THE MAGAZINE FOR LEICA M PHOTOGRAPHY

M

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First issue featuring:

BRUCE GILDEN / TRENT PARKE / ALEX WEBB
JAN GRARUP / ANTON KUSTERS / CIRIL JAZBEC

and eight unforgettable moments of Leica M photography

LEICA FOTOGRAFIE INTERNATIONAL

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DEAR READER,

This is a serious achievement – this year the M system turns 60! A technical masterpiece since 1954, and a system still manufactured today despite the decision in 1975 to stop production, which was quickly resumed in Canada in 1976. In 2006 the digital M8 was introduced, and today the M system comes with Live View and HD Video. Despite all the innovations, the M system has offered ongoing applicability of its lenses since 1954. Not something you see every day! And the M system is still only equipped with manual focus – in fact, those who master it often claim it is faster than autofocus. Another thing you don't see every day.

You do see it at Leica: the M and its range of lenses is an evergreen. Its unmistakeable shape could even be called archetypical. It's a camera system consistently sought out by professionals and amateurs who are looking to produce the best pictures: a system that allows for brilliant images – the M is all this and much more. Customers tell us how they suffer when their M is being serviced. There's even an ode to an M lens. In December 2013, an M, a one-of-a-kind designed by Jonathan Ive, was sold at auction for the highest price ever achieved for a deliverable camera. In short, the M epitomizes Leica's goal to give form to the essential.

What does the future hold for the M? Quite simply, there will be further technical developments, great lenses, archetypical form and new generations learning that a rangefinder system for photography is a wonderful thing. A wonderful piece of equipment with which to take great pictures!

Designing a special publication for the M was long overdue, a magazine to present the essential of what M photography is all about. This is a space where pictures will be given their due – it is about the photographs after all. In the M Magazine the focus is on the picture: concentrating and celebrating each image – whether part of a comprehensive series or a single, unforgettable shot. We are delighted to publish this new magazine for our dear readers. May it encourage you in your own photography, preferably with an M in your hand, to capture every single moment that is important to you.

Yours, Andreas Kaufmann

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COVER PHOTO: BRUCE GILDEN/MAGNUM PHOTOS, NEW YORK 1979

A *Window* to the World

Welcome to the first issue of M. A short name with a clear intention: to present the works of photographers who explore the world and describe the human condition with the Leica rangefinder system. What is the basis for the ongoing attraction of this photographic method that is so steeped in tradition? An attempted homage.

The most recent digital embodiment of the Leica rangefinder concept is simply called Leica M. The most evident feature is that the bright-light frames are only visible through the viewfinder when the camera is turned on. Also known as 'Typ 240' to distinguish it from other M models, the Leica M uses LEDs to illuminate the frames, replacing the traditional corrugated illumination window.

Apart from that, the camera is part of a continuous series without equal. Be it film or sensor, since 1954 when the Leica M3 was introduced, M photography basically works like this: use the dial and the adjustment ring to determine a combination of speed and aperture, compose whatever it is you want to capture and purposefully align the split images in the viewfinder with the focussing ring, then shoot. Not only does it sound simple, it is!

At the same time, with a functionality aimed at nothing other than the formation of precise images, the rangefinder Leica, a geometrically minimalist body made of metal and glass, is provocative. It invites you to think about what exactly constitutes technical progress in photography, what is essential to produce great pictures and what is not.

Sure, even the Leica M (Typ 240) features all the hallmarks of state-of-the-art digital technology in order to generate the best possible data. What's more, it marks a bit of a break in the sense that the rangefinder, the optical mechanical component for which the camera is famed, no longer insists on being the only way of focussing. The new M camera sports Live View, enabling the photographer to assess the picture as the sensor sees it. It is kind of like a modern take on the old Visoflex mirror reflex attachment for long lens and macro photography and reflects the intention of expanding the M system's application range in the direction of greater universality. The traditional photographic process however, the symbiotic union of eye, hand and camera that the Leica rangefinder promotes like no other, is in no way affected by this.

EMOTION AND OBJECTIVITY. As though to emphasize the eternal relevance of the rangefinder camera concept as the instrument for purist photography beyond any discussion of "analogue versus digital", this year, when the M system turns 60, Leica comes up with a camera that could not be more anachronistic: the M-A, essentially an M4. A celebration of opto-mechanical artistry and functional purism, and therefore also without integrated exposure meter. Possibly the most desirable instrument for all sceptics of progress.

But wait! Instead of a Leica-meter device like in the past, Leica opts for a symbiosis with an iPhone App. This is how the icon of today's digital life-style, the iPhone, helps the honourable rangefinder principle to trace it back back to its pure origins.

You might think that by launching a product such as the Leica M-A as late as in the year 2014, there would be sufficient cause to believe that the M system is on its way to finding its place in a museum. And it's true that, for most of its existence, the Leica rangefinder has always been considered a rather exotic bird. Its glory days as the indispensable tool for photojournalists already began half an eternity ago. Strictly speaking, that period only lasted little more than a decade.

However, the fact that this era, following 1954, was also the most important era of magazine-worthy photojournalism, the fact that the M3, the congenial evolution of Oskar Barnack's invention, which ultimately gave wings to the cultural practice established by the original Leica, and the fact that its singular combination of speed, precision, compactness and discretion, have surely motivated professional and amateur photographers alike to find a passion in Leica – all of these factors proved to have an enduring effect long after the Leica had just become an object of desire for camera lovers.

Despite the fact that changes in fashion and the dynamics of innovation – which, ironically have their origin in Leica – pushed the company into an outsider position, it was, in fact, the Leica camera that stimulated the evolution of photography to become so popular today.

EVOLUTION AND INNOVATION. Speaking of the dynamics of innovation, as tough a time as the M system may have had – because of its inherent limitations – standing up to the super-automated, tele-zooming, high-speed culture of photography today: it is still here. Perhaps it is no accident that the observed renaissance of rangefinder photography, in particular since the M9, occurred at a time when digital technology had reached a plateau of maturity.

The triumph of the electronically generated image prompted an overall trend that said that the modern photographic process was to be a fully automated one, exploiting the possibilities of electric controls and establishing special functions previously never even considered necessary, but which promise the creation of the perfect picture as though by the wave of a magic wand.

However, there is bound to be a clash of culture between the independently minded photographer and this imposed machine logic. And so, even after 60 years, the Leica M, the prototypical embodiment of the 35 mm format camera, is once again and more than ever an object of desire, representing a longing for a more original form of photographic experience. →

In its favour, the rangefinder Leica has always been more than an instrument whose form and function has largely remained the same over time. It is precisely the continuity of its appearance that charges it with history. This history is nothing less than the most influential cosmos of imagery describing the 20th century. This is an achievement that will always be associated with the M Leica, the tool which, in the hands of the best photographers in the world, managed to steal the most moving, dramatic and emotional moments from the fleetingness of time and freeze them in pictures forever.

Today, it is virtually impossible to reach for your Leica camera without feeling the presence of this history-laden visual cosmos. Some even say the Leica camera has an aura. This cultural heritage, which at the very least may serve as an inspiration for those in search of their own style of photography, which gave the Leica its status as a quasi-mythological creature, ultimately defines its role in the world of modern photography, no less than its character as a highly engineered precision instrument designed for no-frills photography.

AUTONOMY AND INTUITION. So what is it exactly that makes people want to take pictures in this way? Why, for instance, would you want to put up with the fact that virtually no other camera system is so adamantly committed to putting all its eggs in the manual focus basket?

The inherent simplicity of the rangefinder Leica does not mean that you can master it without putting in the work. But maybe it can be compared to learning how to ride a bicycle. A coordinated sequence of motions that stay with you forever once you know them. And you never have to think about them again.

Oskar Barnack understood his priorities. His camera design had to be easy to carry and easy to handle. Not least, it had to deliver pictures that were sublime beyond any doubt, and not stand in the way of the photographic intention but support it without effort. Until this day, the Leica M continues in this tradition. But what may seem so clear and simple, is, when combined, a challenge. In this sense, the rangefinder Leica has turned out to be one of those historically lucky cases of an instrument endowed with certain human standards.

Translating the considerably technical complexity of its interior into an interface that only shows 'das Wesentliche' (the essential), into a master piece of industrial design committed to functional sobriety – this is precisely what is at the core of the timeless attraction of the rangefinder Leica.

The M Leica is not the universal device for every kind of photography; the range of focal lengths compatible with the rangefinder principle is limited. However, it is this limitation that elevates it to a 'human' camera – to a camera for distances in which human interaction still takes place. This is why the rangefinder Leica is and always will be the instrument par excellence for photo reportages teeming with life. Take the viewfinder: what is it but a window to the world, enabling the photographer's feelings to share space with his subject, to forget about the device in the flow of composing and taking pictures, precisely because its perspective is not the perspective of the lens.

Gisèle Freund once said that it is the photographer and not the camera who takes the picture. Users of the Leica M often like to refer to this comment – at the same time, they are the ones who are particularly passionate about their instrument. In the context of all of the above, this is no longer a contradiction.

IMPOSITIONS AND BEST LENSES. The Spartan quality of the rangefinder Leica – which is what makes it so sexy today when compared to the hyper automated devices found across the market – is also the result of practical constraints. The body that was developed back in the 1930s, cut precisely for the integration of the medium and the rangefinder mechanism, has consistently resisted the inclusion of additional features. That's why, for example, it took decades before, thanks to the miniaturization of electronics, an internal light meter could be realized in a satisfactory manner – as happened in 1984 in the case of the Leica M6.

Its compact build has always been a kind of imposition. A positive constraint not least for lens designers, who have been continually forced to turn lens design into an art form, to achieve the best possible transformation of object points into image points in a compact space. In other words, to push the character of the camera as a device for capturing reality to its limits.

And so M photography also means photography with the best 35 mm format lenses imaginable.

As to how rangefinder photography enables creative exploration in photographic reportage and art, both as a preferred photographic method and an attitude towards life, M, the magazine, will explore frequently.

