bystander* states '*Throughout the history described in this book, there have been key periods when a group of street photographers have come together to share their work, their ideas and in some cases a sense of social purpose*'. How true this is, but it could equally be referring to the future.

CHAPTER 1

BUSY

Joel Meyerowitz views street photography as an 'optimistic sport'. We have to enjoy the energy and the challenge to hit the target.

Any examination of street photography must begin with busy spaces; to use a fishing analogy, you simply fish where most of the fish gather in the river. Given the choice on a weekend of heading into a busy market or the more empty business district of a city, most photographers would opt for the busy area.

I am often drawn to the noise of schools, and being high up in Darjeeling I was able to look down into this school playground (see opposite). I was struck by the riot of blue and had a slightly long lens but probably felt that I wanted to get closer. But you make do, and this scene became an arrangement of shapes and colours. There is a dog walking through the middle though you can hardly see it, and the girl on the bottom left with her raised arm adds balance, but everything is really a celebration of the colour blue.

There is a fascinating high-definition video by New York artist James Nares called *Street* (2011), which shows street life dramatically slowed down by a high-speed camera. For any street photographer this unscripted film is compelling because it shows the almost hidden dimension that a photographer seeks. Suddenly every subtle gesture and nuance of human movement is there to be seen more clearly.

Unfortunately that half-speed world does not truly exist for photographers – they could pick off targets at will if it did – but it is worth approaching the busy street with this possibility in mind because all these slow motion moments do exist. It is the task of the photographer – together with fortune – to glimpse these moments. Put simply, on a crowded street the camera freezes a moment that we often only half see.

'IF YOU CAN SMELL THE STREET BY LOOKING AT THE PHOTO, IT'S A STREET PHOTOGRAPH.'

BRUCE GILDEN

There's something in the imagination, too, that makes you want to romanticise street photography in a city like New York in the mid-1960s; especially that of three kindred spirits – Joel Meyerowitz, Garry Winogrand and Tod Papageorge, who all went out shooting together. They would sometimes bump into Lee Friedlander; they knew Diane Arbus; and they met a Frenchman once on the street who continually ducked in and out of the crowd. It was Henri Cartier-Bresson in his prime. These are all legendary figures and Meyerowitz has talked about knowing Robert Frank before he became Robert Frank. This is somehow reassuring – everyone has to start somewhere.

PROJECTS

*ORDER	page 52
*EVENTS	page 58
*SEQUENCES	page 64
*LINING UP	page 68

David Gibson, Darjeeling; 2009

There are latter-day spirits, such as Jeff Mermelstein, Gus Powell and Melanie Einzig, but they all seem to share that same New York attitude – a little brash, frenetic and slightly crazy. At least that's what they photograph, the craziness. Even the light in New York seems crazy.

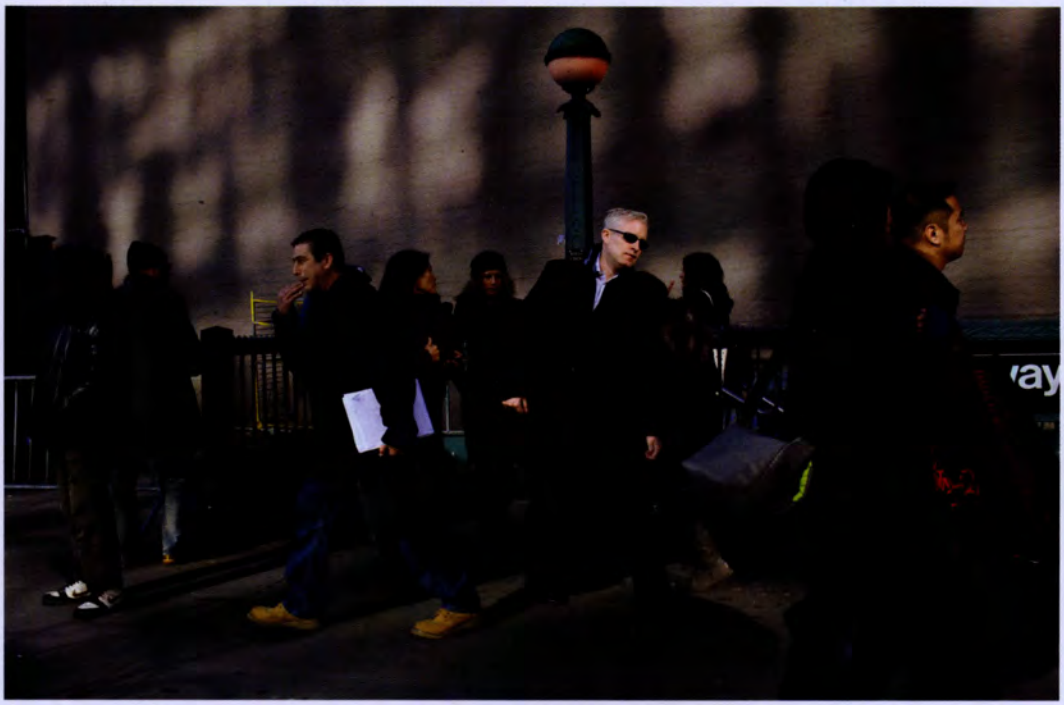
In the late 1990s Jeff Mermelstein typified the 'in your face' New York style with his book *Sidewalk* (1999). Gus Powell's work has a little more distance and is more driven by the subtle interplay between people. His photograph here has that New York light, which is largely aimed at the elegant man in sunglasses. It is almost like finding the night in the day.

And below these streets is the New York subway. What is it about this subterranean world that it can offer up such a myriad of different faces? Perhaps it's all those melting pot origins. You need only look at Christophe Agou's *Life Below* series, which follows that great tradition of photographing busy subterranean streets, to get a flavour. Joel Meyerowitz and Garry Winogrand, both of Jewish origin, had chutzpah in abundance that is made for the street. Bruce Gilden has continued that energy in his own particular way; he seems almost to have sprung from a Martin Scorsese film set on New York's streets.

What is it, though, that all these New York photographers have tried to do in their photographs? Put simply, they have attempted to make order out of chaos. Diane Arbus liked the chaos in people more than the street; she was drawn to the humanly strange. But for the rest it has been the congested streets themselves that is compelling.

Arbus took street portraits; she interacted with her subjects and this is a legitimate but quite separate genre of street photography. There is a trend for this sort of photography that probably draws the kind of

Gus Powell, New York; 2011



photographer who enjoys interaction, performance even, and for some the 'combat' rush of adrenalin. Some photographers literally shove the camera in a person's face and their reaction is the photograph. This accusation has been aimed at Bruce Gilden, but he does it with a degree of empathy; he gives people time, he does not want conflict. Unfortunately some street photographers enjoy conflict. Unlike Gilden, they are not members of Magnum.

So get close – and if it's your preference for interaction then fine – but it should never be about causing agitation. It is not a badge of honor to have confrontations with people, not to mention security staff or the police. This is occasionally unavoidable but perhaps a Robert Capa-like maxim should apply:

IF YOU GET STOPPED TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS, YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING WRONG.

This point can be taken a little further. If you're in a workshop that deals with knowing your legal rights and handling resentment, you are in the wrong workshop.

A familiar criticism heard while poring over photographs is that some are 'too busy' or, taken a step further, when processing images, 'there is too much noise'. In a busy area you expect more but it does not always happen. There is a flower market in London's East End every Sunday. It starts early and even in mid-afternoon the main street of the market is jammed with people; it is actually quite difficult to move, let alone take photographs. People do go there to take photographs but it is hard; everything is too busy and the photographer has little time or space to create good pictures. Some photographers might thrive there, but I suspect many would not.

You might eventually realise that the real photographs are away from the centre of the market. People buy huge pot plants and you can see them struggling with them a mile away on their way home. They have come from a busy area and that is the photograph. The heat of a busy area can be felt more comfortably a little away from the centre.

Colour can be busy and it is interesting to consider how the Canadian photographer Robert Walker first tackled it in a subtle, conventional way. His *New York: Inside Out* (1984) uses colour beautifully and in an almost old-fashioned way. Some years later he confronted colour more boldly in *Color Is Power* (2002). The pictures in this book are big, powerful and a little garish, but an honest view of how colour bombards us in a big city. An older Robert Walker was suddenly wearing loud shirts and enjoying it.

Martin Parr does loud colour too, and he frequently depicts a busy overloaded world with garish clashing colours. Parr's photographs are seldom calm and his camera has often fallen upon tourists. Some photographers in busy cities actually avoid tourists because they want everything to look indigenous. They might be happy to photograph in Tokyo, which would be full of Japanese people, but a busload of Japanese tourists in a European city is different. Tourism is part of many cities and maybe this jars a little with what street photography strives to be. Quite possibly it goes deeper, a wish that the world be authentic and in the past perhaps it was when mass travel was not so common.

The world's cities keep getting busier and street photography reflects that. Virtually all the images taken travel round the world, too; and are instantly shared online. Wherever people are, if they see street photographs taken in Italy, for example, it is comforting for them to recognise Italy in the images. The paradox is that everything is faster but we still crave an ideal. Street photography helps with that.

PROFILE

ELLIOTT ERWITT

born 1928, Paris. www.elliotterwitt.com

While trying to avoid fawning or speaking in clichés, Elliott Erwitt is simply one of the best photographers since the invention of the medium, who, as importantly, has influenced a great many other photographers. His witty black-and-white photographs, his *Personal Exposures*, which is also the title of one of his many books, are his legacy, and it is one that few can equal. Like Henri Cartier-Bresson, his words are also very succinct in how they understand photography. They cut through a world of photographic pomposity.

In many ways he is a street photographer because much of his personal work is taken on the street. In reality, Erwitt is a highly successful commercial photographer, who is known for his personal work. One feeds the other, but it is an important distinction to make.

Also one of the best-known Magnum photographers, Erwitt is renowned for his sharp sense of humour. His whole being seems to poke gentle fun at the absurdities in everyday life; he has a nice perspective and also a vast body of work that arguably buries some of his more poignant and serious work. He does visual puns – better than anyone – and everybody knows of his interplays between dogs and their owners, although there is much more to his work.

Consider 'The Family of Man' exhibition, one of the pivotal moments in the history of photography in the 20th century; it included Erwitt's 1953 photograph of his wife staring lovingly at their newborn daughter on a bed in low light, which is still a perfection of its kind. The word 'iconic' could genuinely be applied to this and several more of his photographs. Elliott Erwitt has taken great photographs, he has taken iconic photographs, and some of them are historical, too. Maybe the term 'iconic' actually encompasses all of these aspects of his work.

There are the photographs he took of Marilyn Monroe, Jackie Kennedy, Khrushchev and Che Guevara. In the first decades of his career he photographed practically everyone of prominence it seems; however, it is his photographs of ordinary people, animals and humorous subjects that really stand out. Erwitt is endlessly inventive and you keep coming back to his sense of fun. He also pokes fun at himself; there have always been self-portraits taken in strange attire, often on commercial shoots.

This is a great visual pun, and part of the fun is that the woman has absolutely no idea why a camera is pointing at her. It's the kind of luck that continually visits a photographer like Erwitt.

Selecting just one example of his work is difficult; you feel the need to avoid his oft-published and numerous pictures of dogs, or the obvious Erwitt puns. In the end, however, one of his best-known images is irresistible. Taken by Erwitt in Nicaragua in 1957, this woman's face says it all.

Perhaps this humorous image sums up street photography – the photographer delights in the happenstance, and in this case when the subject eventually looks at the camera she is mystified by his interest. Surely however, even she would laugh if she knew why.


VOTA POR
LUIS A. SOMOZA D.

PROJECT

1 ORDER

Believe absolutely that extraordinary luck is possible for the photographer who dedicates time to taking photographs on the street.

Making order out of chaos is an abiding principle of street photography, particularly when confronted with a busy scene. There are few photographers who can successfully celebrate the mess of a group of people on a street. Lee Friedlander sometimes 'overloaded' his photographs with traffic and street signs and Daido Moriyama has photographed the mess looking upwards at electric cables. Generally, though, the overriding aim of street photography is a pleasing order.

The idiom that 'two's company, three's a crowd' is appropriate here because a crowd requires orchestration.

Henri Cartier-Bresson took a perfectly orchestrated photo in Shanghai in 1948 (page 7). Taken for *Life* magazine it captures the pandemonium incited by a currency crash during which ten people were suffocated, yet the photograph still has a graceful flow and symmetry. Queues naturally snake horizontally.

There is a slight parallel with my group photograph here, though it was, of course, taken under very different circumstances. This is not a moment of distress or danger, but one of joyful expectation. In London's West End, this group of children in their *Annie* musical dresses had just arrived in front of the theatre. They then proceeded to walk round to the back entrance for what I think was an audition. I followed them and fired a sequence of shots, particularly when they lined up – in a gaggle – to go in. I was acutely aware of the potential of this scene and worked quickly hoping it might all come together. Fortunately it did. I was there standing across the road from them for just a few minutes. The background is a factor in this photograph; the wall and the No Parking sign help, but the 'magic' is that every person in the photograph is positioned almost perfectly. For such a large group, it is rare for nearly all the faces to be visible and therefore contributing to the overall impact. Not one person is doing anything 'wrong' or breaking the rhythm of the scene. Except, as a counterpoint, the boy wearing black with his back turned, who holds the picture together; the black nicely breaks the line of red.

This sequence of shots illustrates a day when the 'One-Eyed God of Photography' was looking kindly on me. Imbued in the one good shot is twenty-five years of wandering around taking photographs. On that day in February 2008 I had that familiar, vague feeling that it is mostly fruitless, nothing will happen, I'm not seeing, etc. I felt flat, and suddenly something happened; an opportunity was given to me, which I like to think I deserved.

I HAD AN ADRENALINE RUSH AFTER TAKING THESE PHOTOGRAPHS AND THAT FEELING, THAT CERTAINTY, HAS HAPPENED PERHAPS ONLY THREE OR FOUR TIMES BEFORE.

David Gibson, London; 2008

1A

2A

3A

4A

5A

6A

7A

8A

9A

10A

CONCLUSION

There are nine children in this photograph, which ordinarily might be too many to orchestrate. Most people on the street usually move in pairs or perhaps a group of three or four, which is visually far more manageable.

- Before action, do a test shot for the exposure. Decide on the camera setting before you proceed.
- Look at the whole frame as you shoot; be aware of distractions because they can spoil a potentially good photograph.
- Believe that luck and awareness can bring order to chaos.
- Think rhythms, balance and flow.
- Practise on the flow of people coming towards you on a busy street, or from a fixed point at a busy exit at a railway station.
- Look at the photographs of New York's Gus Powell who specialises in street corners; he catches two flows of people.
- Clearly seen faces are not always necessary, shapes are just as important.

PROFILE

KAUSHAL PARIKH

This child sleeping calmly on a busy Mumbai street would have been difficult to resist. The transparency of the hammock gives it a womb-like feel.

born 1970, Mumbai. www.kaushalp.com

Kaushal Parikh's contribution to street photography – and one that he shares with a handful of other photographers – is two-fold. First, there are his images, especially his classic black-and-white work; and second is how he has brought other street photographers together in his own country.

He started with a dedicated Facebook page, Street Photography in India, but more significantly in 2011 he founded That's Life, India's first collective in the online photography world, showing only photographs taken in India. That's Life contributors commit themselves to shooting in India once a year. Street photography collectives have predictably moved in two directions, either international or domestic, with the latter often providing a more focused and pure content. This is even more pertinent to India because it is such a large and diverse country.

Parikh, who is unusually tall for an Indian and described by a friend as 'very gentle, rather quiet', resides in a country where the photographic landscape is dominated by Raghu Rai and Raghubir Singh. Typically Parikh's story is one of creative isolation – his

There is so much to read into this powerful black and white photograph; your eyes switch back and forth. Everything is beautifully composed and atmospheric.

own isolation whilst working in banking – and India's initial isolation in the street photography community. Parikh saw 'a gap in the market' and That's Life has followed in the tradition of connecting locally and inspiring globally.

Parikh discovered his passion for photography during his banking years, when he knew little about street photography. In a familiar trajectory for many photographers, he then recognised the street as a legitimate place for photography while studying the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson and Elliott Erwitt. He quit the corporate world in 2006 and only very recently started to consider colour as an option. Photographers such as Steve McCurry and eventually Alex Webb were both big influences, but so too was the encouragement he received from a few In-Public photographers. His sense of isolation began to recede and perhaps inevitably – on the web – he connected with Eric Kim, with whom he has organised several street photography workshops in Mumbai, in keeping with his quiet ambassadorial role within street photography in India.

Parikh is still eagerly learning and admits that photographing in Mumbai is a challenge. Photographing any urban centre in India is difficult – there is always an onslaught of colour and a sheer mess of humanity and backgrounds. Pictures can be overcrowded in every sense.

Parikh's photograph above, taken in 2009, relates to what he describes as the 'circle of life'. He waited a few minutes, everything formed a circle, and he got his shot before it was broken. There is fine composition at work here – luck, patience and an awareness that it might all come together. The other photograph, taken in 2011, is part of the same cycle with the womb-like hammock on a Mumbai street. It is a little surreal but beautiful as well.

PROJECT

2 EVENTS

Events are fertile ground for a street photographer, but avoid documenting the event directly; the edges are far more interesting.

Events, parades, protests and any kind of gatherings understandably attract photographers, because they offer the potential for worthwhile photographs. In addition it is easier to take photographs in a crowd because you are far less conspicuous. Everybody is taking photographs and it is fairly easy to get right in close.

However, I believe that photographers – including those just starting out – should to a large degree avoid the event itself in their photographs. For example, The Chinese New Year celebrations in theory are a must to photograph, but consider what you really want to achieve. There is of course absolutely nothing wrong with documenting such an event; it is a great place to start, always head for crowds and gatherings, always look for 'triggers' that can stimulate your senses to get your eye in. The aim is to find your own event within the big event.

Many times I have photographed events, they provide a purpose and a starting point. But equally quite often after the initial rush of excitement of arriving in the crowd a sense of vague disappointment washes over me. It is then that I have to dig and find my own way. I look for 'my photographs'; I am not documenting it for someone else.

The subject matter of street photography should be broad and ambivalent otherwise it merges back into documentary photography. Photographing a series of events under one broad theme is arguably different. Tony Ray-Jones obsessively chronicled the English at play in traditional festivals and at seaside resorts in a body of work that became the book, *A Day Off: An English Journal* (1974). His approach was meticulously planned over a prolonged period with a real intention to gather the material into a book.

Consider too his 1960s photographs of the St Patrick's Day parade in New York, which is one of the best street events around. How many photographers, both high profile and otherwise, have weaved in and out of a crowd like that. New York has many parades – it has Polish Day, Veteran's Day, Israeli Independence Day, Easter Parade, Thanksgiving Day Parade, to name but a few – that can only emphasise the advantage of being close to a big city.

Parades are fixed events, but big cities are the hub for protests too and they can spring up at any time. Protests can of course be tricky, there are police present and there might be violence, but the same principles apply for the street photographer. What do you want to photograph and do you want your photographs to be a very obvious record of an event?

This first photograph (opposite) of the man standing on a bike was taken at the Queen Mother's funeral in London in 2002, which was a big 'event' – historically and emotionally – for many people. There were many photographers there that day officially, but others like myself were trying to observe things around the edge. I remember briefly meeting In-Public's Matt Stuart, but neither of us had time to waste; we had to get back to the crowds. Street photographers always meet up after the event, or when the light is fading.

The cyclist here looks as if he is from the 1960s and is a very particular kind of Englishman. Look at those cuff links. But what is he looking at, when was it

David Gibson, London; 2002

David Gibson, London; 1995

taken, and how does he manage to stand on the bike with such elegance and confidence?

It is very interesting to compare the work taken by different photographers of the same public event, because it becomes clear that the 'selfish' photographers take the more distinctive and lasting images. This might be contentious, but they use the event to take 'their photographs'. If there is a marathon race through the centre of a city, photographing the runners is limiting, but turning the camera the other way, towards the crowd, is better. You could argue that this is a misleading practice because it might be an historic event, but the press covers these events, it is their job. The ethos of street photography is to be free of obligations.

A particular example – and one imagined because I have never taken such a shot – would be after a marathon. People often dress up in funny costumes, so imagine two men on the subway still in their costumes, two halves of a cow removed from the original event and context. Photographs are sometimes only as good as your imagination and this returns to the idea of knowing from experience what is possible with luck. Quite possibly the potential for luck increases at events and this is why they are the life-blood for street photographers.

This photograph on the left was taken at the VJ Day Anniversary in London in 1995. How do you photograph such an event? You don't; you just follow your instincts. Does it help to know the story behind this photograph? It is interesting, but equally the photograph has more impact without the backstory. Someone commented that this couple had been sitting there for fifty years, which would make it another anniversary.

CONCLUSION

The whole of a city or town is an event itself, and most street photographers cover a lot of ground as they wander. The delight of wandering with no particular agenda is coming upon a gathering of people engaged in some sort of event. It's unexpected, something that would be difficult to know about in advance perhaps. Street photographers develop an antenna for what might be interesting, but equally when they arrive they know instantly if it has been worthwhile. Even if they spend just 15 minutes there, it is not wasted, they are still out with their camera.

- Research events both fixed and random. Ten minutes online might reveal potential for where to start that day.
- Big cities have ethnic communities that have their own particular events, such as Holi.
- Equally, just wander, head for noise or crowds gathering.
- London has Speakers' Corner, an area for open-air public speaking; many other cities have something similar once a week.
- Go to small local events: local fetes, boot fairs, jumble sales, etc. These are often not in big cities but in small towns, villages and seaside resorts.
- At protests don't overly concentrate on placards; they are easy shots.
- At events avoid directly photographing people in silly costumes; the better shots are usually when they are removed from the event.
- Don't underestimate the potential to meet other photographers at events; sometimes you start to see the same people.
- Even bad weather is an event, especially when it's wet and windy; it alters the way people behave on the street.

PROFILE

BRUCE GILDEN

born 1946, New York. www.brucegilden.com

To omit Bruce Gilden in any survey of street photography would be like going against some sort of trade description. You sense, as was the case with Garry Winogrand, that if you want to find him, you will have to go looking for him on the streets.

The streets are his territory; he doesn't exactly own them but he is at home there. In a sense, he's everything a street photographer should be – tough, tenacious and in possession of a wealth of stories about his street encounters. Yet the real story is how he has dealt with these situations and no doubt a degree of charm has always helped. This is a documentary photographer who has got right up close – literally – and this has included shoppers on the streets of Derby, UK, as well as gangsters in Tokyo. His up-closeness is his trademark. Not everybody likes this approach and his style is always going to be divisive.

He is, however, one of the most copied street photographers, or at least his manner is copied because few so-called 'aggressive' photographers are accepted into Magnum and there is considerably more to his work once you delve beyond the up close with flash pictures. You get the impression that he photographs what he cares about and he pursues projects with real dedication. In 2013 he was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship, the same award that enabled Robert Frank to produce *The Americans* many years before.

Gilden's photographs are dynamic; they deal with the theatre of the street and can lean towards the outrageous, wherever he goes. His technical aesthetic is his flash. Consider his 2002 book, *Coney Island* – the place was surely made for him; he photographed on the beach, which is an overspill of the street. Again, these are photographs taken at close range, with mounds of flesh everywhere; they are certainly not beautiful but they are honest. The style and texture is a little reminiscent of William Klein.

Gilden is right in there, up close and very personal. These New York women in the startling 1990 time capsule is exactly what he wanted.

The work of both Klein and Diane Arbus has influenced Gilden; the grotesqueness of Arbus is apparent but tempered by Klein's busy and careful composition. Gilden's distinct subject, however, is his 'characters' and best of all the characters seen on the street.

It is interesting that his no-nonsense approach finds a favourable reception when he does workshops. Photographers may not instinctively warm to his style, but he does shake up attitudes and challenge people's comfort zones. He practises what he preaches and these attributes are always good for any kind of true learning.

The two women 'mugged' in the photograph from his first major book *Facing New York* (1992) is typical Gilden – you smell the street immediately and he has kept faith with that style. It's not beautiful but it's real.

PROJECT 3

SEQUENCES

Sometimes several pictures are better than one to show what happened next, because the unexpected can be a wonderful story.

Sequences occupy a strange place in street photography and not many photographers would even remotely consider them, either consciously or even sub-consciously – they would not recognise the possibilities and this reveals the main dilemma of how deliberate sequences can be. For the curious, the serendipity of sequences is part of their charm.

Typically Elliott Erwitt, who loves the fun of the unexpected, is a frequent 'sequencer'; it is part of his repertoire, sometimes with just two pictures as below, sometimes with several. The couple in deckchairs in Cannes are there in one frame and gone in the next, seemingly catapulted by alarmingly strong winds. Individually the photos are meaningless but as a sequence, they tell a story.

Nils Jorgensen of In-Public is one of those rare 'sequencers' on the street. Forever taking photographs he likely gathers more untold stories than most. Perhaps he consciously looks for them; like many aspects of street photography, one success primes the next.

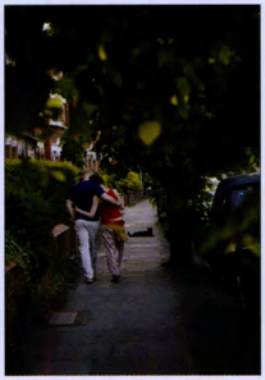
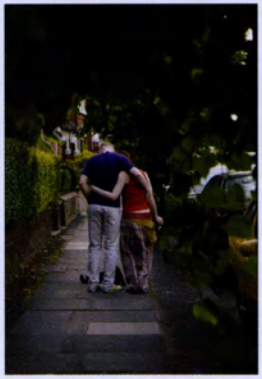
Jorgensen is a cat watcher; he has time for them because he understands that cats have time to consider the small moments in life. Nothing really happens, it's just a charming, quiet encounter on the street, with a beginning, middle and an end.

CONCLUSION

It is a pity that few street photographers produce stories in sequences; they are too preoccupied with the single shot. Perhaps it is another sort of language, and film or video can do it more easily. It requires patience, too, because you do not know how long to wait, but street photography is a continual sequence anyway – of near misses and hope.

- Look at 'sequences' in your contact sheets or scroll through your digital images. Two or more photographs might work better than one.
- A story might already be there.
- Be aware of people arriving somewhere to do something – think man with ladders putting up large poster or billboard. It's already a story but something unexpected might happen.
- There is a 'gap in the market' for sequences.

Elliott Erwitt, Cannes; 1975






Nils Jorgensen, London; 2006

PROFILE

MATT STUART

born 1974, London. www.mattstuart.com

Matt Stuart takes a lot of photographs and he is extraordinarily 'lucky'; the two factors are inextricably linked. He knows exactly what he is looking for and is always primed for the absurdities that come his way.

His now iconic photograph of the striding pigeon (page 15) seemingly leading a group of figures – all in black and all in step – in front of London's National Portrait Gallery is the perfect example of a great street photograph. This is a hard photograph to take and it emphasises his singular style.

That style is again illustrated here with his photograph taken of a New York policeman with the shadowed moustache; again, what 'luck'! You have to check his moustache to make sure what it is.

