

ISSUE 63 - AUGUST 2022

Mobiography

FOR INSPIRING SMARTPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY

MOBIOGRAPHY AWARDS

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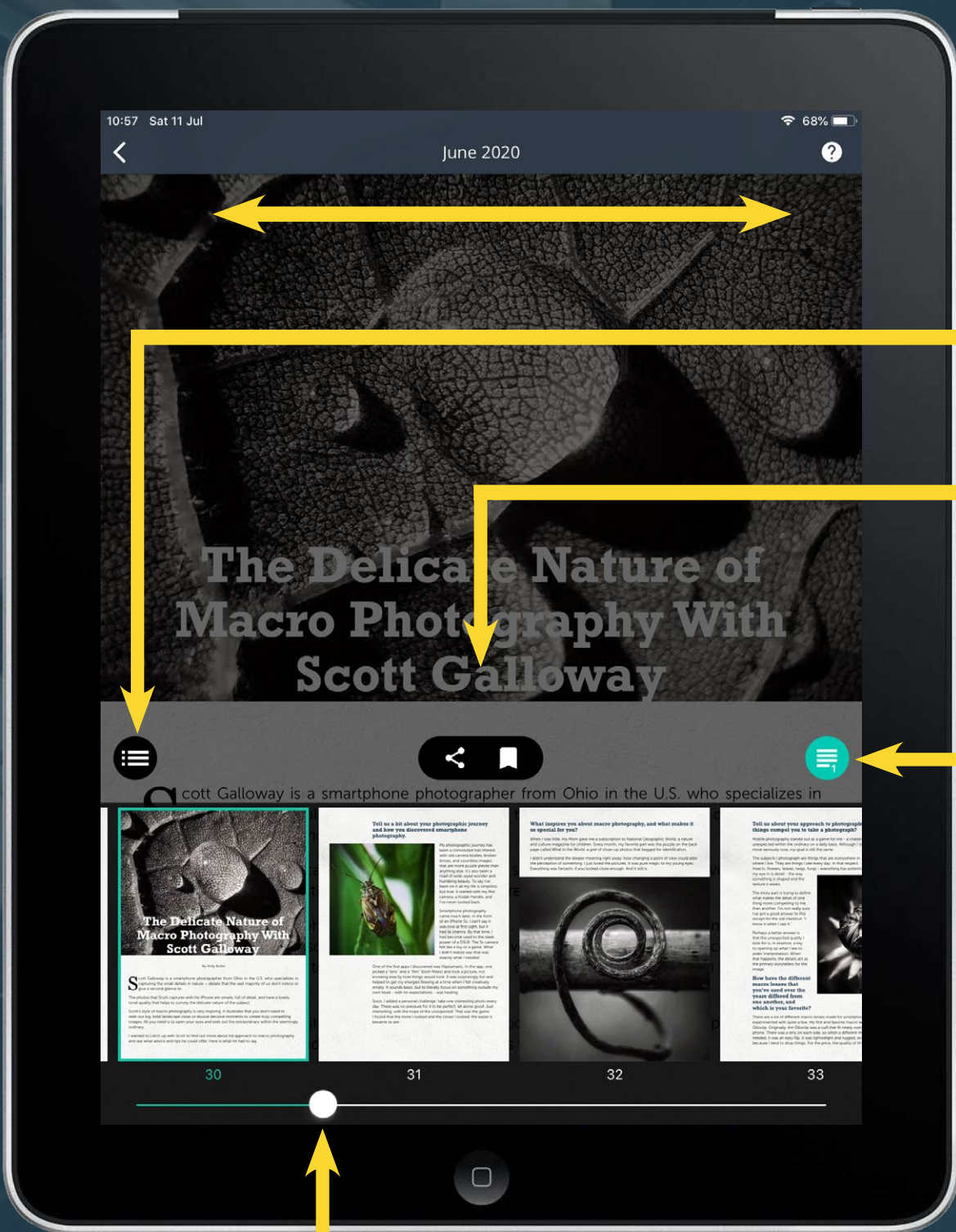
**JULIET COPE
& MAL MCCANN**

PRISMA PHOTO EDITOR

**TURN YOUR PHOTOS INTO HAND-DRAWN &
PAINTED ART STYLES**

PLUS: HOW TO TAKE GREAT PHOTOS AT THE BEACH & PEOPLE TO FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM

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Inside This Issue...

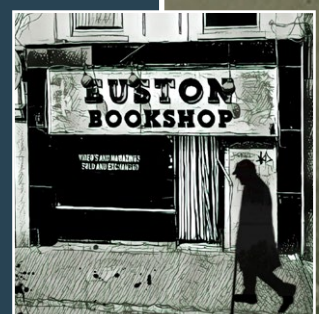
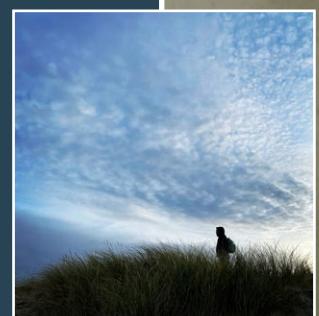
Featured Interviews:

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Belfast Street Life with Mal
McCann

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- How to take great photos at the beach
- Photographer's guide to using Instagram Reels - Part 1
- Prisma Photo Editor: Turn your photos into hand-drawn & painted art styles



From The Editor...

Welcome to this summer issue of Mobiography Magazine. By now, you will most likely have seen that this year's Mobiography Awards is in full swing. Like last year, we are hosting a series of online learning events and interviews with some super-talented mobile photographers. Our aim is to provide added value to the mobile photography community by making the event more than just a competition. If you haven't already done so, make sure you enter, as we have some great prizes and giveaways.

Inside this latest issue, I talk to two more talented photographers, Mal McCann and Juliet Cope. Mal McCann is from Belfast and talks about his early career as a press photographer in Belfast, his introduction to iPhone photography, his approach to using composition, and how life in Belfast has shaped his photography.

Juliet Cope is a full-time mom and passionate iPhone photographer from Brighton, on the south coast of England. Through her photography, Juliet documents the many memorable moments in the life of her children as they grow up. I talk to Juliet about her approach to the photos she takes and about some of the other photographic projects she is doing.

Here, in the Northern Hemisphere, summer is firmly in charge, so as many people head off on their summer holidays, Mark Myerson offers some insights and helpful tips to help you capture those special holiday memories and create stunning seaside images.

Meanwhile, Lindsay Pietroluongo continues with her closer look at making the most of using Instagram. This time, she explores the recent changes that Instagram has been making and how you can use Reels to help promote your work as a photographer.

Finally, Nicki Fitz-Gerald looks at another A.I.-inspired photo editor app, Prisma. Nicki digs deep into this versatile app and reports on the effects you can create with it and how you can use it to create fantastic works of art from the photos on your mobile.

As always, don't forget to share your photos with Mobiography on Instagram by using the hashtag #mobiography. Also, be sure to enter this year's Mobiography Awards. We have \$3,500 worth of prizes up for grabs, as well as some prize draw giveaways.

Andy Butler



'The good, the bad, the dog' by @_bharath_yogesh



MOBIOGRAPHY GALLERY SHOWCASE



'Fashion is more art than art is' by @e3_creatives





'Star Trails' by @harnaka_harto



'Perpetual State' by @kimboid





'It's about time' by @nicolechristophe



'We'll see you soon' by @persiflagepics





'Untitled' by @omarsant69



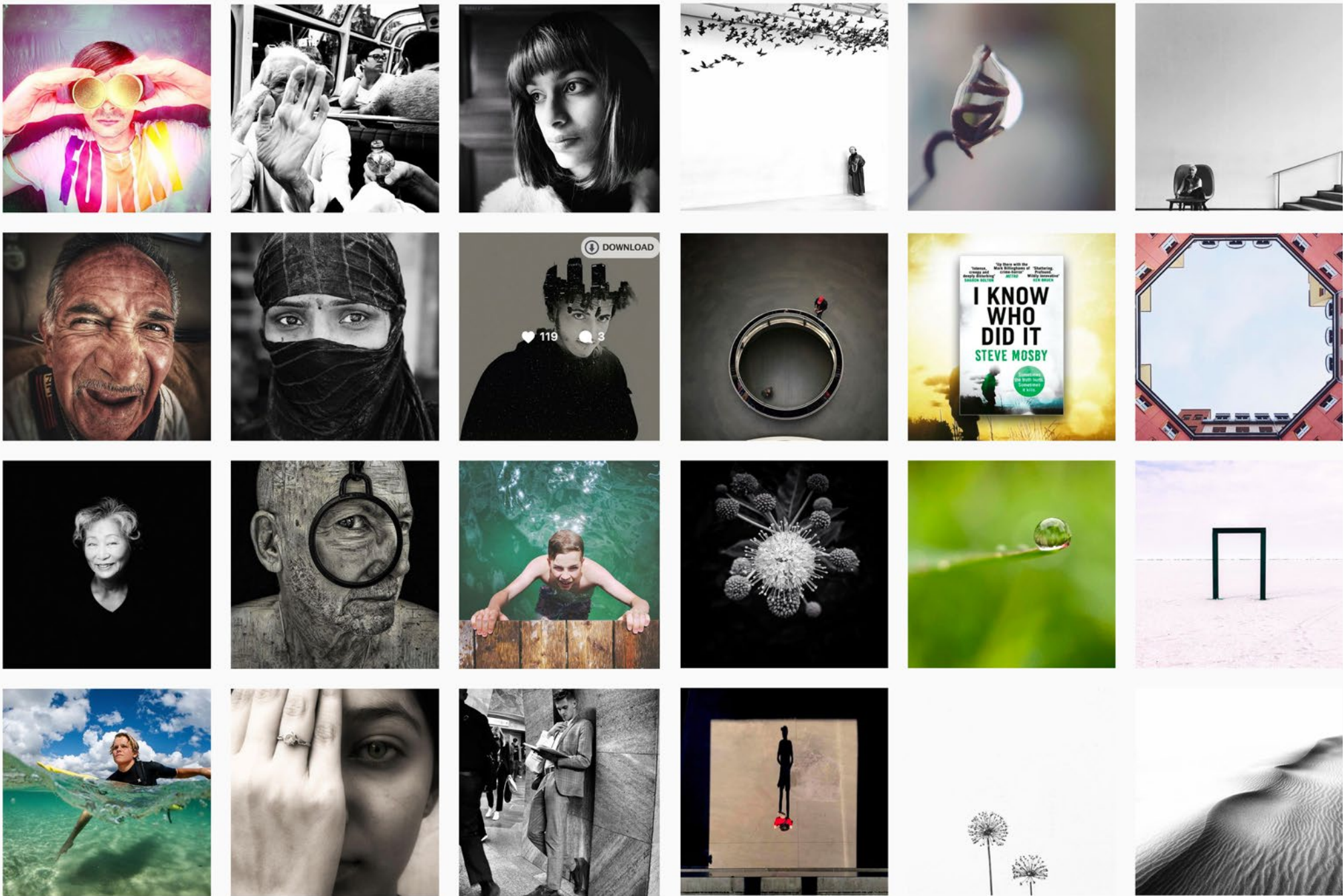
'Untitled' by @onelifephotostory







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ALSO LOOK OUT FOR THE WEEKLY CHALLENGES

BEGINNER'S GUIDE: 9 TIPS FOR INCLUDING PEOPLE IN YOUR LANDSCAPE PHOTOS

By Rob Dunsford



Do you struggle to capture eye-catching landscape photos? If so, then you're definitely not alone. Many people find that even when faced with the most breathtaking landscape scene, the images they capture don't reflect the incredible beauty felt at the time. So how do you make your landscape photos more interesting? One highly effective technique is to include a person in the scene.

In this article, you'll discover how to shoot more creative landscape photos by adding a human element to your images.

Use a Person to Create a Strong Focal Point

Does this sound familiar? You stumble across a beautiful landscape, you pick up your camera and take a shot, but the resulting image is disappointingly underwhelming.

Well, it's a common problem. And one of the main reasons landscape photos don't work out is because they don't have a strong focal point. In other words, there's no main subject for the viewer to focus on. This is especially common with flat, "empty" landscapes, such as beaches, deserts, or fields.



Including a person in your landscape is an easy way to add a strong focal point. The person will instantly grab and hold the viewer's attention. And that's exactly what you need for a successful photo!



Find the Right People for Your Shots

When it comes to finding people for your landscape photos, you have a few options.

Firstly, you could rely on photographing strangers that happen to be in the landscape you're shooting. However, there often isn't anyone else around. Even if there is, you don't have any control over what they're doing and where they'll appear in your shot.

You can definitely get lucky with photographing strangers in landscapes. But for guaranteed success, a better option would be to take a friend along to model for you. That way, you can take your time and direct them where to stand and how to pose, and you can experiment with different compositions.

But what if you're alone while out shooting? Well, that's not a problem... Just use yourself as the subject! Place your phone on a tripod (or balance it on a steady surface), then frame your shot. Now, you can either set the camera's self-timer or, even better, use a Bluetooth remote trigger (they're super cheap on Amazon). Then simply walk into the frame and grab some great shots of yourself in the landscape!

Capture Clean and Simple Compositions

When it comes to photographing people in landscapes, less is definitely more. If the scene is too busy, the person will get lost in the composition.

For the strongest visual impact, keep your images clean and simple. Explore the scene until you find a vantage point that eliminates any unnecessary distractions. The fewer competing subjects you have in your photo, the more the person will stand out.

Try to include lots of negative space (sky, water, sand, grass) to create a stunning minimalist landscape photo with the person as a strong focal point. Shooting from a lower angle is a great way to capture more sky behind your subject.



Use Leading Lines to Draw the Viewer In

Leading lines are one of the most powerful ways to create a striking photo. They draw the viewer's eye deep into the scene, adding an amazing sense of depth to your landscapes. You can also use them to lead the viewer toward your main subject.

So, if you're photographing a person in a landscape, check if there's anything in the scene that could be used as a leading line. It could be a road, a path, a fence, a stream, or even lines in the sand. Then compose your shot so that the lines lead from the foreground of your frame toward the person in the distance.





Backlight Your Subject for Stunning Silhouettes

People in landscapes offer the perfect opportunity to capture spectacular silhouette photos! A silhouette is simply a subject that appears as a dark shape against a brighter background.



The easiest way to create a silhouette photo is to position your subject in front of a bright area of the sky. This works particularly well during the golden hours of sunrise and sunset. The setting sun and the beautiful orange sky will make the most incredible backdrop for your silhouette.

Shoot from a low angle to ensure your subject has plenty of sky behind them. And once you've framed up your shot, check the screen to see how the exposure looks. Remember, you want your subject to appear completely black, so you might need to reduce the exposure to make the image darker. On the iPhone, simply tap on the screen to set focus, then swipe down to lower the exposure. You might also need to switch off the camera's HDR setting to prevent it from trying to brighten up the shadows. For android users, the process of adjusting the exposure will vary depending on your camera app of choice.

When the exposure looks good, capture a few shots with your subject in different positions. Ideally, you want to be able to see the limbs of your subject so that their shape is clearly defined. If you have multiple subjects in your silhouette, ensure they're standing apart from each other so each person is a clearly defined silhouette.



Add a Storytelling Element

Including people in your landscapes is a great way to add a storytelling element to your photos.

Try to capture moments that will intrigue the viewer and evoke some kind of emotion. It might be a couple walking hand-in-hand into the sunset, a child playing with shells on the beach, a person looking out into the distance, or even someone else taking a photo of the beautiful view.

If you can add a little bit of mystery into your photo, that's even better. You see, the best photos are often the ones that leave something to the imagination. This allows the viewer to conjure up their own story about the photo and, in turn, create a strong emotional connection with your image.

One of the easiest ways to create a bit of mystery is to obscure the face of the person. You can do this by photographing the person from behind, photographing them from a distance, or creating a silhouette.



Convey a Sense of Scale

When you capture a landscape in a photo, it's often difficult to convey a sense of size and scale. But if you include a person in the frame, the viewer will have a clear point of reference.

For example, if there's a large tree in the scene, photographing it on its own doesn't give the viewer an idea of how big it is. But if you have a person standing next to the tree, the human form provides a perfect reference point.

Note that it's usually best to photograph the person from a distance. That way, the person will appear small in the frame, emphasizing the vastness of the landscape that surrounds them.



Capture Reflections of People

If you're shooting around water, try capturing reflections of people. This is a great way to add extra visual interest to your landscape photos.

