

SHADES OF GREY

Fine Art Photography Magazine



Olavo Azevedo

Itzick Lev

Florin Firimita

Billy Joe Hoyle

Pietrino Di Sebastiano

Erminio Vanzan

Shades of Grey N°20 €7.00

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Shades of Grey Fine Art Photography Magazine is a 2019 Jean Michel Misri / E-presses.com publication

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How and when did you start photography and what was your learning path?

I'm a self-taught photographer. I have an innate vocation for art and artistic expression and since I was a child I have drawn a lot, experimenting with various techniques. I discovered photography as a means of expression in the 70s, when, in a magazine, I saw Mario Giacomelli's highly contrasted Black and White landscapes for the first time. A world opened up to me and I wanted at all costs to create a darkroom at home to personally follow both the development of the negatives and the prints. I was not yet 20 years old and the photographic equipment was very expensive for a boy, I exchanged a gold bracelet of great emotional value for my first used enlarger. The discovery of Ansel Adams' zonal system was fundamental. I carefully and enthusiastically studied his trilogy (The negative, The press and The camera). Many years later, in the transition from film to digital, the study of the book "Fotografia digital de alta calidad" by Jose Maria Mellado was very useful to me. I have not yet stopped studying, the comparison with other online artists gives me stimulus and help.

What is your favorite genre of photography, as I can see on your website that you are working on a few different subjects?

I am very fascinated by minimalism. I gladly accept the challenge of making an apparently banal subject interesting and that could go unnoticed by an inattentive eye. However, I am not interested in the trivial representation of the photographed subject, I always try to give my own interpretation.

Who are your main influences?

Mario Giacomelli was undoubtedly the photographer who influenced me the most. I have been several times to visit him in his printing house in Sentigallia and I am honored to have three of his original photographs at home. Another photographer who has had a lot of influence on me is Michael Kenna.

What led you to architecture and cityscapes photography?

Michael Kenna's discovery led me to take minimalist photos. Architecture lends itself well to my idea of minimalism and is a subject easy to find, anywhere.

How do you select your location?

Except for rare exceptions, I do not choose places to photograph in advance. I like to wander around aimlessly observing and imagining the world around me. I photograph when I come across a subject that I find interesting. The interest may also arise from a particular challenge such as that of representing in black and white "The Enchanted Garden", a work of urban environmental art by Franco Summa present in Pescara, whose main characteristic is colour.

How do you prepare for a shoot?

I study the subject in search of the most congenial point of view, which allows me to balance the lines, the lights and the shadows well in my frame.

What kind of equipment do you use (camera, lenses, filters)?

Canon EOS 5D Mark IV - Canon Zoom Lens EF 24-70mm 1:2.8 L USM
Tripod Manfrotto and filter ND 4.8 (-f 16 stop)

Architecture photography is mostly a game of lines and shapes. How do you work with your composition?

I do not aim to give a canonical representation of the architectural structure so I do not apply formulas and in the search for the composition I let myself be guided by instinct, by the mood of the moment. Much also depends on the light there is. I do not plan my shots and therefore I am not the one who chooses the light but it greatly influences the choice of the frame because the shadows, their angle and their intensity constitute a fundamental part of the final composition. I try as much as possible to choose a non-trivial composition, I like the viewer to make an effort to identify and reconstruct the photographed subject in his mind.

I like to understand the intent/vision of a photographer, so do you have a specific intent when you are on location and have a specific final image vision, or do you work on getting a well composed/exposed image and finalize it with experimentation during post-processing?

Shooting is only the beginning of work, I experience a lot in post-production. When I shoot I already have in mind a photographic vision of the subject and the potential of a particular shot or a particular type of light, but the creative process that I put into practice in post-production sometimes leads me to unexpected results.

What kind of software and plugins are you using?

The software I use for post-production is Lightroom 6 and Photoshop CS6

I use The Silver Efex Pro, Topaz B&W Effect 2 plug-ins

I personally print my photos with

Epson R2880 with UltraChrome K3 archival ink on Hahnemühle Fine Art Baryta paper.

Processing Architecture images is often a real challenge. Masters like Joel Tjintjelaar and Julia Anna Gospodarou made a style definition. Can you describe your processing workflow, and explain how you work the light on your images?

In 2014 I read the book FROM BASICS TO FINE ART | Black and White Photography - Architecture and Beyond by Julia Anna Gospodarou and Joel Tjintjelaar and I really enjoyed their The New Fine Art Photography THE MANIFEST OF (en) VISIONOGRAPHY. I like the idea of being able to overturn everything and therefore being able to give free rein to my creativity in the search for my personal interpretation of the photographed subject. In any case, however, I want to have full control of the processing I perform in post-production, leaving nothing to chance, being able to reproduce a particular effect or remove it if I don't like it. I make great use of Tony Kuypers' luminosity masks, they allow me to manage, in full control, the contrast, the tones and in general the quality of the Black and White typical of Fine Art photos.

Social media are now a key element to promote and distribute your work. Which one is the best for you and why?

Social media are a useful tool for sharing and comparing, they allowed me to





compare myself with photographers from other nations that I would never have had the chance to know and meet. The first social that was very useful to me in this sense was Art Limited. But if I have to choose, I prefer 1x because that's what gave me more visibility. Through 1x I received most of the publication proposals.

Finally, do you have one great advice for any aspiring cityscape/architecture photographer?

We must become masters of technology, studying a lot. Careful observation of the works of great photographers allows us to refine our compositional skills. I highly recommend going to the exhibitions to see the original prints on paper, the only ones that can faithfully reproduce the author's intentions. Having identified a master in the genre, it can be very useful to follow one of his workshops.

Do you have any specific projects for 2019 (photography, books, exhibitions)?

I was invited to some group exhibitions in my region. I was also invited to publish in other online magazines. My main project, however, is a personal book to which I started working recently and that will see me busy well beyond 2019.

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