A digital version of the M Magazine is available as an app at the Apple iTunes store (iOS) and at Google Play (Android).

LIGHTBOX

It is that one moment when everything slips into the background – the landscape, the buildings, or the crazy patterned sheets. What remains is the glance – the connection that can arise between the photographer and the protagonist, despite or maybe because of the camera. It is a connection that gets transferred to the viewer and gives voice to the images. Eight unforgettable examples.

Joe and Duke Brooks are identical twins. When the picture was taken in Regent's Park in London, they were exactly eleven years and eleven months old. Joe is named after the US American actor Joe Dallesandro and Duke after David Bowie, who at times called himself 'The Thin White Duke'. Sarah M. Lee took this double portrait of the sons of a friend, when they were training parkour. Lee had less than one minute to take this photo

Sarah M. Lee, Leica M

A young boy on the way to school in Tajikistan. He is from the village of Ishkashim on the Afghan border, and his path runs directly along the Hindu Kush. Like all school children he wears a uniform. Even though most families in the region have little money, a school uniform is a question of honour. The education of children is taken very seriously and the appropriate clothing is seen as a sign of appreciation. So they set off to school dressed accordingly

Francesc Melcion, Leica M6 TTL

PHOTO: JACOB AUE SOBOL / MAGNUM PHOTOS

Jacob Aue Sobol travelled on the Trans Siberian railway, from Moscow to Beijing, for his 'Arrivals and Departures' project. It was on this trip that the Danish Magnum photographer worked with an M Monochrom for the first time. "In black and white, I feel my images are not bound to a specific location or time, but rather that they create their own universe," he says, explaining his choice. For this series, he photographed landscapes, towns, people: close up and in high contrast

Jacob Aue Sobol,
Leica M Monochrom

Gazipur, Bangladesh, eight o'clock in the morning: a flow of workers and seamstresses head for the surrounding textile factories. After China, Bangladesh is the world's largest exporter of clothes. In 2012, the textile branch represented 76 percent of the country's exports. Because Bangladesh has the lowest salary level in the region, the textile industry grew at top speed. Working conditions are tough, and there are frequent accidents. In 2013, 1100 people died when a factory collapsed

Tomás Munita, Leica M9

This picture came about within the framework of Gianfranco Tripodo's project about migration in Ceuta and Melilla, the two Spanish enclaves in Morocco. Their borders are the most southern ones of the EU. African refugees are lodged in community housing and receive lessons in Spanish, whilst their immigration application is verified. Tripodo accompanied them in their daily life, where poverty and a sense of imminent departure reign, regardless of refugee statistics

Gianfranco Tripodo, Leica M9

Caracas: a young man, who calls himself Ninguno, guards a street in the western part of the Venezuelan capital. He often speaks about the fact that he has few options if he wants to survive in the barrios. These are the areas where the poor live – a belt of suffering surrounding the city. For young people who grow up here it is difficult to create a future without violence, drugs and weapons. There are too many things to tempt and seduce them

Oscar B. Castillo, Leica M9

John Lou Miles had just finished a lingerie photo shoot with a friend in Long Beach, California, when he managed to get this snapshot. The sheet was already half off the bed, and even the dog refused to pose quietly; yet it is this interplay of imperfect details that Miles finds so interesting in the picture. “This candid picture came at the end of the shoot, proving once again that the best photos are usually never planned,” he says, commenting on the shot

John Lou Miles, Leica M8

Private insight into the life of a modern patchwork family: with the title ‘Sorry, Welcome’, Magnum photographer Alessandra Sanguinetti processes a very personal portrait of her family. With haunting black and white pictures, she documents the life of her partner, the photographer Jim Goldberg, as well as the two daughters, creating a stage for apparently banal scenes of daily life. This picture shows her stepdaughter Ruby

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Alessandra Sanguinetti, Leica M9

PHOTO: ALESSANDRA SANGUINETTI/MAGNUM PHOTOS/AGENTUR FOCUS

SARAH M. LEE

Born in Birmingham in 1977. After studying literature, she turned her hobby into a profession and now works as a freelance photographer for The Guardian and The Observer.

FRANCESC MELCION

Born in 1968, Francesc Melcion studied photography in his home town of Barcelona. He now works there as editor in chief of the newspaper Ara, and teaches photography.

JACOB AUE SOBOL

Sobol was born in Denmark in 1976. Among other places, he studied at the Danish Fatamorgana Photo School. He has been a member of the Magnum Agency since 2007.

TOMÁS MUNITA

Born in Santiago de Chile in 1975, Munita studied photography and now works as a freelance photographer. He is the winner of the 2006 Leica Oskar Barnack Award.

GIANFRANCO TRIPODO

Born in Manila in 1981, Tripodo studied media sciences and semiotics before opting for photography. He is represented by the Contrasto Agency.

OSCAR B. CASTILLO

Castillo was born in Caracas in 1981, and his work is often dedicated to Venezuelan themes. He is currently working on a project about the increasing disposition towards violence.

JOHN LOU MILES

Born in Huntington Beach, California, in 1977, Miles worked as an advisor in advertising and feature movie-making before turning increasingly to photography.

ALESSANDRA SANGUINETTI

Born in New York in 1968, Sanguinetti lived over 30 years in Argentina. The photographer is a member of the Magnum Agency and has published numerous photo books.

BRUCE GILDEN

The *Faces* of Mr. Gilden

Classic black and white portraits taken on the streets of New York, and new colour pictures taken in Rochester: Magnum photographer Bruce Gilden proves that he has an eye for capturing people's peculiarities. He has been dedicated to Leica M photography for over 30 years, first analogue and now digital, and has remained faithful to his unique character studies – many unpublished till now.

PHOTOGRAPHED WITH LEICA M4/M9


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TO JOIN
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Thank You
for
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Dry Dock


PIZZA GIRLS

Look! No question, this is not your average selection of banal images of ordinary people in a typical urban setting. Undoubtedly, these are originals by Bruce Gilden, the street photographer whose work leaves no one indifferent. So much has been said, is constantly said about his modus operandi, the frontal close-ups, the jumping at people, the flash... All this repetitive blah, blah, blah, diverting the viewers' attention from looking at his unique imagery.

Interestingly enough, these are not the 'classic' Gilden's New York photographs that fans and detractors usually comment on: most of these images, the New York vintage ones in black and white, or some of his recent work in colour in Rochester, have never been published.

So now, look closer... There are a few secrets and several untold stories throughout the two chapters of this 'Before and After' portfolio. Is this a photographer's personal odyssey? A tale of two cities or the saga of two eras? All of the above, thirty-three years apart.

The story narrated in black and white through a 28 mm lens, starts in the late seventies, a few years after a photographer named Bruce Gilden – a young rebel with lots of hair and incommensurable energy – had first picked up a camera. He had not yet started using flash, which was the time in that same rebel's career when – with greying hair but the same amount of energy – he considers he became 'Bruce Gilden, the photographer'. He explains that he chose to do photography back in the early days because he felt that "it was in the air". Rightfully so, and historically proven: 'New Documents', the 1967 exhibition curated by John Szarkowski then head of MoMA New York, was decisive. It presented a "new generation of photographers who had directed the documentary approach toward more personal ends". The exhibition opened up unexplored possibilities in the minds of the photographers coming in the wake of Lee Friedlander, Diane Arbus and Garry Winogrand. Meanwhile, as an avid learner and basically self-taught photographer, Gilden had been devouring all the works of photographers that he could find at that time, developing a very serious photographic culture. He knew his classics: Cartier-Bresson and the 'concerned photographers', Robert Frank, Bruce Davidson, Winogrand, Lisette Model, Weegee and Klein, but had no preferences, no idols or heroes. "I just looked at good photography – European or American – and I knew what I liked and did not like," he explains. Nowadays, his opinion about 'good photography', no matter the origin of the photographer, their style or genre, has not changed: Gilden believes that "controlling the space is part of the game" and that a photograph "has to be formed well and have a strong emotional content". Point taken and proven in these images.

In 1979, Gilden was determined to push his photographic approach to even more personal ends than his 'New Documents' predecessors. But not only them, as he has often stated: "I decided that if I could not be as good as Cartier-Bresson, I could be the best at being Bruce Gilden."

WHERE BETTER TO CONFRONT himself than on the wild and tough streets of New York in the late seventies? For Gilden it was time to absorb the noise and the traffic, feel the pulse of the street. Pacing intersections, watching angles, testing the light between buildings, instinctively moving with the flow of passers-by and blending his energy with theirs, Gilden was sharpening his vision and giving his voice to his second-hand Leica. "When you're finding your legs," he explains, "you're influenced by the photographs that your teachers show you, and then you make up your mind." If one can detect a touch of Winogrand or a flavor of Weegee here and there, if the images are more wide-looking, more gentle than later, it is also obvious that "all the pieces of the puzzle" as the photographer says, are being put into place. Especially since he had come across a quote by Robert Capa that struck him: "If your photograph is not good enough, you were not close enough". He would adopt this quote as his mantra, and, in his own words, "subconsciously bring it to another level".

Looking at the action on the street, this level of proximity offers viewers a chance of becoming participants in the action and to make up their own stories. Close enough we are able to notice subtle details that Gilden picks up instinctively – an attitude, a gesture, the texture or the pattern of clothes – like in this first image of a middle-age couple walking on the street: the woman has severe pursed lips and pulls an arrogant face at the photographer, while her companion, in his impeccable chequered jacket, seems a bit worried. He is holding a mysterious black box tight to his belly. A camera? A radio? Their savings? Further away, behind them, did you notice the almost dancing silhouettes of happy young couples?