You'll need a shallow, still body of water that your subject can stand in (some gentle ripples in the water are fine, as they can add a kind of painterly effect to your reflections). You could use the edge of a lake or pond, wet sand on a beach, or even a small puddle.

Compose your shot with the reflection in the foreground (between you and your subject). This places maximum emphasis on the reflection and creates wonderful foreground interest.

When photographing reflections, experiment with your shooting angle to find the best composition. Getting low down to the water is often the best option. It's amazing how much a reflection will change as you adjust the height that you shoot from.

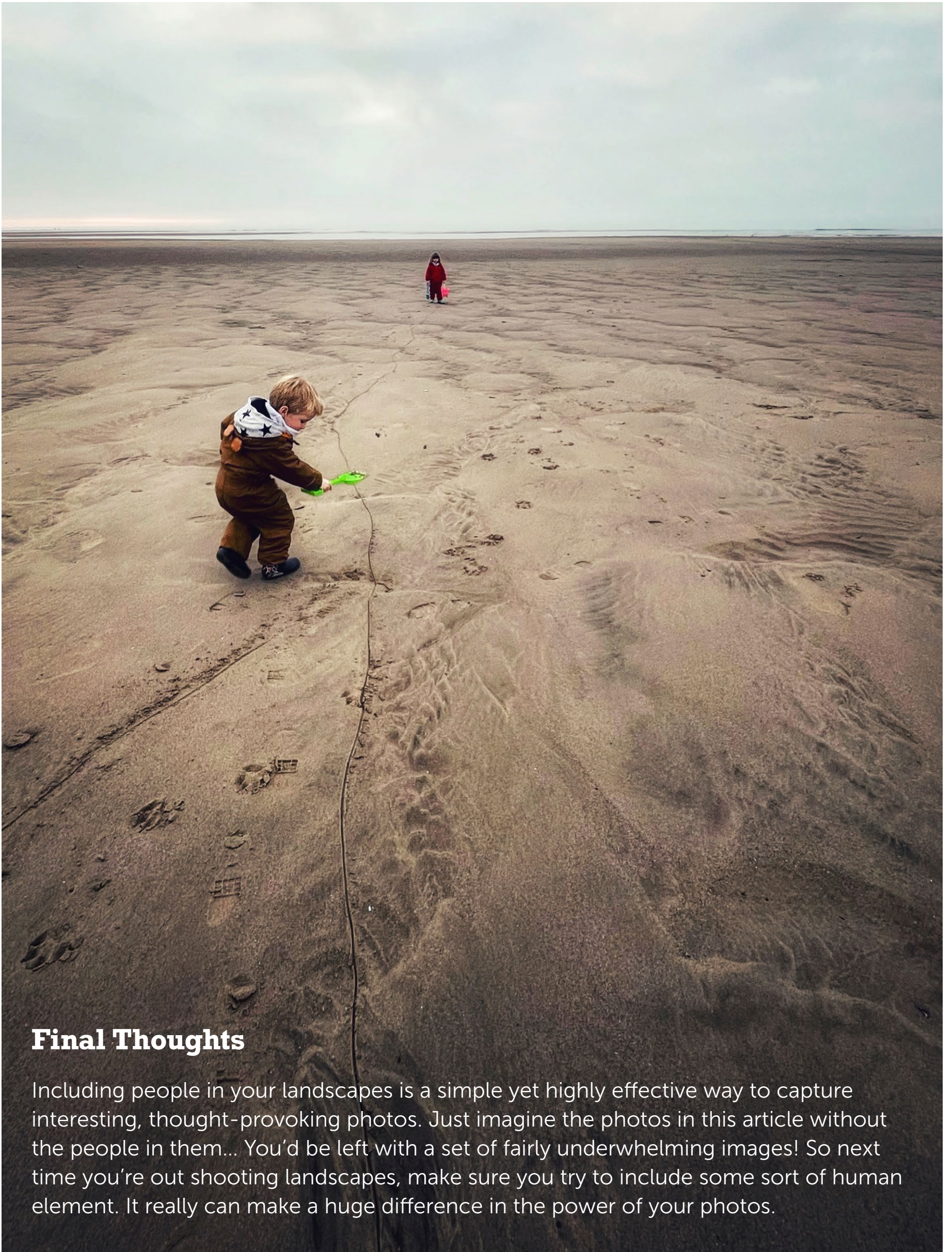


Add Some Action to Your Landscapes

Unless you're photographing waterfalls or waves, landscapes have very little in the way of movement. On the one hand, that's a good thing because it makes it easy to carefully compose your shots, knowing that nothing is going to change. But it also means that your photos can appear rather lifeless. So if you want to create more dynamic landscape photos, try capturing people moving through the scene.

It could be a person walking into the distance or a runner or cyclist moving quickly across the frame. You could even ask a friend to jump in the air for a fun, high-energy action shot!

Be sure to use burst mode when photographing moving subjects. Capturing a burst of photos in quick succession will ensure you have at least one shot of the subject in the perfect position.

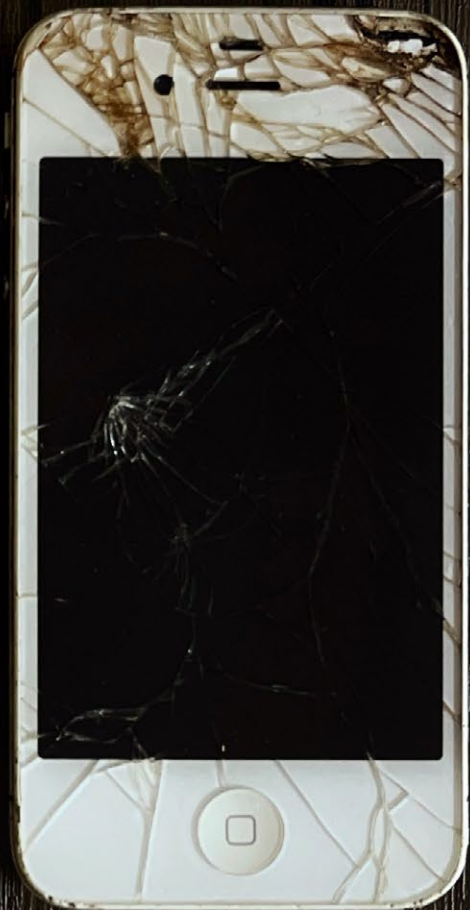


Final Thoughts

Including people in your landscapes is a simple yet highly effective way to capture interesting, thought-provoking photos. Just imagine the photos in this article without the people in them... You'd be left with a set of fairly underwhelming images! So next time you're out shooting landscapes, make sure you try to include some sort of human element. It really can make a huge difference in the power of your photos.

HOW TO GROW A BOY: THE FAMILY PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF JULIET COPE

By Andy Butler



Juliet Cope is a full-time mom and passionate iPhone photographer from Brighton, on the south coast of England. Her portfolio of images on Instagram mainly documents the many special moments in the lives of her children as they grow up. This has not only developed into a superb visual diary of a family as they grow up but also as an inspiring resource for those looking for a different approach to the humble family portrait.



Using a variety of compositional techniques, such as closely cropped images of bubble gum-filled mouths or negative space to frame bath time or seaside fun, Juliet then mixes in blur and textures to create a sense of fun-filled magic in her images.

I caught up with Juliet, as I wanted to find out more about her approach to the photos she takes and some of the other photographic projects that she constantly has on the go.

Could you tell us a bit about your photographic journey and how you first discovered smartphone photography?

When I had my kids, I found I could no longer photograph in the same way and felt quite lost. There wasn't much time to think

about anything else other than nappies and being obsessed about them going to sleep! But I got the hang of it, and while I loved being a Mum, I realized I was missing something in my life. I know it's a cliché, but you do really lose the old you, and in a way, you need a new identity.

I vividly remember being at a friend's house in the garden. I had never used the camera on my phone before, never even thought about it! But for some reason, that day, I took a picture of Oscar on the iPhone 4 and used the Instagram filters on it for fun. That phone looks so funny now, but what a revelation.

I started researching phone photography to see what others were doing and what apps were available. It was exciting to find this whole new world. Things were springing up that were platforms for phone photography; it was kind of a new dawning in photography.

Of course, it wasn't taken seriously by the main photography community, but in its genesis, nothing is. I've always been a champion for anything democratic or populist, anything that allows everyone access. I love things that liberate people,

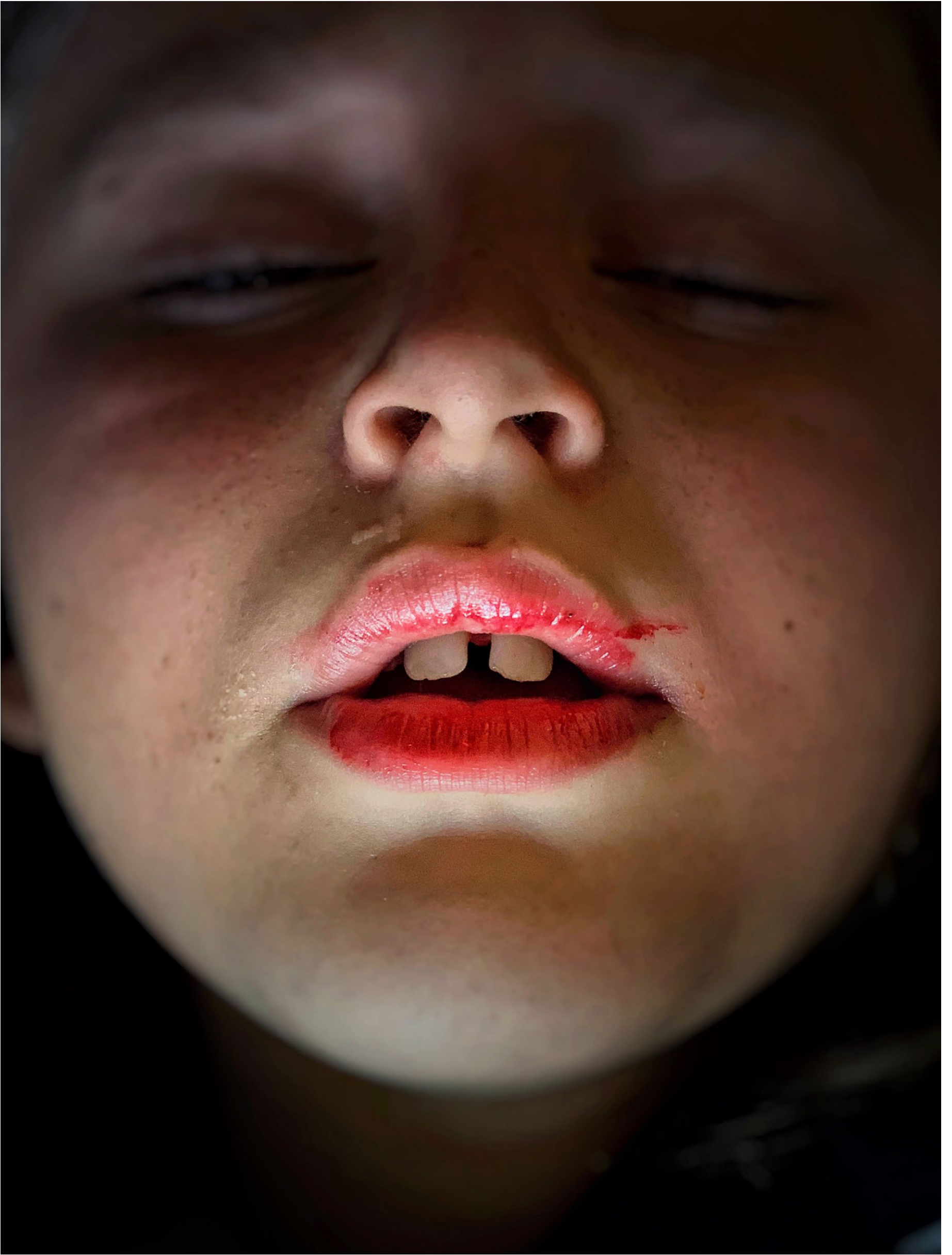
and I'd argue that the phone has done that. It hasn't just disrupted and changed photography. It's democratized art and film, too.

So for the next year, I worked on my iPhone photography, on my knowledge and technique, just doing what probably amounts to thousands of edits and taking a lot of terrible photos. I had lots of waiting time during that period. Waiting in parks and soft play centers while the children were watching Peppa Pig. Hanging out with the kids is how I practiced, and it became this really great documentary training.

For a long while, I was always thinking, okay, this is great because I want to have this record of their childhood for them, and it's good practice, but what "serious" project could I do?

But as is often the way in life, the thing you think is a setback can be a gift. I hadn't registered that photographing the kids could be my work. That's when I became interested in documenting childhood, particularly the world of boy culture, which is what my long-term project is now.





What are the things that compel you to raise the camera and take a photo?

Well, for the longest time, I never really thought about it, and even now, it's become a very instinctual process. But if I look at my photos as a whole and try to analyze them, I can see that what sticks out is that I'm inspired very much by colors, pop culture, childhood and memory. Oh, and by the ordinary — that's very significant to me, an elevation of the ordinary.

I'm obsessed with memory and trying to preserve things and pin them down, almost like beautiful dead butterflies pinned in a specimen box. Maybe I'm a memories collector, just like someone else might collect and preserve stamps. I moved houses and countries a lot as a child, so perhaps it stems from there? Wanting to find some permanence...

I'm always drawn to capturing those non-moment moments; they really inspire me. I think of it as "the space between things." Those things that would normally be forgotten. I have an ongoing series of stuff I find on the floor, which the kids think is particularly weird and embarrassing!



I'm never inspired to take photos of photogenic moments. Things like weddings, sunny holidays and so on. You know that traditional family narrative? I find family photography fascinating. I'm inspired by George Eastman and how he really changed the way the family story was told with Kodak. He gave that storytelling ability to the community. For the first time, an average family could document their family legacy. The iPhone has done the same. It's extraordinary in that sense, within the history of photography. It's given photography to the people again and has become the next iteration of a movement democratizing how we record our lives.

Back to what makes me grab a shot — well, it's often doughnuts! It's funny...I always tell the kids and their friends that I've never met a doughnut I didn't want to photograph. So every time they get one, they're like, "Here you go," then roll their eyes. In particular, I'm drawn to the popular culture symbols of childhood: bubble gum, action figures, stickers, comics and TV. I also like documenting childhood ephemera, like drawings and funny notes. There are the pivotal things, of course, like firsts, but looking back, those smaller, seemingly insignificant things are always the most evocative.

I can see things appearing in my camera roll as kind of motifs. For example, I have a thing for clouds; I think they can just convey so many emotions. Whimsy, frustration,

melancholy... I love putting them with other images to underscore the emotion. They are like a visual, musical tone.

Lastly, colors: Colors are powerful, evocative and emotive. I'm in love with how they react next to each other, how they mix together, how they clash. I like the idea of my post-production being like I'm in some kind of lab with a lab coat and pipets, mixing colors. Studying colors is what has probably had the most profound aesthetic influence on me. Sometimes I think of myself as less of a photographer and more of an anthropologist, collecting childhood artifacts and mixing colors.



How do you approach the composition of your photographs, and what advice would you give others?

With composition, I do go very much on instinct. My advice is to just trust your eye; you'll know if something doesn't look right. The more you do this, the better you'll get. Try not to get too caught up in technical composition theory. Things like the rule of thirds are helpful, but if you worry about it too much, then the whole thing produces something more clinical.

Be aware of your background and the edges of your frame. If your background is really busy and there are distracting elements, it can detract from your subject. While you often don't have control over the action, you do have control over yourself. Can you move up, down or to a different angle so the background is different? Realize that it's your job to do the moving and that you can change your composition just by changing your position. It may seem obvious, but it's so easy to forget and become rooted to the spot.






When you are shooting, I always say to look for potential, not perfect. Trying to get a perfect shoot can freeze you up. You want to be in flow. Remember, even the most iconic photographers in the world say they have bad pictures on their camera roll. We are in a position now where we don't even need to worry about wasting film anymore, so take as many photos as you want. Experiment, that's how you will really learn!



Another tip is to avoid cropping too close to the subject while shooting and editing. It's always best to leave breathing room. Breathing room is as important in composing an image as punctuation is in a sentence. Like reading a long sentence with no commas, it can be claustrophobic. Remember that the person's eye is "reading" the image. The eye is traveling across the image and doesn't want to be hit with a full-stop-slap-bang after the action. Particularly, if your subject appears to be traveling in a certain direction, then you kind of need to leave somewhere for them to go. It's often called negative space and can allow us to process what we see. So don't be afraid of negative space.