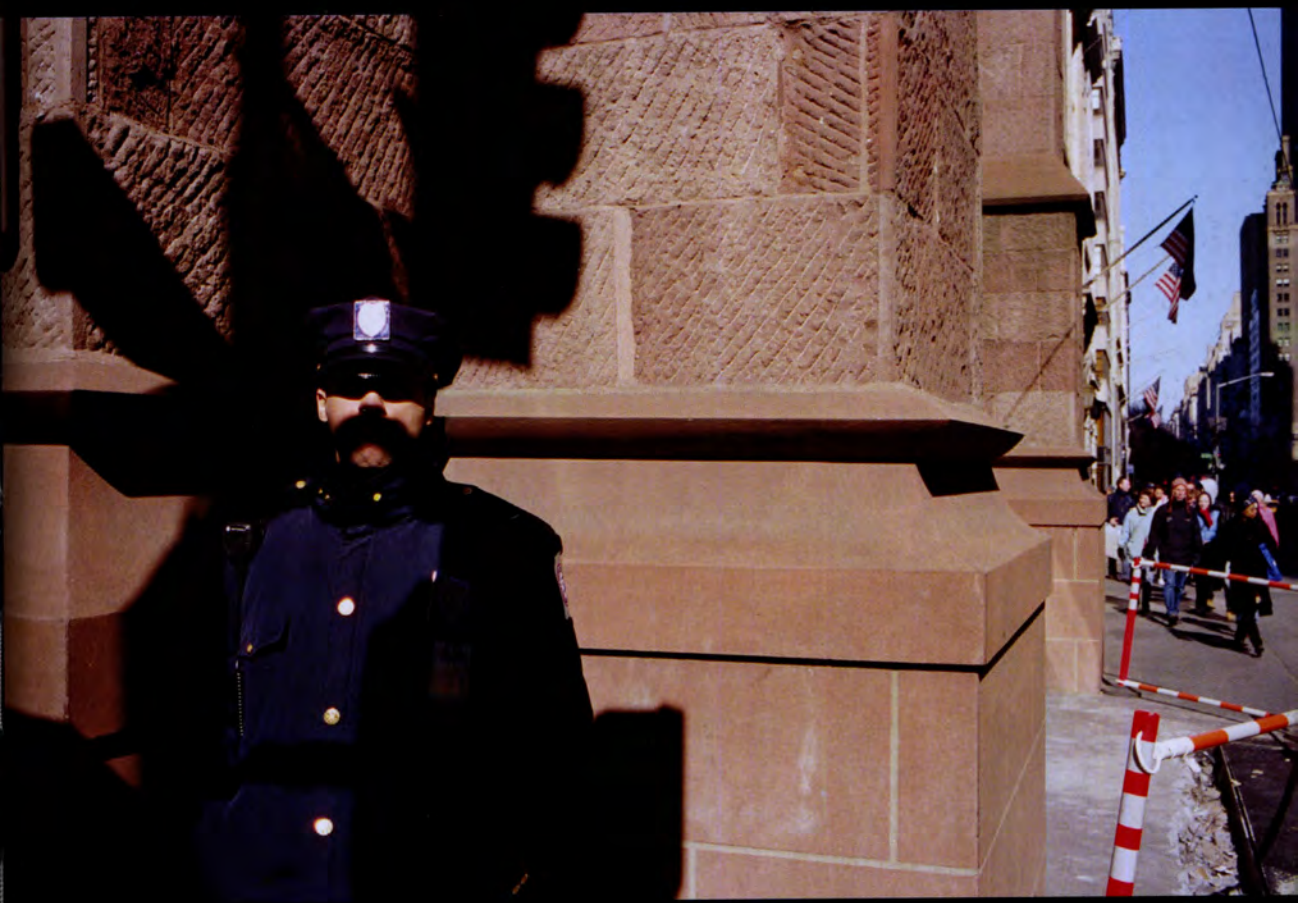
Stuart's background is one of changing obsessions; first the trumpet, then skateboarding and finally street photography. Crucially connected to this was the influence of Matt's father, David Stuart, who was very successful in the design world after setting up a prominent London design group and who also co-wrote an important book, *A Smile in the Mind* (1996). This book could almost be a template for Stuart's clever observations, some of which – to some people – seem too good to be true. They might be 'art-directed' in his head but they are genuinely real moments that are the essence of pure street photography. Advertising agencies and design groups know this too and Stuart has undertaken assignments for them all around the world.

His heroes in photography are numerous: Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Frank, Joel Meyerowitz, Garry Winogrand, Tony Ray-Jones and Lee Friedlander should be noted, but Stuart has often cited attending a workshop by Magnum's Leonard Freed in 1998 as significant. It was there that he started to see more clearly and the obsession took grip. First it was black-and-white photography but he found his true identity with colour. This is not an uncommon 'progression' but you sense the comfort in Stuart's style with colour. His world needs to be colourful.

This is signature Matt Stuart; being in the right place at the right time, in New York, 2009. You simply cannot imagine such a shot, that's what makes it so special. When he moved off the cop would have suddenly become clean-shaven.

When asked what advice he would give to someone starting street photography, Stuart summed up his philosophy as follows:

'BUY A GOOD PAIR OF COMFORTABLE SHOES. HAVE A CAMERA AROUND YOUR NECK AT ALL TIMES, KEEP YOUR ELBOWS IN, BE PATIENT, OPTIMISTIC AND DON'T FORGET TO SMILE.'



PROJECT

4 LINING UP

There is always an alternative view: if two people can become one and baffle the viewer then the photograph works.

I have often thought that the obsessive photographic eye eventually develops an element of autism – in which everything visual is processed slightly differently from the mainstream – so that, for example, elements can be satisfyingly lined up. A strong element of street photography is making things fit, almost like the pleasing joints in carpentry or a jigsaw. This 'fit' is an exercise in some respects, but, if done well, you literally cannot see the join.

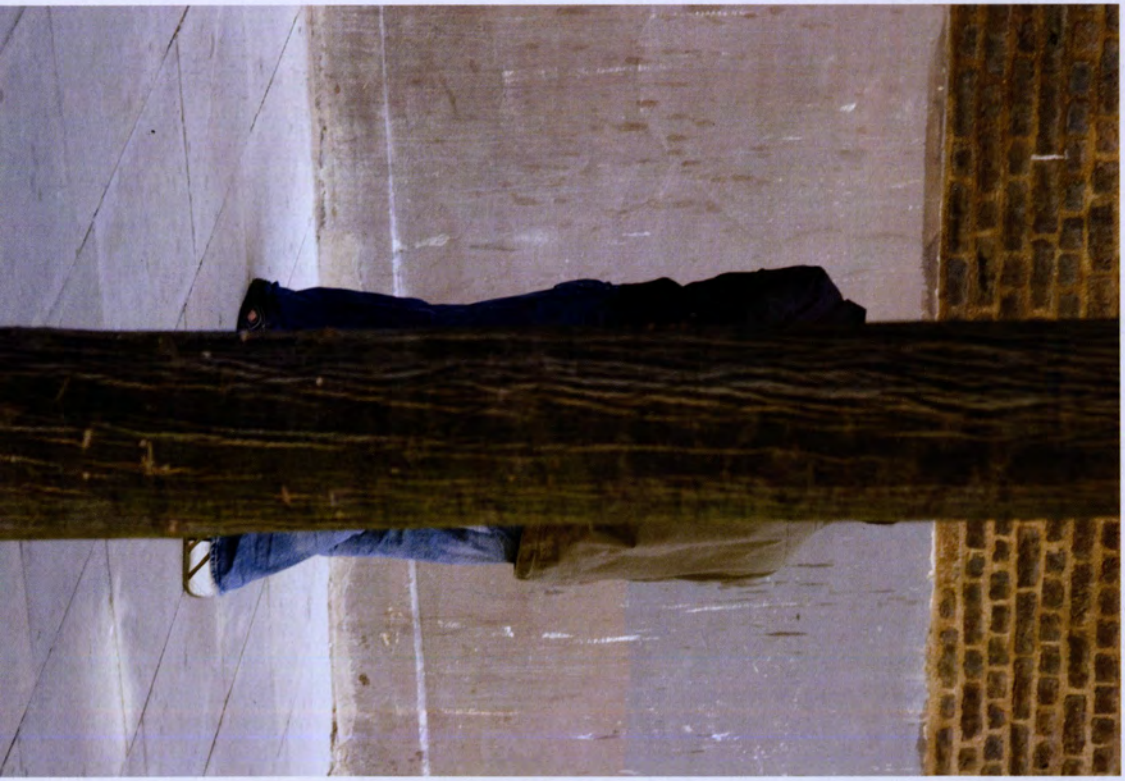
One of the satisfactions of observing people on the street is their body language. An example of exploring this is by observing two people who are absorbed in each other's company, because from different angles they are 'joined' and can fleetingly become one. This creates an alternative or sideways view: it is a visual trick that can prompt the viewer to look twice. If a photograph demands time to understand it, it is a photograph that works.

The photograph of the two men behind the telegraph pole works because they genuinely merge into a single standing figure, with the pole. This image required lots of very slight movements for everything to fit. I was hidden behind the pole, which gave me time to try minor adjustments.

However, with hindsight this photograph seems to be more of an exercise; it works but it probably lacks real punch. The Stockholm fit on the next page is far more effective.

IT IS AN INESCAPABLE TRUTH THAT SOME PHOTOGRAPHS WORK BETTER THAN OTHERS, YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT THIS. FEEDBACK HELPS; NO PHOTOGRAPHER IS COMPLETELY UNSWAYED BY OPINION, BUT YOU HAVE TO KNOW YOURSELF.

David Gibson, London; 2006



David Gibson, Stockholm; 2012

The sequence of three Stockholm photographs here shows the jigsaw coming together. The red hair of the woman in the foreground stood out but the two friends sitting on the steps were to my eye one entity. I quietly sat near them, took one shot and then quickly adjusted my position – moving one step down and then another so that from my angle the pieces in my composition 'fitted' together to make a visual illusion. Each image is only slightly different but only the final one works.

There was the possibility of a fourth shot as a friend approached the pair, but I instinctively knew that I would be pushing my luck if I tried to take more photographs. To take street photographs, you need to develop an acute awareness of when your imagined cloak of invisibility is about to slip. If you take too many photographs or do it in a clumsy way, the natural scene that you wish to photograph will disintegrate. There is a very fine line between the need to get a photograph and 'giving the game away' by getting caught. So much is dependent on the body language of the photographer; you need to pursue your subject as if you are not interested, when in reality you are very interested. Experience can teach you this, but it is also an attitude. I saw this moment in Stockholm and I wanted to get it absolutely right – there was only one fit – and this is not an uncommon feeling. Without sounding too absurd I hope, I would extend the analogy of the hunter and its prey. The cheetah hiding in the long grass is not seen and knows exactly what it is doing.

CONCLUSION

It's a strange thing to see two – or even three – people merging into one. You have to develop a particular taste for this absurdity, which is not for everyone's palate. Like other aspects in street photography it can be in your vocabulary for possible use. It's a trick but like any trick done well, the impact is immediate.

- **Look at the book *Earthlings* (2007) by Richard Kalvar, who frequently sees people and their shapes in fresh ways.**
- **Remember that people engaged in conversation will often be unaware of a photographer's interest in them.**
- **Think unconventionally: perhaps a person in your composition might usefully merge into the background.**
- **Consider lining up people with animals too; the more legs the better!**
- **Lining up – or merging – can also involve colour. For instance, a green top can become one with nature.**
- **Likewise, black-and-white can absorb differences. A green top appears dark, like a hedge; they too can become one.**
- **People 'line up' best when they are stationary and away from traffic. Public squares are good for this.**

PROFILE

MARIA PLOTNIKOVA

born 1984, Moscow. www.mariaplotnikova.com

The photo is a celebration of bold red but it's also charming and a little mysterious. It's a simple juxtaposition but it works so well.

Maria Plotnikova makes an interesting observation about the paucity of female street photographers in Russia that can probably be applied more widely. Female photographers, she thinks, prefer 'guaranteed' trends in photography, such as portrait, documentary, wedding or even sports photography. She adds that, with time, women will make their mark on street photography as they have in documentary work.

Plotnikova is a thoughtful photographer who draws on a wide range of influences; she studied philology – a combination of literary criticism, history and linguistics – with an emphasis on Russian literature and language. She cites this as a major influence and suggests that Russian culture is built on verbal foundations, which gives primacy to the word over visual language. A Russian apartment might be 'visually primitive' while home to a library of many books. Her view is that 'we believe more deeply through the word than through the picture'. This is an interesting conundrum but Plotnikova strongly believes that Russian photography is therefore driven by an overabundance of information and narrative.

She herself has a background in documentary and especially sports photography. She likes all sports and is

This is perfectly framed, indeed a whole series of lines and colour with the little boy caught exactly at the right moment. His joy at kicking the football is infectious.

a fan of the Russian football team, which she describes as a 'very sad passion'. Plotnikova also notes the relationship between sports and street photography, in the 'decisive moment' of hitting the target.

Plotnikova is a member of Street Photographers Collective, which she joined in 2012, and she cites members of other collectives as influential, including Jesse Marlow, Nils Jorgensen and Maciej Dakowicz, but she reserves special praise for her 'virtual teacher', Gueorgui Pinkhassov. Alex Webb and Harry Gruyaert's use of colour has also been an influence on Plotnikova's work.

Plotnikova is sensitive to colour, particularly as she comes from a relatively 'grey' place dictated by plain visual taste but also climate. Intriguingly, since 2010 she has been living in South America, in Buenos Aires and now São Paulo. She thought at first that she would 'go mad from the diversity of colours and the light' but yet again this has provided her with more studies and influences. She is now well versed in South American photography, citing Sebastião Salgado, Sara Facio and Magnum member Alessandra Sanguinetti. The latter you sense connects with a very particular feminine sensitivity.

Plotnikova emerged and gained confidence from the Flickr world of street photography – she still regularly checks in – but has since continued to learn beyond that. Her wide interests are reassuring, in that there is always something new to discover, especially when you live away from your home country.

South and Latin American colour dominate her photographs here. The girl wearing a red top complements the umbrella in her photo from Cuba, 2008. The action shot of little Lionel Messi running on an Argentine beach, 2010, is perfectly framed.

CHAPTER 2 QUIET

Although cities are crowded with people, photography is a reflective and calming way of seeking quiet amid the noise.

Some photographs shout loudly; they draw our attention and make an instant impact. The alternative is the quiet photograph: fewer people, more space and, in a sense, more time. Quiet photographs are slow photographs. You give time to the photograph because it has depth. Busy and quiet are not necessarily polar opposites, but it is worthwhile to recognise how a photograph works.

Photographs suggest, and it is up to the viewer to engage and make their own interpretation. Attributes of the quiet photograph are that it is calm, modest, measured and has grace and economy. You could add other attributes: quiet photographs can be spiritual, sad, gentle, or comforting, however, all these aspects are fluid. There are also other, as yet unthought or unexpected, attributes that are unique to a particular photograph.

There might even be an unexplored question regarding gender: for example, do female photographers take quieter photographs? Street photography is largely the preserve of the male and perhaps the female aesthetic is a little less boisterous at times.

There is a beautifully considered anthology called *Hope Photographs* (1998) that offers yet another category of what a photograph might suggest. Many of the photographs in this book are calm and poignant, although hope is not exclusively quiet. A more uniformly quiet book is *To Sleep, Perchance to Dream* (1997) by Ferdinando Scianna. Always fascinated by the sight of 'figures wrapped in sleep', Scianna gathered a collection of pictures alongside evocative quotes from Shakespeare on a universal theme. The book is soothing and emphasises how well quiet photographs can collaborate with text.

'WHEN PEOPLE LOOK AT MY PICTURES I WANT THEM TO FEEL THE WAY THEY DO WHEN THEY WANT TO READ A LINE OF A POEM TWICE.'

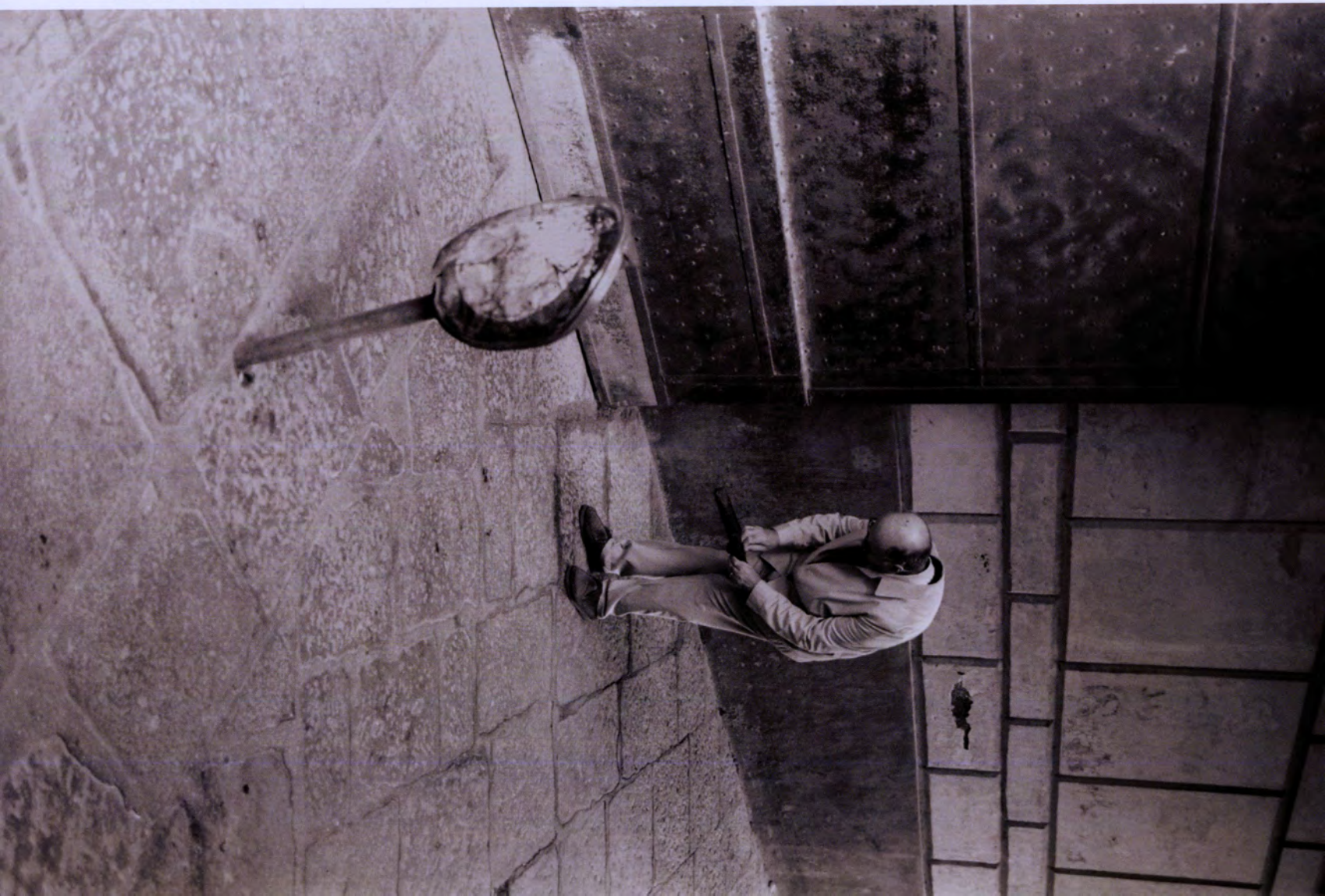
ROBERT FRANK

Quiet photographs lend themselves to having a title, but an ill-thought-out title can narrow the possibilities of the image. A good title should naturally aid our appreciation of the image and the intent of the photographer. Quiet can evoke a mood and thus a title: as with book covers, the right photograph suggests something 'inside'. It is worth going into a bookstore and looking at the carefully chosen covers in the fiction section. Often they are contemplative,

PROJECTS

*WAITING	page 80
*FOLLOWING	page 86
*BEHIND	page 92
*LOOKING DOWN	page 98

David Gibson, Perugia, Italy; 1992



and the people depicted on them are somewhat anonymous. These cover images are nearly always sourced from picture libraries and again it is worth researching the styles that these libraries offer. There is a demand for quiet – and abstract – photographs, and many photographers shoot specifically for picture libraries.

Sebastião Salgado's photographs have always been intensely epic, almost biblical in their scale. His *Workers* series was suitably industrious and in his recent eight-year *Genesis* project, the scale remains but the photographs are quieter and less crowded. They are about remote communities and a concern for nature, a quiet protest about the damage that we do to our planet.

Rural streets – roads without houses – are quiet. Rural communities such as the Christian Mennonites cling to a different way of life. They do not shun technology but there is a strong emphasis on peace and quiet. Magnum photographer Larry Towell has extensively documented their way of life in Canada and Mexico. His beautifully composed photographs evoke the simplicity and quietude of their lives. The theme of childhood is prominent and you can strongly sense Towell's sincerity and respect for Mennonite traditions.

Nils Jorgensen (page 90) seeks the quieter margins of the streets. In his work there are typically fewer people, sometimes just a singular graphic figure against a suitable background or various quiet echoes; occasionally the echoes are just small splashes of colour. Like many street photographers, the colour yellow is common in his photographs because it is everywhere in street markings. Yellow is quieter than red.

Arguably colour is louder than black-and-white, especially primary colours, which can be distracting. It is significant that Henri Cartier-Bresson only reluctantly worked with colour on assignments because he felt so strongly about its inherent difficulties. He had a distinct philosophy about what photography should be. However, you need only consider the early colour work of Saul Leiter (page 124) to recognise that quiet need not be exclusive to monochrome. Over analysing the merits of the two options can be a distraction in itself. What is important is the intent of the photographer. It is better to consider the mood of a photographer's work, whether it leans more to busy, quiet, or abstract rather than the actual palette.

Quiet is good for the soul and it is interesting to observe the work of certain photographers. The renowned war photographer Don McCullin covered noisy and bloody war zones throughout the world over several decades, including in Lebanon, Northern Ireland and Vietnam. What he primarily sought in his work was to emphasise the quiet dignity of people amid the inhumanity and madness of war. Today he seeks solace by incessantly photographing the rural landscape in his adopted Somerset. These black-and-white photographs are all the more powerful and redemptive when you consider his experiences in war zones. Don McCullin is a quiet and dignified photographer who, by his own admission, was transfixed by the adrenaline rush of war.

The ultimate quiet photographer is Vivian Maier; indeed, she was virtually unknown during her lifetime. There has been much conjecture about how and why this came about; was she content not to seek an audience, did she perhaps lack ambition or confidence, or was this more a reflection of women's roles in society during her formative years? She worked as a nanny for a family in Chicago for much of her working life yet obsessively documented life on the streets. It seems that she wanted to be left alone although quite possibly like many photographers she experienced frustration and did not, for example, have the money to process much of her later work. Her 'quietness' – since her discovery shortly after her death in 2009 – is of a different order, but in their 'modesty' her photographs do have a quiet dignity. Her street photographs, some of which can be considered street portraits, are not exclusively quiet. She photographed on busy streets, but her silent approach has been rediscovered in the Internet age.

It is misleading to try and suggest where quiet photographs might be found. Of course, there are emptier parts of a city and at night there is stillness in some places, but quiet photographs really start with the mind and the eye of the photographer, and what they seek in their pictures. The photographer highlights what he or she wants to see and crucially excludes what is uninteresting to them.

Photographers eventually take photographs subconsciously; it becomes a prolonged personality test that reveals aspects of who they are. In theory the more extrovert are drawn to the busy streets while the quiet photographer prefers space; they do not want to be hemmed in by crowds.

Street photographers wander; they move in and out of busy and quiet. Most photographers instinctively gravitate towards busy streets because there might be 'something going on', but how many photographers have taken a better photograph on the way home from a busy event? They have been fired up or frustrated by the crowds, but with their eye suitably primed, they have got something worthwhile afterwards.

Quiet photographs are reassuring. They are like parks in a busy city.

Vivian Maier, Florida; 1957

PROFILE

LUKAS VASILIKOS

There is so much going on in this photograph. The out-of-focus girl in the foreground and the couple on the right are part of a short story.

born 1975, Heraklion, Crete. www.lukasvasilikos.com

The Cretan, Lukas Vasilikos, is one of the most respected of the new generation of street photographers in Greece, although his motivations and relationship with photography are a little surprising.

What immediately strikes you about him is his discipline and commitment. It's intriguing to learn that part of this was instilled during his years as an athlete, from the age of eleven to thirty-two. He was one of the best decathlon athletes in Greece and was only a few places down in the national rankings from being considered for the Olympics. He freely acknowledges that the patience and discipline required in athletics are now vital in his photography.

Another facet of Vasilikos is that since 1996 he has been working as a policeman, currently as a traffic officer at Athens airport, which makes his accumulation of images all the more impressive. Unsurprisingly, he is a member of the international Street Photographers Collective, and has participated in many exhibitions.

Vasilikos cites Michael Ackerman, Anders Petersen, Roy DeCarava and Trent Parke as influences. You can see this in his work, particularly in his monochrome, where mystery, mood and sometimes edginess prevail.

He seems to wear different photographic hats, though; he deals with the business of Athens with

What a crazy moment caught by the camera; what on earth is happening? The photographer likely knows the story but we don't. A great example of how the camera can freeze people in flight.

its bright light and colours, yet sometimes his photographs are quieter, reflective, even abstract – more the Ackerman look. Many of Vasilikos's photographs are taken at night; he likes to fill up the frame with black and 'mood', and this extends indoors too. He takes photographs wherever he is – at the beach, in a restaurant, or at home with his family and friends. There are moody portraits of women along with children too. They all capture a certain intimacy and it is evident in the photographs that friends and family trust him.

Flitting back and forth between colour and black-and-white can be troublesome – for the viewer and the photographer – but Vasilikos wears both hats comfortably. He is a photographer who studies hard; you could say that he learns songs off by heart and then suddenly makes another song, which is more his own.

His street photographs are always clever but the inbetween shots, the ones in which friends and colleagues are gathered in cafes or restaurants, capture something equally compelling. These are the streets resting, identifiably Greek, which he captures quite naturally.

The photograph (above left, Athens 2009) of a girl sitting opposite the photographer in a cafe is surprising because the focus is not on her – she is mysterious – but on the couple behind her. But back on the streets – by the sea – an extraordinary somersault is performed amid the crashing waves (above, Crete 2007). What on earth is happening here?

PROJECT 5

WAITING

Backgrounds are a beginning; an interesting background in texture, words or shape can be half of a photograph. Then we wait.

What I call 'waited for' – or 'staked out' – photographs can be clichéd, in which the juxtaposition becomes too formulaic; it might literally be the 'oldest trick in the book'. Photographers take clever photographs employing this 'technique' but the better results are those where you cannot first see the method; it should look as if the photographer naturally came upon the scene complete. It might be a paradox; you want the perfect picture but you don't want it to look too perfect.

Imperfections are at the heart of street photography; however, backgrounds do offer a little more control for the photographer. There is an element of the scene being preconceived in the photographer's head but ideally not completely. Find an interesting background and imagine the 'perfect casting' – the right person to walk into the scene – but be open to what might actually transpire.