'Give me the shows! Give me the streets of Manhattan!' as American poet Walt Whitman wrote at the beginning of the last century. Gilden observes the free show. He considers the backdrop and the open stage – that exuberant family in a convertible –, appreciates the level of drama – a dictator-looking older man with girlfriend and bodyguards –, gets to recognize instantly the talented actors, his 'characters' as Gilden calls them – the man furtively fixing his tie for the photographer while his oblivious companion continues talking. Hats, cigarettes, action! People gesticulate, talk and argue, engage in animated conversations with each other that only the street could spark off at that time. →

2012. ROCHESTER, NEW YORK. Thirty-three years had elapsed since Gilden was taking his first pictures on the street in New York City, making it his 'home' and his signature style. Three decades in between, New York had become a continuing work in progress where the photographer returned each time he was back from some part of the world where other projects had led him. Haiti, Ireland, India, Russia, Japan and Haiti again, where Gilden returned three times after the deadly earthquake of 2010, and where, on his last trip, he practised digital photography with an M9.

Meanwhile in New York, the street that had always been a seemingly reliable promise of exciting encounters just around the corner, an endless source of visual stimulation, was changing. Over the years, the Gilden 'characters' became less conspicuous not to say scarce. The world was moving around the photographer and all of us, and the city was reflecting its inexorable march in the opposite direction of one that can feed a street photographer's art: "Now people are dressed the same," Gilden remarked a few years ago, "and they look the same. They all have their eyes fixed on their cell phones, they don't pay attention to anything around them." Gilden hates cell phones and all the screens that the virtual age has installed in front of us, between us. Still he concedes: "I was ready for a change."

Since 2008, Gilden has diverted his lens from New York, going deeper into America and seeing for himself the devastation that greed and political deed has caused in urban communities: abandoned houses in foreclosure, closed down small businesses, deserted streets... In the states of Florida, Nevada, California, the city of Detroit, and now Rochester, the town where George Eastman had launched a new era in the history of photography, where Kodak was born and was now dead. All these reasons were behind the choice of Rochester for the eleven Magnum photographers working on the second segment of the ongoing project 'Postcards From America' (there have been two more episodes since, in Miami and Milwaukee, and the next one is in preparation). The idea was to create a documentary archive of Rochester at this particular moment in time, based on the photographers' feelings for the place and the project. But no matter how ready for a change Bruce Gilden felt, the challenge was a tough one: "The deal is that we had to produce 100 pictures in just two weeks!" he explains. "I needed to be able to see what I did everyday, and going digital was the only possibility." The Leica M9 and a flash of course, since its use is now 'natural' for Gilden.

Going through his work every evening gave him, "the confidence to go on as it went because there was nobody on the street." The beauty of the Postcards 'game' is that the photographers descend on a place that intrigues them, but with no prior knowledge of it. "I would probably not have chosen Rochester myself if I had known that it was so empty," says Gilden. Remarkably, all the different elements of the Rochester challenge fell into place with each other. Forced to get out of his comfort zone, they served the photographer's determination for a change and offered exploration into the new direction his work is now taking. "In downtown Rochester the street was deserted, that's why I did those portraits," Gilden explains. Driving around, he looked and looked again and found people who inspired him, not on the street, but on their street.

So, now that the black and white photographer was 'officially' seeing in colour, what did he see? What do we see? Interestingly enough it was mostly women who caught his eye. It started with an interesting pattern on a pair of pants and a pair of legs. No need for a head when you've already given so much with your bottoms. There is the 15 year-old girl posing in her quinceañera outfit in front of her building, very similar to the housing projects on Coney Island. Look how shy and proud she is. Look closer... Did you notice the weird-shaped graffiti on the material of her skirt? There is a strange picture of a fierce-faced mother and her defenseless child, who seems to have been born attached to her at the shoulder. And there is a tough blonde who dares the viewer to guess what she did in her life, or with her life, like this beautiful and sad red-haired woman holding her watering hose like a gun. How about the last one of the lot, a real definition of a Gilden 'character', a woman with too much of everything yet everything in absolute harmony: the spiky hair matching the eyelashes and the cross sinking in a perfect trajectory right between her colossal breasts. Is it so surprising that of all his colour work in Rochester, this portrait is Bruce Gilden favourite?

Close, but still not close enough for the photographer who has been constantly working on pushing his motto further and further, and beyond the borders of the average distance. "The older I get, the closer I get!" he claims. Shying away is not part of Gilden's persona. Point proven in his most recent portraits where you can see – and Gilden wants to look at – every detail that human faces can show.

But this is another story...

Sophie Darmaillacq-Gilden *is a French-born writer. After she met her husband Bruce Gilden she moved to New York where she translates and writes on photography.*


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PHOTOS: BRUCE GILDEN / MAGNUM PHOTOS

TRENT PARKE

Dream*time*

Australian Magnum photographer Trent Parke likes to stick to his home soil. While he explores, he enters into a dialogue with the country, taking pictures that reflect his own perceptions, far from the perfect post card ideal – a parallel world located somewhere between romanticism and realism. When it comes to the interplay of light and shadow, Parke is a true magician.

PHOTOGRAPHED WITH LEICA M6


COUNTRY ROAD


Elizabeth St
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CAFE


I AM BLIND
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HOW.
4 YOUR SUPPORT.

A magician with the camera: pictures taken by Australian Magnum photographer Trent Parke reflect an on-going dialogue with his homeland. For his 'Minutes to Midnight' book project, he travelled over 90 000 kilometres along the Australian coastline, painting a very personal portrait of the country. In the 'Dream/Life' series, he shows the fifth continent in all its mystical interplay of light and shadow.

His images have served as inspiration for other photographers for a long time now. Street photographer and blogger Eric Kim summarizes statements by Trent Parke into seven propositions.

1. LOOK FOR THE LIGHT. "I am forever chasing light. Light turns the ordinary into the magical."

2. CHANNEL YOUR EMOTIONS INTO YOUR IMAGES. "My mum died when I was 10. It made me question everything around me. Photography is a discovery of life which makes you look at things you've never looked at before. It's about discovering yourself and your place in the world. I grew up on the outskirts of Newcastle where the suburbs meet the bush. When I came to Sydney at the age of 21 I left everything behind – all my childhood friends and my best mate – at first I just felt this sense of complete loneliness in the big city. So, I did what I always do: I went out and used my Leica to channel those personal emotions into images. That is very different from a lot of documentary photographers who want to depict the city more objectively. For me it is very personal – it's about what is inside me. I don't think about what other people will make of it. I shoot for myself."

3. SHOOT A LOT OF SHIT. "You shoot a lot of shit and you're bound to come up with a few good ones. For example – the fact that the images of the people on the bus have stayed sharp, and that you can see through them, is something that still baffles me (page 80). People can't understand what the image is, or how I was able to obtain it, and I can't work it out myself. It's something that the eye can't see when you're walking along. It's something that only photography can capture. Sometimes I shot a hundred rolls of film, but once I'd got that image I just couldn't get anywhere near it again. That's always a good sign: you know you've got something special."

4. DON'T STAND STILL. "I'm always 'wired', always awake, things are always rattling through my mind. I suppose I've started to calm down a little bit, but in that first ten-year period that I was on the streets of Sydney I was just manic. Insane. That's how I approach street photography: watching everything. If I think something might happen, then I will hang around. But most of the time I'm rushing from one corner of the city to another, just looking for stuff. I also don't like to stand still because you draw attention to yourself. I've never been pulled up on the street and it is simply because nobody ever sees me. I'm there and I'm gone. If you spend too much time in a place you tend to start affecting what's happening around you. And I just want to capture things as they are without influencing the action in any way."

5. BE INFLUENCED BY OUTSIDE ARTS. "There is this Icelandic group called Sigur Rós and their music is just very sad and melodramatic. They have this kind of dark dreamy quality and I suppose that is what I am trying to evoke in my photographs, although I am not really conscious of these influences when I'm taking pictures."

6. SIMPLIFY YOUR SCENES. "'Dream/Life' was really about finding myself and my place in life. I wanted to present a truer version of Sydney – with lots of rain and thunderstorms, and the darker qualities that inhabit the city – not the picture-postcard views the rest of the world sees. But I also wanted to make images that were poetic. Trouble was the city was actually quite ugly in terms of the amount of advertising and visual crap that clutters the streets. I found I could clarify the image by using the harsh Australian sunlight to create deep shadow areas. That searing light that is very much part of Sydney – it just rattles down the streets. So, I used these strong shadows to obliterate a lot of the advertising and make the scenes blacker and more dramatic. I wanted to suggest a dream world and show a realistic picture at the same time."

7. IGNORE SINGLE-IMAGE IMAGES; FOCUS ON MAKING BOOKS. "Everything I do is working towards the next book. Books are what drive my work. I am not interested in single photographs. From the moment I started 'Dream/Life' I knew that it had to be a book in order to get across my feelings for the city. Making books teaches you a lot about your own work, your way of taking pictures. Every trip I do I make a one-off book from the work just to see where it's going and what might still be missing to make it work as a whole."

Eric Kim *is a street photographer who lives in Los Angeles. In addition to workshops in this genre, he runs the photo blog www.erickimphotography.com/blog.*

PHOTOS: TRENT PARKE/MAGNUM PHOTOS/AGENTUR FOCUS

CIRIL JAZBEC

On Thin *Ice*

An expedition into a disappearing world: Leica Oskar Barnack Newcomer Award-winner Ciril Jazbec travelled to Greenland to document the consequences of climate change in the region. The glaciers are melting while at the same time many traditional ways of life are gradually disappearing. Images from a world impacted by global environmental change.

PHOTOGRAPHED WITH LEICA M


101
OUTFITTERS NATION
STAGE
BLEND
DENIM
1993


ORIGINAL
1x6
NESCAFÉ GOLD
Kerzen

Two-hundred fifty inhabitants and more than five hundred dogs represent the entire population of Saatut, a small village in northern Greenland that is my ultimate destination. I had previously worked in Greenland researching the impact of climate change and my aim was to gather as much information as possible. With my heart thumping and my hands sweating, I climb into the helicopter that will take me to north Greenland, where the ice is melting. Will the people who live there remember me? Will I be able to capture the images I have in mind? It is important to be well prepared, but it's only when I converse with people that the special energy needed for my pictures begins to flow. I am full of questions, and my bag is full of the special clothing that I need to protect me from the bitter cold.