One of my biggest tips in terms of making an image is to get into the habit of determining what I like to call your hero element. This is just a technique that works for me. The hero element makes you want to take the photo, the thing that evokes the sense that's drawing you to it. Maybe it's that thing you most want to say or for others to experience. It will impact how you compose the picture and help you decide how to edit it. The cool thing is that the hero can be anything and doesn't need to be a person. Your hero could be a color, a shape or a pattern. It could be a tear and how it's rolling down a cheek or the pattern the ruffles form in a blanket. It can be the humor in something.



How do you approach the use of light in your photos?

Light is almost everything; light can be so different and make you feel anything. Sublime, angry, sad, calm, hopeful... it really is the backbone of the image. It's the ultimate conductor of the emotion and the experience of looking.

I love harsh, shadowy beams or pools of light that you get during autumn and winter. I also love the opposite too, though. I love flat, moody light that mutes the colors. It kind of makes people look ethereal. It gives you the feel of an oil painting. I'm lucky to live by the sea as you get that a lot; it's that special

quality of light that's traditionally attracted painters. Funnily enough, a true lovely summer's day, the kind we all like to sit in, is the least inspiring light to me.

My other favorite type of light that I really can't resist is any colored, artificial light. For example, the glowing neon lights from shop signs and bus stops, and I love the colored lights from arcade games and the glare of the light from the TV. I always think the glow on people's faces from the light coming from their phones is kind of beautiful. I'm such a magpie for anything garish and tawdry, and I guess sort of cinematic. I find anything culturally lowbrow to be just beautiful and exotic.



Start with your home, as that will be a fairly consistent study of light. Just get used to how the light falls in different rooms at different times of the day, in different weather, in different seasons. In summer, does your back room always go to a golden orange as the sun sets? On an overcast morning, does the plant on your window seem to look like a painting? How does the different light play off and change colors? As you notice the light more, you'll see this little world open up.

You can gain so much knowledge and insight by studying the work of others. Not just photographers, but also look at painters; they are masters of understanding light. Turner is so inspiring for understanding light and color and how they interact. Look at cinema or theatre lighting. I used to work on film sets and wish I'd paid more attention to the sparks (the electricians), as they are just amazing at manipulating light. They can throw up certain lights, flags and gels in such a way that, in 20 minutes, they can have an old airline hanger

in Crawley look like a summer evening in Provence!

A practical tip is to use natural light as much as possible and avoid flash. If you want to take a shot, but it's too dark, try and get your subject into some natural light, or if that's not possible, utilize the available light you have. Maybe that's a lamp or a torch; maybe it's your car's interior light or the light from an iPad. Make a feature of it in the image.

One of my favorite places to find light is in an urban setting on a bright, sunny day, as all the obstructions of the urban environment create pools of light. The buildings and road signs and so on carve into the bright sun and etch out shapes and geometric patterns. This interacts with the people and objects around it in beautiful and surprising ways. Consider the light as its own character in the image; it's always the star, really, and the subject is the supporting artist.

What apps do you use to shoot and how do you approach the editing of your photos?

Yes, I definitely have a distinct process that has developed over time. I've played around for years with all sorts of apps, but in the last five years, I have settled on a few regulars.

My process is always to go through Snapseed first. There are some features it has that are just game-changers. I wouldn't want to be without Lens Blur, Selective, Perspective and Details. I like to think of Snapseed as how a chef would think of their mise en place. It's where you prepare all your ingredients before the creative assembly part of the process.

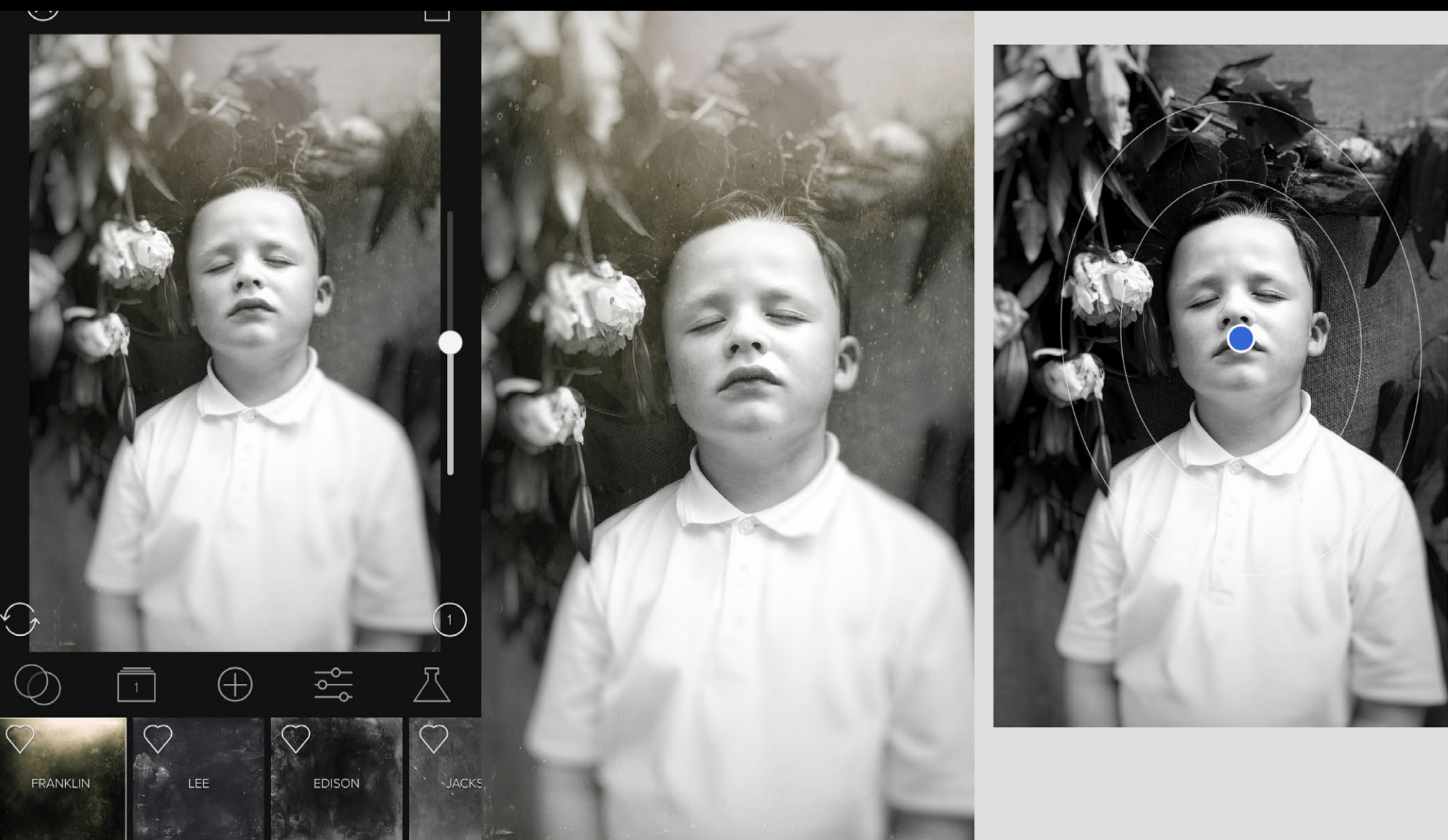
I never considered myself a post-production person before; I didn't get excited about Photoshop. But now, it really is an integral part of the process for me. It would be like being a cake maker and not icing anything to not edit. Editing is a way of expressing a personality. I don't think my images would look quite like me without it.



For color, I use Mextures, Stackables, Afterlight and Lens Distortions. All of these apps are brilliant for learning about color. Through experimenting with these apps, I've understood how all the subtle tones that each color can have within it can change the feel of a scene.

The final stage of my edit may be adding texture, for which I always use Mextures. My go-to for the texture is Mextures Emulsion. I also can't forget Diptic. I use this app every day.

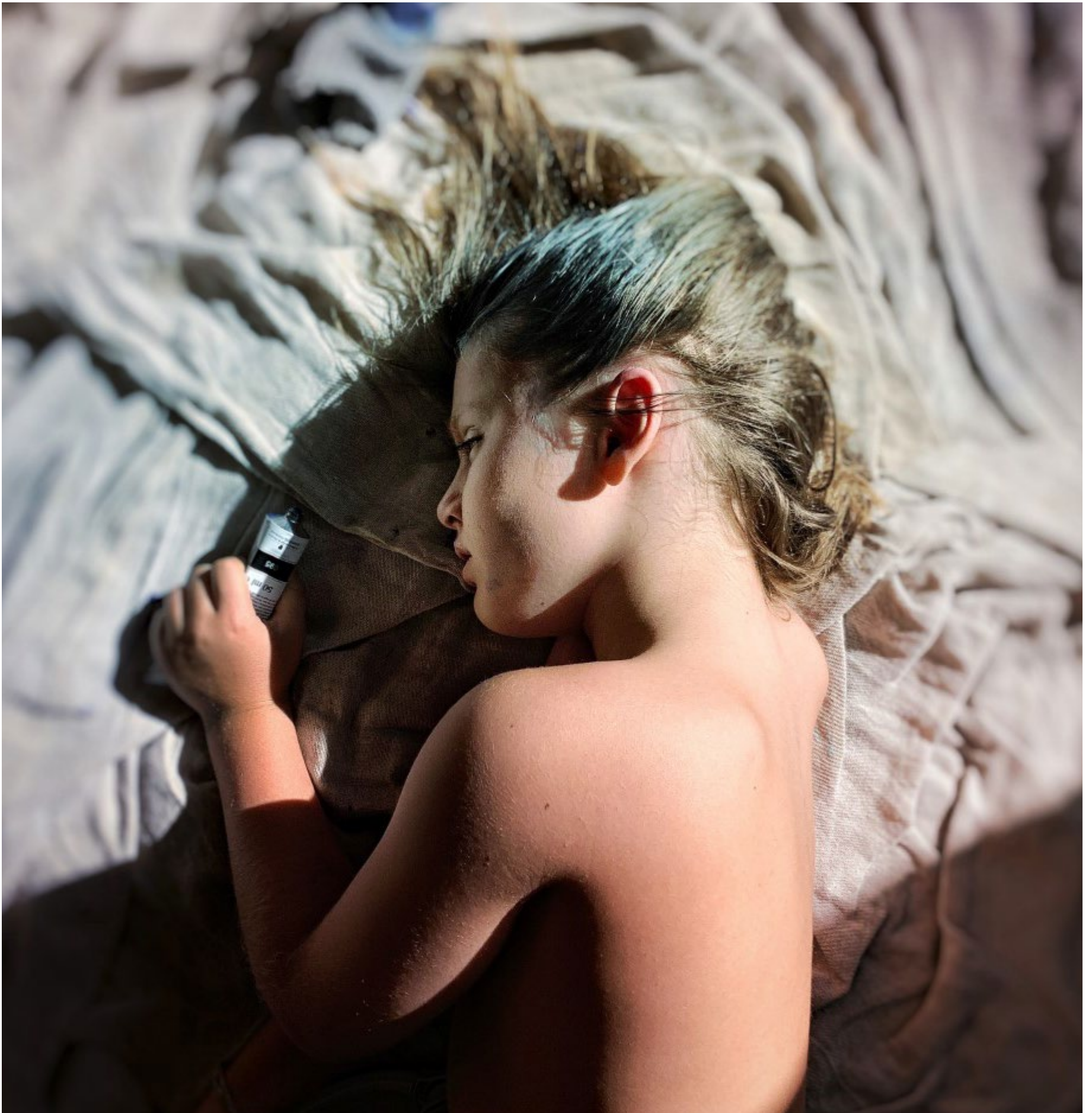
The Stackables app is close to my heart. It was the first app that really inspired me color-wise. Stackable presets are more painterly, textured and ethereal. Sadly, it doesn't exist anymore. Luckily for me, I still have it, but I guess you'd call it vintage now!



When I do use black and white, I use the Carbon app. I totally consider it a color. From an artist's point of view, black is a color, as black is the presence of all colors. A different tone of black and gray can give a completely different feel and evoke something quite different from another.

While editing, I make many variations of the edit for an image. It's an essential part of the process now. Some may think it's overly time-consuming, which it probably is, but it works best for me. I put the image through many filters, edit variations, and save each one. By the end, I can have up to 10 or more variations of the image on my camera roll! I then leave a little time and go back and look

at them all together as a contact sheet. This gives me perspective, and I can then easily decide what is the right feel for that image. Otherwise, I find your eye and mind get fuzzy, and you can't really see them anymore — like how you can only smell a few perfumes simultaneously before they blur into one smell.



You seem to have a few photographic projects on the go. Tell me about your childhood project.

Yes, I always have too many ideas and not enough time! My childhood project is called Hot Dust and the Myth of Being a Man. My ultimate wish for this is to create a kind of collection or a typology of boys' experiences. A window into boy culture.

In the UK, consistently since the 1950s, three-quarters of suicides have been male. As a mother of two boys, I want to investigate "boy culture." The project intends to consider whether the archetypes we feed boys, the unwavering, the silent, the strong, the superhero, are as stifling as the princess. Do these representations contribute to

the mental health crisis that men face? Investigating the traditions, compulsions and ideologies of boyhood and how they figure in the journey to becoming a man... How we can move forward from a lot of those outdated gender archetypes and find a more eclectic idea of what it means to be a boy?

Anyway, it's a big topic, and along with the portraits and images of their lives, I'd like to record some interviews with them about what they think it's like to be a boy in their community. I'm interested in the tribal nature of boyhood, in the definition of "relating to a group or community with similar ancestors, customs and traditions." I'm curious to explore and represent the traditions, the uniforms, the rituals and the ceremonies of modern boyhood.



I'd like to collect examples from all sorts of different experiences. Different communities, religions, lifestyles and sub-cultures. For example, boys from, say, the Hasidic Jewish community to boys who've had to live in shelters. Boys who live in army barracks, those who are into Dungeons and Dragons, and so on. Ideally, this could be expanded to be a comprehensive look at the experiences of boys around the world. I am really interested in looking at how boyhood has been portrayed through history in things like Lord of the Flies, Dennis the Menace, Huckleberry Finn and The Boy's Own Paper, which was from the 1800s to the 1960s. I guess it's more of an anthropological study, really.

I love popular culture, so I'd include that in this project. The food, the clothes, playing with sticks and guns, and the media consumption of modern-day boys. I love to capture the simple, seemingly ordinary things that become the fabric of our childhood. And while they are seen as unimportant, trivial things, they can really shape our childhood experience. Things like cereal, comics, fast food, sweets, fashion, toys and TV shows. The infra-ordinary. I'm just so interested in childhood as a state, as a little transient world with its rituals, ceremonies and rites of passage.

Tell me about your school's project.

I completed a pilot for a school project years ago. It was called 'GROW - The Alternative School Photo', and we have since changed it to 'The Unique School Portrait'.

I just didn't understand why the school photo hadn't changed over the years, and it was still so, well, boring and uninspired. Other parents at my kids' school always complained that the photos were terrible. Either the kids weren't smiling, or if they were, they looked really awkward. It just seemed like a soulless, factory-like process and showed in the results that it had no creative heart.

I just really wanted to make something that showed the spirit of the individual child, something that really looked like your kid. Though I have to say, some people love the traditional photo, and that's great. There's something nostalgic and kitsch about them. I just felt there was room for an alternative as well.

Basically, I was attempting to marry bespoke portraiture with a factory-style process. I needed to find where those two things could happily meet. The current school photo system is really just a hangover from the pre-1900s, when the everyday person didn't have a camera they could use. The school used the images as identification for school records and, at the same time, sold them to parents to raise school funds. This is roughly how the model still works today. I liked the idea of disrupting an industry that hadn't changed since its inception and could do with a shake-up.

The goal was to try and see if the whole concept would work. I felt like it was possible, and I loved the entrepreneurial process. Ultimately, life got in the way as it tends to do, and other things had to take priority. Then, after some time passed, I joined up with a brilliant mom, Hannah, who became my co-founder, to try to take two. Then COVID happened, and it went on the back burner again! It's still on the table, though, and close to my heart, so it will be something I hope to revisit in the future.