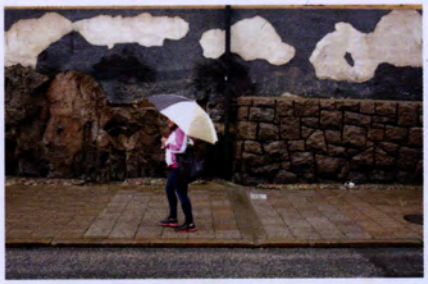
The first of the two 'cloud' series here is an example of being open to possibilities. The obvious cloud shape on boarding in a London street immediately struck me. It was raining and people were passing by with umbrellas. I imagined a little girl with red Wellington boots and a red umbrella passing under the cloud. It did not happen and I settled for a drably clothed man of the 'wrong' height, who merges more with the cloud rather than passing underneath it. The scene needs more colour, but the other imperfections work; people have commented that the cloud stain is more like smoke coming from his umbrella. The other two photos in this series are clearly warm-ups but this was not a long stake out. Sometimes if something does not come naturally it is better not to force it.

This straining is apparent in the other cloud series where, having chanced upon the cloud idea, I saw something similar in Stockholm: a wall on which the plaster had eroded – to my amazement – suggested big fluffy white clouds. It was a busy street, again it was raining and people were passing in front of the 'clouds', but this was a much longer wait and subsequently became overworked. The background was not so simple; there was more than one 'cloud' and the whole scene required more orchestration. In other words, the odds were stacked against me. What did I really hope for? Perhaps two or three people in unison passing in front of clouds? The slight desperation is evident in the lengthy series of shots. Some are horizontal, some are vertical and nothing looks quite natural. It was one of those days when, in the words of Henri Cartier-Bresson, I was guilty of wanting. The chosen image of the woman with the white boots works to an extent, although it does not work as naturally as the London shot.

CONCLUSION

I cannot emphasise enough how the natural and unforced element of waited photographs should be prioritised. The combination of patience and luck is at the heart of street photography. You tend to get what you deserve and sometimes it is just not meant to happen and you move on. And there is a moment when it does not feel right waiting any longer; in a sense you wear out your welcome.

David Gibson, London; 2008



3A

4A

5A

6A

TIPS

- Wait a while but not too long; if the background is fairly permanent, you can always return with fresh eyes.
- When you 'set up' the photograph and the subject is walking into the frame, wait until the very last moment because if they see you want to take a photograph they will politely wait at the side or even walk behind you so as not to disturb your shot. This can be critical; don't reveal your intentions.
- Some backgrounds involve sunlight and shadows, which are constantly changing. The shadows could be significant so remember the time of day.
- Street corners are an ideal place to wait – they are not reliant on backgrounds – but they offer literally two-way traffic.
- It is usually best to photograph people with the background square on and not from an angle.
- Always do a test shot of just the background for the exposure.
- The same applies to the focus; the absolute focus might be better on the person rather than the background. In other words; get ready.
- Make a note of interesting backgrounds; sometimes you can return.

David Gibson, Stockholm; 2012

PROFILE

BLAKE ANDREWS

born 1968, California. www.blakeandrewsphoto.com

You see the white legs first and then look harder into the darkness for a human outline. It's an illusion, the difference between what is seen and what the camera tells.

Blake Andrews lives in a place that suits his forensic eye – and his sense of humour. Eugene, Oregon seems to have welcomed a small advance party of aliens who haven't quite blended in. Then again, the default setting for many street photographers is a strong suspicion that things are a little weird.

Andrews describes himself as a 'volume shooter'; he shoots every day, 'sometimes just a few frames, sometimes several rolls'. He has been advised that his website has too many pages but this is an honest reflection of his photography. You need only read his 'guiding principles' to get a flavour:

1. Camera in hand always, unless asleep in bed.
2. Film is cheap.
3. Digital looks cheap.
4. Reality is stronger than imagination.
5. Form subjugates essence, yet requires it.
6. Bystanders will quickly forget you, but a good photo lasts forever.
7. Light should illuminate the subject matter, but not be the subject matter.
8. Don't fight light. You will always lose.
9. Use right brain when shooting, left brain when looking over contact sheets. Paraphrased, this becomes. . .
10. . . .shoot first, ask questions later.

A normal family beach scene. Or is it? This delicious dark possibility is what the photographer has seen.

Andrews takes finely tuned black-and-white photographs so subtle that you need to double-check that you haven't missed something. This is a rare quality. They are a quiet homage to the weird, and often feature children. He has three children of his own and obviously likes them. He sometimes gently depicts scenes of play but he equally delights in the macabre.

Through Blake's eyes the beach scene above, taken in Florida in 2008, is a little sinister. The child is buried up to his neck in sand and by the look on his face he is being interrogated and systematically tortured. Things are perhaps not what they seem.

The 'disappearing woman' photograph, taken in Portland, Oregon in 2010 is a cleverly seen moment; it is also timeless. There is no contemporary clutter and you have to do a double take on the legs. When other photographers respond to this photograph, they wish that they had taken it.

His influences are many; like some obsessive working in a vinyl record store he knows about the most obscure artists. This obsession is channelled into his widely popular blog, which is one of the most respected in the photographic community. He employs quirky charts to illustrate different photographic trends and interviews photographers. He was a dedicated member of the Portland Grid Project which documented the city through photography, and in 2008 he founded the spin-off Eugene Grid Project. The word 'grid' is telling because everything he does seems initially complex. He is a photographic DJ with an eclectic playlist.

You could attempt to describe Andrews' work as a hybrid of Richard Kalvar, Lee Friedlander and Henri Cartier-Bresson but that wouldn't really do it justice. His style is both subtle and original.

PROJECT

6 FOLLOWING

It is very natural to follow an interesting person, who might suddenly walk past the perfect background, to make a picture complete.

Taking 'waited' photographs from a fixed position can obviously be reversed; it still involves a background and a moving subject combining to make a photograph complete. The difference with the 'followed' approach is that the photographer is also likely to be moving. Everything is quicker and it is not uncommon to require a sprint to get in position.

Photographers in the studio prefer to work with uncluttered backgrounds because they do not want distractions. Subjects are sometimes depicted as seemingly floating in space. On the street where everything is happenstance, backgrounds can work in tandem with the subject. The bigger ambition therefore – achieved with luck and awareness – is to get an almost unbelievable background. The man carrying mattresses on his head who suddenly came out of a store in London's Regent Street was a good start; that alone is a reasonable capture, but what lifts the photograph is the background. The woman in the shop window display seemingly balances on the end of the mattresses. The man only walked a short distance but the jigsaw fits in the middle frame (main image).

The 'pursuit' of the woman with the striped dress on page 88 lasted longer, although still only a few minutes. I saw her dress and immediately thought zebra or pedestrian crossing, because at some point, with luck, she would surely walk across one. The idea is to keep everything simple; there are only two factors in the photograph: the two sets of stripes. A vertical shot naturally worked best, while the man with the mattresses suggested a horizontal view. The shape at the centre of a scene should naturally suggest the format.

SOMEONE SUDDENLY EMERGING CLOSE BY CAN DRAW YOUR ATTENTION – THEY LOOK INTERESTING, OR THEY ARE CARRYING SOMETHING UNUSUAL, AND YOUR INSTINCT IS TO FOLLOW THEM. IT COULD BE CALLED THE JIGSAW APPROACH: YOU ARE AWARE OF WHERE A PIECE SHOULD GO AND SUDDENLY YOU HAVE THE MISSING PIECE IN YOUR SIGHT.

David Gibson, London; 2010

David Gibson, London; 2006

The last two photographs here illustrate a final fit that never quite happened. They were taken in Cambridge and London respectively a few years apart. Individually each of these street photographs has merit but it does not take much imagination to see a far better photograph if they were combined. The scaffolding 'erection' specialists and the man with the low-slung guitar walking towards it are two elements that combined could equally make a waited photograph, which would have been extraordinarily lucky. 'Missing' such a photograph is a reminder that luck does not always happen and it should be considered all the more precious when it does. We should always be prepared to follow possibilities.

CONCLUSION

Following people should only be done with a view to taking a few photographs fairly quickly; it is not realistic – and it is strange – to follow someone for more than, say, five minutes. Photographs tend to come together fairly quickly or not at all and it is best to accept this. And this philosophy applies to much else in street photography: you should be receptive to what occurs naturally, you cannot force something to happen.

- Think jigsaw; note different backgrounds with potential.
- Be ready and have camera settings set correctly, especially the shutter speed and the ASA setting.
- Know your city and take notes.
- Or just wander; delight in not knowing a city.
- Sometimes an anonymous background, a wall for instance, is enough so that the emphasis can be on the subject.
- Follow shapes.
- Follow the shadows of people too.

David Gibson, Cambridge; 2009

David Gibson, London; 2006

PROFILE

NILS JORGENSEN

born 1958, Hørup, Denmark. www.nilsjorgensen.com

Nils Jorgensen appears to be the quintessential quiet photographer. He is quiet, his photographs are quiet, but this disguises his tenacity when it comes to taking photographs. He is always taking photographs; indeed, he takes photographs on the way to taking photographs. His day job as a press photographer, for many years with Rex Features and more recently as a freelancer, has never dulled his love for street photography. He has often bemoaned how this strange branch of photography was never understood by most of his press colleagues. It is not news and it features ordinary people or bits of people, or just as likely a cat in a window or a pair of shoes in a box. Jorgensen's strange photographs of nothing in particular have acted as an antidote to the pursuit of celebrities and the incessant rush of news pictures.

His street photography is slower and the lack of urgency means that he often sits on photographs for a long time, sometimes years. He lets them marinate and he comes back to them with a fresh eye. Some photographers do this; they like to forget.

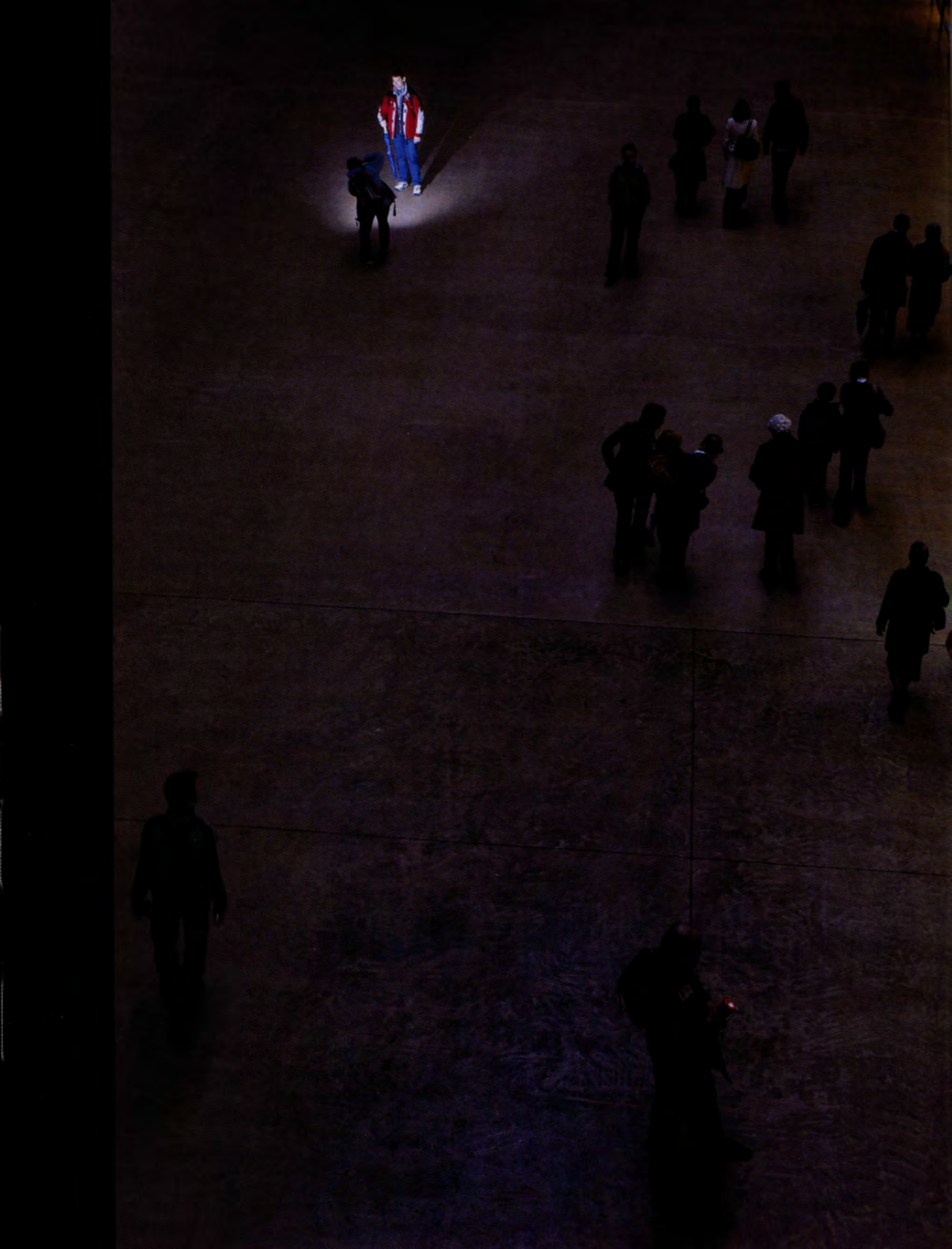
In his press work, Jorgensen particularly enjoys art openings where his street eye picks out juxtapositions and oddities. He has a close affinity with art as his mother is a keen painter, and Lowry – a street painter – is one of his favourite artists. Jorgensen has eclectic tastes that encompass The Clash and the poetry of Philip Larkin.

His obsession with photography began with one of his father's *Time-Life Photography* yearbooks, especially one that featured Paul Strand, Diane Arbus, André Kertész, Elliott Erwitt and Tony Ray-Jones. Jorgensen's father, a doctor, was an amateur photographer and in 1976 gave Nils one of his old Leica cameras and that was the beginning.

For years Jorgensen drove everywhere, stopping the car briefly to snatch a photograph or even taking the trouble to park it and return on foot to something that had caught his eye. Recently he has used public transport in London but the prolific picture-taking has continued. Now there are more photographs of people on trains or life seen on and from the top deck of a bus. His territory is the margins of life. This is the real news for him.

A strange and miraculous photograph, which takes a while to figure out because almost everyone is in darkened light except for one colourful figure that is lit by flash. The whole scene is instinctively well composed, but allows for the serendipity of luck.

And he gets 'lucky' – and what better example of luck visiting the prepared than Jorgensen's grabbed long-distance shot taken at London's Tate Modern in 2002. Remarkably the flash from someone taking a photograph went off at the same time. Nothing can really prepare you for such a possibility, but you recognise it, with a quiet nod to the god of photography somewhere in the sky.



PROJECT

7 BEHIND

Photographing people from behind is natural; it allows the photographer more freedom, which makes the viewer's imagination work harder.

The conventional view is that portraits should always show the face; it would be odd for a studio photographer to focus on the backs of heads, for example. On the street this notion is largely undone because life on the street is unrehearsed, whereas in the studio the sitter is prepared and consciously offers a performance towards the camera. Indeed, the photographer will also direct them.

Street portraits are popular, too, but with street photography there is no interaction and this gives the photographer quite literally many more angles. There is a long tradition of photographing people from behind; André Kertész's shot of a man looking at a broken bench immediately comes to mind. This photograph is packed with possible interpretations. The photographer is unseen by the subject, which perhaps made the photograph more possible.

Couples on the street attract photographers because, amongst other reasons, they are often engrossed in each other and thus less alert to a photographer's interest. A good example is the monochrome photograph here of the couple entwined on a London bridge; they are merging, indeed she is almost buried in his embrace. This photograph came complete; there was no waiting and it was just suddenly seen. The view from behind *is* the photograph; there is no other angle. It is not a difficult photograph to take; the central theme of the photograph is obviously the three legs, which required a tight framing with no distractions around the edges. You just need to be alert to such gifts and to be fairly quick. With the photograph of the couple on the right, there are no long sequences. The contact sheets do not reveal many alternatives because each scene is still. I had time to adjust my vantage point by moving a little closer. Ten seconds in street photography is a luxury and it happens more with photographs taken from behind.

THIS VANTAGE IS NOT NECESSARILY AN EASIER OPTION OR IN SOME WAY COWARDLY; IT SIMPLY ALLOWS THE PHOTOGRAPHER TO WORK MORE FREELY. SHOWING LESS REVEALS MORE.

David Gibson, London; 1999

This father and son photograph on the promenade in Blackpool is a quiet moment. We do not need to see their faces; the photograph is more poignant from behind and crucially the uncluttered space around them emphasises the protective arm of the father.

CONCLUSION

It is in no way feeble or cowardly to photograph people from behind; it is considerably easier, admittedly, but the final result can be more compelling and imaginative than the conventional front view. Less is often more and besides we are conditioned to read character from behind; our imagination is better than reality quite often.

- Watch from behind how people clasp their hands.
- Remember that people are vertical, so a vertical framing will probably be best.
- It is simply easier to photograph people from behind; take advantage of this.
- What we don't see clearly or is suggested is often more compelling.
- Shapes and body language are often clearer from behind.
- With busy scenes, move in close to fill up the frame, as edge can be distracting.

David Gibson, Blackpool, UK; 1996

PROFILE

MARC RIBOUD

born 1923, Lyon, France. www.marcriboud.com

Marc Riboud's photographs are probably better known than his name. In a world in which the word 'iconic' is overused, Riboud can genuinely have the term attached to several of his photographs.

'Iconic' is a lazy word, and what does it mean exactly? Perhaps it describes an association with an historic event, nostalgia, or some indefinable resonance. Riboud's work encompasses all of these together with an underlying sense of grace and dignity. He is primarily a documentary photographer but the term 'humanistic photographer' is more telling. Like many of his Magnum colleagues, he took photographs on the street, usually while on assignment but equally for the sheer pleasure. The publisher Robert Delpire has described Riboud as 'a humanist who loves life'; certainly pleasure and passion are part of Riboud's philosophy, as he clearly states:

'A CAMERA IS EASY TO USE, BUT PROPER USE OF THE EYES REQUIRES A LONG, LONG APPRENTICESHIP OFTEN CAPPED WITH GREAT PLEASURE.'

Riboud's long photographic life has taken him all over a changing world. His 1967 photograph taken at a Washington DC anti-war protest of a woman placing a flower on the barrel of a rifle is one of the most powerful photographs associated with the Vietnam War.

A truly 'iconic' image is the ballet-like pose of the man painting the Eiffel Tower in Paris in 1953. It is graceful, elegant, beautifully composed and will continue to be seen for a long, long time.

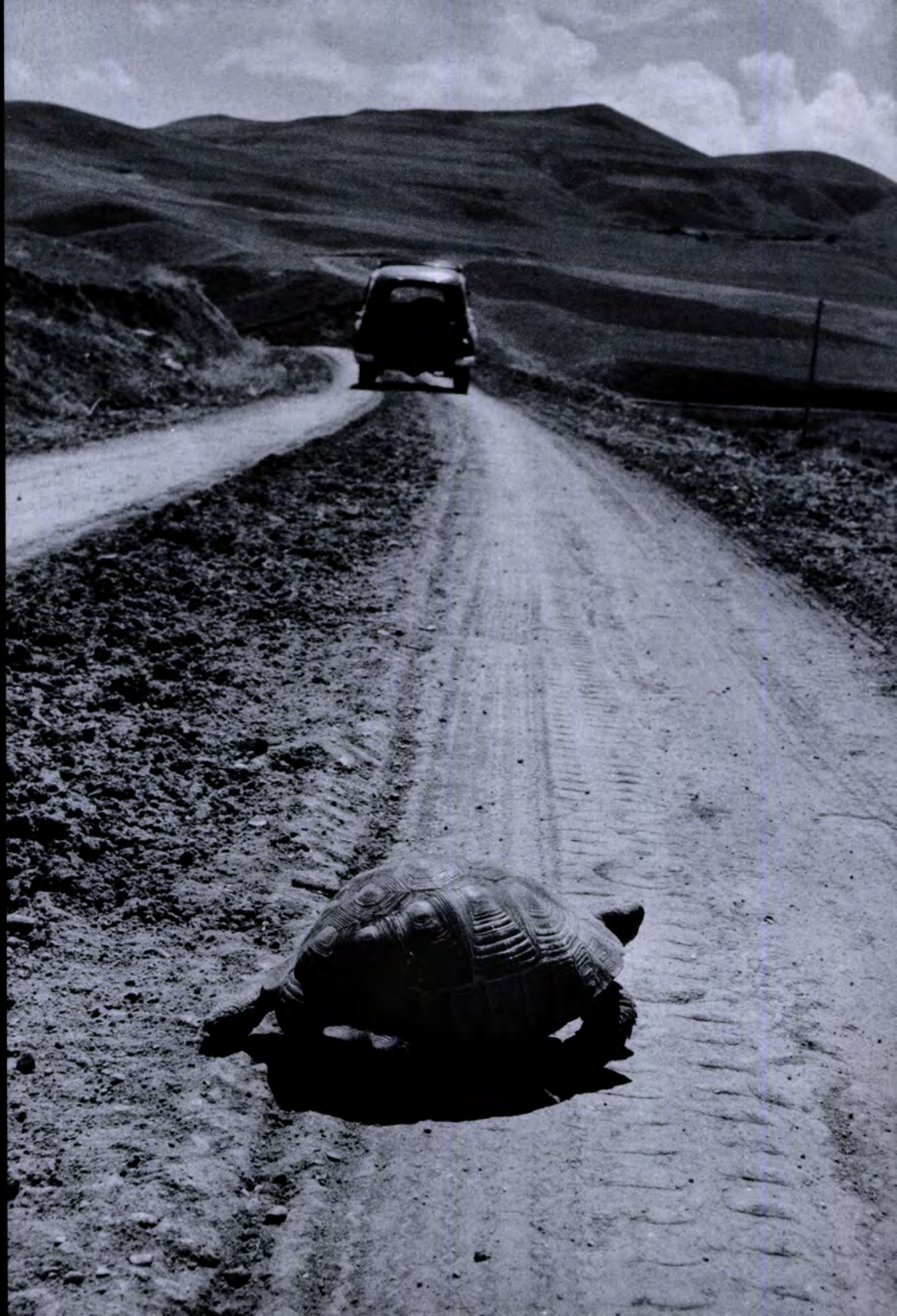
There are several retrospective books of Riboud's work but a largely overlooked book is his *Three Banners of China* (1966). He was one of the first European photographers to be allowed into China and this book still has that exclusive, exotic feel.

Why did the tortoise cross the road? Because it had time. Such an unusual and charming photograph, taken near Van, Turkey, in 1955.

When you look at his body of work, what shines through is how effortlessly free it appears to be of visible technique. His work is of a different order, alongside that of his colleague Cartier-Bresson. There are a few quiet juxtapositions, echoes and always careful composition, but the only real technique is his humanity seen through a graceful eye.

The photograph by Riboud on page 38 was taken in Istanbul in 1955, and was given the caption: 'The photographer operates with a tripod and will deliver his photographs three days later.' There is one kindly face visible but you suspect that the photographer is a kind man, too. The photograph is so simple; there is no modern clutter and everything about the scene is modest. His wise words are worth remembering:

'SURPRISES OF EVERY KIND LIE IN WAIT FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER. THEY OPEN THE EYES AND QUICKEN THE HEARTBEAT OF THOSE WITH A PASSION FOR LOOKING.'



PROJECT 8

LOOKING DOWN

Where we take photographs from is as important as what we photograph: different perspectives on the street are vital.

We should think of the city as layered: upwards there is sky and building tops, then there is head height and then the ground we walk upon. In nearly all cities there are also streets below our feet – walkways and bridges from which to view more layers below. Photographs can be taken from buildings and there is also the upper deck of a double-decker bus for another bird's-eye view. The best analogy for finding the right perspective is a sniper looking for the perfect vantage point.

Taking photographs from above naturally halts our wandering; we become still and more in tune with what is below us. We have time to observe and we are not seen. It is easy to overlook how instinctively so many photographers have done this. André Kertész delighted in the scale and quiet afforded by distance. His iconic, snowbound Washington Square shot at night from his apartment window in 1954 is typical. The square is empty, only the street lamps announce their presence, and the mood is reflective. Kertész took the photograph when he was resting, not in the throng of a busy daytime street.

This resting motif is a vital one because we are open to what plays out below. The flat ground or gradient becomes the background and with this view we have more control. We do not have to consider the skyline, which can be a distraction with uneven light and lines; there is no top or bottom and everything is even. It is like chess – we need to look from above to see what move is best.

I have a particular fondness for finding higher vantage points and one such place is above Trafalgar Square in London, which is typical of many public city spaces in that it can be looked down upon from the street. It is a place to stop; sometimes the more interesting photographs are to be taken looking down into the square as opposed to being in the square.

The Trafalgar Square sequence here is taken a short height above some benches. I had time to frame these shots, to get the two legs from two people seated there to appear as one. The little girl moving around provided the variation. The strongest in the sequence is the main one with just the feet, because it asks more questions and provides a double-take moment.

The other set on pages 100–101 are taken from Bukit Bintang Monorail station in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The distance was longer and it was more of a concentrated wait; the bold yellow arrows fascinated me and this was the fixed starting point. Kuala Lumpur is a layered city, with the monorail itself and raised walkways between shopping malls. Traffic dominates and by necessity pedestrians are often above the street.

The woman with the red hijab echoes the traffic cones but it is the three vertical shots of the woman in the red top carrying two yellow shopping bags that ultimately work, as everything is pleasingly laid out.