A WORLD IN TRANSFORMATION. I arrived as a stranger, and now I sit in the middle of a group of villagers with a piece of cake on my plate. I have been invited to attend what is called 'Kaffemik'. There are many reasons for holding this type of festivity: often it is the first hunt or a wedding. Today it is a birthday. A flag has been hoisted in front of the house to signify the location of the party. A steady stream of people visit throughout the day but no one lingers for too long or the small house would become overcrowded. Here, families live in close quarters – four or five children sharing one room. The older ones stare at their smart phones in a contrast between tradition and progress that I noticed in my previous visits to Alaska. Change is also in the air in Greenland. Temperatures rise and the ice melts more rapidly. In the past, water was frozen for an annual average of ten months – now reduced to just a few. Consequently, the traditional seal hunt key to many villagers survival are rare. Hunters turn to fishing and increasing numbers of young people leave the village, hoping to make their way in one of the bigger cities. On my journey I pass through abandoned settlements and conclude I'm seeing a land drifting apart.

In addition to my carefully selected thermal clothing and my camera, I have with me prints of the photographs I took on my previous visit which I give to the surprised subjects. It feels good not to come empty handed. They open their doors to me and, using body language, I manage to explain what I plan to do. A student helps with the translation – and I quickly learn my first word: 'Kasugta', a version of 'cheers!' that is a good word to know, but I am here for the project. I'm introduced to Unnartoq. At 70 years of age he remains committed to the old ways and earns a living by hunting. I am captivated and begin taking pictures and asking him about his daily life. This results in an invitation to take part in a traditional seal hunt.

HUNTING SEALS. I stand on the ice and swear at my feet that are too large to fit into a pair of sealskin boots. I quickly realize that no modern outdoor clothing is as warm as the clothes made of animals skins worn by my six companions. Their traditional clothing has proven its worth over generations; mine was bought especially for this trip and I'm wearing it for the very first time. I borrowed trousers and a jacket that offer marginal warmth but my fingers hurt as I take pictures. One of the men suddenly shouts in English. "Attention! Polar bear!" I turn around in fear and see the hunters laughing. By the second warning shout, I'm laughing as well. Trust as opposed to self-mockery.

We spend four days together, riding on dog sleds, sleeping on the bare floor in a small hut, listening to the deep silence and sharing the extremely short days. We fish in ice holes with long lines and I feel my cold muscles tire with each passing hour. However, the moment I eat a piece of fresh cod grilled over the fire, all my aches are forgotten. Another day we have fresh prawns and I can't imagine them tasting any better in a gourmet restaurant. A thought that seems worlds away.

I spend a total of five weeks in Greenland. I acclimatise to the cold, learn more words and, above all, take pictures like crazy. Part of the prize for winning the 2013 Leica Oskar Barnack Newcomer Award is a Leica M, and this camera helped me rediscover my work, to take a step back and give more thought to the picture. At the same time, I can get very close to the people – who also consider me an amateur in this respect. A new chapter has opened in my long-term project on climate change and its impact on people. And every day I discover new beauty in nature – for example, I attended a youth project cinema evening where instead of projecting the film onto a screen, it was projected onto an iceberg. What an unforgettable evening. When I pack my bag, it's clear that I will return.

It is good to be home however, because when I stay somewhere for too long it becomes part of my daily life and I lose my perspective. Still, I can hardly wait to get back into a helicopter and see the ice far below me; to feel it under my freezing toes; to fish something tasty out of an ice hole. It may be melting, but while the ice remains I want to capture it in my images.

Ciril Jazbec, *2013 Leica Oskar Barnack Newcomer Award-winner, travelled to Greenland in 2014. The transcript of the journey was recorded by Katrin Iwanczuk.*

JAN GRARUP

In the Name of *Faith*?

It began when Muslim rebels carried out a coup against the government, then Christian militia retaliated with murder and plunder – the bloody conflict in Central Africa is escalating. Danish photographer Jan Grarup travelled to Bangui. His haunting black and white images paint a disturbing picture of civil war: a journey through a country on the edge of collapse.

PHOTOGRAPHED WITH LEICA M9/M MONOCHROM

Hundreds of Muslim refugees wait at the military airport in Bangui. They have set up makeshift lodgings between disused air planes – waiting for a chance to leave the Central African Republic

Looking back: on 24 March 2014, Seleka soldiers, an alliance of predominantly Muslim rebel groups, stormed the palace of President François Bozizé

The new government could not keep the Seleka militia under control for long. Plundering, raping and murder spread through the country

Anti-Balaka groups were formed in the villages around the country, and they viscously attacked the Muslim population. A few Anti-Balaka fighters demonstrate what they would like to do to every Muslim in the Central African Republic

A young Christian woman collapses when she learns her husband was killed by soldiers from neighbouring Chad. It is said that the Chad soldiers not only protect their own citizens, but side with the Seleka and therefor also attack christian civilians

Increasing numbers of children are victims of the conflict. Even making your way through the city to the hospital is fraught with great dangers, so many people are not medically treated

Children wait patiently between disused air planes and burnt out car wrecks either to flee the country or for the conflict to end. Like here, their toys are self-made mock weapons. These children must quickly get used to the sight of suffering and death

According to Human Rights Watch, Anti-Balaka fighters are intent on total ethnic cleansing. What role does religion play in this bloody civil war that has sent the whole country into chaos?


ANTI-BALACKA
Je TUE LES ARABES

The man responsible for the killing in Bangui, Commander Sylvestre Yagouzou, sits outside on a sofa barricaded behind eight checkpoints. He swallows a Diclofenac for his headache, lights a cigarette, rests his bare feet on the wooden table in front of him.

Two men in army uniforms approach the table, salute and stand to attention. Yagouzou waves them away without a glance. At times he barks orders into his radio unit, or reads something on his mobile. Soon he will free two of his people from prison. Bodyguards hover behind the sofa: not wearing uniforms, but rather amulets to protect them from bullets. They claim to take drugs before going to fight to achieve the high required to be able to chop someone up with a machete.

Yagouzou worked as a car mechanic until Muslim Seleka rebels toppled the president in March 2013. They seized the capital and plundered his shop, so Yagouzou joined a counter militia: the Christian-Animist Anti-Balaka vigilante group. Many soldiers also changed sides, joining groups who first defended themselves against the Seleka, but later began to hunt down all Muslims. Observers spoke of ethnic cleansing and the threat of genocide.

Yagouzou rose to Commander of the Anti-Balaka in Bangui. When asked how he climbed from car mechanic to rebel leader, he says, "God used me as He used Moses, to lead His people out of slavery."

The rebel commander's sofa is a few hundred metres away from a runway, somewhat hidden between the trees. He rarely shows his face in Bangui since President Catherine Samba-Panza, who assumed power in mid-January, declared the Anti-Balaka murderers and plunderers, and called the army back to the barracks.

Every few minutes, a UNO or French army plane lands at the airport. "We're happy to have them all here," he says politely, referring to the increasing numbers of soldiers and diplomats as though they were his guests. And it is true the world is coming to the Central African Republic because of Sylvestre Yagouzou. He led one of the biggest massacres: on 5 December 2013 the Anti-Balaka attacked Bangui with machetes, grenades and Kalashnikovs. Several days of fighting left nothing but ruins.

Self-defence, claims Yagouzou: "We didn't start," he says. "It was them." He means the Seleka and he points at the town beyond the airport, where Muslims lived. A ring inscribed with the name 'Jesus' flashes on his left hand.

Today, the districts he points at are empty, with murderers' names painted in white on the burnt-out ruins. Tiles from destroyed mosques were removed by plunderers, roof beams carried away, abandoned furniture and clothes sold at markets. The country's Muslims try to escape if they can.

Christians and Muslims lived together peacefully for decades but it took only a few months to drive the land into a bloody conflict – and for food supplies to collapse. Many Muslims were wealthy merchants, who employed Christians and farmed large herds of cattle. Now they are gone, prices rise and the poor starve.

More than a quarter of a million people, half of them children, have fled the Central African Republic, in one of the largest diasporas in Africa. More than half of the five million remaining inhabitants need help: medicine, food or shelter. Western doctors recall the conflict showing these types of injuries was twenty years ago in Rwanda.

Within sight of the rebel chief is a refugee camp, a former air force hangar. Inside are two old Soviet helicopters while a dozen propeller machines rust outside. Muslims sit in the shade beneath them, cooking over small fires. Nomads, most of them, the meat of their goats and cows once also fed Christians. Nowadays they themselves are hunted like animals. They fled here to be near the French soldiers' headquarters. When a plane lands they gather their meagre possessions in hope of escape. They want to go to Cameroon, or Chad, anywhere away from here.

Virtually no care has been taken of these stranded people. Initially there was no electricity, nor water, no medicines or toilets, no food, yet thousands crammed together in the hangar. Doctors without Borders was one of the first to intervene. Marcus Bachmann, a Director of Operations, built a hospital ward. He claims one-fifth of the children are undernourished and half have malaria.

The sick are transported in armoured vehicles. Muslims are hauled out of clinics and murdered but relatives are unable to bury the dead because their cemetery lies close to the Christian district. Few Muslims remain in the city, living behind barbed wire and barricades protected by elite French and African Union soldiers. But they are not safe, attackers find secret methods to reach them.

This story is about Bangui: little is known about the rest of the country. The UN have sent 6000 African Union peacekeepers and 2000 French troops to be stationed in Bangui and other key towns with a mandate to disarm militias and protect convoys of refugees. It is likely they have succeeded in preventing a second Rwanda, however they are too few to secure the entire country. Germany is considering sending an air ambulance but this will not secure the country. The UN estimate requires another 10 000 soldiers.