Out of the school project came a spinoff idea: to take the school photo concept to the most alternative schools around the world. Starting in the UK, where one of the most remote schools is in Scoraig in the Scottish Highlands, I



wanted to document the education experience in its many forms in different countries, cultures and communities. My eldest came out of mainstream school in year seven and now does a combination of homeschool and college. So I also became personally interested and invested in the idea of a broader conversation about education and what "alternative" means.

There's so much to explore in terms of what education looks like and means in different places. In Nigeria, they have schools on riverboats; in India, there are schools under railway tracks. There is still a school for witches in the U.S. There are still radio schools in the outback of Australia, and schools run on abandoned buses in Iraq. I know exactly how it would look and how I'd execute the project; I just need to get there!



Tell me about some of the other projects that you are working on.

The main thing I'm working on right now is a book that's starting off in the form of a course or a selection of courses. The courses are in collaboration with a company called Retail Spark that I would describe as a one-stop shop for independent retailers. It's an awesome idea and supports retailers with the many things involved with running a business or brick-and-mortar shop. They mentor on everything from the legal aspects to understanding your accounts and marketing.

Jason Haywood, the CEO, realized there was a gap in the knowledge base of some of these retailers. That gap was content creation and social media marketing. The idea is that while you may have a wonderful business or service, if your online imagery is not up to scratch, then your business won't get the traction it deserves. It costs business owners lots of time and money outsourcing their photography. Ultimately, you want fresh, good-quality content daily to compete in

the marketplace. This can be a tall order for businesses with a lot on their plate and who are time-poor. Creating images and being active on social media has become essential to managing your business.

As we all know, as consumers, the commerce landscape has changed with the internet and social media. This was ramped up even further by COVID to a point where sales predominantly happen online. Even if you are a service, a large portion of your business might be coming from social media traffic.

People will either upload poor content or just not realize the relevance of how social media imagery connects you to customers. Or, they will buy expensive DSLR cameras, lights and so on and then feel overwhelmed with the time it takes to learn how to use it. What we are saying is that it's not about training people to become photographers. It's about empowering them with skills. Skills that enable them to take their imagery and branding into their own hands in a way that will enhance and support their primary skillset.

With as little as £30 to invest in accessories/props plus the phone they already have, I can show them how to turn their brand's imagery around. Not just the mechanics of how to take the pictures on their phone, but how to compose them and find their brand's image style. I'll also cover practical necessities like managing their Instagram feed, creating a home/office studio and building up their own image library and templates.

Really, it's about understanding that you're selling a story rather than a product. People don't buy things so much as they buy feelings. They buy something based on how it might make them feel. Photography can really be your vehicle in communicating that. So I'm showing them how to tell their story in pictures.

I know that even people who say they are not creative are creative and can do it. I want to leave them in a place by the end where they know their style and can edit and shoot for it. I want them to feel confident and enjoy it.


What is the greatest lesson you've learned on your photographic journey?

Well, I'd say one of the greatest lessons I've learned is that it is really not about what camera you use at all. There's a lot of emphasis on the camera, but it's not about that for me. I don't think the hardware you use matters. I've found it's about learning how to actually see what you're looking at.

In photography circles, it would have been and still is seen as quite lowbrow for you not to have a "proper" camera and be shooting on a phone. I like trying to subvert that. Can you take something populist and ordinary and create something high-end with it? I just don't believe creation is based on the equipment you have. I believe we can all be creators. If you are an artist, you can still be an artist whether you use oils or ceramics or collage. I think that should be true for photography too.

I think what we all want when we look at art, listen to music or watch dance is all the same: We want to connect. To evoke empathy and to feel something that someone else feels too. To be seen. That's what all art is about for me. I mean, marketing is one of the biggest and most influential forms of applied art we all consume daily. Marketing is just art overlapping with commerce, and when it's at its most successful, it uses empathy to connect us.

"...I know that even people who say they are not creative are creative and can do it...."



If you can make someone feel something, some connection, with your work, whatever that may be, that's a success to me.

Other than that, the most important thing I've learned is that you've got to one day decide to be absolutely yourself and nobody else. It's really a lesson for life that's been a long time coming for me and that photography has helped me learn. That your path is not necessarily going to look like someone else's. Like life, creativity — however that may look for you — is not a path you forge by following a formula or a set of rules that have come before you. It's about trying to express yourself regardless of the current status quo.

It's so easy to live life asleep, rushing from one thing to the next, looking to society to show you what you should and shouldn't be. As Mr. Ferris Bueller once said, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." Photography has been my reason to look around and stay awake!

Follow Juliet Cope

Instagram: [@howtogrowaboy](https://www.instagram.com/howtogrowaboy)

Website: www.howtogrowaboy.com

The Story Behind My Favorite Photos...



Photo #1

I particularly love catching kids when they are deep in thought and far off wonder. This is why I chose this first image in the sea. What are they thinking about? Kids, understand the power of creation. They are the ultimate creators. They are not afraid to dream up whole worlds and live another life in their imaginations. They appreciate the space between things too. We live by the sea and every summer we spend most of it with friends on this little patch of the beach that has a long fishing groin going into the sea. All the kids spend hours jumping off this groin. Casper had longed to join the jump but had always been too nervous as it can be pretty high when the tide goes out. This was taken after he was coming back from his first time jumping off with the other kids.

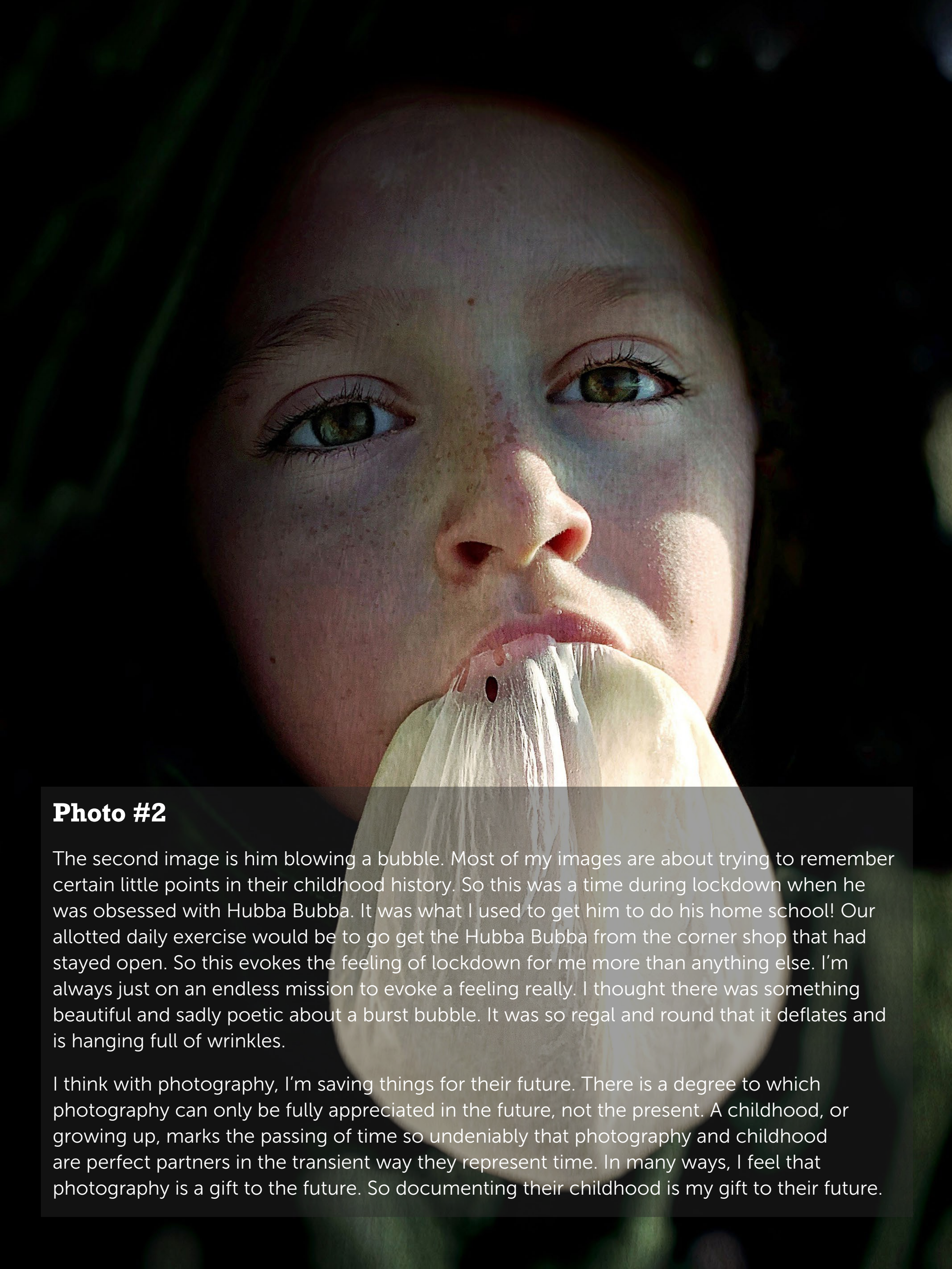


Photo #2

The second image is him blowing a bubble. Most of my images are about trying to remember certain little points in their childhood history. So this was a time during lockdown when he was obsessed with Hubba Bubba. It was what I used to get him to do his home school! Our allotted daily exercise would be to go get the Hubba Bubba from the corner shop that had stayed open. So this evokes the feeling of lockdown for me more than anything else. I'm always just on an endless mission to evoke a feeling really. I thought there was something beautiful and sadly poetic about a burst bubble. It was so regal and round that it deflates and is hanging full of wrinkles.

I think with photography, I'm saving things for their future. There is a degree to which photography can only be fully appreciated in the future, not the present. A childhood, or growing up, marks the passing of time so undeniably that photography and childhood are perfect partners in the transient way they represent time. In many ways, I feel that photography is a gift to the future. So documenting their childhood is my gift to their future.



Photo #3

In the third image, I basically found him making cardboard cigarettes and lighting the end, pretending to smoke. One challenge was the moral debate I had about showing an image like this. I just took it without thinking as it's my instinct now to record all these parts of their childhood. But while I was editing it, I thought a lot about what the image was trying to say. Was the intention just to be shocking, or was it just an accurate representation of the moment. I think part of childhood is very much discovering the world around you. Where you fit in, trying things on, emulating those strange things you see grown-ups do! I think role-playing these things that seem adult and forbidden is a natural part of growing up and something that a lot of us remember doing as kids. I'm interested in recording those rites of passage.

NORWAY TIME-LAPSE SHOT ON A PHONE

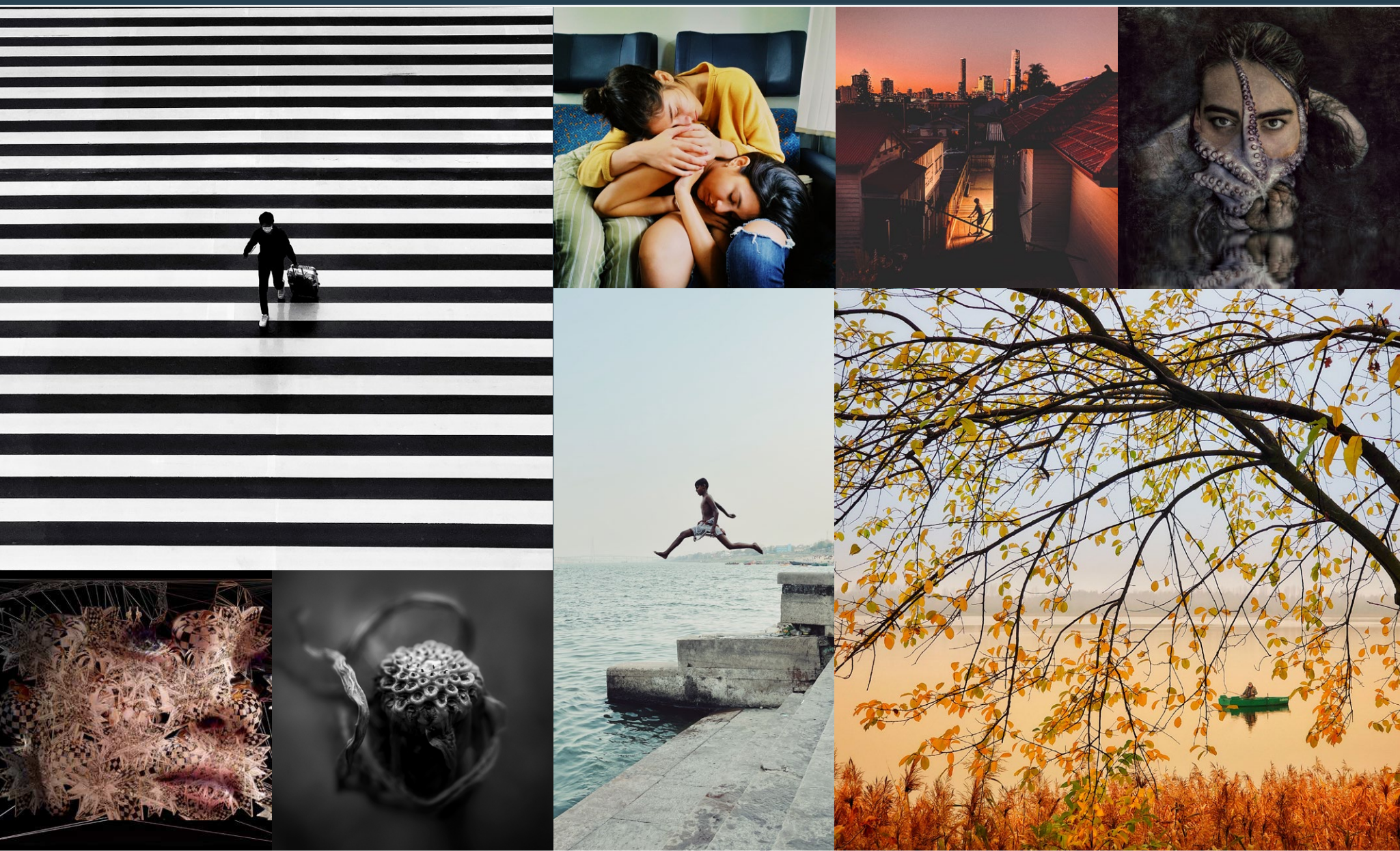
Video Placeholder
Internet Connection Required

Smartphone manufacturers have been coming out with some really bold claims lately. "Shoot like a pro", "DSLR like quality" are some of the claims we have seen. Time-lapse photographer Morten Rustad wanted to test out how good these cameras really are today.

Morten went out on a road trip around Western Norway to really push his smartphone to the limit. What do you think of the result?

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Following on from the success of last year's event, The Mobiography Awards has returned and is now open for submissions.

The Mobiography Awards is an international mobile photography competition that showcases the best smartphone photography from around the world.

CATEGORIES THIS YEAR INCLUDE:

Abstract & Digital Art

Architecture & the Urban Environment

Black & White

Family & Home Life

Landscape & Nature

People & Portraits

Travel/A Sense of Place

Street Photography

During the open call period we will be presenting a series of online workshops designed to offer added value to the international mobile photography community.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: SUNDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER 2022

**A QUICK REMINDER OF SOME OF THE
WINNERS & HONOURABLE MENTIONS
FROM 2021**



HOW TO TAKE GREAT PHOTOS AT THE BEACH

By Mark Myerson

Over the next couple of months, many of us will be packing our bags and heading to a destination near the sea. The combination of dazzling sunshine and soft sand provides the perfect environment for relaxation.

But that's not all. The coast offers an ever-changing color palette, a unique collection of wildlife and endless opportunities for people-watching. What more could a mobile photographer ask for?

To help you make the most of your travels this summer, we've put together a comprehensive guide to coastal photography.

Coastal Landscapes



For hundreds of years, artists of all varieties have been drawn to the coast. Where land meets the sea, the light is bright and the colors are vivid. It's only natural that you might want to capture what you see.

This instinct is so strong that pretty much everyone temporarily turns into a mobigrapher when they first arrive at a beautiful beach. Snap, snap, snap — the generic sun-and-sand holiday pics are quickly saved to our camera rolls.

However, many more interesting shots can be taken with a little more care and attention.

Some photographers specialize in capturing art deco-inspired scenes where perfect cloudless skies meet the darker ocean blue. In this case, shooting during the middle of the day is perfectly fine. In fact, the harsh sunlight can actually accentuate those blocks of intense color.