1A

2A

David Gibson, London; 2010

5A

6A

7A

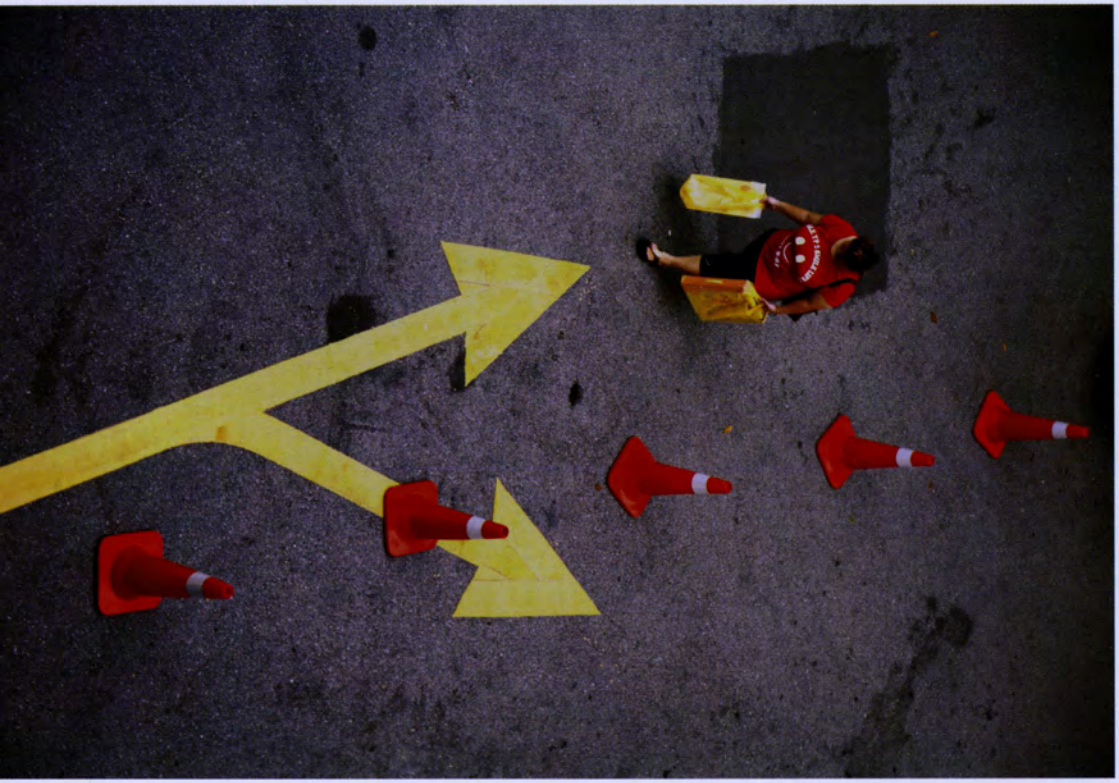
8A

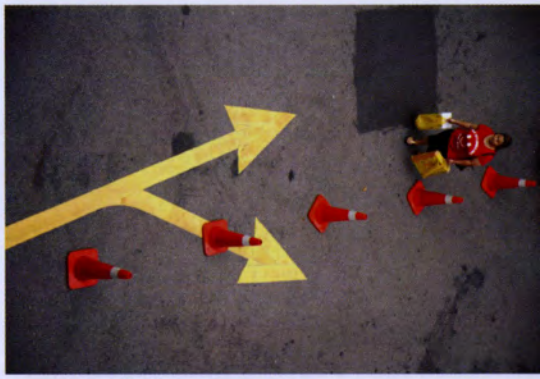
CONCLUSION

When we look down in a busy city we are removed from the fray. Just get on a double-decker bus, for instance, to watch the world go by. Suddenly we are above and can observe completely unnoticed. And this is an ideal that we should occasionally seek; we should look up to find places in which to look down. It's an intriguing game because many cities – not just Asian ones – have unexpected raised walkways or vantage points.

- Even our height is a vantage point; look at the street level at our feet.
- Take photographs looking up too; the sky and tops of buildings can be fascinating.
- Stop and find a vantage point; you will have more time and can work unnoticed.
- Practise composition by seeing the frame as a plan view; look at the patterns, the corners and the balance.
- Appreciate the potential of space in photographs by looking down.
- Get on the top deck of a bus to look down.

David Gibson, Kuala Lumpur; 2012





PROFILE

SHIN NOGUCHI

This mysterious image containing abstract colours and a textured surface is simply beautiful. With no glass it would have had less of an impact.

born 1976, Tokyo. www.shinnoguchiphotography.com

Shin Noguchi describes himself as a jazz-loving street photographer, based in Kamakura and Tokyo, Japan. What is it about jazz and photography? Is it some sort of sideways take on everything and not necessarily playing the melody straight? Noguchi singles out the jazz trumpet player, Clifford Brown, who died aged twenty-five in a car accident leaving behind only four years' worth of recordings.

Noguchi readily admits to a hero worship of Henri Cartier-Bresson and there is certainly a similar tidiness in Noguchi's best work, as opposed to the often chaotic approach of Daido Moriyama, which seems so imitated in Asia. Noguchi is more attuned to the work of Ihei Kimura, which he describes as 'overflowing with beauty and humanism' and you can see this ambition in Noguchi's work too. Perhaps there is something poetic about Noguchi's sensibility, alongside his liking for graphic lines, space, elegant shapes and a little surrealism.

Intriguingly, in two of his projects, *Sweet Dreams* – on people sleeping – and *Umbrella*, he mixes black-and-white and colour together, and it works. The consistency of the themes overcomes a usually very tricky dilemma. Ordinarily it is not a good idea to mix colour with monochrome in a single project; very few photographers do.

Two bright yellows coming together is so simple but this fun slice of life on the street is really all about the quizzical look of the dog.

He has flitted backwards and forwards between colour and black-and-white, but as with many photographers who began in monochrome he is starting to find his true vision in colour. Noguchi was always interested in the photographers from Magnum – that was his beginning – but the true momentum for his street photography came from the anthology, *Street Photography Now* (2010) and the subsequent online project that sprang from that book.

You might describe Noguchi as an emerging photographer. Everybody has to start somewhere yet he has amassed a strong body of work over just a few years. He seems modest about his output, but he aligns himself firmly with the new 'online generation' of street photographers who are all active on Flickr and Facebook and look towards the ever-increasing number of street photography collectives for inspiration.

Significantly, in 2012 Noguchi joined the collective, Street Photographers, which has one of the biggest online followings. He was also recently one of the finalists for the IPA Street Photography Asia Award.

Looking at a photographer's work on Flickr can be revealing – and sometimes disappointing; because photographers test photographs there, they are a little experimental in what they share. Noguchi's Flickr stream reveals some of his fascinations: people carrying things and looking odd, the colour yellow, deep shadows on bright streets and people layered behind glass or reflections.

In the photo above right, the black-eyed woman seemingly wearing a kimono is sparingly beautiful, reduced to shapes of colour behind the mottled glass. In the other photograph of a dog in a car, the colours leap out. This one is about eyes as well, and the colour yellow, in bold repetition, but it's also a slightly surreal moment. It captures a dog with attitude, which is always good to photograph.

CHAPTER 3

ABSTRACT

The abstract can be part of street photography; it offers an alternative direction within art and a welcome break from seeing conventionally.

Abstract is not a word normally associated with street photography or indeed photography generally. It is rarely accorded a separate category, possibly because the term is more firmly associated as a genre within art. Mark Rothko, for example, is clearly understood to be an abstract expressionist painter. Perhaps photography can never be completely free to achieve anything comparable because ultimately it records a reality. Photography is creative – it is an artistic tool – and it sees broadly but it cannot entirely escape its inherent function to record.

The US photographer Aaron Siskind took 'abstractlike' photographs; his peeling paint series are abstract but they are also photographs of a surface. Whatever the surface, whether it is a distressed wall or even human hair, it will still prompt most people to wonder what the photograph shows. In fact to not know what the 'subject' is, lessens the impact. This may be the attraction of abstract photography – to disguise and prompt questions – and it seems all the more clever when it creates 'art' out of something that does not function as art.

I have always had a strong affinity with abstract photography, as a means of experimentation and a much-needed escape from what I normally do. Taking 'conventional' street photographs has never been enough, and I have sought inspiration from art almost as much as photography. It would be unusual and limiting for any photographer not to look at art. You do not need to delve too deeply into the lives of some of the so-called master photographers to discover their artistic connections.

When street photographers cite their influences, many routinely mention Henri Cartier-Bresson or Alex Webb. A better question to pose to a photographer is not who are the photographers who have influenced you the most, but who are the artists?

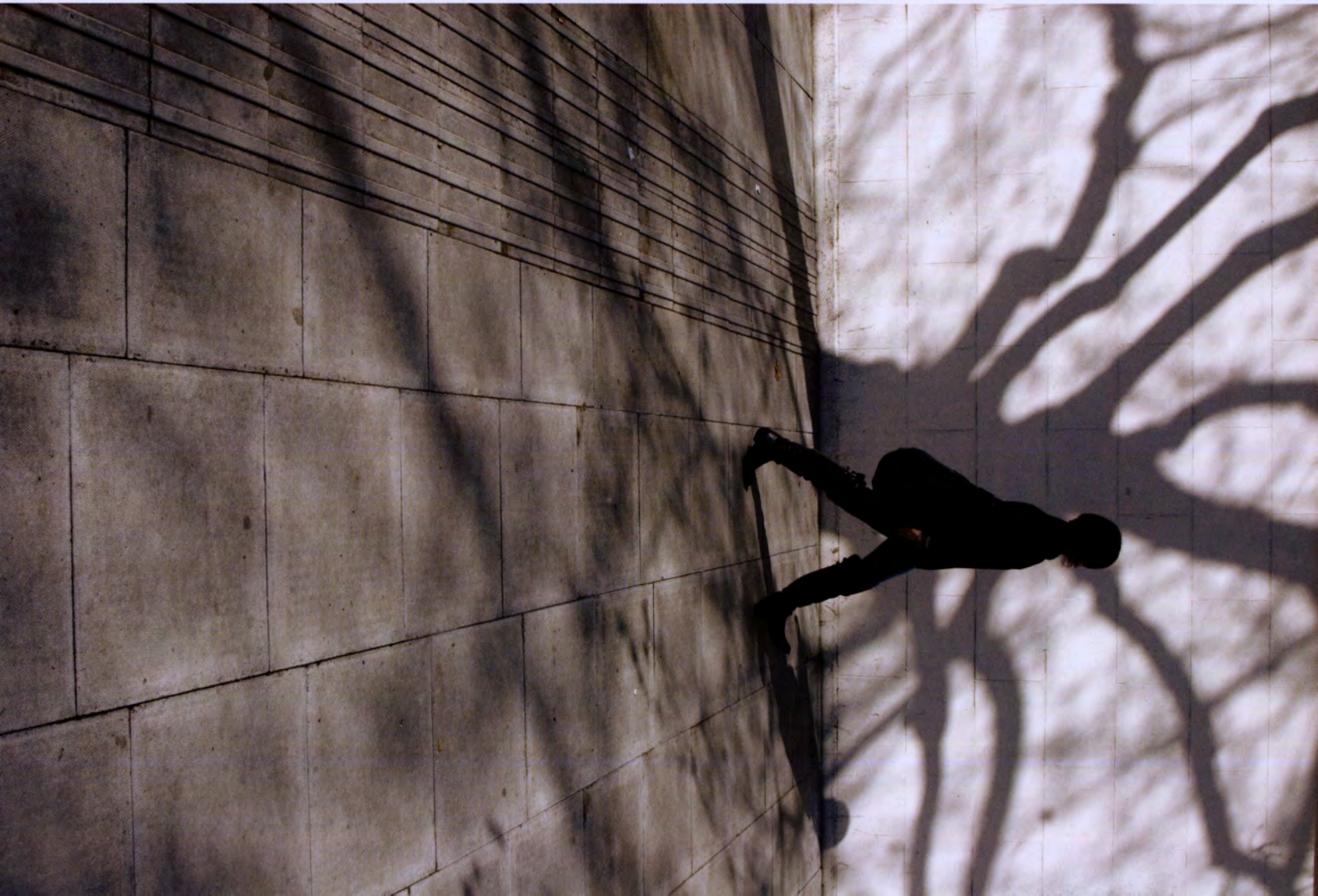
Some photographers have also been accomplished artists. Cartier-Bresson virtually gave up photography to return to his painting. Others such as Saul Leiter have kept their photography and art running simultaneously. The shared theme is creative energy, which does not always come out in one particular medium. You could argue that various creative outlets are vital and that repetition potentially dulls any artist's output.

The history of photography is littered with photographers who have tried to 'escape' the restrictions of what they have become known for. Walker Evans established his reputation during the Great Depression era of 1930s America when he documented the poverty and conditions of the time for the Farm Security Administration (FSA). In his old age, in the early 1970s, he playfully engaged with the then new Polaroid camera and his photographs are very different, both experimental and a little abstract.

PROJECTS

*BLURRED	page 108
*LAYERS	page 114
*SHADOWS	page 120
*REFLECTIONS	page 126
*DOUBLES	page 132

David Gibson, London; 2010



I have always admired the Italian photographer Mario Giacomelli, whose work clearly leans towards art and abstraction. His trademark high-contrast prints provided his escape, though far less consciously, because he did not have a background in photography and was not aware of the supposed rules. He photographed the streets of Scanno in Italy, an almost fairy-tale village that in the late 1950s remained untouched by the uniformity of the modern world. Giacomelli seldom travelled outside of Italy to take photographs; he did not need to, which somehow makes his work all the more complete. The artist Lucian Freud once said that he much preferred to 'travel downwards', which seems an apt description of Giacomelli's singular approach.

Giacomelli, whose era was decidedly pre-digital, is also known for his abstractlike images of priests playing in the snow. The series *Little Priests* (1961–63) is both poetic and graphic – the black figures of the young priests seemingly float in the white landscape; nothing is in sharp focus and the effect remains strikingly refreshing. Everything about Giacomelli is in fact refreshing; he was first a painter, he did not engage with photography until he was about thirty, and he seems to have had little interest in financial gain. He made photographs for himself. The very best artists often defy the expected rules.

It seems nonsense, therefore, that every photograph should be taken at 250th of a second. Then there is the eternal question of depth of field. W. Eugene Smith, the great US photojournalist and humanist photographer, put the question of depth of field firmly to rest: 'What use is having a great depth of field, if there is not an adequate depth of feeling?'

Shutter speeds – slow shutter speeds – are a parallel universe: what if you took photographs for seven days, employing a different shutter speed each day? Things would look a little different. They might look like mistakes requiring instant deletion, but what if some kernel of an idea emerged, something unexpected? The possibilities lie in the meaning of the word 'abstract' itself: theoretical, hypothetical, unreal, spiritual, vague, conceptual, imaginary, indefinite, profound, philosophical.

The desire to explore should not be dictated by advances in digital technology whereby cameras can now shoot in high-definition in very low light. High-definition fulfills a need, but it is often the antithesis of abstract photography. It might be clearer, but it does not necessarily say more.

Abstract photography should be therapeutic, a means to redefine and challenge conventional photography. It should have soul, but these ideals do not chime with all photographers. In the wrong hands, attempting abstract photography can be a redundant path because it becomes visible experimentation with no heart. This is how it should be; after all, you could argue that Cartier-Bresson or Sebastião Salgado stuck with one tried and tested style that worked for them.

The D-day beach landing photographs by Robert Capa from 1944 are blurred. Circumstances obviously prevailed – it is some feat to take photographs in a battle – and tragically, some film was later destroyed by mistake. Some of the images that survived are enticingly blurred and add a creative edge to an already intensely poignant set of historical pictures. Suddenly, in the motion, everything seems even more vital.

Robert Capa was a straightforward photojournalist and a very powerful one because he covered such important events. His fellow Magnum photographer, Werner Bischof, who died young in 1954 – the same year as Capa – was quite different. He had the same concerns for humanity but his approach was far more experimental, perhaps even poetic. Bischof was an accomplished sketcher, and his early photography was full of experimentation with studio lighting on nudes and still lifes. Given a subject, he would as easily do a sketch as photograph it.

It must be stressed that this branch of photography is not for everyone. Some photographers stick to what they know, they play to their strengths because, quite literally, their expression is focused. Returning

to Cartier-Bresson for example; it is hard to imagine him deliberately shaking the camera or using very slow shutter speeds as it would spoil the picture and confuse our appreciation of his carefully constructed body of work. His photography always leaned more towards the surreal rather than abstract.

On the other hand, for photographers such as Mario Giacomelli or Ernst Haas, abstraction either slight or profound was essential to their way of seeing the world around them. Conventional photography for many has its limits that can only remind us of the futility of supposed rules. Photographers make their own rules.

Mario Giacomelli, Scanno, Italy; 1957

PROJECT 9

BLURRED

Deliberate experimentation in photography opens up the possibility of an escape hatch. Blur need not be a mistake.

Many photographers prefer the pin-sharp or high-definition world of photography; the word 'blurred' can be associated with having made a mistake. There are degrees of blurred – and out of focus – and sometimes it is a mistake, but when it is done deliberately it can open up a whole new world on the street.

We should also consider movement in this context, and again there are degrees of movement too. When does movement become abstract? There is a famous blurred photograph of a pedestrian's foot from 1950 by Otto Steinert that is so deceptively simple, yet abstract and surreal. It is a reminder of how differently the street can be seen.

Swiss photographer Ernst Haas was a pioneer of colour and abstract photography in the 1960s; he was a documentary photographer whose work became fine art in galleries. He broke new ground with shallow depth of field, selective focus and blurred motion. His photograph of a bullfighter in Pamplona, Spain, in 1956 looks like a painting and is still a revelation.

Raghu Rai's epic black-and-white photograph of Mumbai Railway Station (page 10) shows two men reading newspapers who are in focus but a sea of flowing movement surrounds them. The technical details are not known, but you would hazard a guess that it was taken at around ¼ of a second.

Sometimes when I am out, I will occasionally visit this other world of photography, which all comes out of the same camera. The shutter speed on the camera determines this; it is usually set at 1/250, which can cope with normal walking movement, but altering the film speed (ISO) together with a shutter speed of, say, ⅛, changes everything. And there are many more variations.

I HAVE FOUND TAKING BLURRED PHOTOGRAPHS A RELIEF AND A COUNTERBALANCE TO MY MORE CONVENTIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY.

The photographs here are a selection of these controlled experimentations. This short series of a traditional Korean musician was taken looking down onto the floor of the Great Court in London's British Museum. She was stationary – I wanted her more or less in focus – but with blurred people passing by, it is almost as if she is the pied piper. The shutter speed here was ⅛.

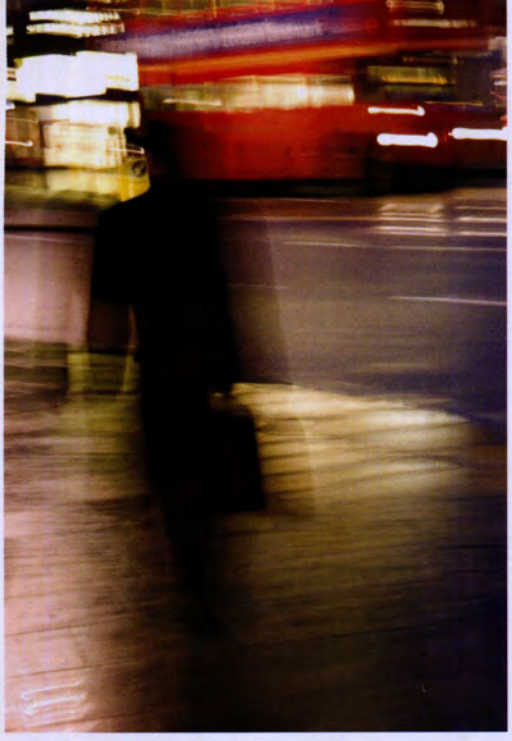
1A

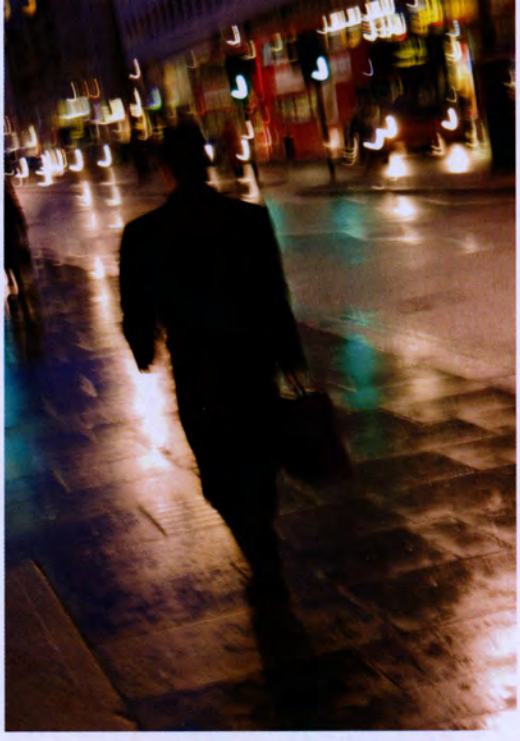
2A

3A

4A

David Gibson, London; 2013





The blurred, black-coated man with hat and briefcase taken at night is a combination of a slow shutter speed and shaking the camera to create a slightly streaked effect. It was a wet night with lots of saturated colours reflected on the ground, and this man, looking elegant in a black hat, was an opportunity to capture a mood and shape. Sometimes it is just the shape that draws you.

YOU NEED SOMETHING BOLD TO STAND OUT IN THE BLURS AND STREAKS OF COLOUR.

CONCLUSION

We are forever moving towards 'better quality' in photography, but the soul of photography is hopefully unchanged. It is like painting; the canvas and brushes are basically the same as one hundred years ago. The pin-sharp world of street photography is like high-definition television; what ultimately matters is the quality of the show.

- Experiment. Photograph the street at various slower shutter speeds – for instance, shoot only at ⅛ of a second for a concentrated period.
- Take photographs from a fixed point to capture movement; the traffic flow of people passing by provide the blur. Vary the shutter speed to find the right amount of blur; it is often better to be able to identify the subject.
- Shake the camera as you photograph closely on the street and fill up the frame with the shapes of people rather than their details.
- Look at the photographs of Ernst Haas and Mario Giacomelli; both were pioneers of abstract/blurred photography that has not dated.
- Look for primary colours when taking blurred shots; they often work better.

David Gibson, London; 2007

PROFILE

GUEORGUI PINKHASSOV

born 1952, Moscow. www.instagram.com/pinkhassov

Flicking through the pages of a photographer's book, you sometimes keep coming back to a few images that have startled and inspired you. There are many words that describe this moment; in his book *Camera Lucida* (1980) Roland Barthes notably called it a 'punctum' – something that pricks your consciousness. But this feeling is also an affirmation, of something special that can still surprise. Gueorgui Pinkhassov's photographs do this.

Part of this pleasure is probably that Pinkhassov is a relatively obscure photographer. Although he is a member of Magnum, he is not that well known. Sebastião Salgado, Alex Webb and Martin Parr, for example, all have a higher profile.

Some of Pinkhassov's 'punctum' photographs are in the book *Sightwalk* (1998), which is distinctive in itself with its Japanese binding and paper. What is it, though, that makes Pinkhassov's work so different? He has an acute awareness of light, colour and distortion; he is drawn to the muted and the unusual. He seemingly has his own special time and place to photograph.

You could describe it as a murky world in which he avoids normal daylight; night or twilight is better, or a daylight that is muted or not wholly seen. He has his own light; perhaps it could be said he takes indoor pictures outside. His early background as a film cameraman might explain this, but it is commendable that Magnum should want to embrace such a unique vision. Magnum's ethos focused initially on important photojournalism, yet it also encompasses a broader appreciation of abstract artistic vision too.

Another aspect of Pinkhassov's work is his unusual framing and his liking for layers, through windows in particular, as if he wants to abstract the world around him. It is very difficult to pin Pinkhassov down, and his own words seem to confirm that:

Pinkhassov sees unusual beauty. The evocative light and reflections present the girl very differently. The photograph is literally quite reflective.

'THE POWER OF OUR MUSE LIES IN HER MEANINGLESSNESS. EVEN THE STYLE CAN TURN ONE INTO A SLAVE IF ONE DOES NOT RUN AWAY FROM IT, AND THEN ONE IS DOOMED TO REPEAT ONESELF. THE ONLY THING THAT COUNTS IS CURIOSITY. IT WILL EXPRESS ITSELF LESS IN THE FEAR OF DOING THE SAME THING OVER AGAIN THAN IN THE DESIRE NOT TO GO WHERE ONE HAS ALREADY BEEN.'

The photograph of the women at the Tokyo metro station, taken in 1996, is typical of his layered, abstract pictures; the colours and speckled reflections are absolutely beautiful.

PROJECT 10

LAYERS

Taking photographs through things, such as glass or material, adds a natural artistic layer. Suddenly there is another meaning.

Camera equipment has always offered layers in the form of filters on lenses that can be added for artistic effect, but more interesting filters are those naturally found on the street. As with perspective and with finding a higher vantage point, it is worth seeking 'street filters' through which to take photographs. These can be myriad: glass, preferably dirty, wet or frosted; wire mesh fencing; and all kinds of material or liquid. Even plain glass adds a slight layer, and you could even add bright sunlight to the list. Photographing into the sun might capture shafts of light streaming down but this again breaks things up and provides a layer effect. The normal technical rules might curtail such experimentation, but equally there are no limits to possibilities. You can even 'remove' a layer by shooting faint, low-key photographs. We should not necessarily consider layers as adding density.

A photograph by André Kertész taken in Martinique in 1972 is a half-layered photograph; a man silhouetted behind glass is one half, the rest is lines, sky and horizon, but the two halves work together to create a surprising image. Kertész's background was rooted in surrealism and he experimented with distorted imagery during his long career.

David Gibson, London; 1995

David Gibson, Westcliff-on-Sea, UK; 1994

Glass is one of the most common layers; usually windows of some kind. Michael Wolf's series *Tokyo Compression* shoots commuters seemingly trapped behind the glass windows of subway trains. Their discomfort, dignity and strange beauty are frozen in the photographs. These could be described as layered street portraits.

Layers iron out normal distractions, they can add texture and mood, and like a veil may suggest mystery. The layer can sometimes also be a screen allowing the photographer to work unseen, and as with looking-down photographs it allows time to compose.

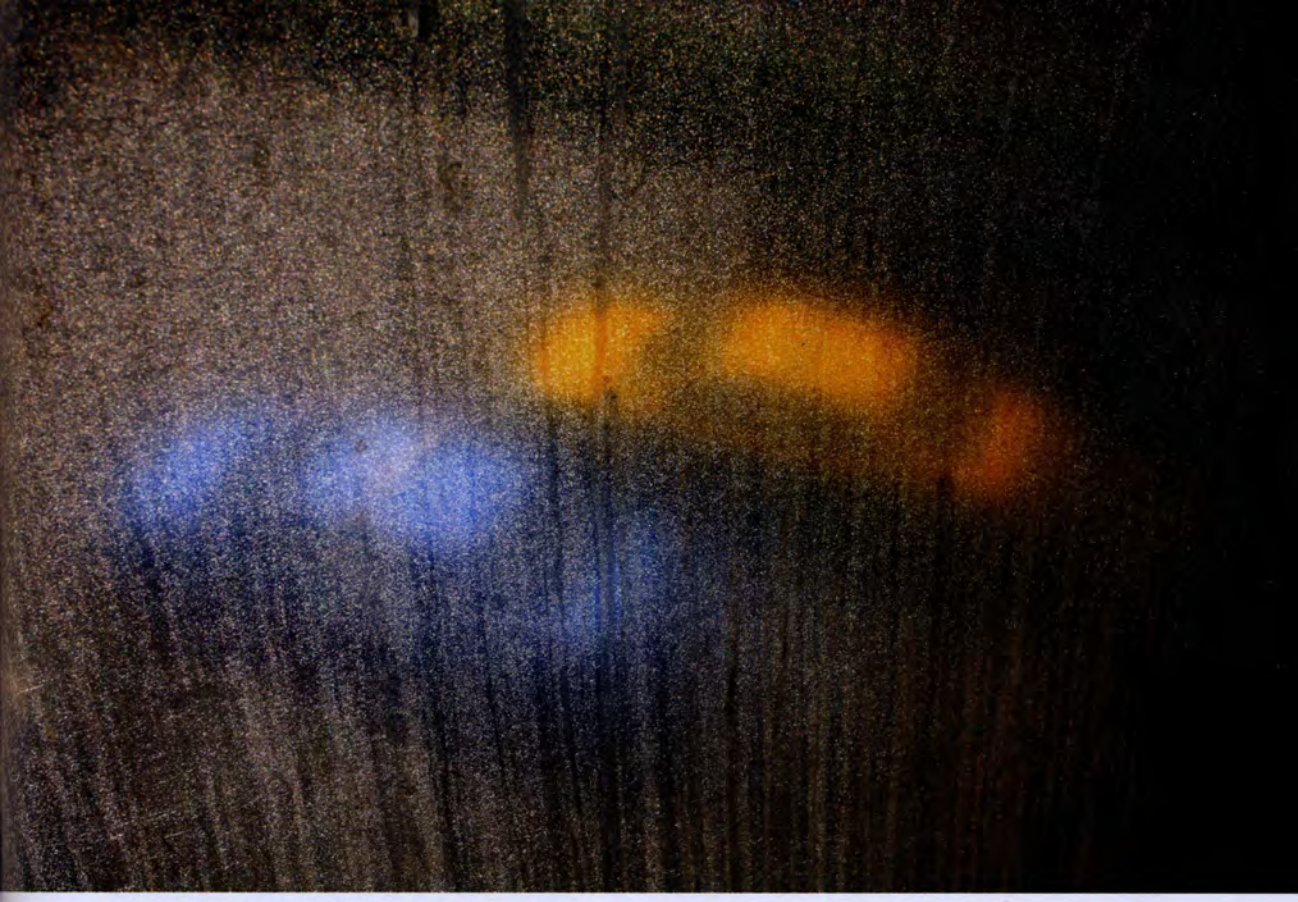
The photograph above, which I call *Heaven*, was taken in 1994 at an old bandstand and shot through a dirty window; there is a heavenlike mood to it. The exposure is a little uneven and the contrast is quite high, which blasts out some of the detail in the background, so that the shape of the elderly people in the foreground stands out.