Peter Bouckaert, crisis manager for Human Rights Watch, is unconcerned about the lack of security. He arrived long before the peacekeepers and is often one of the first in a crisis area. In Bangui he packs things into a Jeep: petrol, tent, and chainsaw to clear away fallen trees. →

He plans to drive through the country for five days, documenting human rights violations and speaking with all parties. “It’s not just about bringing people food and medicine, we have to stop the killing.”

Bouckaert has been doing this work for 17 years. He documents mass graves, tortures, murders: arm stores in Libya, mass rapes in Guinea. Like a notary of horror, he writes everything down in his little, black book.

It is early March and Bouckaert drives towards Boda, about five hours west of Bangui. Muslims torched the Christian market, and Christians burned the Muslim one. Now all that is left are inscriptions: here ‘Jesus is the source of love’ and there ‘There is no God but God’. French soldiers position themselves on the hill between the Muslims and the Christians, weapons at the ready, children playing alongside.

It is already late and Bouckaert needs a room for the night. At the Catholic mission the priest is sorry: no vacancy. Hundreds of Christians have set up camp in the corridors and gardens. In the end, Bouckaert pitches his tent next to the French barracks, parking his car beside it to protect against bullets. He then opens his laptop and pulls a bottle of whiskey out of his rucksack. A few days earlier he was skiing in Switzerland; now he is in the middle of a war. Bouckaert is used to it, he spends six months of the year going from one crisis to the next.

He tells about a young boy who approached him a couple of days ago and wanted to put a chopped off leg in his car. On the boy’s T shirt it said Central Africa. He sent a photo of it round the world via Twitter. He explains that formerly people like him used to write pages of reports that disappeared into a drawer somewhere. Nowadays he photographs and tweets the starving or massacred people he finds. A cameraman accompanies him and films every encounter: Human Rights Watch employs some of the best photographers in the world in order to draw attention to these situations.

Even so, Bouckaert is disappointed the world shows little interest in this civil war. Too complicated, too far away. During the Academy Awards, he tweeted: “And the Oscar for the bloodiest international conflict that no one is interested in goes to the Central African Republic.”

The next morning Bouckaert sets off early. He wants to meet a man from the local Red Cross to find out who attacked who first. In this conflict, however, it is not easy to find out the truth.

The Christian Red Cross helper says that the Muslim Seleka left the town a month ago, and shortly afterwards the Anti-Balaka arrived with Kalashnikovs and machetes, to supposedly protect them from the Muslims. “And then,” he says, “it got bad”.

Bouckaert writes down the numbers of dead and injured, and photographs the helper’s notebook as proof. “ The numbers tell a different story than he,” he says later.

Afterwards he goes to the Muslim district and speaks with the leader, a diamond merchant, who assures him that the Christians had been his brothers, there had never been a problem. But, when the Seleka left, the Anti-Balaka attacked the Muslim population.

Bouckaert closes his notebook. After four interviews, talks with the Anti-Balaka, and comparing the numbers of dead, he believes the conflict may well have happened more or less like the merchant said.

Will the two groups be able to live together again in the future? No, the Muslim merchant says. No, says the local Anti-Balaka leader. And in the church hall the priest says it would have been better if there had been death instead of destroyed houses. “The dead can’t talk,” he says. “But the ruins are a constant proof of blame.”

On the way back to Bangui there is a dead body in the road. He was shot with an arrow, and his genitals cut off as the next talisman for the militia. He was the last Muslim in Mbaki, a nurse from the village says.

Further on in Boali the mosque has been destroyed, copies of the Qur’an reduced to ashes. Of the thousands of Muslims, none remain. The whole village has come to church, everyone claps their hands. The priest spreads his arms. “The Lord is my Shepherd,” he says. “He prepares a good place for me. Let the joy of God fill your hearts.”

While the service is being held in the church, two women are held by Anti-Balaka youths in a mud hut close by. Screams come from behind the door. No one dares help them. The young men have machetes tied to their chests, their hair is matted, their eyes red. They have just chased the last Muslims away and are high from the victory. The two women are witches who cursed a girl from the neighbourhood, they say. They have to be punished for that. The young men open the door and pull the women out of the hut. The two victims sink to the ground, eyes lowered, awaiting their fate. “Now that the Muslims are gone,” says the Mayor, “they attack Christians.”

An hour later two women are delivered to the hospital in Boali. One is missing a little finger, both have had parts of their scalp torn off. There is simply no end in sight.

Jonathan Stock *attended the Henri Nannen School of Journalism and works as a crisis reporter for Der Spiegel. The article appeared in Der Spiegel 11/2014 (© Der Spiegel).*

ANTON KUSTERS

Japan's *Godfathers*

Long fascinated by the secretive Japanese Mafia, called the Yakuza, Belgian photographer Anton Kusters relished his unique opportunity to submerge himself in the world of organized crime. For two years he developed his portrait of Japan's crime syndicate – producing a series of impressive and clear images as he followed the Yakuza from strip clubs to funerals.

PHOTOGRAPHED WITH LEICA M9

The Yakuza are powerfully organized and have a clearly defined hierarchy. One of the bodyguards shows his tattoos – they express his belonging to the group

A secret meeting of two bosses in a hotel bar. The other guests have to leave the room – only security remains behind


練馬 349
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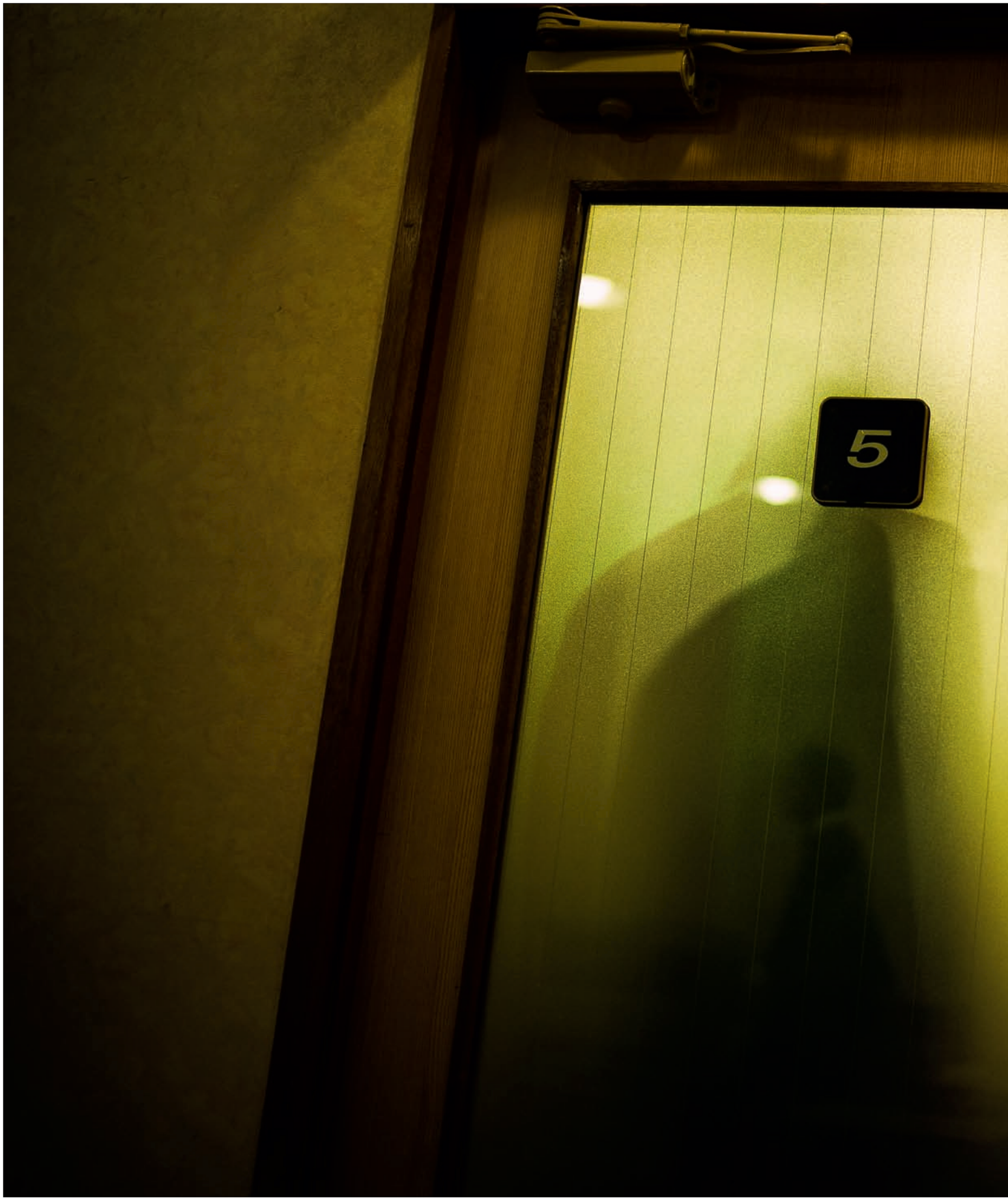
A high-level member of the Yakuza is on business in Kabukicho, Tokyo's infamous red-light district. Souichirou and a friend keep watch on the car and the area. Normal traffic regulations hold no power