Other photographers prefer to wait until the clouds roll over and the waves get bigger. This style of photography is usually better suited to the morning and evenings, where the shadows are longer and the angled sunlight enhances texture.

Photo by @harnaka_harto

Whichever style you choose, the art of framing is so important. Apart from very secluded coves, the majority of beaches are dotted with human-made distractions. If you want to offer a true taste of the natural environment, be sure to line up your shots to avoid signs, litter, life buoys and other beach furniture.

We would also highly recommend taking a tripod with you — even if it's a mini one. This gives you the opportunity to experiment with longer exposures. Open the shutter for more than a few seconds and the sea will turn into a mysterious mist.



Exploring Aquatic Nature

When surrounded by sunbathers, it's easy to forget that the coastline is home to many other species. But look carefully and you will find signs of nature in even the most crowded resort.

Some of these non-human residents are more obvious than others. Seagulls are an ever-present threat for anyone nursing a dripping ice cream or a box containing fish and chips. Shells in the sand come in a million different shapes and colors, and seaweed often forms green patterns along the shore.

Capturing these specimens might seem like a challenging task for mobile photographers, but it's far from impossible. Bold birds will walk right up to your feet if you stay still, and getting down low will allow you to capture various crustaceans at close range.

Bear in mind that capturing coastal wildlife doesn't necessarily restrict you to the natural history genre. Returning to the idea of long exposures, seaweed drifting in the waves can create stunning abstract patterns. Shooting directly down through the shallows allows you to frame minnows, shells and pebbles as seen through a dreamy covering of water.

In some coastal locations, you may be lucky enough to encounter some rock pools. This is where the fun really starts.

Look closely, and you can find crabs, small fish, shrimp, starfish and many other fascinating creatures in the crevices.

Move your phone down to the water surface very slowly, and you should be able to capture them all at close range. If necessary, use a manual camera app to nail focus.

Avoid using flash or putting your phone in the water; the former will ruin your photos, and the latter will scare the rockpool residents.

For a splash of color, try framing some sea anemones. These brightly colored creatures look like aquatic plants but are actually related to jellyfish. If you can find a dense cluster, be sure to frame them to collect some eye-catching images.



Seafront Street Photography

Of course, it wouldn't be a beach resort without a whole lot of visitors. And any one of those people could make the focal point for your next great photo.

The beach is an excellent place to practice street photography. There are many fun and interesting moments to capture, and the crowd

makes it easier to go unnoticed as a photographer.

Try taking a seat near a busy spot and look for interactions between members of the same group. You may see laughter as ice creams turn to liquid in the baking sun or sour faces when a holiday romance goes wrong.

Many holiday resorts also provide a unique environment for photographers in the architecture and documentary niches. The crossing rails of a rollercoaster against a sunset make for an iconic image; so does the shabby fascia of seaside attractions that have been neglected for far too long.

The key here is to train your vision. Rather than seeing from the perspective of a holidaymaker, adopt the mindset of an inquisitive artist. If you take the time to look carefully, there are shots to be found everywhere.



Just a quiet word of caution: We wouldn't recommend pointing your lens in the direction of any scantily-clad tourists. And if you're in a foreign country, make sure you check the law on photographing people in public.



A Very Creative Holiday

Many people are happy to spend an entire fortnight building up their tan by the pool while using as little energy as possible. For creative minds, however, all that lying around might get a little monotonous.

This summer, try fitting a little photography into each day of your holiday or vacation.

Instead of coming home with souvenirs and some underwhelming snaps, you might just bring back an award-winning image!



27 BEST BEACH PHOTOGRAPHY IDEAS EASY TO TRY

Video Placeholder
Internet Connection Required

In this video YouTube Kanbokeh, shows us 27 creative ways you can use props to take imaginative photos on the beach.



🔍 photography

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PHOTOGRAPHER'S GUIDE TO USING INSTAGRAM REELS: PART 1

By Lindsay Pietroluongo

If you've ever used TikTok, you're already familiar with the concept of Reels. Not a TikTok adopter? Don't worry – welcome to Reels 101.

There are some big changes going on with Instagram in relation to their algorithm and the feed layout. Instagram is currently in the process of testing these changes out on a sample of users, so how the changes are implemented remains to be seen. Even though, you can bet your bottom dollar the changes are on their way. Even if you're a total Reels newbie, it pays to understand how they work and how they're displayed and interacted with, both now and potentially in the future.

What Are Reels?

Reels are firstly, vertical videos that can be up to one minute long. They are made up of single or multiple video clips and/or images plus they can include audio and visual effects. Just like other Instagram content, you can tag accounts and add captions. You can also pick a cover to choose the frame that will be on display before the video plays. You can see examples of Reels on [Instagram's own profile here](#).

How Do Reels Work?

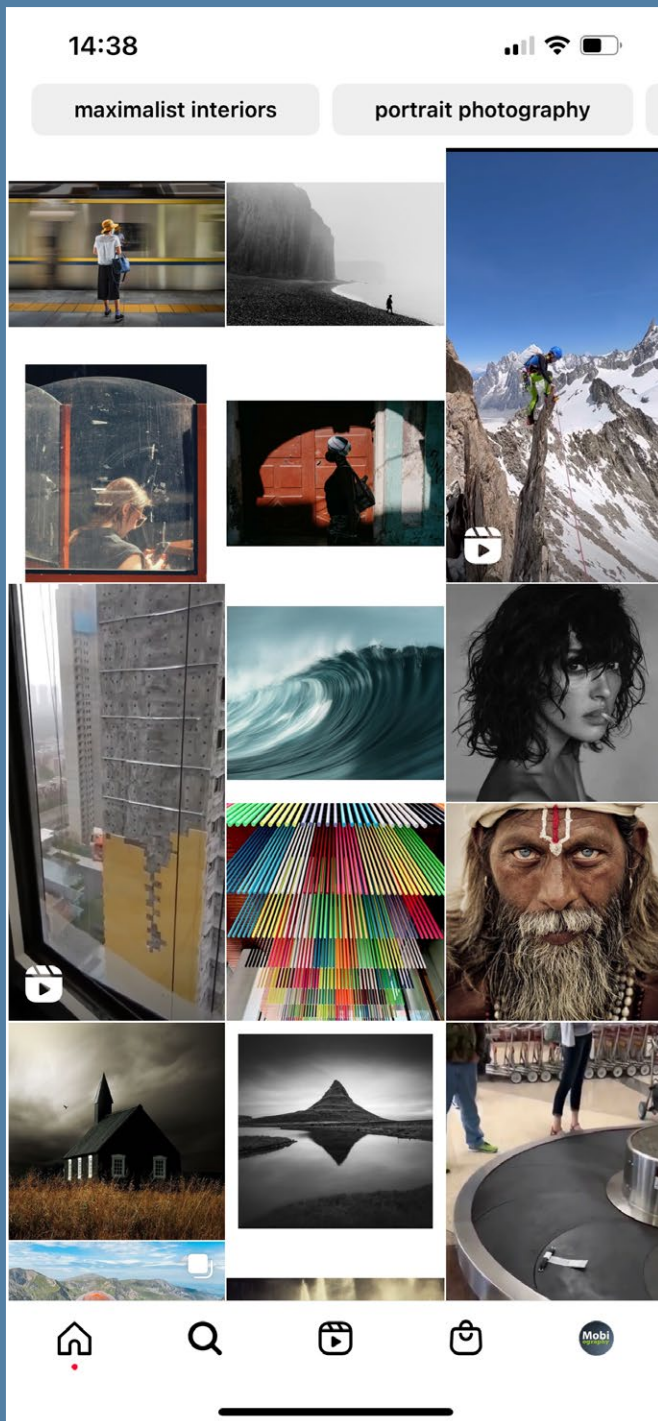
Reels are created by splicing together content and effects (both visual and audio), but you can also create a Reel from just one clip or photo, too. You shouldn't create a Reel that features one photo and nothing else, though – more on that in a moment.

If you use original audio (i.e. audio you create instead of audio you use from something else), others will be able to save it and use it for their own content, too. Sometimes, audio has the potential to go viral, spurring a ton of videos inspired by the first or by something another creator made with it.

If you have a public Instagram account – and if you're promoting your photography work, then your account should be public – anyone can find and see your Reels. Some Reels get chosen to be featured in the Explore tab as well, which as you can imagine, can do wonders for your audience growth.

But Why are Reels Becoming Such a Thing Now?

As with any and every social platform, Instagram loves to change things up. In May of this year, an [announcement](#) about its Visual Refresh initiative was posted to the blog. This is part of a rollout that also includes redesigned brand elements, but for our purposes, we're going to focus on what it means for Reels. And note that right now, this is in a testing phase – it's not permanent (yet), and only some accounts have access to the changes.



Most importantly, as part of both the new algorithm and design, Reels have priority in the home feed. Also, a lot of the home feed is made up of recommendations, not just content from those you're following. This is good news for photographers for two reasons. First, Reels grab attention and get a high amount of engagement. Second, you'll be able to reach people who aren't connected to your account yet.

But what is the new layout, exactly? As you scroll your home feed, instead of seeing the next post before the one you're on is completely off the screen, some photos and videos – including Reels – will take up the entire screen. Put another way, the content is longer, reaching from top to bottom of your phone screen. You can see an example [in this video by Adam Mosseri](#), the Head of Instagram.

Instagram says that the new layout is "content-forward and celebrates creativity, simplicity and self-expression." The point is to eliminate fuss and immerse the viewer in the content. And while the slim, vertical format of Reels can pose a problem for photographers, figuring out how to work with it is beneficial – Reels tend to get better engagement than photos, so they can help draw attention to your work.



▶ 52



▶ 154



▶ 443



▶ 705



▶ 896



▶ 1,711



How Can Photographers Use Reels Effectively?

Professional photographers should go beyond the typical TikTok-style video. Dance crazes and lip-syncing challenges are fun to watch, but they don't lend themselves to photography and there are more thoughtful ways to promote your work.

First, don't just use Reels as another place to post a single image — it's not going to attract attention. Short-form video content is what people go to Reels for, not stills. The only exception is if you want to interlace your images with video clips. You could string several images together to create a slideshow, but even then, you'll want to creatively use audio and effects to make it pop.



Here are a few Instagram Reels ideas for photographers:

- Take a video of the location where you are shooting your photos, then include them as part of the Reel.
- Briefly review the gear or software you use.
- Include a timelapse video showing a location and how it changes over a long period of time.
- Reveal part of your process, like instructing a model to pose, setting up a still life shot or editing an image.
- Share a video testimonial from a client.
- Show the before and after versions of a raw image versus the edited version.
- Tell the story behind your latest photo.

Most importantly, interact with the people who engage with your content. Reels give your audience a front-row seat to a lesser-seen part of your life, which will make them feel connected to you. That authenticity motivates viewers to leave comments. If you want to build relationships, it's important to respond. Take the time to compose responses that go beyond a quick "thanks," too.

Are Reels Worth It?

There's not a straightforward answer to this, mainly because results can be mixed even if you're diligent about regularly posting Reels.

On the plus side, Reels are super popular. According to Google Trends, it's the Instagram feature that's seen the most growth over the past year. People love them, especially those who used TikTok and either still do or switched over to Reels because of TikTok's ongoing drama.

Also, you're probably going to see some uptick in your stats if you use Reels. [This photographer posted a Reel every day for a month](#) and he got 10x the followers as the month before, along with 4,000% more reach and 3,000% more engagement.

In reality, though, those numbers don't translate to massive overnight success or an Instagram account that skyrockets in popularity and stays there. Basically, some Reels perform really well and rake in a lot of attention, but most of the time, barring a sensation, that won't make you a household name.

When it comes to performance, Reels are unpredictable. Some will do well, others won't, and you may be surprised at which ones fall into each category. Should you make Reels your only marketing strategy? No. But if you're on Instagram already or you want to be, you should absolutely incorporate Reels into the content you post, because it's the platform's most popular feature. At the moment, Instagram is more of a video-sharing platform than the photo-sharing one it used to be, and if you can't beat 'em...

Lastly, don't worry about the fact that Instagram changes its algorithm so often. Work with what's available and popular now to build your audience. Even if something should shift in the future, you'll have a dedicated group of people who will always care about what you post.

PHOTOGRAPHY ON INSTAGRAM IS CHANGING!! (GOOD OR BAD?)

Video Placeholder
Internet Connection Required

Instagram have announced an update to change the aspect ratio or crop of the images to 9x16 instead of 4x5. How will this affect photographers?



BELFAST STREET LIFE WITH MAL MCCANN

By Andy Butler

SUMMER HAZE
DISCO DAZE

Mal McCann is from Belfast and has been working as a professional photographer since 1994. Over the years, he's worked for various local newspapers before joining the Irish News in 2006, where he is currently a staff photographer. When he's not documenting street life, he can be found roaming the Belfast Hills or the Mourne Mountains with his iPhone.

Mal has won several regional and national photographic awards, most recently Northern Ireland Press Photographer of the Year in 2018 and Regional Press Social Journalist of the Year in 2018, as well as awards for his iPhone photography work.

I met Mal earlier this year at the MojoFest conference in London and joined him on some of the photo walks. I've always been impressed by the consistently high standard of Mal's photography, and I was keen to find out more about Mal's photographic journey.

In this interview, Mal talks about his early career as a press photographer in Belfast and his introduction to iPhone photography, his approach to using composition and how life in Belfast has shaped his approach to photography.

Could you tell us a bit about your photographic journey and how, as a professional press photographer, you discovered iPhone photography?

I wasn't very academic in school and couldn't wait to get out of it. I left secondary school in 1987 without doing any exams. The only subject I was really interested in was art. I didn't have the drive or motivation to do anything worthwhile. Belfast was awash with photojournalists when I was growing up, and I suppose I was always intrigued by the profession.

It wasn't until the early 1990s that I got interested in photography, and so it was then that I went back to school and completed an O level in photography. I then followed it with an A-level qualification.



Belfast back then was a different place, with regular protest marches and civil unrest, so there was no shortage of things to photograph. However, you really had to put yourself out there in some dangerous situations, so as a very shy person, this is where I gained my confidence.

Looking back, I didn't really know what I was doing. I have the negatives to prove it. There were many bad exposures and poorly developed films, but I was able to salvage some images. I was starting to get some photos in the local papers, which is usually the starting point for most photographers.

The Andersonstown News group was a popular local paper and was starting to launch editions in different parts of the city, and that is where I got my first break working as a freelancer and then in a full-time post.

“...you really had to put yourself out there in some dangerous situations, so as a very shy person, this is where I gained my confidence...”

This led me to take on a job with the newly launched Daily Ireland in 2005, and because of this experience, I was able to apply for a job with the Irish News in 2006, where I'm currently employed.

I didn't get into smartphone photography

until around 2015, starting with family snaps and then some rural landscape shots. I was going on holiday to the U.S. and decided to leave my camera behind and just use my iPhone 5c. While on holiday, I would shoot several shots every day and post one to social media that evening with the hashtag #attheendoftheday. It was really after that when I started to take it more seriously.



Is there any scope for you to use the iPhone in your press photography work, and if so, how have people's attitudes changed regarding the use of iPhone photos in the press over the years?

I believe there is more scope for smartphone photography to be used in the media nowadays. It seems to be quite common now.

For example, when an incident occurs, the first photos taken will more than likely be by civilian bystanders with a smartphone. It doesn't matter about the quality - the first

photo is the first photo, so clever designers will make it work.

A phone is less intimidating and can put the subject at ease. The evolution of mobile phones and apps has meant that I now use them in my daily work, whether for our digital platform, the newspaper or social media. I think a lot of media sources are embracing smartphone photography and mobile journalism more these days.

With many media outlets becoming online first, it makes sense to get your content quickly and from a single device that almost everyone has with them. It's more than just a phone with a camera; it's a whole studio suite in your pocket.

What is it about the smartphone that inspires you so and what compels you to raise the camera and grab a shot?

For me, a smartphone is a camera. I take more photos on it than I make phone calls. I rarely plan photographs. I go for a walk and document what I can on that journey. I try to tell a story with my photos as each journey has a start, middle and end. I treat photo walks as a kind of therapy; mental well-being is an important part of what I do - helping others to feel better through being more creative.

I'm constantly inspired when I see photographs created by the global smartphone photographic community. I don't think I can be pigeonholed into a specific photographic genre. I like to capture all sorts of images. For me, it's about documentation and preserving a moment in time. I couldn't walk down a street without taking a photograph. I'm always looking out for anything odd, should it be a piece of graffiti or street art or an interesting-looking character.