The photograph below left, again taken on black-and-white film, was captured looking down from a station walkway, but this time through a mesh fence. The texture is more pronounced; the crisscrossed pattern is the filter, which highlights the starkly lit white hats belonging to the three security guards. It is a photograph about hats, mood, shapes, lines and ultimately texture.

4A

2A

3A



David Gibson, Bangkok; 2013

The final example is a series taken in Bangkok, this time in digital colour but with exactly the same concept. Taken from a walkway through frosted and scratched glass, the focus is not on people but the colourful Bangkok taxis. The pleasure is simply the bright colours, which became abstracted through the layer of glass. It is worth acknowledging that in such situations the glass layer throws out what might be considered the 'correct' colour. Suddenly we are excused from having to present the expected colours that we see on the street and we can experiment a little. The colour balance in this series can be varied and none would be wrong.

CONCLUSION

The main point about photographing through layers is that no one is concerned with the method, however odd it might seem at the time; it is only the effect in the final photograph that counts. The maxim must be: think differently; look for different ways to approach photographing on the street.

- Conceal yourself – and take photographs – through layers.
- Consider 'layers in the air', such as mist, fog, snow, steam and smoke. They can envelop a subject and enhance it dramatically.
- Experiment: use different camera filters but create your own 'filters' – you are at a cafe table; hold up a glass and photograph the street through it.
- Unclean or textured layers are usually the most interesting.
- Focus on both the layer – perhaps the glass – and the subject beyond it. There are two alternatives, giving different results.

PROFILE

JACK SIMON

born 1943, New York. www.jacksimonphotography.com

The bandwagon of street photography doesn't really need any more recruits, however there is delight every now and then when someone a little bit different gets involved. The addition of Jack Simon is testament to that – his whole ethos is intelligent and refreshing:

'I'VE WORKED AS A PSYCHIATRIST FOR THE LAST FORTY YEARS. EIGHT YEARS AGO I BECAME FASCINATED BY THE POSSIBILITIES OF PHOTOGRAPHY, TAUGHT MYSELF AND NOW RARELY GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT A CAMERA.'

What an intriguing idea – the worlds of photography and psychiatry colliding or colluding – but then street photography has always probed and revealed. Simon's website galleries list, amongst others, *Women on the Verge…* and *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest.* They seem to confirm a link with psychiatry until you realise that they are just films he likes.

In interviews Simon appears reticent to commit to definitions or absolute explanations about what he does. There remains an urge to link his psychiatry to his photography and he concedes that his years of observing people – the quirky and the offbeat in his office – have heightened his intuition. Outside of his workplace, though, you sense that his thought process is more abstract rather than neatly cognitive.

Strangely, the fashion and documentary photographer Paul Himmel comes to mind. He became disenchanted with photography and took his last photograph in 1967 after which he retrained as a psychotherapist. There is not necessarily a predictable timeline for when inspiration first appears or slips away.

Jack Simon's enthusiasm for street photography developed through his involvement with the Street Photography Now project, which began on Flickr in 2011. The group's origins lay in the book *Street Photography Now* (2010), which struck a chord with many potential street photographers around the world. Every week throughout 2011 the book's contributing photographers gave members of the project an instruction. Jack Simon was one of the joint winners for that first year, accelerating his confidence, which led almost inevitably to his becoming a member of Burn My Eye, one of the burgeoning number of new street collectives that emerged out of this online energy. Burn My Eye, whose original members include Zisis Kardianos, has become one of the most ambitious amongst the new wave of collectives.

Looking through Simon's work it is astonishing to realise that it has all been created in less than four years: the depth and originality suggests twice that time at least. There seems to be another layer in his work that is more original. He loves reflections and a certain ambiguity.

'Leaving Japan', taken in Tokyo, 2008, might almost – after just a few years – be his signature style.

Jack Simon has this photograph for life; it's one of those surreal and beautiful images that will continually nudge him and resonate with others. His luck and vision came together that day and secured his late ambition with photography.


JAPAN AIRLINES

PROJECT 11

SHADOWS

Shadows on the street are conducive to being photographed; treat them as an opportunity to explore another world.

Shadows are an important part of photography. Indeed, the very concept of photography was born out of the desire to 'fix the shadow' in the early nineteenth century.

Shadows of people on the street can be approached as something quite literal or as another 'shadowy world'. Sometimes shadows are passive but they can be the reason for the photograph. Photographers chase shadows because they distort and they create atmosphere, patterns and surprise. Shadows in colour or black-and-white are always dark, they add balance and intriguingly photographers have their own shadow to enjoy. It is a constant and likeable companion. Often they cannot get 'out of the picture' and that can also be good.

There are shadows of people and there are shadows on people. Shadows are not there every day and when they are, they change and move. There is nothing quite like a late afternoon in autumn for long shadows in the city. On a bright day many photographers wait for the shadows to get long; they do not like the sun to be directly overhead.

A photographer in Athens once told me about his '18:38' photograph: every day at about that time a shadow was fixed at a particular point, which in conjunction with something already there could make a great photograph. This 'sundial' approach can be vital and it is worth noting the times and movements of shadows.

All the best photographers have at some point photographed their own shadow, almost like a signature. Elliott Erwitt's typically wry take is of his shadow on grass lined up so that his eyes are daisies. It's obvious and simple, but it's enjoyable.

My 'self-portrait' photograph here is a celebration of long shadows but also the scene, which was a small landscaped green with a lake outside the Museum of Modern Art in Edinburgh. Again it's simple but quite dramatic. There is also that familiar self-photographing shape with the arch of the arm that appears only in vertical photographs.

In the image on page 122 the shadow of the woman with the distorted hips is different and could be classified as an event photograph, although it avoids the event. It was taken at an S&M protest in London in 1996. The photograph is not really about the woman but the surprise and drama of her shadow. This scene naturally suggested a horizontal shape because of the left and right elements in the picture.

The third shadow photograph on page 123 is an example of the benefit of sometimes turning a shadow picture upside down. Shadows often suggest this; it cannot really be done with other types of photographs. Shadows have different rules. It was taken in the centre of Barcelona and shows a little girl carrying a small horselike balloon. The long shadows distort the perspective and turning it upside down adds further drama.

David Gibson, Edinburgh; 2003

David Gibson, London; 1996

CONCLUSION

In bright light or sunshine shadows accompany everything – people, buildings, objects – and they also move. They really are an important element for street photographers and should never be ignored or taken for granted. Sometimes the shadow is better than the thing or person that casts the shadow. We should celebrate shadows on the street and not just have them as incidental in the frame; they should leap out.

- Think 'sundial' because shadows move throughout the day; there might be one particular moment to take the photograph. Chase long shadows in late afternoon, especially in autumn.
- There is no colour in shadows, so they are more dramatic.
- Photograph your own shadow in all sorts of situations; alone but also imposed upon quiet or busy scenes.
- Photograph the shadows of photographers; it's a special shape.
- Shadows distort what people look like; photograph that.
- Consider the upside-down approach to shadows.

David Gibson, Barcelona; 2003

PROFILE

SAUL LEITER

born 1923, Pittsburgh, died 2013, New York

In a 2013 documentary about Saul Leiter, *In No Great Hurry*, the art historian Max Kozloff succinctly placed Leiter's work as follows:

'TO SAY THAT HE FLOURISHES AT THE TOP IN THE MOUNT OLYMPUS OF NEW YORK PHOTOGRAPHY IS SAYING A GREAT DEAL. HE IS RIGHT UP THERE WITH THE AMAZING HEIGHTS OF PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY ITSELF. HE'S MORE ABSTRACT THAN MANY, HE'S MORE CONSTRUCTIVE THAN SEVERAL BUT HE'S ALSO MORE SOULFUL THAN A GREAT MANY.'

Indeed, how do you place Saul Leiter? Henri Cartier-Bresson and Mark Rothko influenced him. Maybe his vision incorporates both and we should settle at that. Or perhaps even wildly claim that no other photographer has lovingly appreciated the simple umbrella as Leiter has. They appear in many of his photographs, often with muted colours but always vital. Consider also the number of his images taken through windows, streaked with rain and condensation, which so eloquently texture the street beyond.

Born in Pittsburgh, Leiter came to New York in the late 1940s initially to be a painter; he mixed with painters and likely absorbed some of their bohemian attitudes towards the world. He became a successful fashion photographer for *Elle*, *Nova* and *Esquire*, which he approached with typical modesty, never believing it to be noteworthy. That was the early incarnation that some people saw but he worked in all genres. He did nudes, portraits, still life and street work.

Sometimes the wisest people are the most reticent. Saul Leiter knew a lot about many things but was comfortable with other people offering an interpretation of his work.

'I DON'T APPLY LABELS TO MY PHOTOGRAPHS. I'D MUCH RATHER HAVE MAX KOZLOFF DO THAT. HE'S MUCH BETTER AT UNDERSTANDING AND DESCRIBING WHAT I DO. HE ONCE SAID THAT I'M NOT REALLY A PHOTOGRAPHER, I JUST USE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR MY OWN PURPOSE. I'M NOT SURE WHAT HE MEANT BUT I LIKE THE SOUND OF IT.'

It's not a mistake; all the space and only half a figure is absolutely deliberate. The result is a timeless celebration of a woman in red who brings elegance to a snow-laden New York street.

Proper recognition, at the level he deserves with books, exhibitions and documentaries came relatively late for Saul Leiter. You sense that he was not past caring; he certainly enjoyed the recognition but was equally bemused by it. He actually stated that he was content to be ignored, like some of his photography; his view of fame is abstract. The satisfying part – for everyone – is that he has achieved recognition on his terms. He carried on with all his art, painting gouaches in recent years that are only now starting to be seen.

In his photography it is surprising to know that he was comfortable with a digital camera. How refreshing that at the age of ninety, having been an important pioneer of early colour in the 1950s, he retained the same sense of colour, whatever the changes in technology. That is real wisdom, of the young at heart, and an example to us all.

PROJECT

12 REFLECTIONS

Reflections on the street give back to us another view; they break up normality and have the ability to charm us.

Like shadows, reflections are a common concept in photography. The mechanics of traditional photography are based upon mirrors – in the camera and the lens – and outside on the street there are all sorts of reflective surfaces: glass in windows or even in sunglasses, water or any kind of liquid, anything glossy, such as paint or metal…the list seems endless. We take many for granted.

Reflections can confuse and delight. The complex reflection in Louis Faurer's Times Square photograph from 1960 is like a short film. A young boy looking cold or apprehensive seems to be reflected in a shop window; there is also the busy street and another reflection of a bride and groom. You keep looking and you want to understand.

In cities at certain times on sunny days office block windows cast a series of light abstract squares across a street. This alone is a modern phenomenon and worth a series of photographs. Somebody somewhere will have done it.

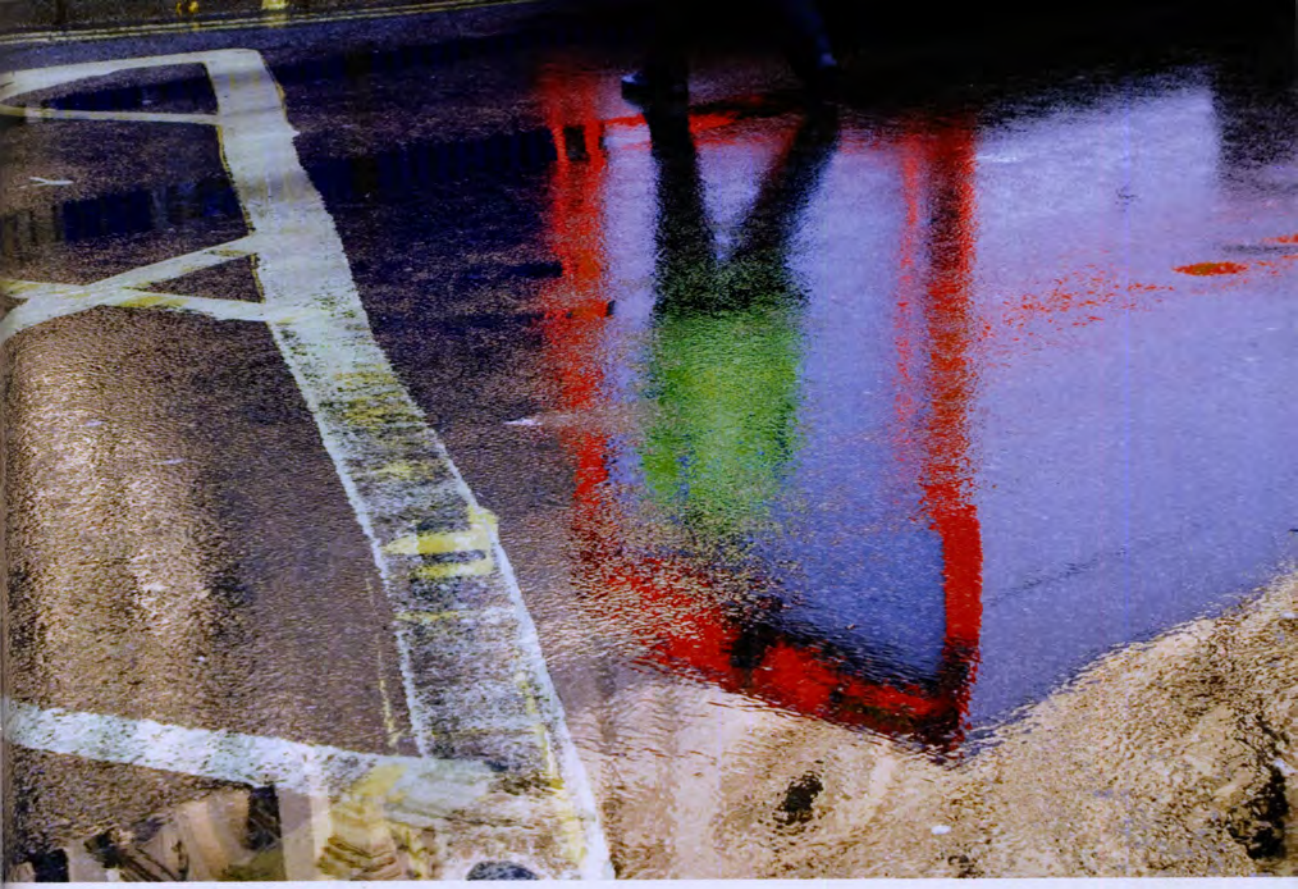
Weather is a factor; on rainy days colours on the street can become saturated and the wet surfaces almost prismatic. How many times have you seen a small oil spill on a wet road that becomes a beautiful rainbow mess of reflected colours?

My Piccadilly Circus photograph here was taken on a wet day; without the wet there would be no photograph. It is an abstract collection of colourful road markings and at the centre a man framed in red. This was exactly what I saw but in Photoshop I have turned the saturation and the contrast levels up a bit – not too much, just enough to lift the image.

A similar photograph was taken in Trafalgar Square in London, again on a wet day, but this time the final image has been turned upside down. The reflections of people appear the wrong way up when you see them, but turning the photograph upside down 'corrects' this. This photograph is all about the colours saturated by the rain and the shapes. People with umbrellas are a classic subject for reflections.

This is another example of a photograph moving towards the painterly where outlines are rounded and the overall effect is a little impressionistic. It is no coincidence that my interest in art surfaces in some of my work.

The pleasure of reflections – as with shadows – is that they offer virtually an alternative world for the street photographer, which, crucially, does not involve pointing the camera directly at people. This is sometimes a relief because it is easier and it gives you more time. However, that is not the main reason for considering reflections and nor should they be consigned to the realm of what the 'amateur' might do. There are nice reflections of boats on rivers, for example, but the street offers something a little grittier. It is the same technique, but far more interesting.



David Gibson, London; 2005

CONCLUSION

Reflections are not a photographic cliché because it depends entirely on what is reflected rather than the technique. The results can be both startling and original. Reflections are like shadows; we should be acutely aware of them.

- Become aware of reflections generally – in windows, metal fences, puddles or anything that reflects the street.
- Photograph your own reflection in mirrors and shop windows; photographers such as Vivian Maier and Lee Friedlander did it. It's for posterity too because it shows the camera you are using.
- Consider unusual surfaces for reflections; glossy paint in the right light can reflect bold shapes.
- See one or more mirrors on the street. It may only be part of the whole photograph but somebody caught in a mirror makes the photograph more interesting.
- A whole set of mirrors in a market, each one occupied, can make a photograph.
- Know that rain intensifies reflections – and saturates colour – on the street.
- Look at paintings – include visits to art galleries – on your street wanderings and see what effect it might have on your photography.

David Gibson, London; 2007

PROFILE

TRENT PARKE

born 1971, Newcastle, Australia

To describe Trent Parke as a documentary, fine art or street photographer is too simplistic. He is a member of Magnum, his work sells off gallery walls and his territory is often the street, but that does not really get to the heart of what he is.

He has a strong emotional connection to Australia, he lives absolutely in the now and he digs deep with an intensity that puts other photographers to shame. Parke is not an ordinary photographer; even within Magnum, you suspect he is a little unique. He is obsessive and restless, there are no half-measures; being in the zone, as he terms it, matters.

He has produced several books, most notably *Dream/Life* (1999) and *Minutes to Midnight* (2013), which reveal the familiar Parke style: razor-sharp observations in black and white, mixed with an unworldly appreciation of the Australian light, whether in the city or the bush. In *Dream/Life*, which is devoted to Sydney, we do not see that city in the colours established by convention; the shimmering blue of the harbour, for example, is dark and brooding in his pictures. Dark skies prevail throughout in possibly an allusion to childhood and lost innocence. Parke has often cited the sudden death of his mother when he was young as pivotal.

Dream/Life is a driven reflection on Parke's state of mind when he first left his hometown of Newcastle, NSW. His ghostly vision transforms Sydney into something unexpected and undoubtedly makes it one of the great photography books. Some would consider it every bit as good as Robert Frank's *The Americans* (1958), though not as historically important.

Parke considers himself to be primarily a storyteller and books are an essential part of that process; he does not like 'one-liners' in photography. After each story he quickly and ruthlessly moves on; he is only interested in immersing himself in the present. Significantly, he goes about this quietly; he is reassuringly above – or beyond – the world of social media. He seems to have little interest in conventional fame. He was good enough at cricket for it to have been considered a career option at one point and he later toured (as a photographer) with the Australian cricket team; he had come up through the same youth ranks as some of the well-known players. He mentions his unease at seeing that fishbowl world up-close, concluding '*give me an anonymous street corner any day*'.

This is such an intriguing shot, you immediately want to know how it came about. It's experimental yet compelling, and stretches the creative possibilities of street photography.

Parke's latest story, *Black Rose Diaries*, examines the major aspects of Australian life, including the suburbs, the beach, the outback and finally the city. The latter is an unusual set of portraits taken on the streets of Adelaide that are actually just a small part of a larger photograph.

Original ideas are worth nothing unless they are approached with patience and depth, which is what makes Trent Parke such a unique photographer. This photograph, entitled *Candid Portrait of a Woman on a Street Corner,* won him the Olive Cotton award for excellence in photographic portraiture in 2013.

PROJECT

13 DOUBLES

If you are walking next to a glass building, or any surface that reflects, hug its contours to see the doubling-up potential of the street.

Another type of reflection is the mirror or kaleidoscope effect, what might be called simply 'doubling up'. It is a technique that I have always instinctively used because you cannot always chase the obvious in street photography. You have to look up and down, seek different perspectives from which to shoot and generally search out alternatives.

We are surrounded by surfaces and buildings that are not always opaque backgrounds that stop dead, as it were, for photographs. They can be transparent or half transparent. More significantly, they can reflect back, distort and surprise. We do not always look at this parallel world because we know that it is not real, we take it for granted; but remember the imagination of children and how naturally fascinated they can be when noticing their reflection on the street and how they'll spontaneously play with it. This is what street photographers do; they understand more than the child but they seek to play with their surroundings.

Using reflections to split photographs in half – with one half mimicking the other in reverse – is a trick favoured by many photographers because it can be ingenuous and a little surreal. At ground level you have to position yourself tight against the reflection, so that the split is roughly in the middle. This 'doubling-up' series (opposite) was taken from a high perspective in Bangkok; it continues the high perspective concept, but the main intrigue here was the cleaner by the side of the glass building. With her blue top, blue bucket and mop, she is central to the series of photographs.

I was struck by her reflected doubling-up shape in the glass wall. Immediately there was a central symmetry that might be added to by the people passing by. I had time and was unseen – always a good combination – and was keen to fill out the corners of the frame, so that everything was balanced but provided a pleasing kaleidoscope shape.

I took 20 frames, which is a reasonable amount, feeling, as I often do, that I'd naturally exhausted most possibilities. How long to linger and at what point does it start to feel strained, with too many pictures? I think that there is some sort of internal nudge that comes into play, almost a reminder to not push your luck. Luck is precious and it should come naturally.

There was plenty of even daylight in this scene and because I wanted the passing figures to be sharp, I had the shutter speed on 500th of a second.

The other short series on pages 134–135 was shot in London and taken at street level. I was interested in the man's reflection at a bus stop but was aware that it was not enough, it needed another element. I then saw the newspaper seller coming along. Everything was set up and I took just one vertical shot as he suddenly came into the frame. This was better; it was much more of a kaleidoscope.

David Gibson, Bangkok, 2013

David Gibson, London; 2012

CONCLUSION

Doubling up is a great way to develop a good sense of composition and balance, although admittedly it could be viewed as an exercise. Too many photographs would potentially be bland, and that would prompt a challenge – to make each double photograph appear fresh. An awareness of this technique offers another avenue to explore and slows you down, because it often requires standing in one spot. To people passing by – who might be vital for your photograph – it can appear as if your focus is not on them but on some sort of reflection. It is easy to give this impression and then at the right moment swivel the frame to include them.

TIPS

- 'Hug' reflected walls or glass as you walk along; see the potential doubles.
- Stake out mirrored street corners for the kaleidoscopic effect, and catch people as they come round.
- 'Double' photographs work best as a 50/50 ratio in the frame.
- Have fun with doubles as you might do with shadows; photograph animals too. Colours can also be doubled.

PROFILE

JESSE MARLOW

This is fun and so perfectly seen and lined up. It's a decisive moment on the streets of Melbourne.

born 1978, Melbourne. www.jessemarlow.com

Jesse Marlow is one of the most surprising photographers within the In-Public collective, which he joined in 2001. His folio of traditional black-and-white street photographs appeared to be his style with a leaning towards documentary projects, but a shift took place when he took up colour photography.

His normally peopled street scenes gradually gave way to a more primary coloured, abstract style. Suddenly there were fewer people and the focus was more on colours and shapes.

Photographers essentially have to grow; they might have a starting point where they absorb their first influences but eventually they find their own voice. Marlow has grown into his signature style, which has resonated within the street photography community. He is often name-checked and it is significant that In-Public has three of Australia's finest photographers in its ranks. Marlow, Trent Parke and Narelle Autio were all early members of In-Public. Marlow has always generously acknowledged the collective – especially in its frenzied early years – for its encouragement and for introducing him to the work of photographers such as Tony Ray-Jones.

Marlow's conventional start in photography drew inspiration from Henri Cartier-Bresson and Josef Kouldelka, but it was the colour work of Alex Webb

that provided the spark for a gradual change of direction. Marlow cites the opening photograph from Webb's *Hot Light/Half-Made Worlds* (1986) – of a man jumping and touching a wall – as being pivotal. Webb's intricate and busy images have continued to inform Marlow's approach, but intriguingly so has the Australian modernist painter Jeffrey Smart and the US realist painter Edward Hopper. Marlow also mentions his mother, who he watched when younger, working in the family clothing business, collecting and reinterpreting antique fabrics. An appreciation of colour and design was clearly instilled early on.

The real shift in Marlow's work, however, took place when he began to embrace colour photography. With these accumulated colour connections, he was less likely to cling, as some photographers do, to a black-and-white sensibility. He has produced several books, most notably a monochrome collection entitled *Wounded* (2005), during an obsessive period of photographing all kinds of human wounds covered in casts or bandages on the streets of his native Melbourne.

Marlow seems most proud of his book project, *Don't Just Tell Them, Show Them* (2014), in which his gathered coloured work is at its most mature and complex. Marlow likes visual puzzles and the chance to play around with perspective, which is clear in the two photographs here. The 'White Horse' is a Melbourne landmark, but caught here with a worker in the background it suddenly asks questions about the horse's size. The woman in a headscarf is another surprise; she seems to have some sort of super-power or x-ray vision. And yet – to tease expectations – and no doubt out of curiosity and an abiding first love, he still returns to black and white. We can't make absolute predictions as to where his palette will go; photographers ultimately decide such things for themselves.

It's a visual trick and no amount of looking will confirm the height of the horse. This plus wonderful light is why it works.

CHAPTER 4

STILL

Street photography does not necessarily require people: evidence of people's lives, in all their curious forms, is just as poignant.

Ironically, perhaps the very first street photograph by Louis Daguerre in 1838 of a busy Paris boulevard is almost completely devoid of people. Due to the required long exposure of several minutes only one small figure is rendered – a man having his shoes cleaned, who was sufficiently still during the long exposure to be immortalised in the photograph.

It is a fascinating photograph which was carefully composed, but the eye is drawn to that one standing figure…That section of the photograph is often blown up to show the 'first man photographed' on the street.

However, the concern here is not with people but with *evidence* of people and objects and 'empty' streets. As ever there is some overlap, but it is helpful to try and make clear distinctions.

In reality many street photographers make little separation; certainly in the process of photographing as they move comfortably between peopled and non-peopled scenes. All that matters is that they have seen something interesting to photograph.