Yoshikura-san is number three in the hierarchy of the Odo Family. On the streets of Kabukicho, he is respected and greeted as a Yakuza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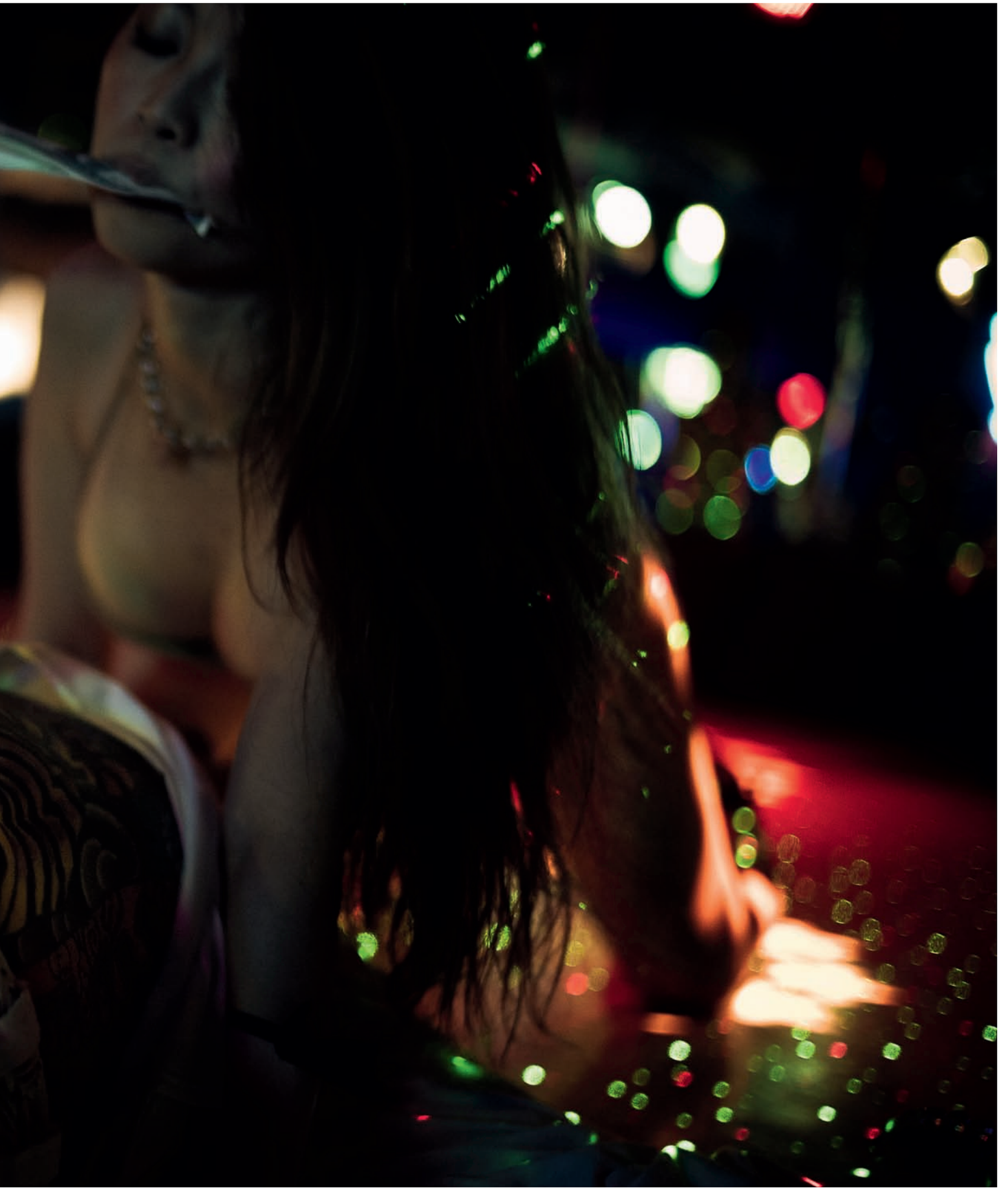
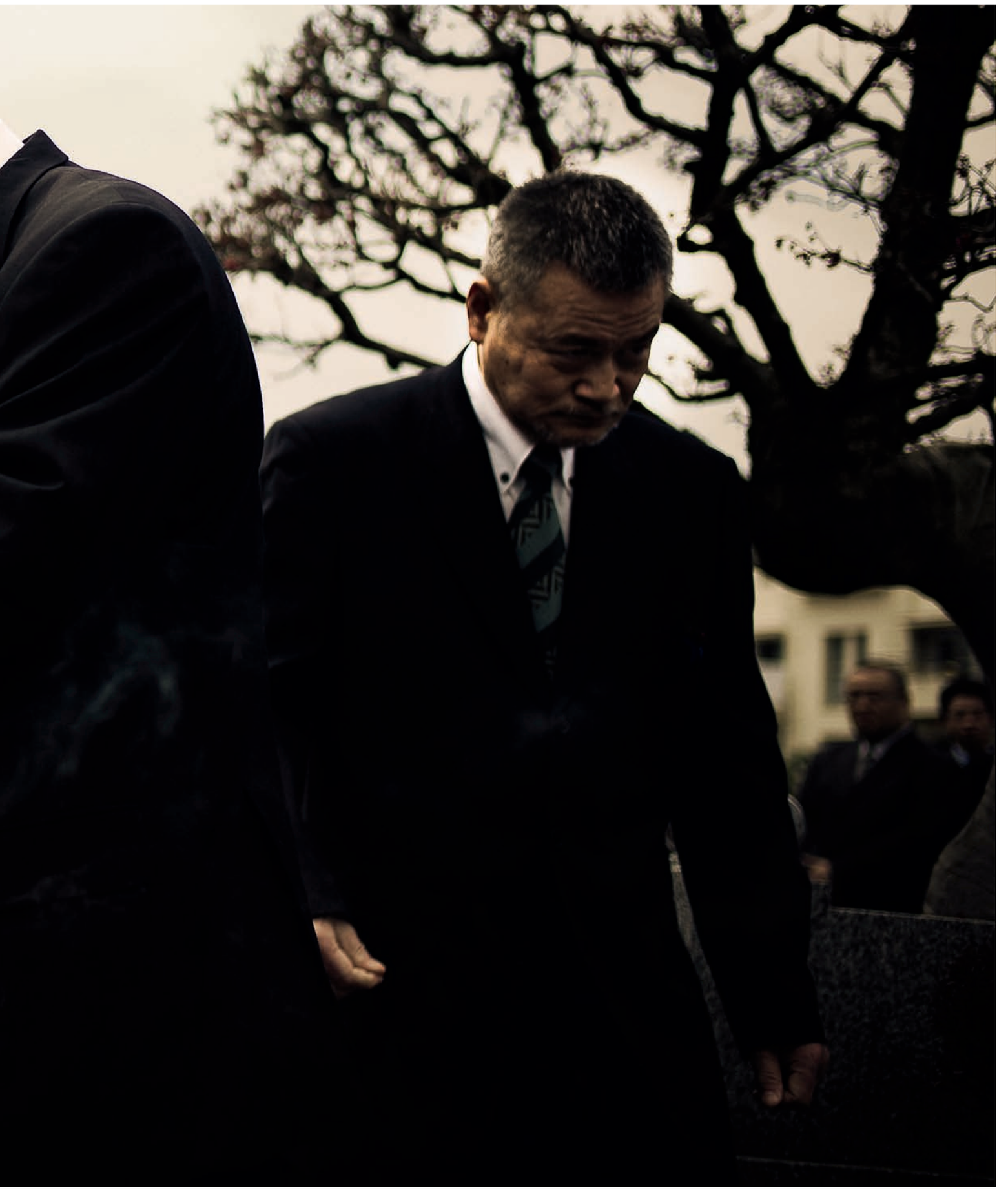
Silhouettes of power.
The really important
Yakuza meetings take place
behind closed doors

In Kabukicho most of the money is earned in the red light district. Many locales here are family-owned



Funeral of a Mafia godfather. Miyamoto-san was a high-level member of the Shinseikai family. More than 250 Yakuza from different families pay their last respects. When Kusters learned on the phone that the leader was dying, he made his way from Belgium to Japan immediately

Once a year, high-level Yakuza members thank their ancestors who opened the way for them into the family



The Belgian photographer was granted permission to shadow members of the Japanese Mafia and take pictures, offering a glimpse into the strange world of the Yakuza: a syndicate laden with tradition in a world full of secrets and unwritten rules. The name derives from Oicho-Kabu, a Japanese card game similar to Black Jack, but where the card combination of 8 (ya) – 9 (ku) – 3 (sa) is considered of no value. When the Yakuza was founded as a gambling syndicate, it was mostly comprised of people from lower circumstances who took pride in calling themselves the Valueless of Society. Now the word Yakuza has come to encompass all of Japan's criminal organizations – though their members no longer belong to the poorer classes. Pin-stripe suits and expensive cars are just as important in setting the tone as a diplomatic attitude. With his images, Anton Kusters manages to make this parallel society of the Yakuza more accessible:

NO CRIME FAMILY IS MORE FEARED and yet respected inside their own culture than the Yakuza of Japan. The Yakuza are involved in almost every aspect of Japanese life and account for an important part of the GNP. They are a real force, and a real part of Japanese life. Anton Kusters has chosen to take us on an almost two year photographic diary visually scribing the lives of the Yakuza. Yes, with their approval and yes under their watchful eye. Yet Anton has managed the nearly impossible. To photograph with integrity and yet flow within the parameters of a powerful criminal regime that knows no politics or government. The Yakuza are indeed independent. This should be no surprise given the culture they thrive in.

There could hardly be a more isolated culture than Japan. No other civilization literally threw out the Westerners after some initial exposure with the Portuguese in the mid 16th century. Japan stayed feudal and cut off from a developing West for another two hundred years after the Portuguese inadvertently landed. Only in the mid 19th century was Japan forced to evolve and become a part of the so called modern world. Economic ups and downs and two world wars helped to shape modern Japan. Some of it for better, and some for worse. Japan is a mighty small island to have such world influence, yet if you spend any time at all studying or trying to become part of Japanese society, you will quickly see why they succeeded as they do. The ability to compartmentalize and to keep a healthy isolation from all outside forces is a reason for their survival and success. These are traits inbred and developed and nurtured for hundreds of years.

So even the Yakuza families, known primarily for their incursions into a wide variety of criminal business, have managed to use that exact same cultural phenomena to survive themselves inside and blending in a totally symbiotic way with Japanese culture.