Tell me a bit about your approach to the composition of your photographs?

Photography is subjective, and on my photo walks, I tell people to please themselves first and let the viewer interpret how they want. When photographing a subject - whether it's a person, architecture or a landscape - it's all about self-expression, how you see and feel about things, and putting your own stamp on the image you've created. As long as you follow these elements - composition, light, and subject - you should produce a visually pleasing result.

Sometimes a scene will have some elements, but you might have to wait until they all come together. When photographing architecture, I say don't be consumed by the whole building; try and take it bit by bit, look for the small details — deconstruct it, look for the angles, the form, the light, and be aware of distractions and cut them out. Try and do as much of the work in-camera. Be confident in what you are doing, and it will show in your work.

And what about your approach to using light?

Light is everything in photography. It can change the most mundane of scenes into a dramatic image. I will always look to see how the light falls on the subject. It can change in a split second, so sometimes you need to be quick. Even in bad weather, the light can be your friend, such as using backlit scenes to your advantage and creating striking silhouettes.

What apps do you use to shoot and edit your photos, and what is your post-production editing process like?

I suffer from TMA (too many apps)! I have all the usual apps for shooting and editing, but I only occasionally use them. I mostly shoot with the native camera and edit in Snapseed or the native app.

I like Snapseed because it's easy to use, intuitive and free. I'm able to teach others to use it in my workshops. Snapseed takes a bit of practice, but once you've found your way around the interface, it's pretty easy to use. There are lots of menus and options, but you only need to use a few to get great results. There are some gimmicky settings, but I tend to stay away from them.

I usually start with the ambiance, then maybe rotate/perspective and contrast. It has a set of looks and preset filters that I might occasionally use, like the black and white set.

I went through a phase of using Firstlight and especially liked their redscale film simulation. I've been looking at the Reeflex app recently. It's one of those all-in-one apps and is getting great reviews. Camera+ 2 is similar.

Because most of my photography is taken on the go, I don't have time to fumble about with third-party apps and accessories. I would prefer it if Apple included more options in the native app so that you don't have to leave the app to edit in a third-party app.



Tell me a bit about the city of Belfast, the people and the types of photographic opportunities that the city offers?

Belfast is a vibrant city and very popular with tourists these days, making it a very easy city to photograph, as the locals are well used to people with cameras.

The Titanic Quarter and the Maritime Mile are great places with ample photography opportunities; also, the Cathedral Quarter has an old-town feel about it. Belfast is surrounded by hills that are easily accessible

and provide stunning views of the city below. I'm a keen walker, so I particularly like to use the Belfast Hills a lot for my photography.

There are a number of popular tourist trails and iconic architecture ranging from Georgian/Victorian through to modernist buildings, and there are numerous historical sites to visit.

The city center where I work has many characters and street art. Like most cities, it has its problems, so just treat it like you would anywhere. Starting at City Hall, you could go in any direction, north, east, south or west, and you will not be disappointed.





Tell me a bit about some of the teaching projects you have been working on with different groups of people in the city?

I do a lot of workshops and photo walks in Belfast, working with a broad range of people, from teenagers to pensioners. Recently, I've been doing some interesting projects with asylum seekers and refugees, documenting and identifying areas of the city that could be used as housing for all. I enjoy working with young people and various youth and

school groups, giving them the basic skills to be more confident using their smartphone cameras.

I'm finding people are responding very positively to smartphone photography, judging by the comments on my social media accounts. I recently worked with young people on various projects in disadvantaged areas of the city, which was really enjoyable. Most people have a smartphone, so no extra equipment is needed to make it accessible to all.





Do you have any incredible encounters or stories that are part of your photographic journey that you would like to tell us?

In the 1990s, the political landscape was changing. There were many seminal moments in the run-up to the signing of the historic Good Friday Agreement, and having a young family at the time, I was hopeful that the future would be a better place for my children. I am proud to say I was there.

Everyone always asks, "Have you photographed anyone famous?" and the answer is yes, but it's the ordinary everyday person and situation that I can relate to.

40

SAATCHI & SAATCHI





Are there any photographers who have been a big influence or inspiration to you?

Brendan Murphy, the former picture editor at the Irish News, was a big inspiration who not only played a pivotal role in my photographic journey but many others whom he shepherded through the years. I love his candid style and approach to photography.

There are lots of great smartphone photographers I follow on social media. It was great to meet some of them recently at the MoJoFest conference in London and do some photo walks with them.

I love the street photography work of Mark Fearnley, especially his stunning black and

white urban shots. Jack Hollingsworth has to be admired for giving up on his traditional DSLR to champion the iPhone, taking over a million iPhone photos in 10 years. Irish photographer Brendan Ó Sé creates great abstract and colorful images from Ireland and around the world, and he's not afraid to experiment with different styles.

Follow Mal McCann

Instagram: [@malmccann](https://www.instagram.com/malmccann)

Twitter: [@malmccann](https://twitter.com/malmccann)

The Story Behind My Favorite Photos...



It's hard to choose favorites. I know what I like and what appeals to me, but while in London recently for the MoJoFest and Mobile Creators Academy, I pushed myself and did several street portraits that I'm pretty pleased with. Being in a different environment with like-minded people gave me a real boost. The whole experience has motivated me to challenge myself more.






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Prisma Photo Editor:

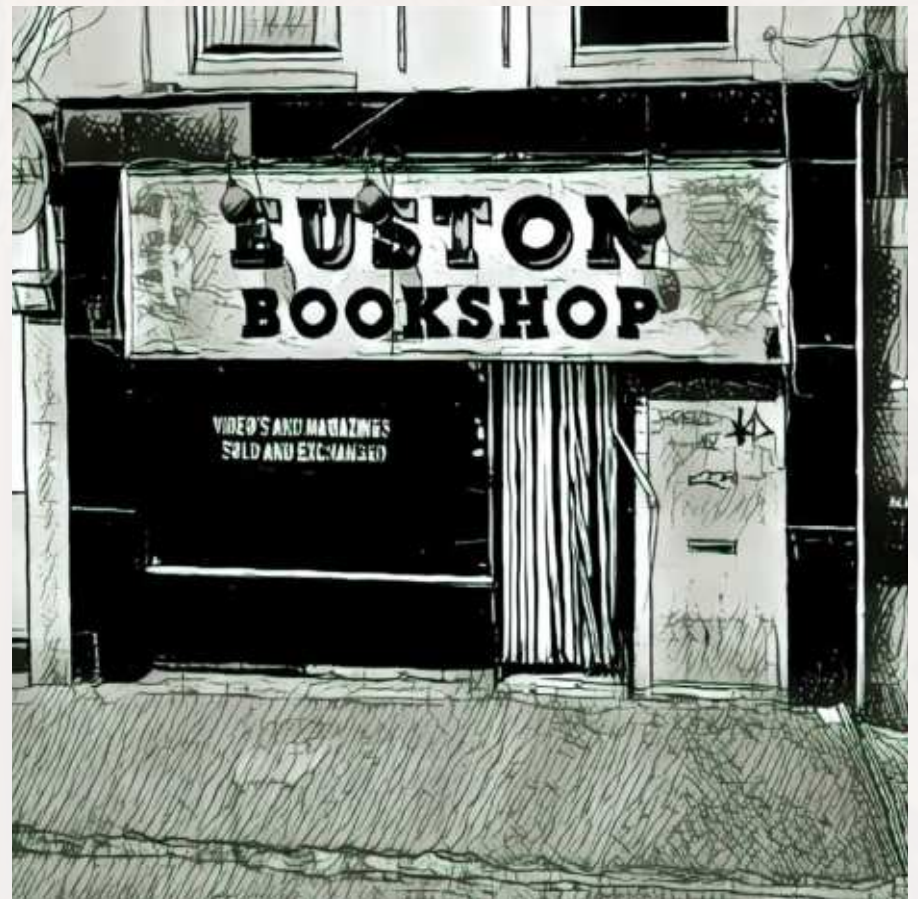
**Turn Your Photos Into
Hand-Drawn & Painted
Art Styles**

By Nicki Fitz-Gerald

If you love illustration and more graphic styles of art, the kind you might come across on posters, book covers and magazine pages, then you'll love the A.I. app Prisma. With a quick tap, this little app will turn your photos into superb, highly polished graphic art.

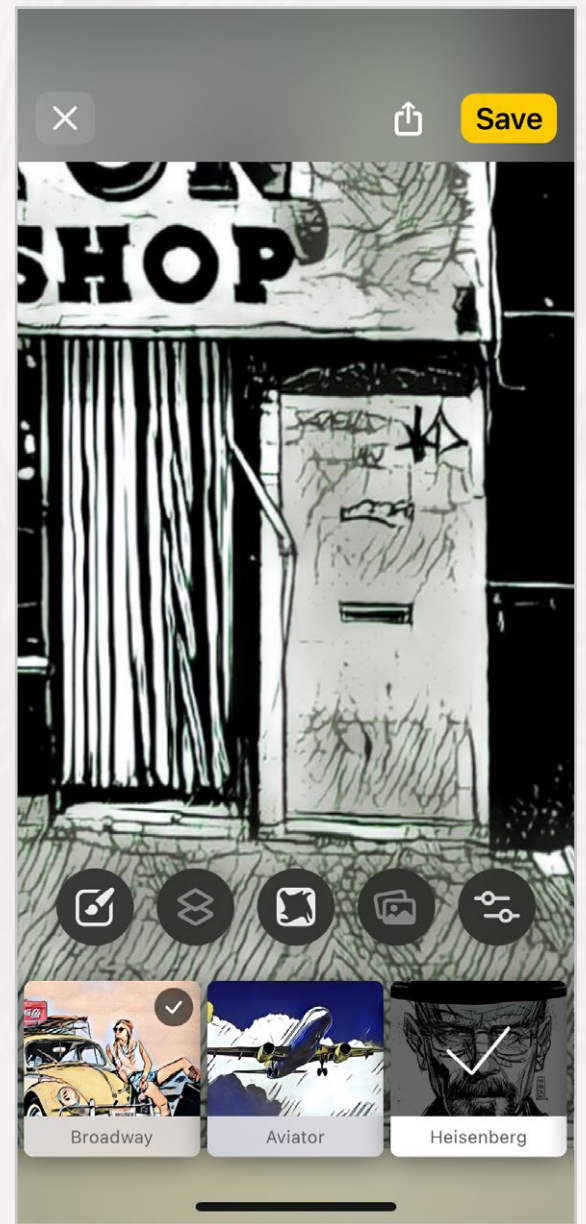
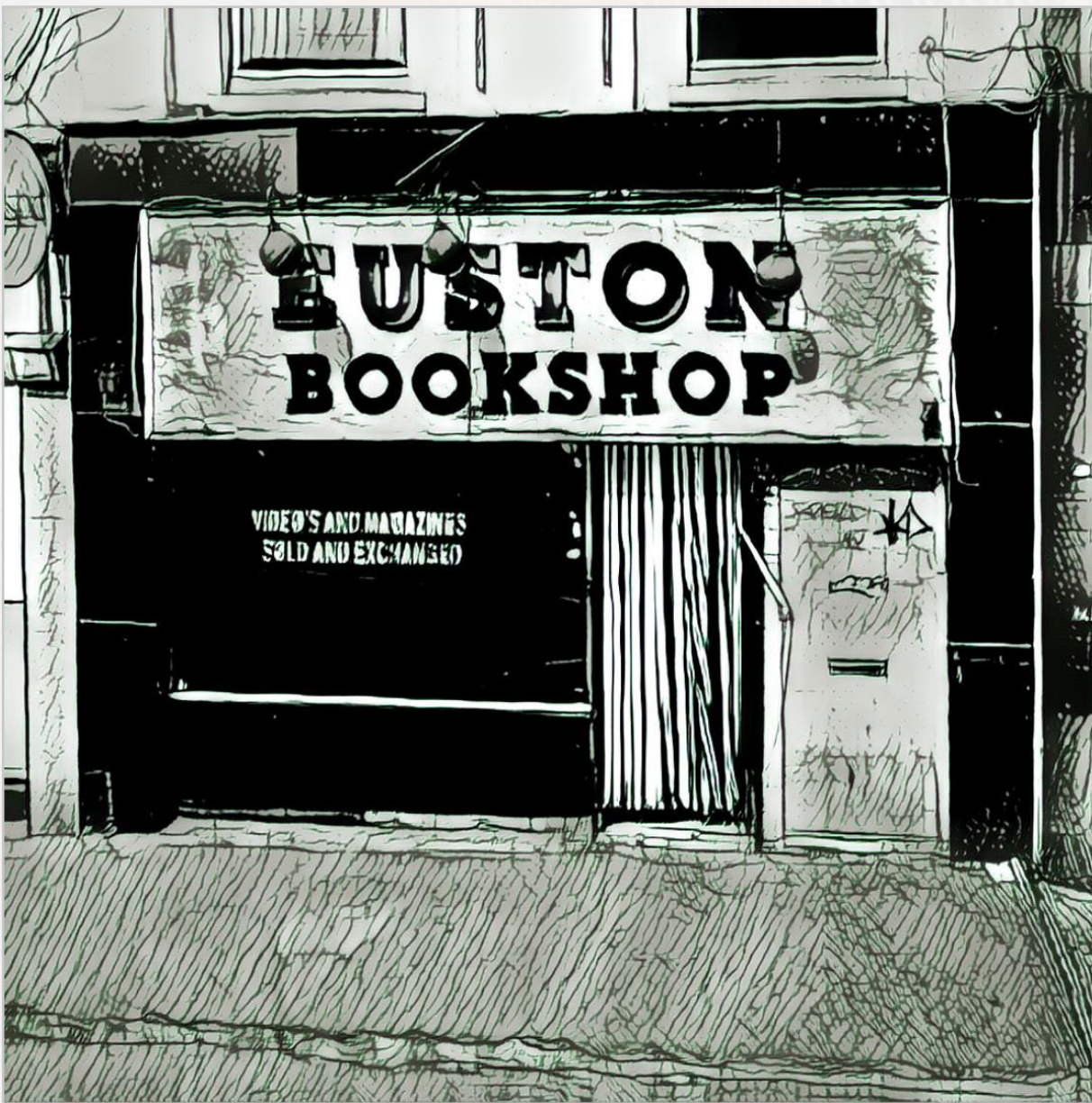
As the name suggests, A.I. apps use artificial intelligence to significantly enhance your photos. You may have read in the last issue of Mobigraphy about Prequel's impressive cartooning capabilities, and if you love that highly illustrated style, Prisma will not disappoint.

This powerful app not only offers effects with a huge degree of sophistication, but it also has some cool features for separating subjects from the background (portrait segmentation), so you can really have some fun getting creative with changing the backgrounds. I also found that Prisma excelled in converting photos to hand-drawn and painted images with natural textures and stylish, spontaneous strokes.



Prisma is an interesting app, claiming that its "gorgeous pictures are almost too cool for words," and after trying out some of the artistic effects I'm inclined to agree with them. The results are consistently high in producing hand-painted styles that retain the original essence of the image rather than muddying over and looking too plastic in the way some art-effect apps render photos.

I love the rendering of Prisma's Heisenberg style to convert my photo into a convincing hand-drawn effect.