Mannequins are surely one of the best subjects ever for a street photographer. They are humans by proxy and they do not mind being photographed at all.

IT SHOULD BE REITERATED THAT STREET PHOTOGRAPHY DOES NOT NECESSARILY REQUIRE PEOPLE; THERE ARE ALWAYS OTHER VALID OPTIONS.

Often found in separate parts alongside other interesting artefacts, the possibilities are endless and it is not surprising that they have been a staple subject for so long. The eyes of any accomplished street photographer will inevitably fall upon mannequins. Just look at those collected by Magnum photographers over many years and you suddenly realise how vital and versatile mannequins can be for a street photographer. And they don't just stare out from shop windows; they can also interact with real people. They are one of the best props on the street.

PROJECTS

*EMPTY page 142
*OBJECTS page 146
*GRAPHIC page 154

David Gibson, London; 2006

Bits of mannequins are sometimes thrown out like litter. Litter is not pretty but there is a point at which it can be different, say with empty boxes piled up. The shape might be a beginning for a photograph or generally as an idea for a project. Litter is a theme too; people leave litter on the street, so why not photograph it? Not all litter is dirty and unattractive.

It could be added that relentlessly photographing people, even when they are minimal elements in a photograph, can be overwhelming for both viewer and the photographer. It is a question of pace; in a book, for example, still images without people allow breathing space.

STILL PHOTOGRAPHS ON THE PAGE OFFER PUNCTUATION. ON THE STREET THEY ARE LESS HURRIED AND SIMPLY EASIER TO DO. THEY ARE NOT ALWAYS EASIER TO SEE.

It is not uncommon for novices in street photography to consider taking pictures without people as lacking – in all respects. They are anxious about photographing people and turn the camera away, feeling cowardly and then that everything else they do subsequently is a compromise. This is really not the way to approach it; everybody is different and if you genuinely feel uncomfortable about photographing people, it will show and most likely compound the problem. It is like a very bad golf swing – you probably need to start again and consider what you really want to do. If you really want to photograph people, you have no alternative but to completely change your mindset. Equally, however, for some people photographing the streets does not mean a focus on people. They might have a fascination for graffiti, street art, or just curious found things, either temporary or fixed. You could define this as an interest in the design found on the street that we are surrounded by. Typography alone is a huge and varied subject to photograph on the street, as too is 'street furniture', which is a homely description for a litany of objects, including benches, bus stops, traffic lights, fountains, memorials, mail boxes and so on.

Milk bottles were once a fixture on the street – the glass variety delivered by a milkman from his milk float – and they meet the criteria of being an object and evidence; and when left for the milkman to collect, they are empty. They were taken for granted when they were everywhere in a city like London, but now, practically vanished from the street, they pronounce their absence merely by a picture reconsidering them. The US photographer Jonathan Bayer has photographed milk bottles since the 1970s, and in 2004 he produced virtually a requiem to the milk bottle, in his book *Bottle in the Smoke*. They are such ordinary objects but when collected in a book of photographs, you suddenly realise how surprisingly beautiful they are. They are never empty of meaning and a classic example of a forgotten street object.

Johanna Neurath (page 144) is a design director for a large publisher in London and she delights in finding 'design things' on the street. One of her specialities is to visit Columbia Road flower market in London's East End as it is winding down and photograph the mess of flowers left in the gutter. What she captures is a wonderful alternative to the formal beauty of flower arranging; her flowers, petals and leaves form temporary street arrangements that are quite compelling. They are also inspiring, especially to people who realise that you do not always have to photograph people.

Trees are also part of the lexicon; they line the street and are one of its most important fixtures. On

their own, the trunks can bend and curve like human figures. There is a 1953 photograph by Cartier-Bresson of curved trees along the bank of the Seine with just one very small seated figure, who seems almost incidental. The trees are like curved backs.

Cartier-Bresson did not always rely on human figures in his photographs; he was equally concerned with shapes. You might even claim that the shapes came first for Cartier-Bresson, although as people usually provided the more frequent shapes, he was always happy to use them.

You need only look through some of his books to see that geometry was really his subject. It can be seen in a sky of seagulls above the English Channel or in the eddy of a stream in Japan that strongly suggests the yin and yang motif; or even in his unmade bed with a newspaper taken in the 1960s. Cartier-Bresson did not need people, which is a surprising revelation to consider in his photography.

CHARACTER IS THE KEY WORD. IF A SPACE OR OBJECT HAS SOME SORT OF PRESENCE OR PERSONALITY, IT IS WORTH PHOTOGRAPHING.

Time is a factor in photography; an empty photograph can be filled up with time. In the first decades of photography in the nineteenth century the medium was not wholly capable of rendering people unless they were absolutely still for a long exposure. But this was not a deliberately photographed absence, although in the nineteenth century there was an absence of cars – now an integral part of contemporary life. Street photography can literally be jammed with cars that often don't improve a photograph. How often has a photographer seen something interesting only for a parked car to be in the way?

I was in Athens a few years ago and was taken to where Cartier-Bresson took one of his well-known photographs from 1953 – the two women echoed by two statues in the upper floor of a building (page 192). This building is perfectly preserved but on most days there is, ridiculously it seems, a car parked outside. You cannot in any way replicate Cartier-Bresson's photograph. The disruptive role of cars in street photography is decidedly underdiscussed. Old cars in Havana are subjects in themselves but the modern car fills up photographs. A street with parked cars is not properly empty.

It is interesting to trawl through some of the groups on Flickr that tackle the subject of empty streets. Some of the photographs are truly empty – of ambition or meaning – their only value is that they meet the brief. Unsurprisingly night is present in some images because night can fill up a photograph.

In daylight, is a sky with no clouds considered empty? Even the blue has a presence but is it worth photographing? An empty street can be made dramatic by the presence of clouds – odd-shaped clouds that might interplay with the shapes on the street. Street photographers should always consider the sky, and therefore the sunlight, because shadows and reflections can make a photograph less empty.

Empty chairs and benches on the street announce their presence because of their emptiness. Their function is always incomplete without people, so they are never completely empty when photographed. Chairs are objects, of course, and they furnish streets and public spaces; they might not initially be considered worth photographing but chairs can have character, like people. It is good to see the personality behind inanimate objects and remember that just like humans, they too have a story to tell.

PROJECT

14 EMPTY

Street photographs that are empty of people, cars or general clutter are not necessarily empty of mood or interest.

Empty is a spurious word when applied to street photography because it suggests something lacking – an empty street is supposedly always awaiting people to furnish it. Streets are functional, they require people, but their absence can actually be the photograph. Photographing absence is a great subject, as long as you can feel the absence.

The important question is: how deliberate is the intention to photograph the absence? The Düsseldorf School of Photography in the mid 1970s espoused a 'new objectivity' towards photography by minimising the appearance of the human figure. Arguably, those bland photographs are deliberately empty; they are empty of hope. However, the meaning of street photography, even without people, is always to have at least some soul and never be completely empty.

The concern here is with the emptiness that stirs the imagination, that suggests something, and is not a lazy photograph of nothing in particular.

My photograph of a cobbled street in Glasgow at night is virtually empty – just one car and no people – but it is filled with reflected light and mood. To me it also strongly evokes the work of Bill Brandt because it has something of his dark, heavy style; it might even echo one of his actual photographs. Photographers have their heads full of images from other photographers and every now and then one of them unexpectedly pops out. Would the photograph be lifted by a single dark figure walking across the scene, an elegant man with a hat? Or a cat, or a pigeon in full flight? Quite possibly it would.

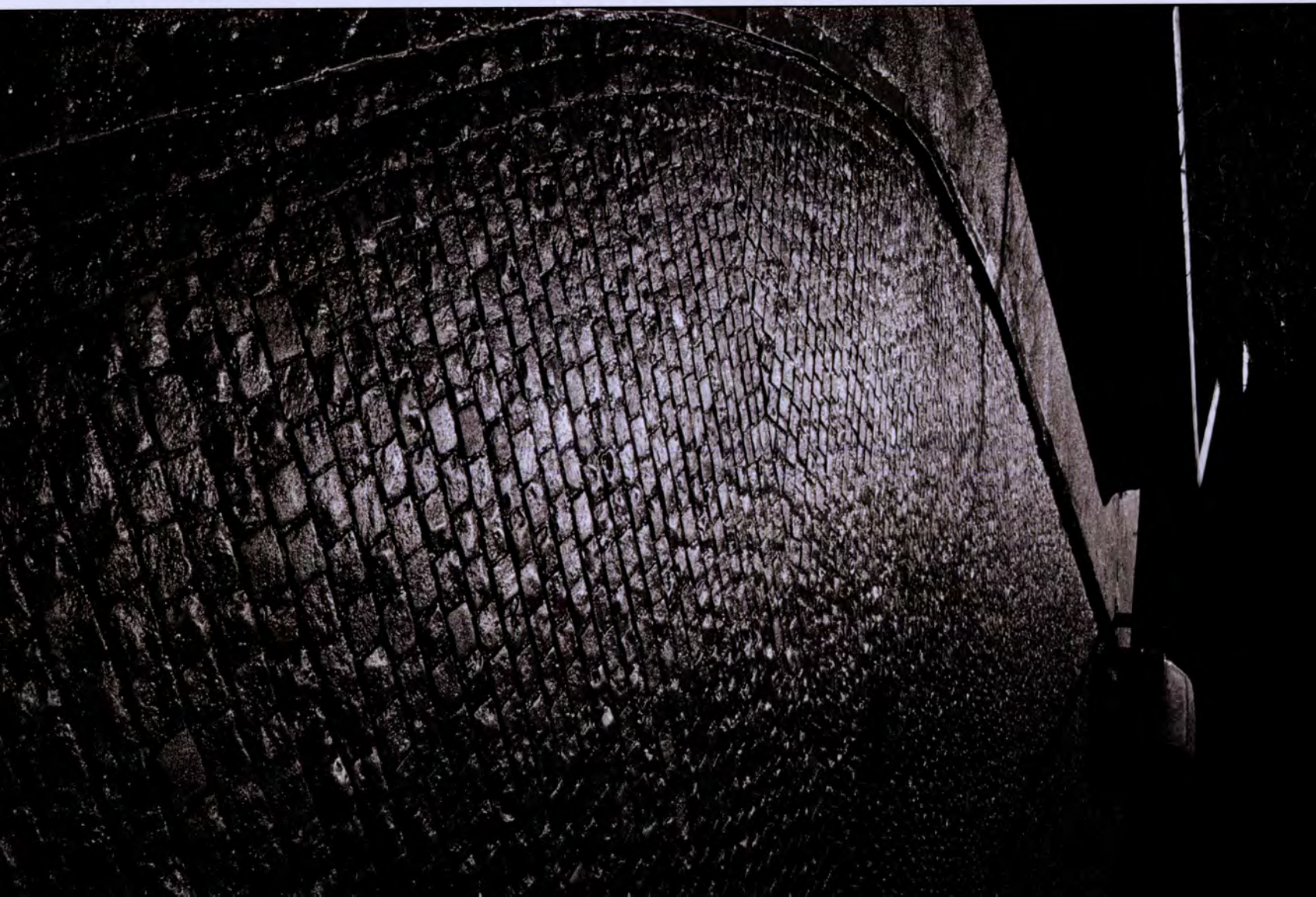
Perhaps the true question revolves around how comfortable we are with emptiness. We expect a street at night to be empty; the emptiness would be more pronounced in daylight but ultimately the photograph is as much about lines as mood. The photograph is full of time as well; it initially seems timeless until you truly consider the car. Without the car it could be the 1930s; that's what stirs the imagination.

CONCLUSION

Empty is such a spurious concept and perhaps the real debate is what is comfortable in a photograph. How comfortable is the photographer – and the viewer – with space or blandness? It is how we understand and approach emptiness that matters – and crucially how deliberate this is. Doing things deliberately with a clear understanding of our motives always makes for stronger, or at least more interesting work.

- Photograph pools of light at night, or light in dark shadows during the day.
- Especially photograph the emptiness of the night.
- Take the theme of empty as a project. Photograph empty buildings, streets, boxes of any kind that are empty, or empty shops, etc.
- Photograph minimal evidence of people on the streets.
- Remove clutter from your photographs; understand the process of boiling down your images to the absolute minimum.
- Experiment with composition; place a person or object in the corner of a photograph surrounded by space.

David Gibson, Glasgow; 1994



PROFILE

JOHANNA NEURATH

born 1963, London. www.flickr.com/photos/johanna

Looking down at the ordinary or neglected can certainly be rewarding; like bold art framed in the gutter on the street.

Johanna Neurath describes herself as 'a bibliophile and image junkie'. The daughter of a prominent worldwide publisher, she has design in her blood; she has risen to become head of design at an independent art book publisher after many years dealing with picture editing, typography and jacket design.

Having been immersed in design and art for so long, it is inevitable that she should 'sketch' with her camera. With the rise of online photo-sharing sites such as Flickr – to which she was a passionate early convert – this self-confessed 'hobby' has intensified. In tandem, her publishing work has been instrumental in reflecting the rise of photo-sharing and particularly the explosion in street photography. She strongly believes, for example, that the book *Street Photography Now* (2010) would not have been possible without its online audience.

Much of that audience provided the impetus for the inaugural London Street Photography Festival in 2011, in which Neurath was invited to exhibit, alongside Anahita Avalos, Polly Braden, Tiffany Jones and Ying Tang, in *A Woman's Perspective*. This group show confirmed her standing in the street photography community, irrespective of gender.

Neurath takes delight in many kinds of visual media but singles out Alex Webb, Constantine Manos,

Stephen Shore and William Eggleston as influences on her photography, specifically for their use of colour and subject matter.

Her photographs on the street are predominantly of designs, which are carefully collected, almost like books, into sets. One of her most distinctive collections is of Columbia Road flower market in London's East End, where she photographs discarded and informal arrangements of flowers in situ on the street. Startling in their simplicity and beauty, they are arguably very feminine. They are also a refreshing reminder that the street does not have to rely on heaving masses of people. This flower market is famously jammed with people every Sunday, but Neurath catches the market as it winds down, ignoring the dwindling crowds to focus on what interests her.

Another motif for Neurath, amongst several, is snow. She captures snow as a blank page with a minimum of squiggles or plants like calligraphy. She also has a liking for petals because they decorate the page, and it's worth highlighting one particular image of hers of a car with a blanket of petals over it. It is not a difficult photograph to take; hardly any of her photographs are of moving targets – but they work. They are like leaves pressed into the pages of a diary, very personal but quite exquisite.

Neurath constantly reminds us that the everyday is eminently photogenic. How many people would consider taking this photograph? It's beautiful.

An important point about her photographs is that they always seem to resonate with people, almost as a relief amidst all the predictable or 'clever' street photographs. Neurath's photographs are a refreshing reminder that people need not be the main subject.

PROJECT

15 OBJECTS

Street objects are part of the flow of people on the street, but approached singularly they have character just like people.

One of the problems of trying to categorise the different concepts and subject matter of street photography is that most practitioners work with a broad palette. In the middle of their wanderings, they would never consciously consider whether their photographs are peopled or not.

Looking at the folios of most street photographers would probably reveal at least 75 per cent of their photographs to have people in them, either prominently or minimally. Arguably, for the majority of street photographers, objects are an occasional but natural part of their photography.

ALL THAT EVER MATTERS IS WHETHER SOMETHING IS WORTH PHOTOGRAPHING.

Photographing objects comes during lulls in a day's shooting. Photographers continue shooting as they move from crowded scenes to places with no people. This is the conventional view, however; there are some photographers who are far more interested in objects and shapes, to the point that having their photographs with even minimal people would distract their vision. Clear evidence of people would equally be a distraction.

The Californian photographer Trevor Hernandez, who is better known (intriguingly) as Gangculture, is one of these singular street photographers. He makes little reference to people; even the dogs in his pictures are independent. Instead, his focus is on what might be called neglected things. There are objects – discarded boxes or litter – but his fascination is seemingly collecting things that other people would not look at. His vision is so consistent that it becomes riveting; an up-close section of sidewalk is nothing, but it has been noticed and posted on his Instagram page. Instagram has a particular aesthetic, too, which is utterly appropriate for this type of collecting and sharing online. Some people collect litter to help the community; others collect things to show others.

There is pleasure in collecting objects and the impact of the whole collection can matter more than the single photograph. There is a long tradition in photographing chairs, for example, as seen by Shirley C. Burden's book *Chairs* (1985), which features only chairs and includes the dedication: '*In Paris chairs are alive and well*'.

I concede that the terms object, project and subject can be one and the same thing when applied to street photography, but perhaps applying the phrase 'objects of desire' can help catch the spirit of collecting. And objects, unlike probably the things that we surround ourselves with in our living spaces, can be quite different on the street. Chairs can be beautiful, as can doors or windows, but any of these objects in decay can be equally stimulating to the eye.

Those are fixed objects but consider a balloon floating haphazardly on the street – I seem to see them quite often in London and I find them fascinating. I have often talked about a photograph taken by Stephen McLaren of a blue balloon caught in the wind

David Gibson, Athens; 2012

on an East London street. It is 'just' a balloon, but this photograph always resonates with people. Perhaps you can't quite figure out how big the balloon is; is it a crashed hot-air balloon at the end of the street; or maybe people just recall a prolonged scene from the film *American Beauty*.

What other tangible objects do I collect? Certainly umbrellas, which could be a project alone, not just when it is raining, but when they are half unfolded like flowers or even abandoned. Bikes appear quite regularly in my photographs and I am often drawn to mannequins and dolls. Dolls are little people and are easy to photograph. Many might walk past the abandoned doll in the photograph on page 147 – or is it a baby mannequin not long discarded from a shop or stall? Either way, this is a good example of 'collecting' objects because once carefully framed, the doll becomes important. The space around it accentuates everything; this needed to be a horizontal shot. Taken on the outskirts of Athens, the little person will surely be gone very soon.

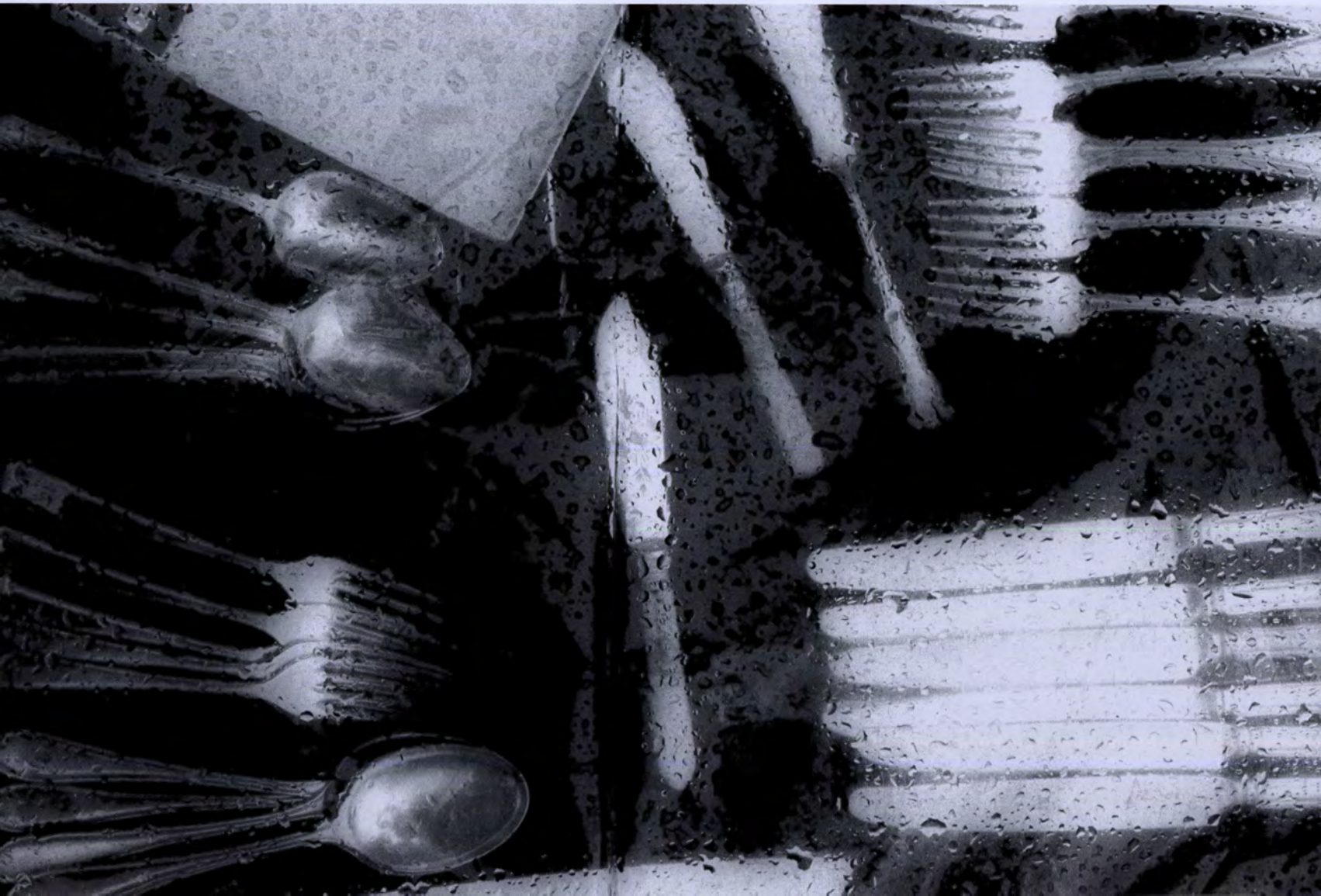
The final photograph here shows a group of objects – some old but elegant cutlery. It was at a craft fair in West London and rain prompted the stallholder to cover up the cutlery with transparent plastic. That is what made the photograph; it's a layered photograph, which adds texture, almost like negative film.

CONCLUSION

Photographing objects is an opportunity to photograph what truly interests us – our collections should be sincere and personal, almost like a diary. The overriding point is that there is a long and varied tradition of photographing objects. We look at objects all the time but when they are photographed they can become something different. It is a perfectly valid part of street photography.

- **Look at the photographs of a singular collector such as Gangculture.**
- **Consider street photographers known primarily for photographing people who turn their camera towards objects. Nils Jorgensen has a curious collection of shoes.**
- **Consider objects that are both functional and neglected.**
- **Photograph people with objects where the object is more prominent.**
- **Photograph decaying objects on the street: fruit and flowers, for instance.**
- **Photograph abandoned objects as evidence of people.**
- **Don't hesitate; an object may not be there for long.**
- **Look at the history of photography; all the photographers who have photographed objects such as mannequins.**

David Gibson, London; 1998



PROFILE

CASPAR CLAASEN

born 1975, Amsterdam. www.casparclaasen.com

Caspar Claasen's street photographs are quietly compelling. Each one is carefully composed and holds your attention. The consistency is reassuring and there are sometimes little gems hidden – look closer and there are subtle juxtapositions. Nothing is loud; everything is comfortable for the photographer and the subject. Claasen, you sense, does not want to intrude and, while distance can be a criticism in some photographer's work, with Claasen the distance is right.

Design, minimalism and geometry are factors in Claasen's approach and people often provide the centre balance. The message is delivered simply and always in colour; Claasen is unequivocal in his use of colour and reasons simply that: 'Life is in colour. I want people to think they would have seen what I saw if only they would've been there. It simply makes it more real.'

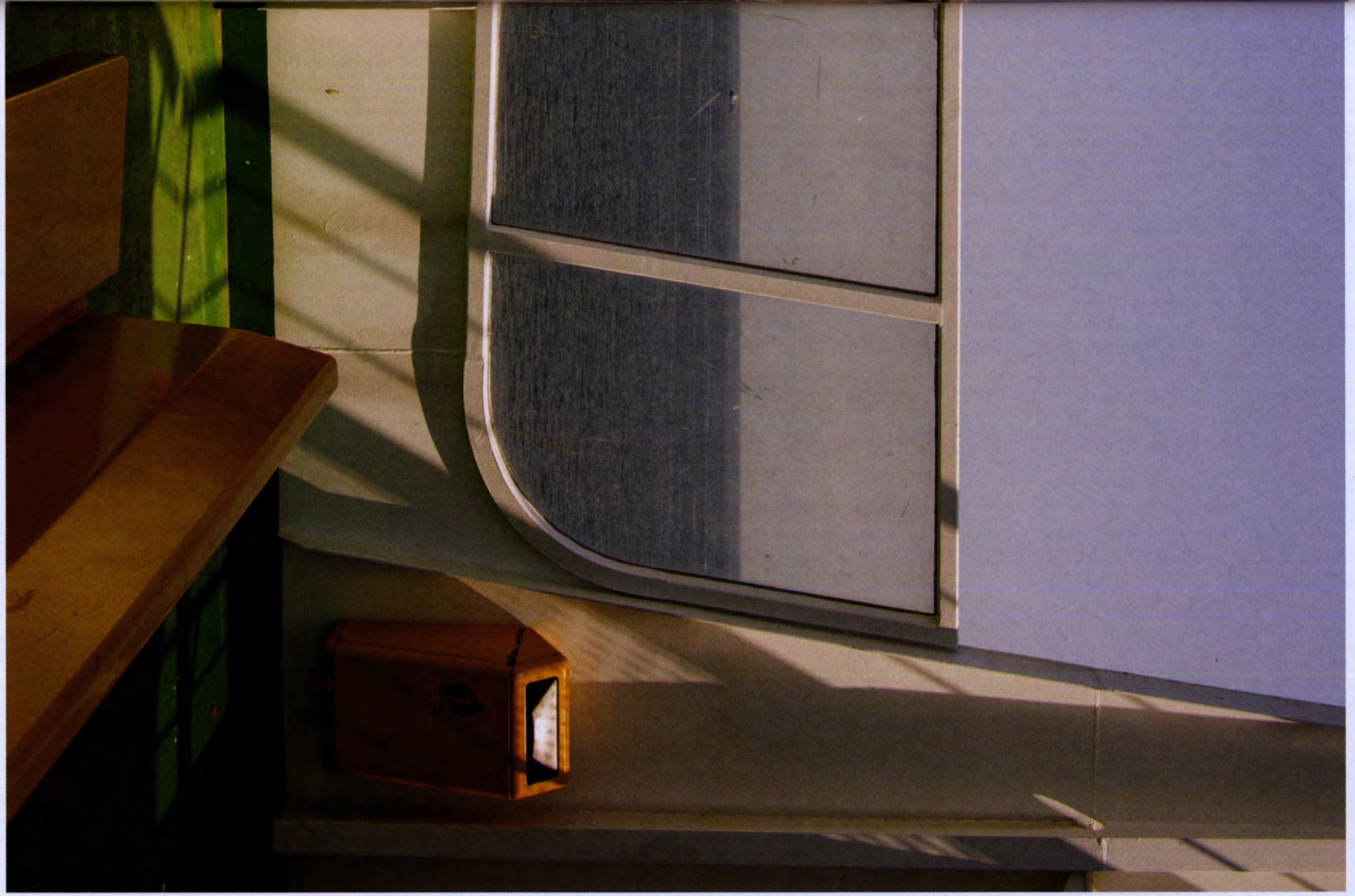
Yet there are other dynamics at play in his work and he concedes that his photographs reveal as much about his own character. There are 'traces' of his design work, but his motivating interest is 'how people behave and interact in and with their surroundings'. This is careful composition but there is also, he admits, 'an odd loneliness' and 'a sense of misplacement' in his photographs. The loneliness, however, is not sad, but more an elegant arrangement of people in urban landscapes. There are bright primary colours but there is also gentle humour – design humour, perhaps – and a fondness for repeated shapes or just plain oddness.