To photographically document any aspect of Japanese society is the artistic equivalent of climbing Mt. Fuji with no ropes. Freestyle climbing. Never knowing exactly where you are, but knowing you will only get to the top of the mountain if you are doing so under the total approval of the culture. In this case, the often feared Yakuza.

No photographer I know could have been more suited for this than Anton Kusters. Yes, a Westerner who would be watched and managed very carefully, yet someone the Yakuza would come to trust and allow inside some of their most private doings. Yes, Anton had to walk the fine line between being totally controlled by the Yakuza and having his own artistic integrity push forward and past any restrictions. How could he do this? He did it with a combination of his own controlled personality and with his vision. A vision of total integrity and artistic style, yet not in conflict with the Yakuza who would have treated any betrayal with severity. So where we can quite literally feel in these photographs the ominous presence of the Yakuza, since this is their real power and yet see their vision of themselves as honourable in the traditional Japanese way of how things are organized, how people are treated, and in what manner things move forward. Kusters had to be aware of all of this and yet play his own music all at the same time. No small feat.

ANTON IS HERE BOTH eloquent and reserved. He speaks with a quiet voice, yet one is with its own power. One can only see this work as masterful traditional documentary yet from the eye of a modern artist. Yes, subjectivity meets integrity. This epic work will soon find its place at the table of serious photography. A work to be treasured. There is no pretense, no posturing, just fine seeing and interpretation.

The Yakuza will appreciate this because they are humanized and treated with respect by Anton.
The rest of us will still see the undercurrents of mystery and of fear. We will never now everything about the Yakuza. Yet what we do see now from Anton Kusters is way more than has ever been before.

A deep bow.

David Alan Harvey *is also a photographer and member of the Magnum Agency. He wrote this foreword for Anton Kusters' book 'Odo Yakuza Tokyo'.*

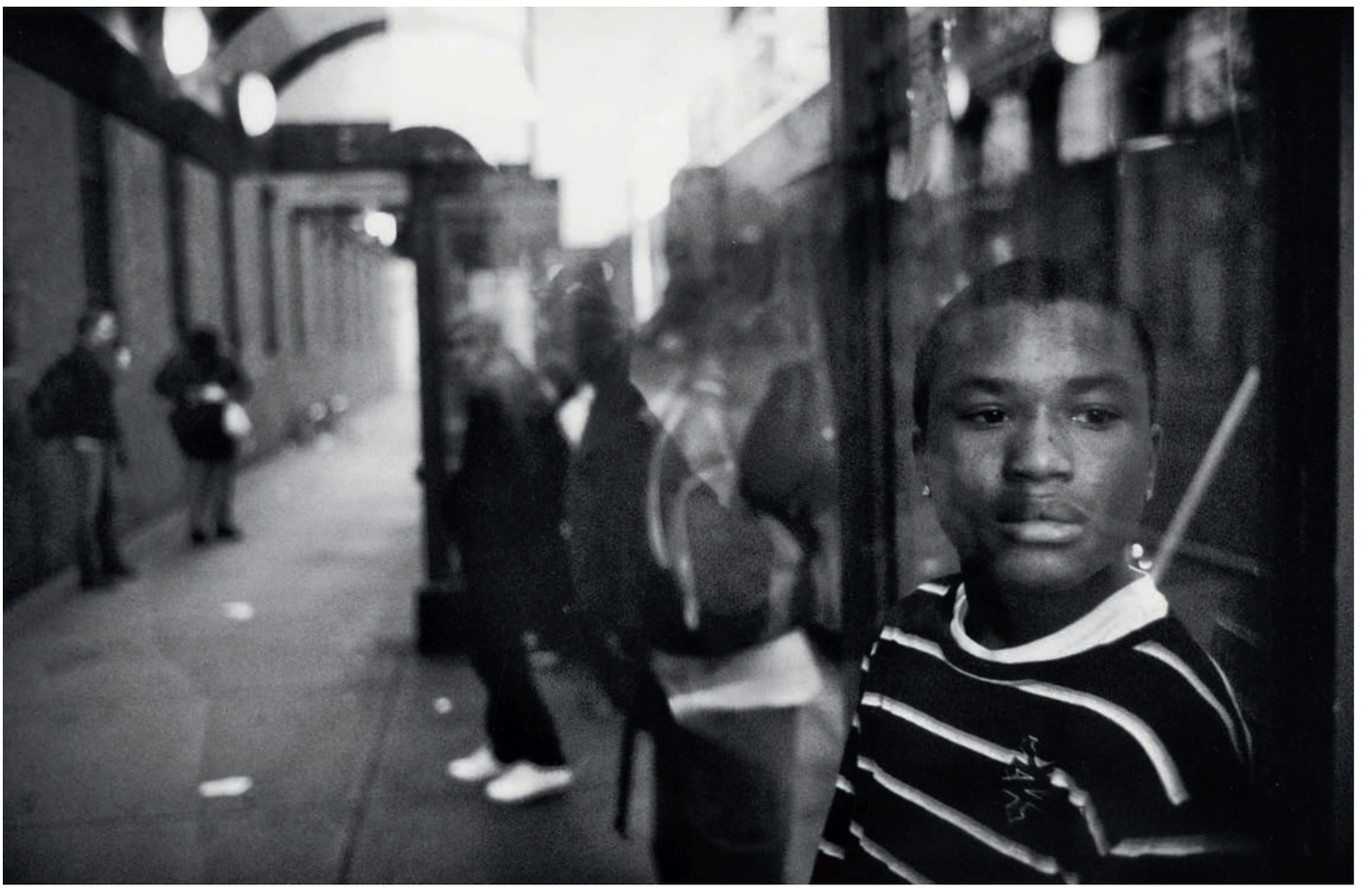
ALEX WEBB

Blue Turns to *Grey*

Rochester, New York, is the home of Kodak: a company that revolutionized the world of photography with its cameras and film. In 2012, the business declared bankruptcy. Magnum photographer Alex Webb headed to upstate New York to create a visual homage dedicated to the legendary Kodachrome film and the city where it was manufactured. Looking back and taking stock: Welcome to Rochester!

PHOTOGRAPHED WITH LEICA M6 / M9


PARK

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EXIT

The Kodak Tower in Rochester. Built in 1914,
it was for a long time the tallest building
in the State of New York. It became a monument
to film manufacturing, and was known as the
'nerve center of photography'

It began as a long-term project launched by the Magnum Photo Agency, and ended in a book about a piece of photographic history. Early in 2012, Magnum photographer Alex Webb, together with his photographer wife Rebecca Norris Webb, travelled to the city of Rochester in upstate New York. It was in Rochester at the end of the 19th century, that George Eastman (1854–1932) perfected the transparent film roll – a development which founded the Kodak empire. The celluloid roll replaced the stripping film in use at the time where a layer of paper was the film's backing material.

Eastman's first commercial success came from combining this new film with the Kodak 1 camera he also invented. With the famous slogan, 'You press the button, we do the rest', Eastman also successfully marketed the company's own film development service. Photographers posted their Kodak cameras to the company's processing lab and received back the developed negatives with a set of prints. At the same time, the camera was returned fitted with a new roll of film.

In 1914, Kodak moved into a 16-storey building in Rochester, which remained the company's headquarters to the end. Within fifteen years, Eastman had 20 000 employees worldwide. For decades the development of raw film stock for Hollywood studios was Kodak's most important commercial branch. When Leica became a success in Europe, the company manufactured films for 35 mm cameras.

Kodak had only just declared bankruptcy when Alex Webb arrived in Rochester in early 2012. As one of the city's most established and important employers, the threat of closure made local citizens fear for the future. Webb captured the company's story in gentle black and white pictures taken with analogue Kodak film, while also allowing space for colourful, digital street shots. He and his wife went to Rochester a total of four times, culminating with the book 'Memory City' that was published in June 2014. We talked with the photographer about memory, progress and luck on the street.

Memories in the form of pictures are often more concrete than just the purely spiritual memory, which also undergoes a process of transformation over the years. What does memory mean for you within the context of your work?
All photographs are memories, but memories that are tangible, that one can hold in one's hand. In 'Memory City', we quote George Eastman, founder of Eastman Kodak, who said, "Such a photographic notebook ... enables [one] to go back by the light of his own fireside to scenes which would otherwise fade from memory and be lost." This book is a kind of meditation on film and memory, and the design of the book emphasizes the tactile quality of analogue documentation. There are tipped-in images – photographs glued to a book page, sometimes with accompanying pre-printed letterpress, an old-fashioned way of making photobooks – as well as a folded timeline of Rochester's history, as a nod to the notion of time unfolding. A separate booklet on rougher-feeling, uncoated paper, in which Rebecca and I muse about our different relationships with film, slips into the back of the book.

How did the idea for this project come about?
I was invited by some of my Magnum colleagues to be part of a two-week group project photographing Rochester, New York, a few months after Kodak declared bankruptcy. I asked my wife and creative partner, the photographer Rebecca Norris Webb, with whom I had collaborated on the book on Cuba, 'Violet Isle', to join me. We soon became intrigued by Rochester and returned four more times over the next year to make a book.

Can pictures pin down time and space?
Photographs can suggest. They create a portal through which the viewer enters and discovers whatever that viewer wants to find. They don't define or 'pin down,' but they can certainly imply. Often the strength of a photograph is its very ambiguity.

A major city in upstate New York – a name known around the world because it is the cradle of Eastman Kodak. An era that has now come to an end...
It's important to remember that Rochester is a city that has reinvented itself several times. In the 1830's Rochester produced more milled flour than any other city in the world, because upper New York State was the breadbasket of the United States. Some 20 years later, Rochester had the largest flower nursery in the world. After that came Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch and Lomb, leading to the moniker, 'World's Image Center'. So Rebecca and I think that Rochester may very well transform itself yet again.