Applying Styles

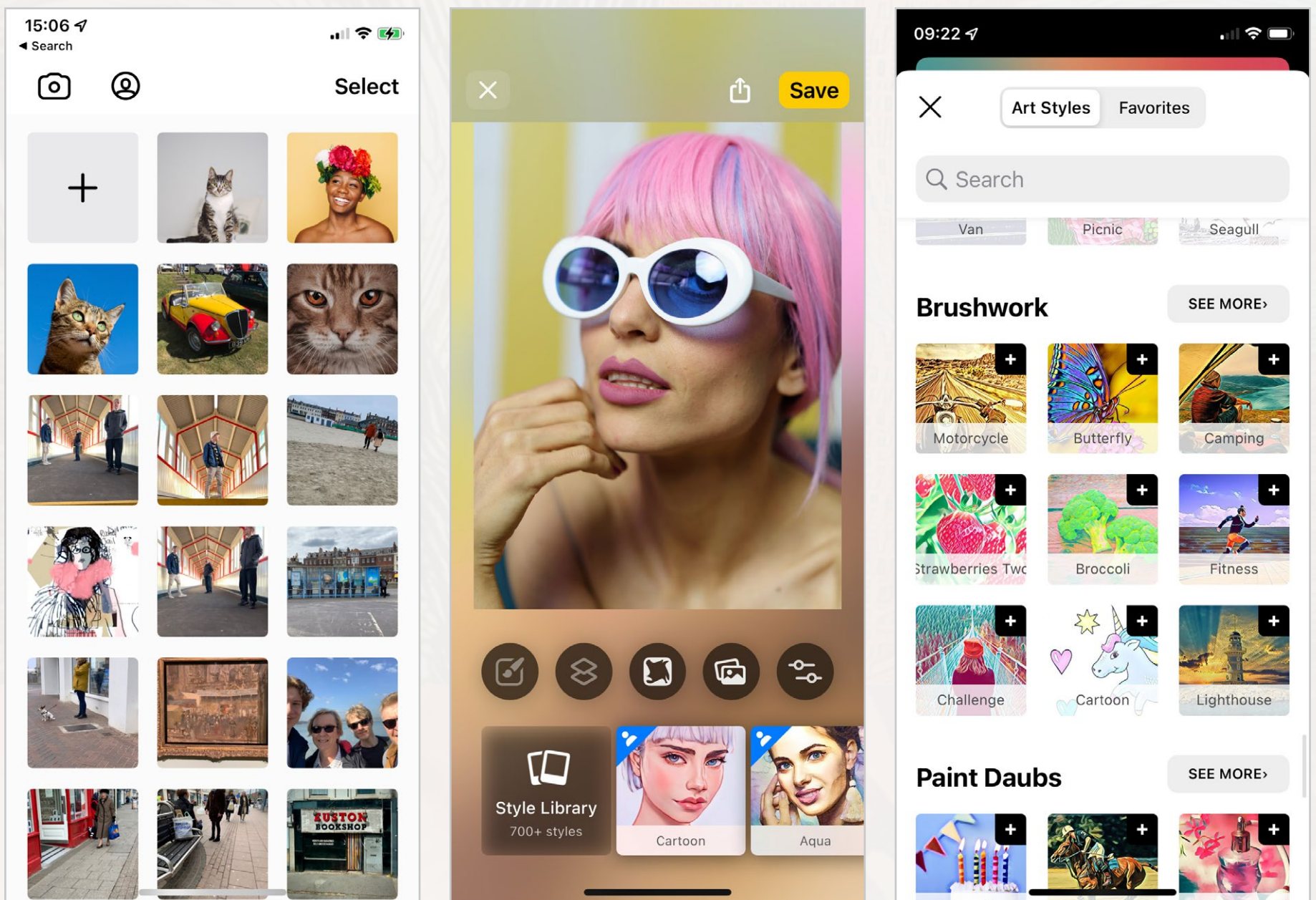
To apply a style, you'll first need to import a photo.

Tap on the Plus Sign on the top left and choose a photo from your camera roll. Your photo will appear in the main part of the screen.

You'll find the art style effects in a sliding menu at the bottom. Some are free, and some are padlocked. You will have to pay to use the locked styles, or you can try a three-day trial.

Clicking on a locked filter will show you a preview of what your art will look like, along with an invitation to subscribe to unlock A.I. styles and HD processing. Choose a style from the bottom menu or access 700-plus styles from the Style Library.

In the Style Library, you'll find all the styles beautifully presented with little illustration preview thumbnails and titles to give you an idea of the style your photo will be converted to. Tap on a style to use it and add it to your favorites.



Once your photo is imported, simply click on a style to preview it applied to your image.

The style is applied to the whole photo, but Prisma has a really cool feature called Portrait Segmentation that separates the subject from the background and applies different effects to both. This only works when there is a discernible subject, hence the name "Portrait Segmentation," as it's really meant for portraits – more about that in a moment.

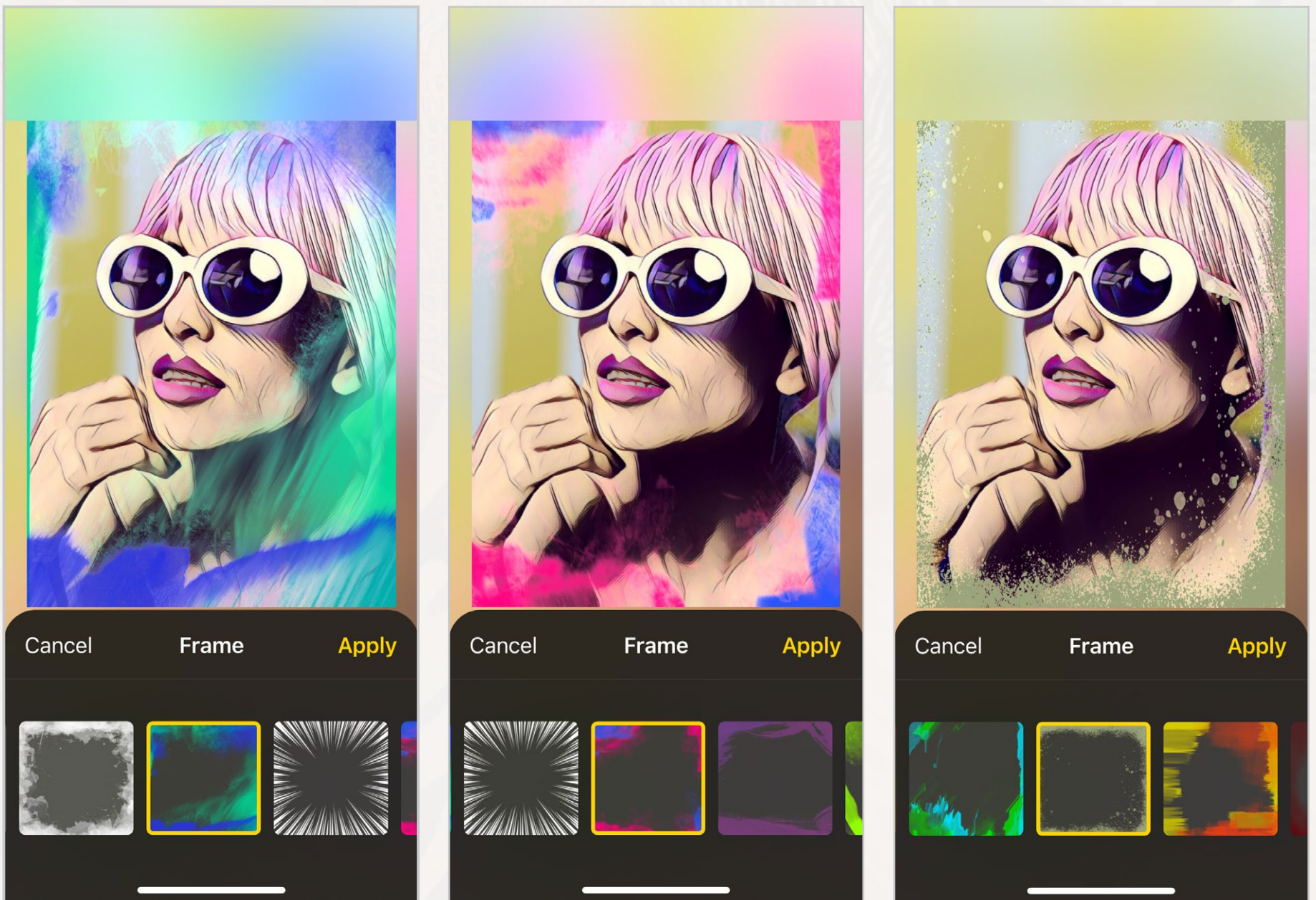
Prisma also has a short and sweet selection of painterly and natural frames. Tap on the Frames icon (center) to access these.

This is the Fun Part! Portrait Segmentation

Prisma's Portrait Segmentation feature separates your subject from the background so you can selectively apply styles to different parts of the image.

Please note: At the time of writing, Portrait Segmentation appears to work with most of the styles (I haven't tried all 700+) but currently does not work with Cartoon, Aqua and Leya styles.

As I mentioned, this feature generally works better where there is a prominent subject, so it's great for selfies! Here's how to use it:



Apply Portrait Segmentation

You'll notice the two-layers icon with two diamond-shaped layers on top of each other. This icon represents the foreground (top layer) and the background (bottom) layer.

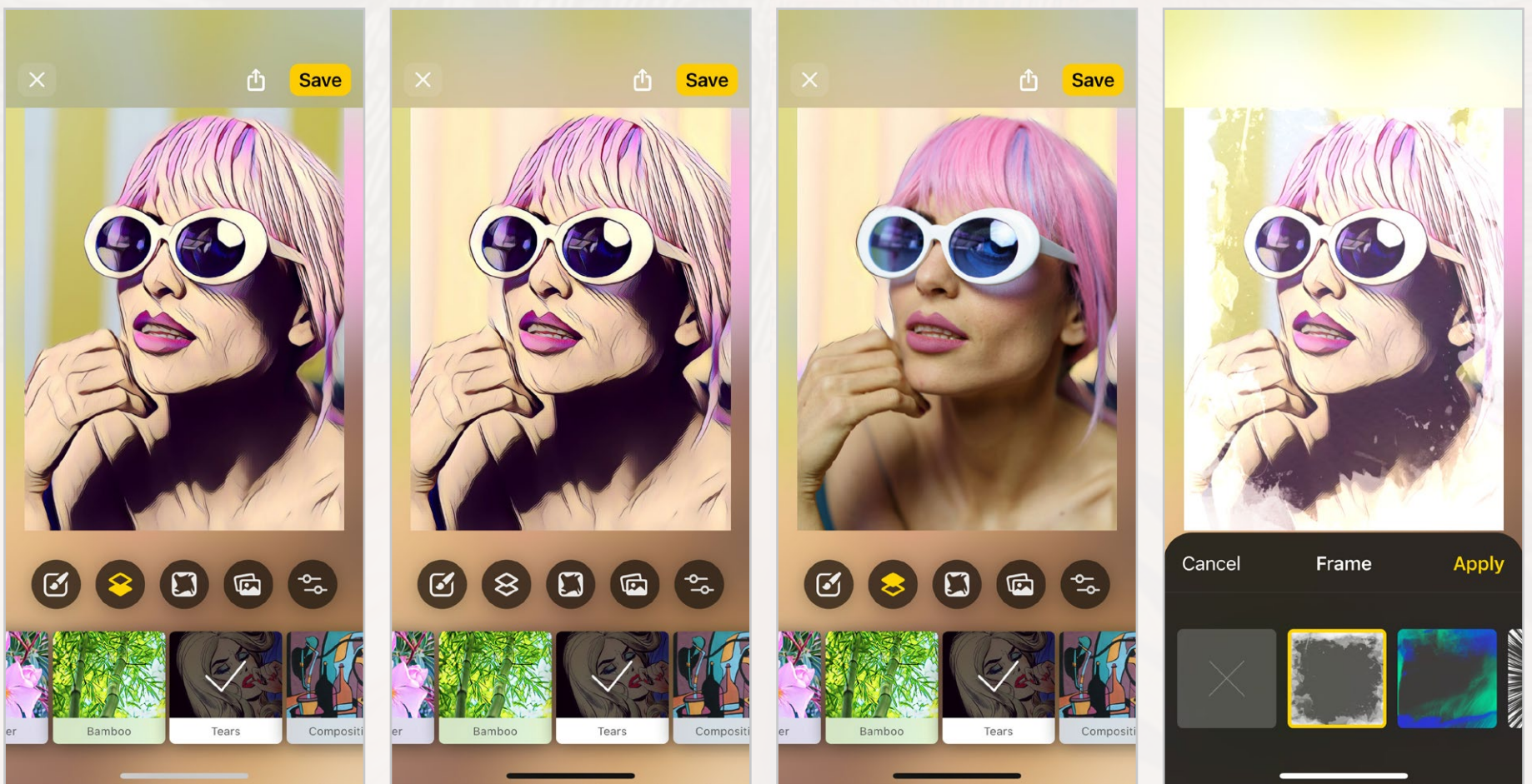
Tap on this icon to apply your chosen effect to different parts of your photo.

The layers icon will show you where the effect has been applied. A black layer with an orange outline (as shown here) means the effect has only been applied to the top layer.

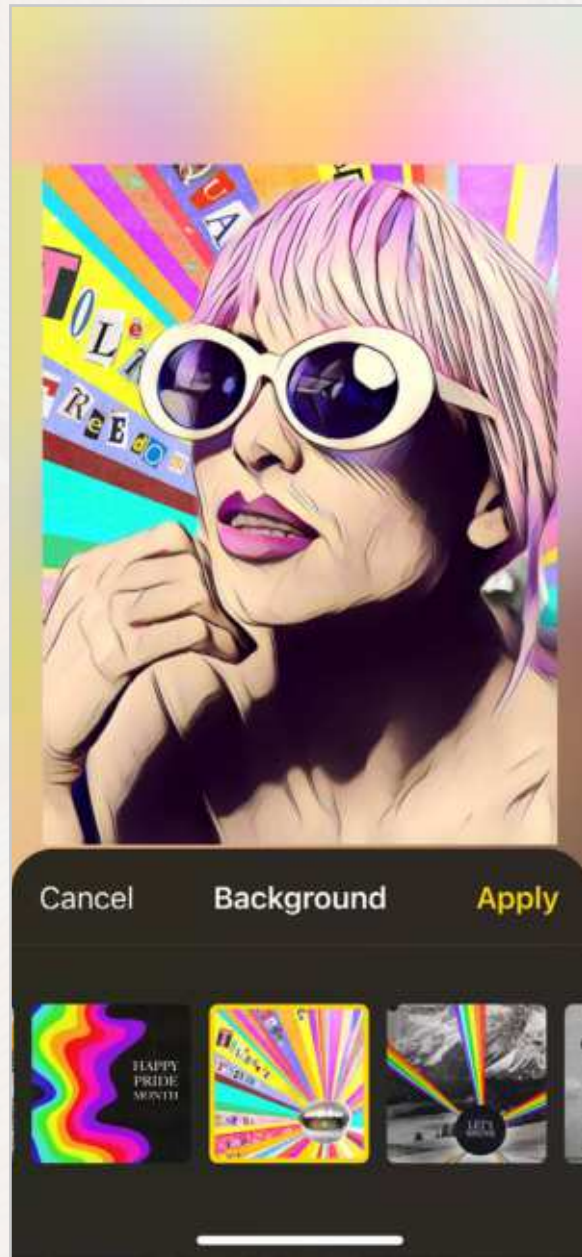
When both layers in the icon are showing as black, then the style effect has been applied to both layers, i.e., the whole image as shown in the previous image.

In the image (second from the right), the effect has only been applied to the background layer. You can see that the woman is still photographic.

I added a frame to the last image. Tap on the center Frame icon to access the frames.



You can also replace the background with one of Prisma's options (see right) or choose any photo from your photo library. For the result on the far right, I used an image of an old wall I shot on my iPhone and added one of Prisma's funky frames. You can scale and rotate the background to get it just how you like.