There are not many faces up close in his pictures; the consideration is on the whole body, especially legs, but equally people are almost always incidental and prone to disappear completely. Claasen delights in 'dead objects' that possibly play the same role as people. A wooden post on a beach, dead centre, like his human subjects, calmly stares.

Just a wooden post on an empty beach, but it is so much more. A quiet appreciation of space and mood, it's cleansing and offers hope.

Magnum, Ed van der Elsken and Anton Corbijn are amongst his photographic influences. He also cites In-Public photographers, particularly Nils Jorgensen, whose spare style is evident as an influence in Claasen's pictures. However, his work also shows his interest in Dutch painting, the films of David Lynch and the writer Haruki Murakami. This is an eclectic mix, but ultimately it is the sheer simplicity of Claasen's photographs that stands out.

A particular aspect of his work is how beautifully he photographs people from behind. It is completely non-voyeuristic: he catches people seemingly deep in thought. His photograph on pages 152–153 of the young girl on the deck of a ferry is a good example. She stands firm – a little like the wooden post on the beach – and is perfectly calm. What is she contemplating? We share the little girl's wonder as she stares at the sea, and eventually see her teddy bear too. The light and subtle colours are perfect.



Caspar Claasen, Texel, Netherlands; 2013

PROJECT

16 GRAPHIC

Taking pleasure in lines and street graphics is a particular strand of photography that is sometimes more striking without people.

You need only consider the Greek roots of the word 'photography' – literally meaning light and drawing – to appreciate how all things graphic are so embedded in the medium.

A photographer's style can be termed graphic. The work of Robert Häusser or Ralph Gibson, for example, has strong graphic elements. My whole approach to photography is graphic because I like tidiness and I have an appreciation for the graphic shapes in buildings and signs. Calligraphy, fonts and textures – even a brick wall to me is graphic.

The concerns here are some of those singular graphic elements in street photography, especially those already written on the street. The artist Henri Matisse likened drawing to taking a line for a walk, which describes the serendipity of a creative process. For street photographers, their canvas already has its lines; functional street markings are everywhere to assist drivers and pedestrians, but they are integral to street photography too. Street markings can provide the backdrop; sometimes they reinforce framing and balance when peopled, but alone they can be a stark celebration of graphics. Every country has its own street graphics; a pedestrian crossing is different in Spain compared to one in the United Kingdom, for example.

On the street, graphics generally photograph best in black-and-white. The classic street font is simple white lines on black tarmac. Perfectly spaced and with the right light, they are even more striking, especially when wet. There is an argument that you should only photograph when it has been raining, a dry road simply does not look so good. Rain clears the air and exaggerates road markings. Snow is another cleansing element that provides a startling graphic; it blankets the street, reducing everything to shapes and lines. The photograph can be what remains – the black outlines of objects poking out of the snow.

The sky can provide a graphic backdrop; its sheer whiteness – captured in black-and-white – accentuates shapes against it. Consider power lines, often six of them like a blank music staff, awaiting birds as musical notes.

The best street graphic in my opinion is the arrow, not simply for its shape but there is also its visual function; an arrow suggests a narrative for people. There are also traffic cones, which provide another punctuation. Street cones are not fixed but are temporarily arranged, their purpose to frame and separate. Consider them as chess pieces on the street, especially when viewed from above.

My arrows shot here, taken in 1996 close to Waterloo Station in London, started with the road markings. The woman on her journey made it complete. She is in the right place at the bottom of the page with the bold arrow beckoning.

Arrows feature strongly in the Edinburgh photograph too – this is also a waited photograph – waiting for the right person to come into the scene. No one would believably carry an arrow but this workman carries a graphic line that breaks up the circle.

David Gibson, London; 1996

CONCLUSION

Graphic is a very general term to apply to most photography, but it is a very important ingredient in how photographs should be taken and interpreted.

Interestingly, graphic designers often make very good photographers; even their visual doodles can be at the very least pleasing graphic exercises. Equally photographers frequently have a strong interest in what graphic designers do; indeed they sometimes collaborate on commercial work.

- Look at street markings and signs and how they can be photographed with and without people.
- Look at the graphic photographs and accompanying texts by Ralph Gibson.
- Look at the quality graphic design magazines, such as Baseline, which often incorporates photography.
- Do a project on arrows.
- Consider the rule of thirds in photography. Some photographers find this very helpful. It's not necessarily a rule to be obeyed, but is part of an explanation of how we see and interpret visual things.
- Read graphic shapes as something else. The alphabet, for instance, is everywhere on the street.

David Gibson, Edinburgh; 2002

CHAPTER 5

SUBJECTS

What are the subjects on the street? People, objects, surfaces, light...they're just too broad to define, but photographers do have their favourites.

In some respects this final chapter is an opportunity to linger a little longer on certain subjects within street photography. Some have been touched upon already, but it is important to give further consideration to subjects or issues that prompt questions. And some aspects of street photography should also be discussed more directly.

Children, for example, have been dealt with as part of the general street population, which is ideally how it should be. A particular point about children is that it was once common for them to play freely on the street in the West. Children now play indoors, thus street photography has to a certain extent lost one of its traditional subjects.

By contrast, humour does not really change, and in its varying shades remains one of the key ingredients – or subjects – of street photography. Street photographers respond to the absurdities of life and humour inevitably surfaces. However, it would be contrived to set a project to take funny street photographs – as ever, it is what occurs naturally. Children do funny things, they have a sense of humour that is freer, and it's a pity that photographing children on the street has lost some of its spontaneity.

Animals do not intend to be funny but they add colour and irony to our world, especially with humans in tow. They are always present in the 'supporting cast' on the street. Sometimes they are the stars; pigeons, for example, have been central to many of the best street photographs. I mention Matt Stuart's well-known pigeon shot as being a hard one to capture, whilst mine (page 161) – also in Trafalgar Square – was an easy one. I was just there to witness this pigeon that had somehow managed to get its head stuck in a polystyrene cup.

One of Garry Winogrand's best-known books, *The Animals* (1969), posed the question: who are the real animals – the animals in the zoo or the people watching them? In one particular photograph of a wolf skulking in a cage, the real predator's eyes belong to the man staring menacingly at a woman as they stand together outside the wolf's cage.

The zoo, like the street, provides raw material for Winogrand's skewed and surreal world. In his accompanying text, John Szarkowski, then curator of photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, questions whether, on the evidence of the pictures, Winogrand likes zoos, but that is not necessarily the point. He instinctively knew the zoo to be a good 'hunting' ground for his kind of pictures.

A lesser-known homage to people-watching/animal-watching is *Please Do Not Feed* (2003) by Andy Morley-Hall, which casts a more affectionate and gentle English eye over zoo life. Morley-Hall's photographs are both lyrical and charming. He does like zoos.

In zoos there is a variety of animals, but the street is mainly the domain of cats and dogs – cats in the suburbs, dogs in the city centre. It is dogs that offer

PROJECTS

*CHILDREN page 162
*PROJECTS page 168
*VERTICAL/HORIZONTAL page 174
*ETHICS page 180

David Gibson, Norwich; 1991

true collaborations. Individually, they have character and attitude; when they partner humans, as in many of Elliott Erwitt's pictures, they bring out the best – or the surreal – in humans. In Erwitt's eye, the owners really do look like their dogs.

In Athens, many of the dogs are independent yet tame. They live on the street and are looked upon kindly by people. Big dogs wait at pedestrian crossings like everyone else because they are citizens, too.

There is no particular technique for 'working' with animals but it could be said that photographers aesthetically lean towards either cats or dogs. Perhaps dogs are busy, while cats are quiet.

Unexpected animals often provide the best street photographs. An elephant in New York or a penguin in Edinburgh, for example, have been captured on the street respectively by Jirí Makovec and Werner Bischof at different times. The reason can always be explained – it's usually connected with a circus or zoo – but the photographer seizes such rare moments. What a great idea for a long-term project.

It is worth noting that camera phones are not just a means to take street photographs; they are arguably the most ubiquitous subject on the street. Body language has been transformed by mobile phones; everybody fiddles and checks their phone. It's taken for granted but imagine trying to take photographs on a crowded street without the slightest evidence of mobile phones; it would be like trying to exclude people with glasses. Suggested project: take street photographs where the mobile phone does not exist. It would be a challenge.

Of course, there is also inside, which is a continuation of the street. The territory of street photography extends to any public space and this can include airports, museums, art galleries, train stations, subway systems, indoor markets – the list is practically endless and you might just as easily call it street photography without the sky. The familiar shadows stay outside, while inside the light may be artificial or natural, but low light conditions can be an asset for a different mood.

On the street people are mostly moving from A to B, while in museums and art galleries people's movements are less hurried. The urgency of the street has gone and they are engrossed in something slower. This is classic territory for the street photographer. Elliott Erwitt did a whole book on people-watching at museums.

Galleries have clean lines and space and each exhibit offers a ready-made frame for people-watching. Nils Jorgensen, another 'inside street photographer', has a bald-headed man in front of a landscape painting with trees; the foliage when aligned provides a toupee for the man, which fits perfectly. It's a cliché, but one picture has made another picture.

Airports and railway stations are far more frenetic. People have arrived at departures but then commence a period of waiting. This can obviously be quite ordinary, but equally waiting can provide something different from the street. It is a different public arena; people behave and look a little different. Garry Winogrand was a frequent people-at-airports-watcher, which eventually became the book *Arrivals & Departures* that was published posthumously in 2004.

Most subjects or situations on the street are potential projects. The beach, where the city goes to unwind, is a subject – and a territory – because again it is a place where people behave differently. There is a whole tradition of beach or seaside street photography. The photographs of Tony Ray-Jones and Martin Parr are prime examples.

The conclusion is that it is difficult to talk about subjects because the adage that a picture is worth a thousand words thankfully holds true. Pictures come first where subjects are naturally revealed. They provide direction and push us to take even more pictures.

But of course sometimes the subject list comes first; it has to because a brief may have very clear ambitions, as with a documentary project. Walker Evans photographing for the FSA (Farm Security Administration) in 1930s America worked from a list. All the photographers for that historical project,

the aim of which was to record the difficult living conditions of American people during the Great Depression, worked from a list of subjects to photograph.

The best photographers tend to be methodical; when they are not photographing, they are writing lists of what they want to photograph. The trouble is for an outsider these lists appear quite mundane: Walker Evans for example listed: 'Automobiles and automobile landscape, advertising, the movies, etc'. The FSA was a documentary project, but identifying subjects in advance can be motivational for anyone and it primes the eye. You are basically telling yourself what you need to photograph and this discipline can work for some street photographers.

Evans it should be noted became friendly with the young Robert Frank in the 1950s and encouraged him to apply for a Guggenheim fellowship. In his application he crystallised his ideas as a list that included a 'town at night, a parking lot, a supermarket' and intriguingly 'the man who owns three cars and the man who owns none', which sounds far more interesting.

With the fellowship Frank set out on a road trip across America and took nearly 700 rolls of film, from which he printed 300 negatives and then arranged them into categories, such as 'symbols, cars, cities, people, signs, cemeteries, etc'. When you consider this the resulting book seems far less spontaneous. The pictures might appear random at first glance but in reality a great deal of thought and organisation went into the process.

Tony Ray-Jones was an obsessive writer of lists; it was important to him because it clarified his mind to move forwards with his picture-taking. His notebooks from the late 1960s reveal much about his approach:

- Be more aggressive.
- Get more involved (talk to people).
- Stay with the subject matter (be patient).
- Take simpler pictures.
- See if everything in background relates to subject matter.
- Vary compositions and angles more.
- Be more aware of composition.
- Don't take boring pictures.
- Get in closer (use 50 mm less).
- Watch camera shake (shoot 250 sec or above).
- Don't shoot too much.
- Not all at eye level.
- No middle distance.

The best one is 'Don't take boring pictures', which is obvious but utterly true. Tony Ray-Jones was never satisfied, which is the trait of many photographers. They try to understand the subjects in their photography and by doing so feel emboldened and clearer about what to do next.

David Gibson, London; 2008

PROJECT

17 CHILDREN

Children are part of the street like everyone else and while there are no laws over photographing them, they require special sensitivity as subjects.

If ever there was a subject that encapsulated the joys and pitfalls of street photography it is children. It is also a subject that varies in sensitivity around the world. Photographing children in Thailand or India, for example, is regarded as 'innocent' and perfectly acceptable, whereas in some European countries it is almost the opposite, the situation is far less comfortable. In the West there are huge and complex issues surrounding the photographing of children.

One of the aims of street photography is to avoid obstacles – whether it is concerns about camera settings or legal issues – because they get in the way of taking photographs. From the outset, therefore, it should be clear that – in the United Kingdom at least – there are no special laws about photographing children in public spaces; they are exactly the same as for adults. However, it is worth considering some of the attitudes to photographing children. We live in strange times, in a world dominated by Facebook, on which many share their private lives, including the lives of children, yet in physical public spaces there exists a creeping paranoia about photographing children. That is the bleak view: it is not about legal issues but is more about a loss of innocence. The West has grown to be suspicious of people, especially men, pointing their cameras at children. Parents are concerned, schools are concerned and children sense something dark.

Should we dwell too much on this? No. The only way forward is to show common sense and respect when taking photographs of people on the street, and extra sensitivity is required when it comes to photographing children.

We should celebrate children and capture the joys of childhood. Once children routinely played on the street; that changed in the UK, probably some time in the 1960s or later, it's difficult to pinpoint. That shift would have varied according to the locale. Look at the photographs taken in New York by Helen Levitt in the 1940s and 1950s, which captured the wonderful theatre of children playing on the street. In the past a far greater proportion of people's lives was lived outside on the street. Photographing children should not be considered furtive or strange in any way. They remain one of the best subjects for a street photographer.

My two black-and-white photographs here feature children, though not prominently. Arguably their age is incidental because they are almost props for the whole scene. The photograph in Gourock in Scotland started with the strange playground ride that was an interesting subject alone, but essentially this is a waited photograph. The boy came into the picture and his slightly awkward pose and especially his outstretched fingers, which mimic the wings of the playground bird, make the scene complete.

The crossroads photograph in Spain (pages 164–165) was a fairly prolonged wait. My fascination was with the shapes of the zebra crossing taken from above – all typical ploys in my picture-taking – and the young boy suddenly came into the frame. His body language echoes the zebra crossing and again there is tension in the photograph.

Neither of these photographs have the child situated in the centre of the photograph, but somehow they are still balanced.

David Gibson, Gourock, Scotland; 2003

CONCLUSION

My earlier series in the Order project (pages 52–55) exemplifies what photographing children should be. The scene of the assorted Annies is light and joyful – everything that childhood should be – and captured in that same spirit by the photographer. It should also be acknowledged that for a female it is far easier to photograph children. Indeed female street photographers probably naturally gravitate towards children.

A final point is that unlike adults, children will naturally play to the camera, which immediately changes the dynamic. It's nice to have children laughing at the camera, but this becomes portraiture or travel photography rather than street photography.

- Be aware of parents (or teachers) and where they are in proximity to the children you are interested in photographing.
- Do it quickly as you would in most situations and do not overdo it - get a few shots and then move on.
- If you are 'caught', smile. A smile is an acknowledgement that what you are photographing deserves a smile and it reassures everyone.
- If you have your own children with you, you have a big advantage.
- You do not have to photograph children as 'children'; they are people and are part of life on the street too.
- See the child in adults; that's what street photography is sometimes.
- Be sensible, but don't be anxious about photographing children. It is not illegal and is perfectly normal.
- Look at the photographs of Roger Mayne who captured children playing on the street in 1950s London.

David Gibson, Palma, Spain; 2003

PROFILE

DAVID SOLOMONS

born 1965, London. www.davidsolomons.com

If there is such a thing as a 'proper' street photographer, David Solomons would fit the bill. Like many street photographers, he does not derive a huge income from photography, but it is about more than that. Self-effacing, yet realistic and honest, he has always taken photographs for himself. Even Elliott Erwitt has a day job for Magnum, which has enabled him to take his personal pictures. Sometimes a photographer's personal work gets them paid work, which allows them to continue with what they really want to photograph. That does not happen with many photographers and it should not necessarily be considered a yardstick for a 'successful' photographer.

Solomons is a prolific street photographer who is highly respected in the photographic community – and he is getting better. Progression is not always a natural outcome because some photographers trail off with a faltering appetite. Intriguingly, he appears only to take horizontal photographs. This is unusual, but this 'habit', as he terms it, is driven by how his photographs will appear

A reflective moment on a busy street which, like all good photographs, needed to be taken. The woman's pose is so elegant and the contrasting bright light from inside the cafe adds to the whole mood.

Typical of Solomons' style, this is a bit like a fashion shot but it's quiet, and thanks to the small wall, a little unusual.

on the page. This invariably requires his photographs – for intended book projects – to be landscape. He has always had faith in what he does and has not been afraid to self-publish books in order to get his work out there. The first two of these, *Happenstance* and *Underground*, both from 2009, have now sold out.

He was a student on the renowned documentary photography course at Newport in South Wales, however his original interest in photography began with his first SLR camera in 1985, photographing friends and family. This interest was further inspired by Magnum's 'In Our Time' exhibition in 1990 at the Hayward Gallery in London.

Solomons is based in East London and his evocative *Up West* project deliciously captures the idea of heading to the busy West End of London to take pictures every day. That's the idea of projects; it creates a hunger that needs feeding. One of those photographs, taken in Soho's Old Compton Street at night, beautifully catches a woman in repose outside a cafe. She is surrounded by bustle but this is a calm moment too.

He enjoys travelling to take photographs, capturing some of his best earlier images in Greece and Brazil and extending his range with two trips in particular: a road trip in the United States, and three cities in China. Despite appearing to be extended research projects, these were in fact just personal trips which offered the chance to take some decent images.

His *China in Three Cities* was not an easy trip: he had limited time to photograph but the series contains several fine photographs that have become part of his growing body of work. The Chinese woman here is a companion to her counterpart in London. What is she doing? Is she waiting or just idling, standing on a small wall? What is she thinking? Again, this photograph has a calm quality to it.

PROJECT 18

PROJECTS

Projects are 'the dog that needs walking' for many street photographers - you need motivation, an excuse, for somewhere to go.

Projects are a common part of street photography and it often seems a prerequisite to be 'working on a project' as opposed to the broad mess of simply taking street photographs. That mess – life on the streets – is largely what street photography is. However, as with any artistic pursuit there still remains the need for motivation. It should not be a trick, but if you 'have a dog' it needs to be walked every day.

Beginners in street photography often bemoan, 'What do you photograph when you go out?' The simple answer is: take photographs over a concentrated period and it will be revealed in what you end up with. You may realise that you have many images of bikes, or umbrellas, or it might be something with a broader narrative, a singular emotion or a place.

Elliott Erwitt has an archive of his interests that have become books. Although publishers see potential in grouping images together, it is interesting to consider 'the piles of photographs' from someone like Erwitt. Apart from dogs, he has produced books on hands, museums, beaches and children. Another US photographer, who thrives on themes, is Sylvia Plachy. Her book, *Signs and Relics* (1999), includes thematic sections such as flight, sit, frames, smoke, obsession, roundness and trees. You suspect that she reached these themes by originally putting photographs into different piles that then developed into a conscious pursuit of the topics. That is how it should be.

André Kertész's book *On Reading* (1971) was described modestly as 'a small number of photographs of various people reading'. That idea is still vitally alive today, albeit with the addition of e-books. There's a project – updating a classic photography book.

Projects can be the lifeblood of a street photographer, and several projects, some vague, others more advanced, in the photographer's head give purpose to wandering on the street.

One of my ongoing projects is to 'collect' hearts, which are a universal theme. Hearts pierced by arrows are scrawled on walls – declaring that one name loves another – but more satisfying are the occasions when the shape of a heart appears naturally and sometimes surprisingly.

A man walking past a London shop carries the remains of a heart, a red plastic bag, which seems almost to have been ripped from the shirt in the window. It's a stretch of the imagination to believe but if you're collecting hearts, the possibility leaps out. A woman leans tenderly against a large tree with a heart in its trunk, and two bikes clearly in love is confirmed by the heart shape in the background window. My original plan was to collect twelve hearts for a Valentine's Day calendar but who knows where this particular project might go.

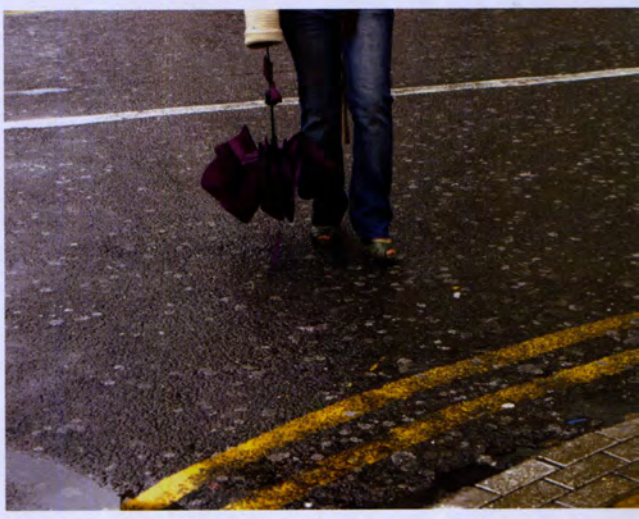
HEARTS

David Gibson, London; 2006. Bottom right, Athens; 2011

David Gibson, London; 2006

HOOKS

David Gibson, London; 2008



David Gibson, London; 2005

I freely admit that I am better at having ideas for projects than I am at seeing them through. A 'sleeping' project I have is loosely called 'Hook' and shows people on the street who seemingly carry things with no hands. I have two good 'starter' photographs for this but realistically this idea will not grow quickly. The idea is there, however, and a good third photograph might suddenly resurrect the project with vigour.

My head is full of projects: they are my dog that needs walking.

CONCLUSION

Look at the websites of a few photographers; most will have specific galleries for their projects or themes. Some will be places where various photographs have been shunted under vague or elaborate titles, but the better photographers are revealed in the diversity and the thought they put into their projects because their photography demands it.

We can't all be like Sebastião Salgado, whose 'projects' last years and take on biblical proportions. A simple and sincere idea, even with just a handful of photographs, is worthwhile.

- It doesn't matter if you don't finish a project; you might still get one or more decent photographs.
- Let projects evolve naturally; don't force them.
- Identify 'starter' photographs that offer potential for a longer series.
- Don't be put off by an idea that has been covered by someone else; yours will inevitably be different.
- Look at the projects of other photographers; don't copy but get ideas, see how they are put together.
- Consider text to accompany a project; it clarifies and makes it more interesting.
- Enter competitions with themes; think of them as projects.

PROFILE

NARELLE AUTIO

born 1969, Adelaide

Narelle Autio is primarily known for her rich, warm-coloured photographs of beach suburbs in her native Australia. You sense she is never photographically very far from water and it is this that makes her work all the more restful and beautiful.

Autio's signature style uses slightly saturated colour. In many of her photographs, taken in the surf or on the beach, and even inland, there is always that sense of it suddenly going a little dark, as if a prelude to a storm. Everything is intensified – the colour, the light and the mood.

Her photographs are reminiscent of Alex Webb's in her arrangement of people, but there seems to be a drama going on too. In one a man walks past an industrial building, intense, darkening colours everywhere, and there is what seems like blood on his face, richly red, probably a wound.

She has completed several works with her husband, Trent Parke, most notably *The Seventh Wave*, which became a prize-winning book in 2000. The book of black-and-white photographs, none of which are credited to either photographer specifically, is an exploration of Australian beach culture quite literally in the water and often underneath the waves. In the words of Geoff Dyer, 'You don't look at this book. You open it up and plunge in.'

Like Parke, Autio has won several awards; they have been successful together and individually. Autio herself has won two first prizes in the World Press Photo Award and she has also been a member of the prestigious VU agency.

One of her most startling works is *Not of this Earth*, a series of photographs from the Sydney Harbour Bridge looking down onto parklands. The composition and rich colours leap out, everything is still but full of life. The photographs are surprising – such a simple idea to look down, but an unusual point-of-view – and quite beautiful. Is it fanciful to imagine that only a feminine eye could so acutely appreciate such things?

The slightly saturated colours, the curl of the dog's tail, the clouds, the shadows; everything is intriguingly balanced and nothing is accidental. The real spark is the rainbow.

The beach is never far away in Australian cities, and indeed in Autio's photographs. Her 'Spotty Dog', taken in 2001, celebrates beach culture. Here there are giant rolling clouds in the sky, a rainbow, dense colours and then the dog, with the curve of its tail. The head is deliberately left out and the tail balances with the rainbow; that's the whole point. Rainbows are always possible in her photographs, and she admits to being a bit of a romantic, saying,

'MY PHOTOGRAPHS ARE MY IMAGINARY WORLD, THE WAY THE WORLD SHOULD BE.'

PROJECT 19

VERTICAL/HORIZONTAL

The question whether to shoot vertically or horizontally is a vital one in street photography, but the answer should come to you naturally.

This aspect of street photography is absolutely crucial and is often overlooked by novices and experts alike. When reviewing people's work, I can hear myself repeating, 'That's quite good, but why didn't you take it as a vertical?' You've seen the moment but you've cooked it wrong, and there's no going back. No amount of cropping will rescue the dish.

Admittedly, there are scenes which would suit both horizontal and vertical framing. A picture can very occasionally work both ways, but the overwhelming point is that a scene will naturally suggest its framing. It is up to the photographer to be in tune with this and to make the most of the shot.

Perhaps unusually, my ratio of vertical/horizontal (or portrait/landscape) is probably more than 60 per cent vertical. I have always been naturally inclined to take more vertical photographs. To me this approach simply makes taking street photographs easier – everything is tidier – and to not have this option would be a severe handicap.

The first two examples here are typical of my approach of instinctively selecting the best composition. A wedding couple in London's Trafalgar Square were being photographed, and hovering around on the outskirts of wedding shoots is always potentially interesting because you do not have to take 'proper' wedding photos. As always, the street photographer has a different agenda. The official wedding photographer could not include another couple, but for me this became the main point of interest.

The horizontal version works to an extent, but there is too much space on the top right, which becomes a distraction because it is too busy. Your eye naturally drifts to the distance in the photograph as opposed to focusing on the two couples. In the vertical version there are no distractions, everything is tightly contained and the eye naturally considers the juxtaposition of the two couples. The two couples fill up the frame and everything is clearer. The stripes on the man's red top in the foreground reinforces the lines of the photograph – the photograph is all about lines – including the alignment of the two hands that nicely provide the bottom of the photograph.

Basic framing is not an exact science but it is very important to be aware of it, and if you study enough examples – amongst your own shots and more importantly in those of established street photographers – the benefits are clear.