Colour is an essential element in your work – in 'Memory City', however, there are also some black and white pictures that have a very particular atmosphere. One even has the feeling that they are telling a completely different story ...
When we first went to Rochester, Rebecca, knowing my 30-year history with Kodachrome film, suggested I see if someone in Rochester could still process it. To our surprise, we discovered that it can only be processed as black and white. Processed this way, Kodachrome changes →

from positive to negative and becomes slightly distressed, as if weathered over time, a quality that seems appropriate for this project. Juxtaposed with my digital colour and Rebecca's colour negative work in the book — portraits, still lifes, and landscapes — these black and white images feel as if they were taken in the 1960's or 1970's. Kodachrome processed as black and white becomes a kind of homage to my long-time reliance on this venerable film and to the city where this film was created.

To what degree has the end of Kodachrome film influenced your work?
I discovered a certain way of working in colour in the tropics and Kodachrome was an essential element in that process. The heaviness of Kodachrome – its deep reds and intense blacks – seemed so right for the weight of the subjects and situations that I was choosing to photograph in Haiti and along the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Kodachrome was an integral part of my photographic vocabulary for some 30 years. I reluctantly made the switch to work digitally, but I can now say that I am comfortable working this way, thanks in part to the fact that Leica has made full frame rangefinder cameras – first the M9 and now the M – that handle much like the M6's and M-P's that I once used.

What does the change to digital mean for photography?
I'm not sure how much I can say about what it means for photography in general. However, I can speak about my own experience. One of the things that has disturbed me about working in digital is its lack of tangibility. I look at my desk and see six hard drives and it still bothers me a little that I can't touch the images. It's interesting to think – as a curator recently pointed out to Rebecca and me – of the difference between a family poring through an album of old snapshots and a family viewing past photographs on a computer screen. How is this new media going to affect memories of the past!

What is the relationship between precise documentation and aesthetic demands in your work in Rochester?
I don't see them as separate entities; they are both entwined in 'Memory City'.

Sometimes people are the clear focus of your pictures, sometimes they slip behind the colours and surfaces that define the picture or they become a part of the composition. What meaning do the people of a city have for you?
There seems to be an implication in your question that suggests that straightforward portraits of people are somehow more about the people than street photography. I photograph the world of the street, a place in which people are an integral part. Every once in a while I capture an image that expresses something about a moment in time, a moment that may show a person, or persons, but is simultaneously about light, colour, and form.

What roles do luck and chance play for a street photographer?
Luck, chance, serendipity: these are all key for a street photographer. Street photographers are always at the mercy of the world, and the world is only willing to give them so much.

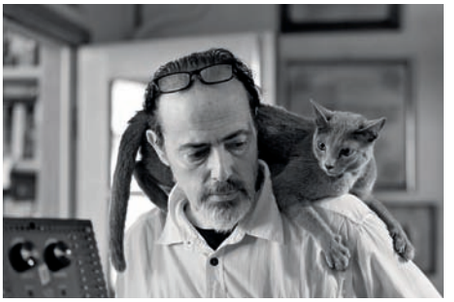
How long did you work on this project?
Rebecca and I photographed for one year, from April 2012, shortly after Kodak declared Chapter 11, to April 2013. It then took us close to a year to weave together all the different elements of the work: my digital colour and analogue black and white images, Rebecca's colour still lifes and portraits of Rochester women past and present, as well as her contact sheets of dresses, her metaphor for film, that slip of celluloid that has accompanied her to every single event she has ever photographed, since even today she still solely uses film.

Which cameras/lenses do you use and how do they influence the way you work?
For my digital colour in this project I used a Leica M9. (I have recently started using the Leica M.) For the Kodachrome black and white I used a Leica M-P or an M6. I have always appreciated the size and unobtrusiveness of a Leica. I also like using a rangefinder, as it enables me to work more successfully in deep space — I can see the layers of the world all in focus simultaneously. I generally use a 35 mm lens, occasionally a 28, sometimes a 50 mm. I gravitate towards the 35 mm because I like what it does with deep space. It's a little messier, a little less elegant, than the 50 mm, but also a little more intimate. It's more the way I perceive the world.

Can you remember the last picture you took with Kodachrome and that was developed in colour?
I can't recall a specific image, however the last major project for which I used Kodachrome was 'Violet Isle', Rebecca's and my book on Cuba. This seems somewhat fitting, in that Cuba remains in a kind of time warp, hearkening back to the late 50's and 60's, a time that we often think of as the heyday of Kodachrome.

Interview: Inas Fayed and Katrin Iwanczuk

PHOTOS: ALEX WEBB / MAGNUM PHOTOS



BRUCE GILDEN

"I decided that if I could not be as good as Cartier-Bresson, I could be the best at being Bruce Gilden."

Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1946, Gilden developed an astute eye and a preference for things happening every day on the streets of his home town. Fascinated by Michelangelo Antonioni's film 'Blowup', he purchased his first camera in 1968. Shortly afterwards he began working on two series covering the Mardi Gras in New Orleans and the beach at Coney Island. Later on he completed a number of personal essays in England, Haiti, Ireland, India, Japan, Russia, Australia and Colombia, which have been published in many books.

His favourite places for working are and remain the streets of America's major cities: right in there and up close. Throughout his career, this has resulted in personal, social portraits of the world's great cities, in street photography style, many of which have won awards. Most recently, Gilden was awarded the 2013 Guggenheim Grant. He is a member of the Magnum Agency.

LEICA M4 / M9

The digital colour photos were taken with a Summicron-M 35 mm f/2 Asph. The analogue black and white photos with an Elmarit-M 28 mm f/2.8 Asph and a Summicron-M 35 mm f/2.

TRENT PARKE

"I don't think about what other people will make of it. I shoot for myself."

Born in 1971 in Newcastle, Australia, Trent Parke began experimenting with his mother's old camera when he was 12 years old. Shortly afterwards, the laundry room in his parents' home was turned into a darkroom. He started out working as a sports photographer before turning to street photography. By the time he produced his 'Dream/Life' series at the end of the nineties, Parke had proven his ability to capture action happening in the street. Together with his wife, the photographer Narelle Autio, he set out on a road trip around his homeland for his 'Minutes to Midnight' project. Trent Parke has already received the renowned World Press Press Photo Award four times and the Olympic Committee has awarded him the Golden Lens five times. Parke is the only Australian member of the Magnum Agency.

LEICA M6

Trent Parke used an Elmarit-M 28 mm f/2.8 lens for both his 'Minutes to Midnight' and 'Dream/Life' series.

CIRIL JAZBEC

"The camera helped me to rediscover my work."

Ciril Jazbec, born in Slovenia in 1987, was literally walking on thin ice to complete his Greenland reportage. Moving from commercial photography to photo journalism, Jazbec's documentary work now focusses primarily on the effects of climate change and the societal interplay between tradition and modernity. In addition, commercial projects still constitute part of his photographic work, but Jazbec tries to maintain a good balance between reportage and commercial assignments. His personal projects are both an inner journey and an inspiration, while commercial photography is a challenge where he tries, using group dynamics, to produce top quality results. He won the 2013 Leica Oskar Barnack Newcomer Award. This earned him a new camera.

LEICA M (TYP 240)

Ciril Jazbec used a Summilux-M 35 mm f/1.4 Asph for the reportage he took in Greenland.

JAN GRARUP

"I know that this job could cost me my life, but I chose it myself – so that's how it is."

Born in Denmark in 1968, Jan Grarup studied journalism and photography at the university of Aarhus. The siege of Sarajevo and genocide in Rwanda – Grarup has spent 25 years covering war and crisis situations around the world, first as a correspondent, and now as a photographer. "I don't believe I can change the world; but if I can incite just a few people to ponder on a subject, that's already a big difference," he says, explaining his reason for continuously facing new dangers – as for his series covering the civil war in the Central African Republic.

His work has been honoured with many awards, including the 2011 Leica Oskar Barnack Award for his pictures from Haiti after the earthquake, and a first place at the 2013 World Press Photo Award for his documentation of a women's basketball team in Somalia. Jan Grarup lives in Copenhagen and is represented by the Laif Agency.

LEICA M9 / M MONOCHROM

In the Central African Republic, Jan Grarup used an Elmarit-M 28 mm f/2.8 Asph, a Summicron-M 35 mm f/2 Asph and a Voigtländer Nokton 50 mm f/1.1.

ANTON KUSTERS

"It took me over ten months till I was able to measure the various situations correctly."

After completing his Masters in Political Philosophy, Anton Kusters (1974) studied photography. On a trip to Japan, he found a subject for his next longterm project: fascinated by the Yakuza he received permission, after ten months negotiation, to enter into the world of organized crime. The outcome is rather like a private tour through the Japanese underworld. Published in 2011, the photo book of his reportage titled 'Odo Yakuza Tokyo' is already in its second print.

Together with his mentor, Magnum photographer David Alan Harvey, Kusters helped establish Burn magazine, and is involved in the yearly award ceremony of the Emerging Photographer Grants. He currently lives and works in Belgium and Japan.

LEICA M9

Anton Kusters took the photos in Japan with a Summilux-M 35 mm f/1.4 Asph.

ALEX WEBB

"The real strength of photography is often in its double meaning and its lack of clarity."

Alex Webb was already delighted by photography in high school. While studying history and literature at Harvard, he also studied photography at the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts. Born in 1952, he began working as a photojournalist in 1974, and was already accepted into the Magnum Agency in 1976. Just three years later he became a full member of the renowned agency.

In the seventies, Webb documented life in small towns in the southern United States – back when he was still using black and white. The colour reproduction of Kodachrome film pleased him so much, however, that he then turned almost exclusively to colour photography. In the meantime, he has also turned to digital. To date, Webb has published seven photo books and received countless awards for his work, including the 2000 Leica Medal of Excellence. Nowadays he often works with his wife, the photographer Rebecca Norris Webb.

LEICA M6 / M9

Alex Webb likes to be close to the action; his pictures were taken with the wide-angle Elmarit-M 28 mm f/2.8 Asph and the Summicron-M 35 mm f/2.

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