The two photographs of the girl with the red umbrella offer a similar natural conclusion. This time, however, the horizontal version is more effective. In the vertical photograph there is wasted space at the top, while in the horizontal version the building naturally prompts the framing. There is a left, centre and middle here – the rule of thirds – but additionally it is the ability to read the script above the door which dictates the outcome. The top has a little too much space, but in general this shot works better as a horizontal.

David Gibson, London; 2011

David Gibson, Canterbury; 2013

CONCLUSION

Always consider framing scenes vertically. There are very few photographers who can justifiably only shoot street scenes as horizontal.

- People are vertical, so always consider shooting vertical.
- 90 per cent of street photographs will naturally suggest vertical or horizontal. Allow this natural selection to occur.
- Vertical affords more control over the top and bottom of a photograph.
- Most books and magazines show vertical images.
- Verticals are portrait and horizontals are landscape. Therein lies logic.


bulging out over the road ... leaning forward, trying to see who was passing on the narrow pavement below... " Charles Dickens, 1849
28

PROFILE

OLIVER LANG

born 1983, Sydney. www.oggsie.com

Of all the photographers profiled in this book, Oliver Lang is possibly the most surprising. The example of his work here of the woman with a heart-shaped handbag is nicely framed against a moodily lit background and it is taken with a mobile phone camera. This photograph can hold its own in most company, but immediately we are faced with two different routes for discussion: Lang's photography or the camera that he uses.

Ordinarily the camera that a street photographer uses is of little consequence, as expounded throughout this book, but for once it is worth considering. The overriding point is that for Lang it is significant: he has a passion for street photography but he is also a crusader for the acceptance of mobile phone photography.

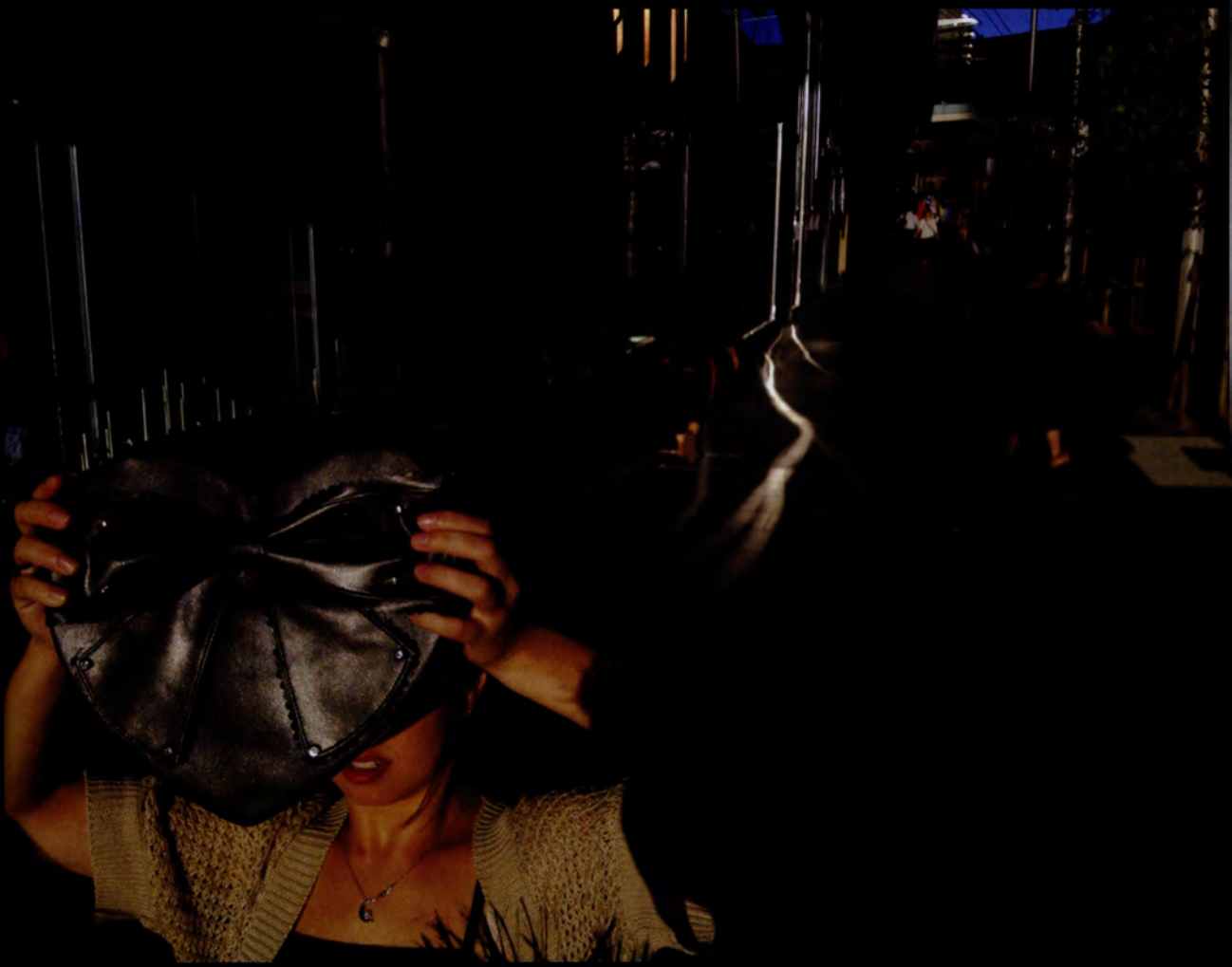
Lang is a fascinating link between two different audiences in the photography world. He cites a familiar mix of inspiration, including Man Ray, Helen Levitt, Elliott Erwitt, Alex Webb and Narelle Autio, but also mentions lesser-known names, all of whom use mobile phone cameras. He pointedly acknowledges Misho Baranovic as an inspiration and it was with Baranovic that he co-founded the Mobile Phone Network in 2007.

Lang is very persuasive about the camera phone, the 'device that allows you to shoot, edit and share' and it's possible that his traditional early interest in photography, which began at school where he learnt darkroom technique, would have faded were it not for the eventual emergence of social media. Lang had two beginnings with photography but found his true calling with the mobile phone camera. This scenario with one foot in each camp is crucial and Lang is acutely aware that in the social media world the sharing is often more important than the photography. Tellingly, he identifies 'addictive feedback, not constructive feedback' being prevalent. He is not critical, however; he just wishes that the mobile phone will be used to its ever-increasing, full potential.

What amazing light, particularly behind the woman who seemingly leaves a trail of it along the street. It's almost like a fashion shot and hard to believe it was taken using a mobile phone.

Now based in London, his self-declared role is to raise the standard of mobile phone photography. He hopes to both educate those in the social media world and to counter the resistance often found in traditional photography.

Although essentially true, such statements arguably remain redundant because photography will always return to the image. Lang by his own admission remains just 'another light chaser', which is reassuring. The real debate is about an enlarged community for street photography – who are more mobile – and not always encumbered by having to return to a computer screen. Significantly, they also use a device that is less conspicuous and threatening on the street. Lang mentions photographers in war zones who have gained trust by using a phone camera. Generally, mobile phone cameras are trusted in public spaces, which is a good omen for all photographers.



PROJECT 20

ETHICS

Ethics and manners are important aspects of street photography because ultimately they show in the pictures.

It is worth identifying what street photography is in a slightly detached yet considered way. Many people, given a choice, do not want to be photographed on the street, although in reality they are usually unaware of being photographed. Therein lies an uncomfortable truth about pursuing street photography, because objectively it could be considered furtive, strange and at times intrusive or annoying.

These facts are not presented as deterrents but merely aspects that should be recognised. The ethical principle underlying the practice is simply respect for other people.

However, these considerations need not be obstacles to taking street photographs, but more a construction of values, which can become personal and evident in the type of photographs you take.

A sense of humour is a fine attribute and it is justifiable to poke gentle fun at humanity in its absurdities and paradoxes. It is not acceptable to depict people cruelly or in an unflattering way. That is my ethos. I hope that I have not strayed from that over the years. It would hurt me if in some way I had caused hurt by my photography.

There are clearly different types of street photographers who ultimately present different values to the public on the street. Diversity is good but there should always be a core respect for people.

I personally dislike an aggressive style of street photography, what you might call 'mugging' people, so that their reaction becomes the picture. This style simply gives street photography a bad name. You could easily include Bruce Gilden in this category; his style is divisive, but it is arguably justifiable because he does it so well. The problem is that many street photographers mimic this mugging style and only achieve agitation; there is no subsequent worthwhile photograph.

Interaction with people on the street is a moot point. I personally dislike it because it is a hindrance to a natural moment, but I concede that some photographers gain instant rapport with people on the street. There is nothing wrong with this if it is after the photograph has been taken. It might well be generous to explain what you are doing, having already got the shot, but not the other way round because it is not within the true spirit of street photography.

It is not the role of the street photographer to alienate people either when photographing them or later in how the photograph is then used. Street photography has been rejuvenated in an age overwhelmed by images, particularly online, but its serious practitioners have responsibilities, both to themselves and the wider photographic community. These are not rules exactly but there are definitely values in street photography for the greater good.

Personality is an important factor in street photography and largely determines the type of photographs that you take, but kindness, empathy and celebration should take precedence. Street photography can be very good at that.

A last word should go to one photograph and imbued in this are my values. 'Last Few Days' was taken in Brighton in 1998 and was a very deliberate – and waited – photograph. I was lucky, the 'casting' was perfect, and it was exactly what I wanted. It is not a cruel photograph but I accept that it is a raw photograph. The man depicted is elderly and it was not

his last few days but very likely his last few years.

I avoid photographing the homeless or anyone in distress and 'Last Few Days' is the extent of my 'cruelty', I hope. The image actually went into an exhibition about the elderly and some friends of the man depicted recognised him. I therefore had some indirect correspondence with him and he was apparently not happy about the photograph. But the photograph was taken in a public place – and crucially it was not being used commercially to sell a product.

This photograph has been published many times and in one photography magazine it prompted someone to write: 'Perhaps when Mr Gibson is older, someone will photograph him like this and he will not find it quite so funny.'

I find this photograph more poignant than funny because it is an inescapable fact for all of us. And it grows ever more relevant.

David Gibson, Brighton; 1998

CONCLUSION

This book was born out of leading street photography workshops and to some extent is aimed at the type of enthusiasts who have attended them. I have led innumerable workshops in London and other cities around the world and I have learnt one stark truth that grows steadily with conviction. You cannot realistically 'teach' participants to take meaningful photographs because ultimately everybody has to be self-taught. You cannot teach a hunger for something; you can only be an example of someone who has been through that process.

If there is an inkling within you to do something creative like street photography that spark will ignite. Empathy, then, with other photographers who have built upon that first spark, will enrich and accelerate your own progress.

That then is a parting shot – seek out like-minded photographers online, but more importantly in the flesh. Because there is a paradox with street photography, it is a singular activity best done alone, but it is unquestionably nurtured collectively. Just consider all the street photography collectives that have emerged together with meet-up groups. The whole of photography thrives upon the pull of kindred spirits. The history of photography is built upon small groups and schools of photographers long before the Internet. Feedback and support is essential.

Should you consider doing a street photography workshop or even a short course? The answer is probably yes; do one with a photographer whose work you admire; maybe even do another workshop with another photographer. But that should be enough. It's then up to you.

The other point I wish to conclude with is simply inspiration, whose theme I hope shines brightly throughout this book. You have to feed your inspiration, and an analogy might lie in street photography itself because there is always the possibility of something new around the corner. You keep going; you hope for something better to arrive.

Don't get bogged down into what is and is not street photography. It does not matter. Find kindred spirits, join with other photographers, share your discoveries, but above all *look* at photographs and particularly look at them in books. Put your own photographs aside. Never be obsessed with your own photography; enjoy and be inspired by the work of others because some of that will come out in your own photography.

Seek out the best and let that speak to you. Yes, everybody's 'best' is different but you will eventually find your way if you listen hard enough. You should then go looking for *your* photographs. This might seem a vague piece of advice but consider how comfortably the photographers in this book own their photographs.

Arguably there is too much photography now and some people might say that everything has been done before and that there is nothing truly original anymore. That is not true; there are just so many more resources to tap into, so it's a really exciting time to be a street photographer.

David Gibson, Brighton; 1997

GLOSSARY

35 mm camera. A camera that takes 35 mm film size.

Aperture. The aperture is the hole in a lens that light travels through to reach the film – or sensor in digital cameras. Controlling the size of this hole determines the amount of light entering the lens.

Bracketing. To take a series of pictures at different exposures.

Bridge camera. A type of camera, as the name suggests, that fills the niche between the SLR and the compact camera.

Burn. A traditional darkroom term that means to darken parts of an image – and a tool that has migrated to digital post-processing.

C.41 processing. The chemical process used for colour film.

Compact cameras. Also known as point-and-shoot cameras, designed for simplicity of use.

Curves. The curve tool is an important aspect in photo editing software, controlling the tones and contrast in images.

Depth of field. DOF is the range of acceptably sharp focus in front of and behind the distance the lens is focused on. Generally a low f-stop – the aperture more open – gives a low DOF, whilst a higher f-stop – the aperture closed down more – gives an increased DOF. The DOF is both a result of available light but can also be a deliberate style.

Dodge. A traditional darkroom term that means to lighten parts of an image – and a tool now used in digital post-processing.

DSLR. Digital single-lens reflex camera; see SLR.

Exposure. A combination of the aperture and shutter speed, a term that is generally prefixed with 'correct', which may or may not be true for every photographer or situation.

Grain/noise. A grainy look consisting of specks; a result of using a high ISO in low light.

Image stabilisation. Some digital cameras have a built-in image stabilisation system which can be very helpful in reducing blurred images when only a slow shutter speed is possible. It is especially helpful with a long lens.

Instagram. An online photo sharing and social networking service that enables users to take pictures and videos and apply digital filters. A distinctive feature is that it confines photos to a square shape similar to Kodak Instamatic and Polaroid images.

ISO. The sensitivity of a film, which translates to digital photography. Traditionally known as the film speed and also the ASA. Generally speaking, a low ISO (100–200) is ideal in good, even light conditions whilst in low light conditions the ISO can be set from 1600 to 6400 depending on the capabilities of the camera. Setting the ISO is also a personal choice; many photographers will routinely set the ISO at 400 or 800 even in good light, to guarantee a reasonably fast shutter speed of say 250th or 500th of a second.

JPEG. A universal image file format that is recognised by all computers and photo displaying devices.

Latitude. The variance from an exposure, which will still provide acceptable results. A much-used term; in other words, 'what you can get away with' from an imperfect exposure.

Lomography. A particular kind of camera and photographic movement. The Holga camera, for instance, is a cheap plastic film camera that produces dream-like images with strange effects such as vignetting and unusual saturation and contrast.

Prime lens. A lens with a fixed focal length, usually in the range from 28 to 50 mm.

Pushing and pulling film. A traditional term for allowing a photographer to make a particular film type behave like that of a faster or slower film. Again this is a very personal choice but typically a street photographer might set a 400 ISO film at 800 to allow a little more flexibility with the exposure.

Rangefinder camera. A camera that contains a rangefinder device; a mechanism to determine distance and focus without looking through the lens to focus. It is a very particular way of taking photographs traditionally adopted by photographers such as Cartier-Bresson, who used a Leica rangefinder camera.

RAW. A very large file format that allows much more flexibility in post-processing images. The best 'negative' in digital photography is a RAW file.

Resolution. A word with many meanings but can generally be interpreted as the quality of an image, similar to a negative that is blown up and then scrutinised closely. In digital imaging, it usually refers to the number of pixels per inch in an image file.

Shutter speed. The shutter on any camera is closed until you click the shutter button, which opens and closes the shutter for a period of time, allowing a specified amount of light to reach the film or camera sensor.

SLR. A single-lens reflex camera uses a moving mirror system so that when looking through the viewfinder you are actually looking through prisms and mirrors.

Zoom lens. A lens that has a varied focal length allowing a photographer to shoot various distances/crops without moving.

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INDEX

Page numbers in **bold** refer to main entries.

A
abstract photography 104–7
Ackerman, Michael 78, 79
Adams, Robert 29
Allard, William Albert 24
Andrews, Blake **84–5**
animals and birds 158–61
Araki, Nobuyoshi 10
Arbus, Diane 46, 48–9, 62, 90
Autio, Narelle 136, **172–3**, 178
auto-focus 38

B
backgrounds 55, 80, 82, 89, 161
Bailey, David 17
balance 55
Baseline magazine 156
black-and-white 24, 37
Bram, Richard 28, 29
Brandt, Bill 142
Burn My Eye 30, 118

C
Capa, Robert 49, 106
cars 141, 142
Cartier-Bresson, Henri 6, 7, 17, 18–19, 38, 45, 46, 52, 57, 66, 80, 85, 102, 104, 106, 124, 136, 141
colour photographs 76
The Decisive Moment 45
character 140–1
children 158, 162–5
Claasen, Caspar **150–3**
clouds 141
collectives 29–30
colour 24, 49, 76
composition 100, 161
vertical/horizontal 174–7
Contemporary Urban Photographers (CUP) 10
cropping 38

D
Daguerre, Louis 138
depth of field 36–7, 38, 106, 108
digital cameras 36–8
digital manipulation 14, 16–17, 37
distortion 14, 122
Doisneau, Robert 45
Düsseldorf School 142
Dyer, Geoff 8

E
editing 32, 37
empty streets 141, 142–3
equipment 36–8
Erwitt, Elliott 16, **50–1**, 57, 64, 90, 120, 160, 166, 168, 178
Personal Exposures 50
ethics and manners 180–1
Evans, Walker 104, 160–1

F
Facebook 29, 30, 32, 56, 103
Fieger, Erwin 17, 20, 22–3
filters 114, 117
Flickr 30, 73, 103, 118, 144
flow 55
focus 82, 108–11
Frank, Robert 45, 46, 62, 66, 74, 161
The Americans 26, 45, 130
Freed, Leonard 42, 43
Freud, Lucian 106
Friedlander, Lee 46, 52, 66, 85, 127

G
Giacomelli, Mario 106, 110
Little Priests 106, 107
Gibson, Ralph 154, 156
Gilden, Bruce 46, 48, 49, **62–3**, 180
Coney Island 62
Facing New York 62
graphics 154–7

H
high-definition 106
Ho, Fan 10–11, 17
Hopper, Edward 137
humour 158, 180–1

I
indoor subjects 160
In-Public 8, 29, 57, 58, 64, 136, 150, 166
inspiration 26
Invisible Photographer Asia (IPA) 10
ISO setting 38

J
Jorgensen, Nils 37, 40–1, 64, 73, 76, **90–1**, 150, 160

K
kaleidoscopic effect 132–5
Kardianos, Zisis 118
Kertész, André 42, 45, 90, 92, 98, 114
On Reading 168
Kim, Eric 30, 32, 57

L
Lang, Oliver **178–9**
Larrain, Sergio 32, 33
layers 112, 114–17, 148
Leiter, Saul 76, 104, **124–5**
Levitt, Helen 162, 178
light 84
lining up/merging 71
litter 140
location 10–13
looking upwards 98, 100

M
Mayne, Roger 44, 45
McLaren, Stephen 146, 148
Magnum 21, 26, 30, 42, 50, 62, 96, 106, 112, 130, 150, 167
Maier, Vivian 76, 77, 127
mannequins 138–40, 148
Man Ray 178
Marlow, Jesse 73, **136–7**
Don't Just Tell Them, Show Them 137
Wounded 137
Mermelstein, Jeff 48
Sidewalk 48
Meyerowitz, Joel 32, 45, 46, 48, 66
middle distance 161
minimalism 142, 150
mist 117
mobile phone cameras 21, 178
Mobile Phone Network 178
Morley-Hall, Andy 29, 31
Please Do Not Feed 158
Moriyama, Daido 10, 52, 102
movement 108, 110

N

Neurath, Johanna 140–1, **144–5**
Noguchi, Shin **102–3**
Sweet Dreams 102
Umbrella 102

O
objects 146–9, 150
O'Brien, Colin 20

P
Parikh, Kaushal **56–7**
Parke, Trent 24–5, 78, **130–1**, 136
Black Rose Diaries 130
Dream/Life 130
Minutes to Midnight 130
The Seventh Wave 172
Parr, Martin 24, 49, 160
photo-essays 25
Picasso, Pablo 17
Pinkhassov, Gueorgui 73, **112–13**
Sightwalk 112
Plotnikova, Maria **72–3**
Portland Grid Project 85
portraits 17
Powell, Gus 48, 55

R
Rai, Raghu 10, 56, 108
rain 126–7, 154
RAW mode 38
Ray-Jones, Tony 66, 90, 136, 160, 161
A Day Off: An English Journal 58
red-eye beam 38
reflections 126–9, 132–5, 141
rhythm 55
Riboud, Marc **96–7**
Three Banners of China 96
Rothko, Mark 104, 124
rule of thirds 156
Russell, Paul 9, 37

S
Salgado, Sebastião 73, 106, 169
Genesis 76
Workers 76
Scianna, Ferdinando 16–17
self-portraits 50
sequences 64–5
shadows 82, 89, 120–3, 141, 142
shutter speed 106, 108, 110
Simon, Jack 17, **118–19**
simplicity 161
skies 141, 154
Smith, W. Eugene 25, 45, 106
smoke 117
snow 117, 144, 154
Solomons, David 166–7
China in Three Cities 167
Happenstance 167
Underground 167
Up West 167
space 100
staged photographs 14–17
steam 117
still photographs 138–41
street furniture 140–1
street markings 154–7
Street Photographers 29, 73, 78, 103
Street Photography Now 30, 103, 118, 144
Stuart, Matt 14–15, 58, **66–7**, 158
subjects 14–19, 158–61
sun, photographing into 114
surrealism 114

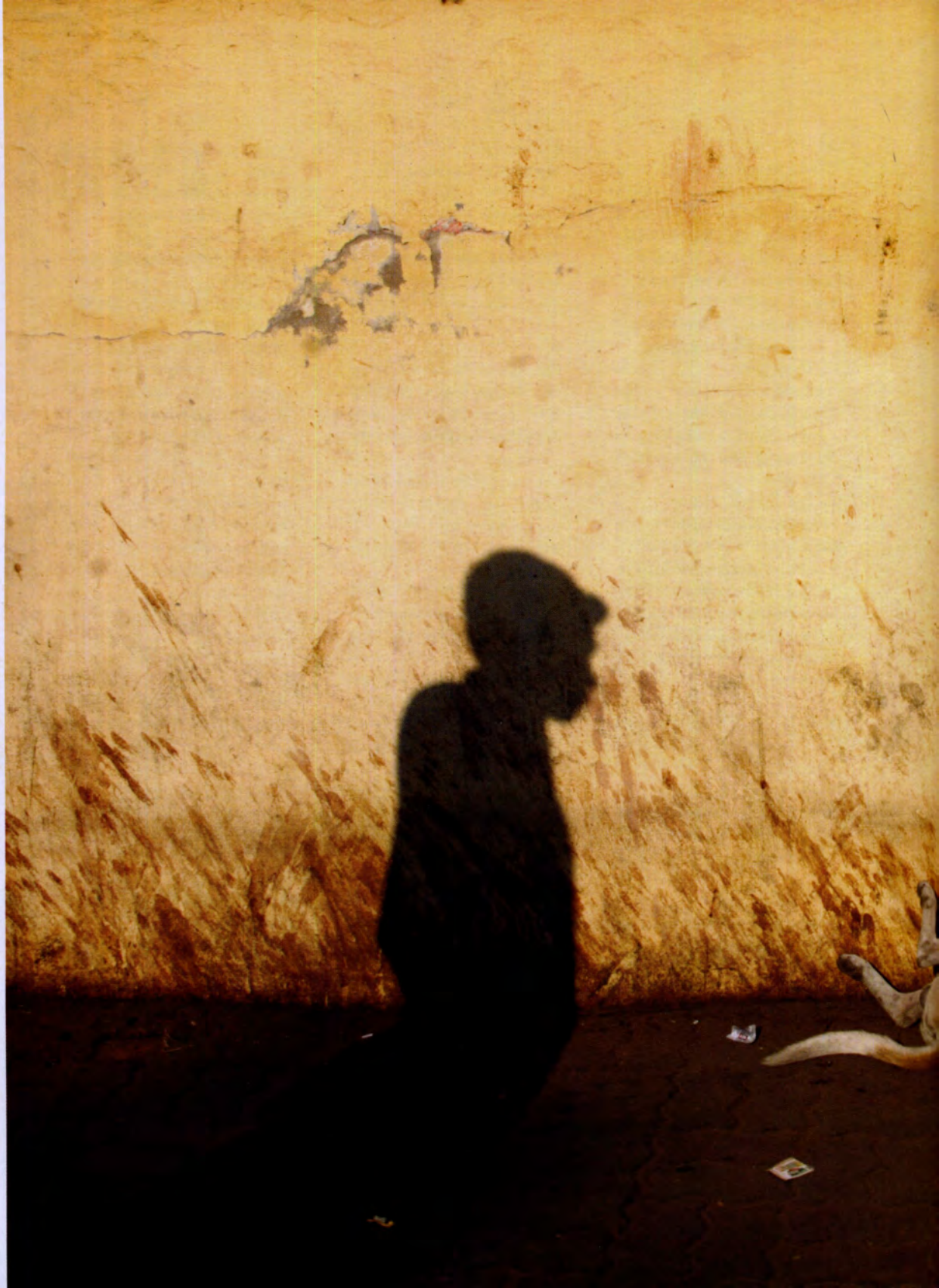
T
telephoto lens 20
test shots 55
text, accompanying 171
That's Life collective 30, 56–7
time 141, 142
titles 74
Turpin, Nick 8, 12–13, 29, 42
typography 140, 154

U
Un-posed 56

V
Vasilikos, Lukas **78–9**
video 46

W
Walker, Robert
Color Is Power 49
New York: Inside Out 49
Webb, Alex 34–5, 38, 57, 73, 136–7, 144, 172, 178
wide-angle lens 14
Winogrand, Garry 46, 48, 66
Arrivals & Departures 160
The Animals 158

Z
zoom lens 38



David Gibson, Kolkata; 2009

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zisis Kardianos, Athens; 2011

David Gibson was born in 1957 in Ilford, Essex, UK – the very same Ilford where the films are from – a fact that has always delighted him as some sort of destiny. Gibson's father was a monumental engraver and that interest in texture and fonts has certainly been an influence on his photography.

Gibson persevered for several years as a care worker and almost studied to be a social worker. His early-published work was of the elderly, children and the disabled; all social issues that were regularly used in the magazine *Community Care*. That was a starting point of sorts, but it was an email from Nick Turpin in early 2000 asking him to join the very beginning of the In-Public collective that undoubtedly made his photographic path clearer, particularly in the group's early years.

Gibson has been taking street photographs for over 25 years and his work has been widely published and exhibited. This includes being one of the featured photographers in the book *Street Photography Now* (Thames & Hudson, 2011), an anthology of the world's leading street photographers. His work is held in picture libraries and he often undertakes commissions from design groups for corporate identity.

In 2002 he completed an MA in Photography: History and Culture at the University of the Arts in London (previously London College of Printing).

In addition to his photography Gibson has regularly led street photography workshops in London and other cities around the world. There have been workshops in Beirut, Singapore, Warsaw, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Bangkok (with In-Public) and several in Athens. More workshops are planned for the future.

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