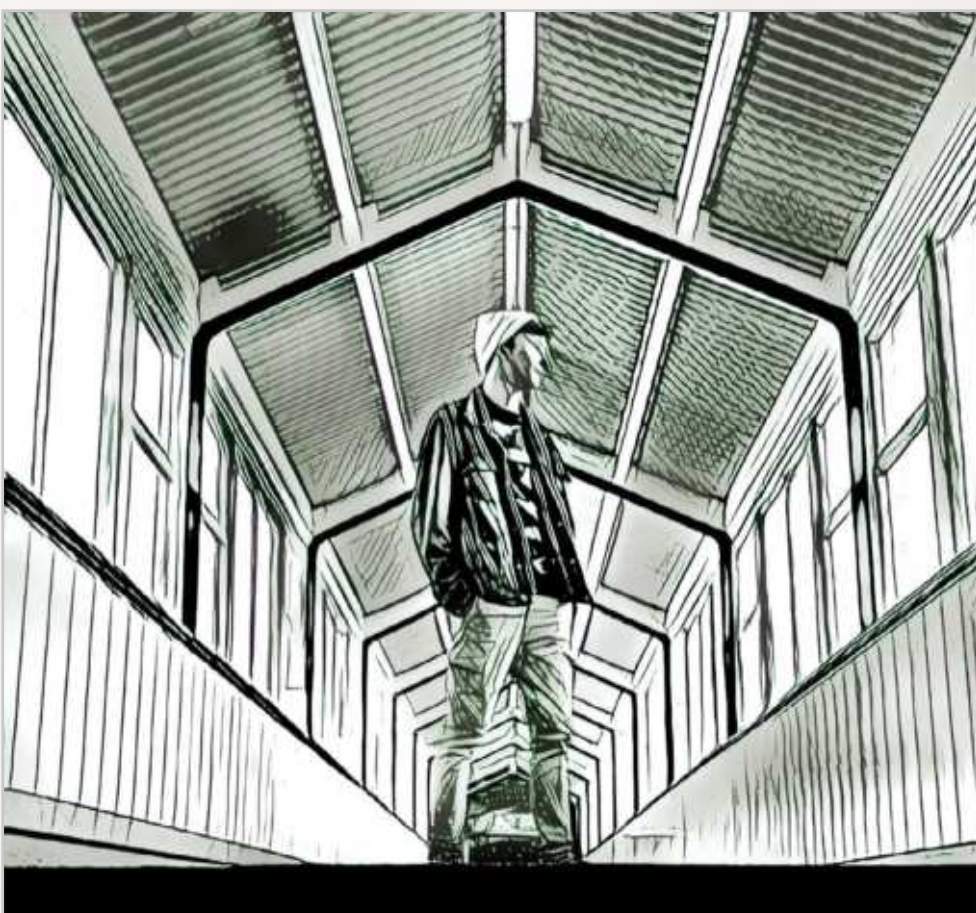
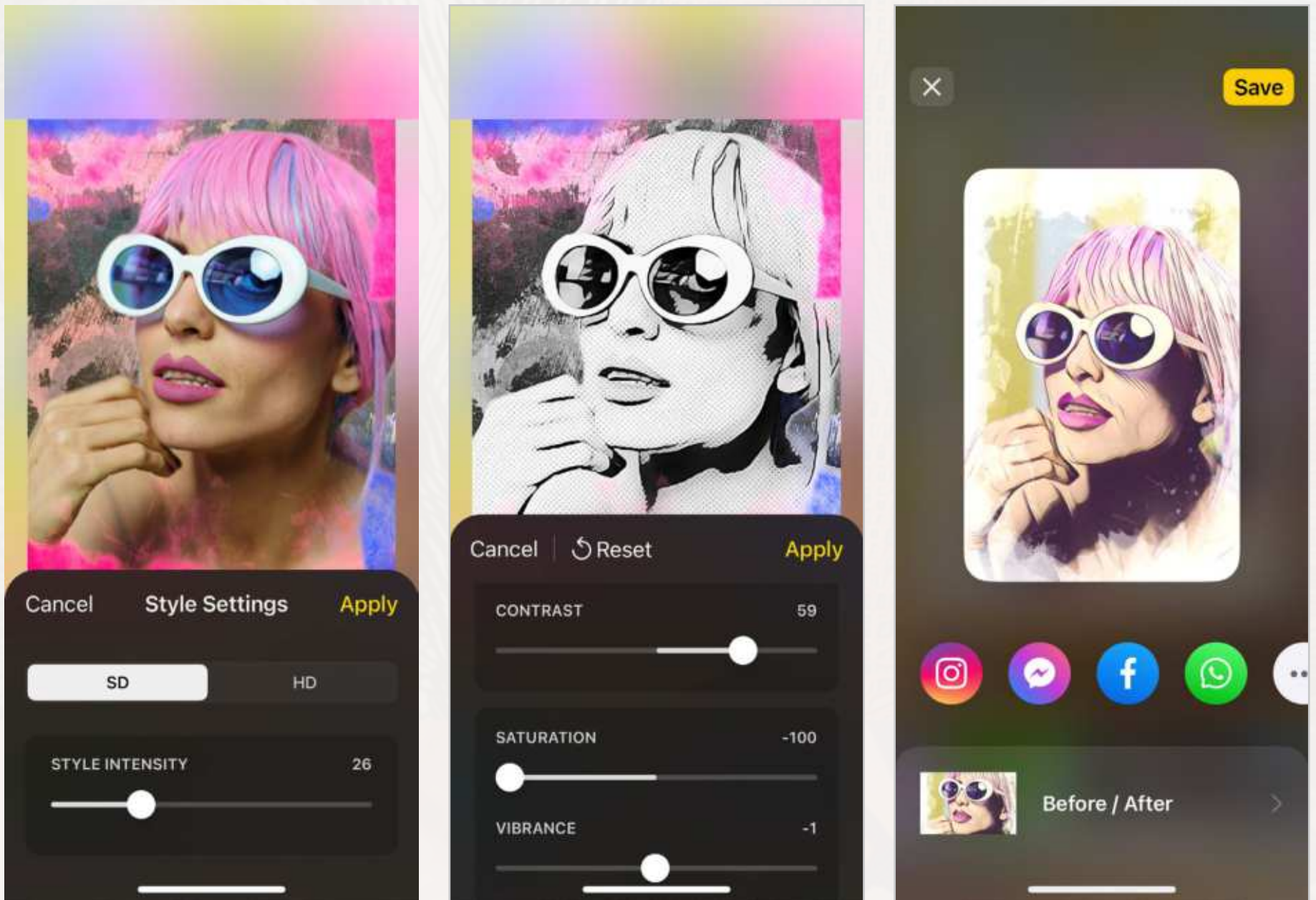


To import your own background, tap on the little Photos icon, second from the right in the main icon.

Here, I used an image of an old wall for the background.



Tapping on the Adjustment Sliders icon (the last icon on the right) will give you access to the Style Settings menu, where you can make color adjustments to your style and control the intensity of the effect.



Portrait Segmentation also works great with figures, although some details get lost in areas like the face. This is where I might do some retouching work in an app like Procreate. I used the Heisenberg style on the photo shown left.

Although this feature is intended for selfies, I also experimented with some group figure shots and came up with some interesting results. If the figures aren't defined enough, they can get left out of the conversion process. The A.I. struggled with converting the background figure to the Heisenberg style here, even though to the human eye, the figure looks clear.

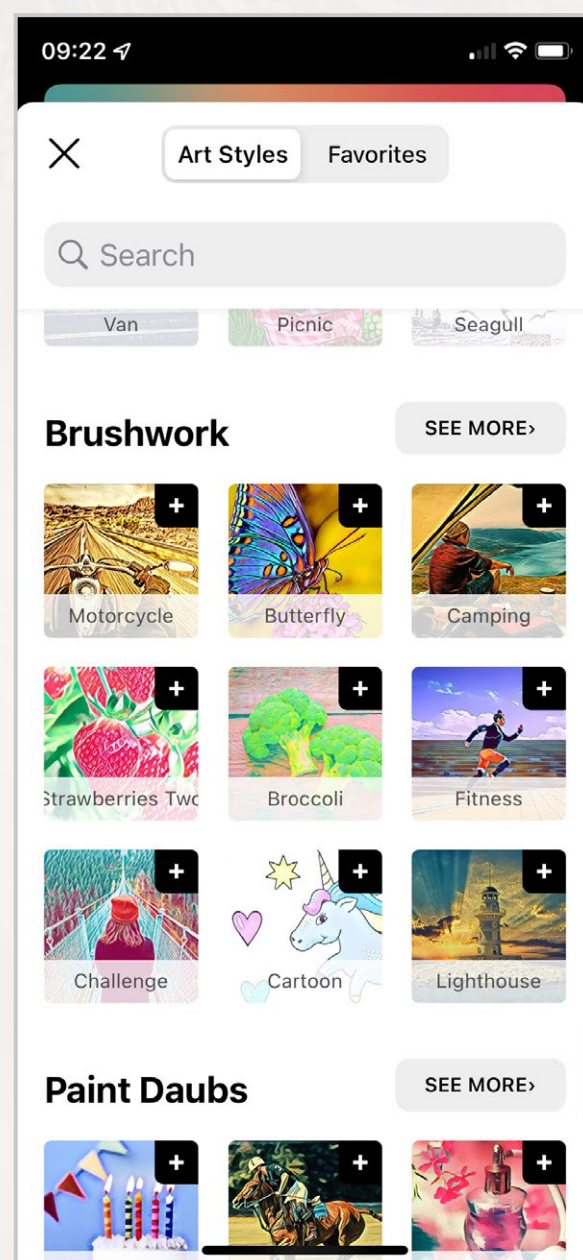
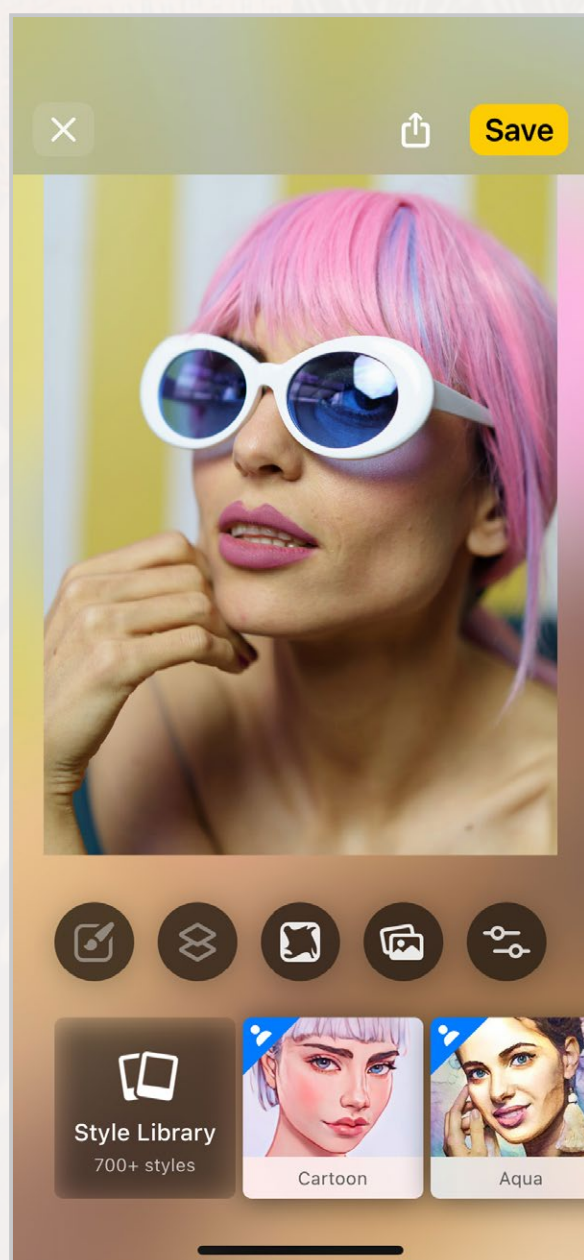


Styles Library

In the Styles Library, you'll find 700-plus styles, all of which are conveniently displayed under different category titles, complete with preview thumbnails for each category to give you an idea of the style. But of course, the final look will depend on your original photo.

Once you've chosen a style, you can use the zoom feature by pinching outward with two fingers to take a closer look at the results before you commit, apply the style and share it or save it to your camera roll.

After trying a few effects and filters, you'll start to learn which photographs work best. As is usually the case with these kinds of filter and effect apps, I found that well-lit and composed photographs with clearly defined shapes and contours usually worked best with all subject matter, including portraits (pets and people), landscapes and inanimate objects like cars.



Hand-Painted and Drawn Effects

The hand-drawn effects were particularly impressive. Below are some of my favorites. I've added the original photo on the left in most cases:

Aqua

Aqua rendered a lovely watercolor effect that worked well with buildings and animal faces.



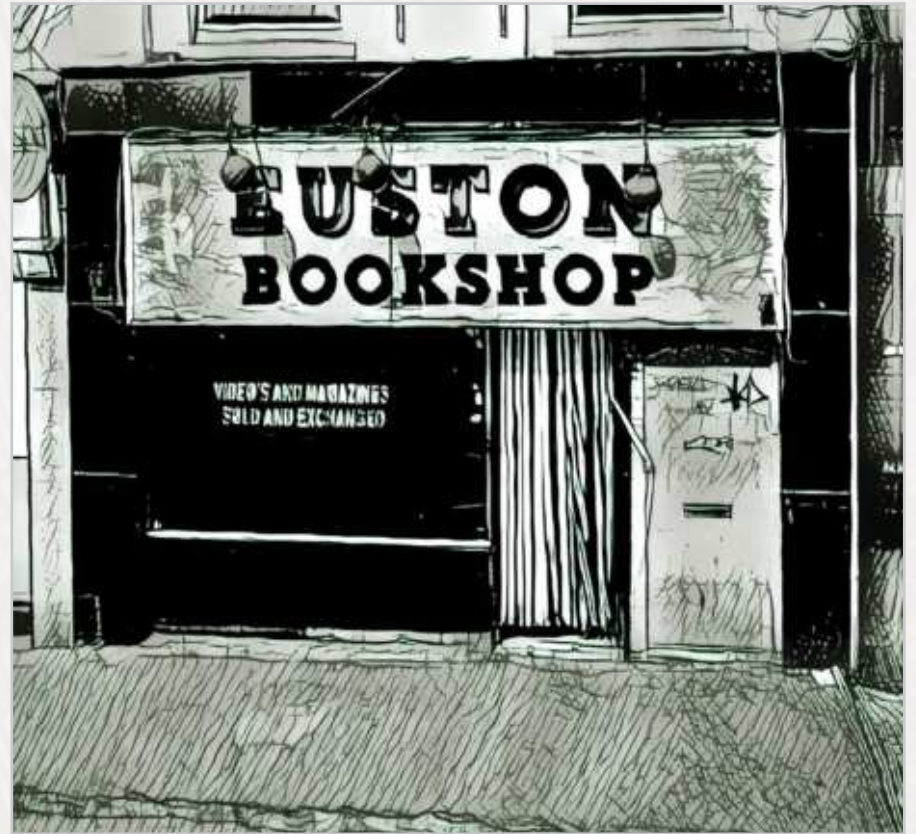
Broadway

I loved the halftone, dotted effect of the Broadway style.



Heisenberg

Heisenberg was one of my favorites. Its conversion from photo to hand-drawn line is very impressive.



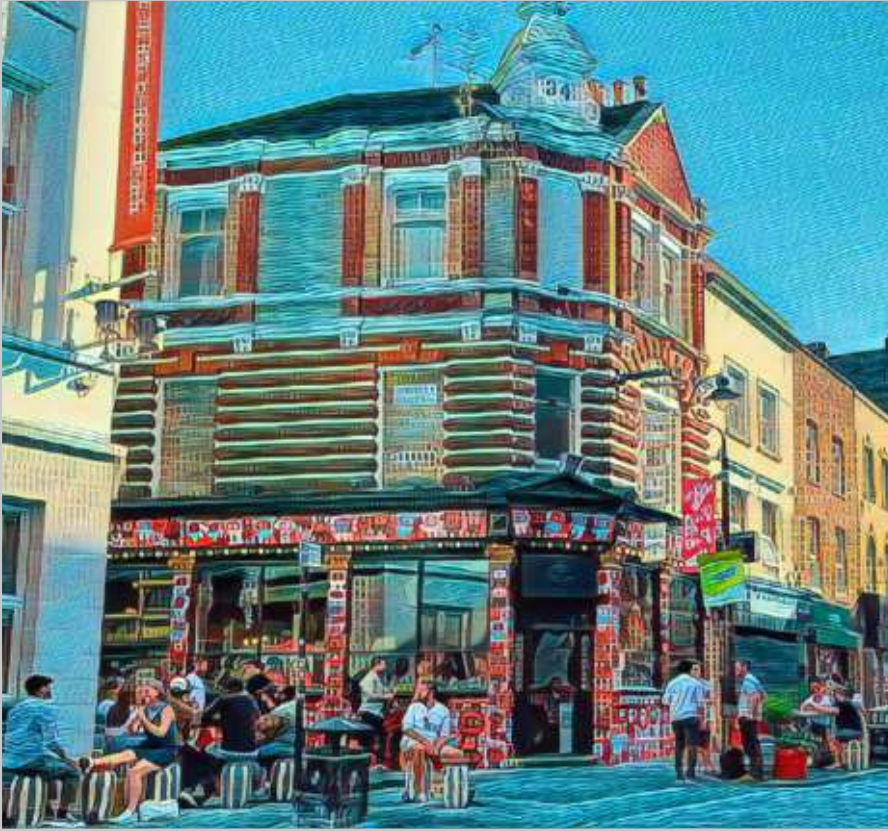
Strawberries Two

I loved the bright and airy color palette of the Strawberries Two style and the patterns applied to open ground, as seen in the conversions below.



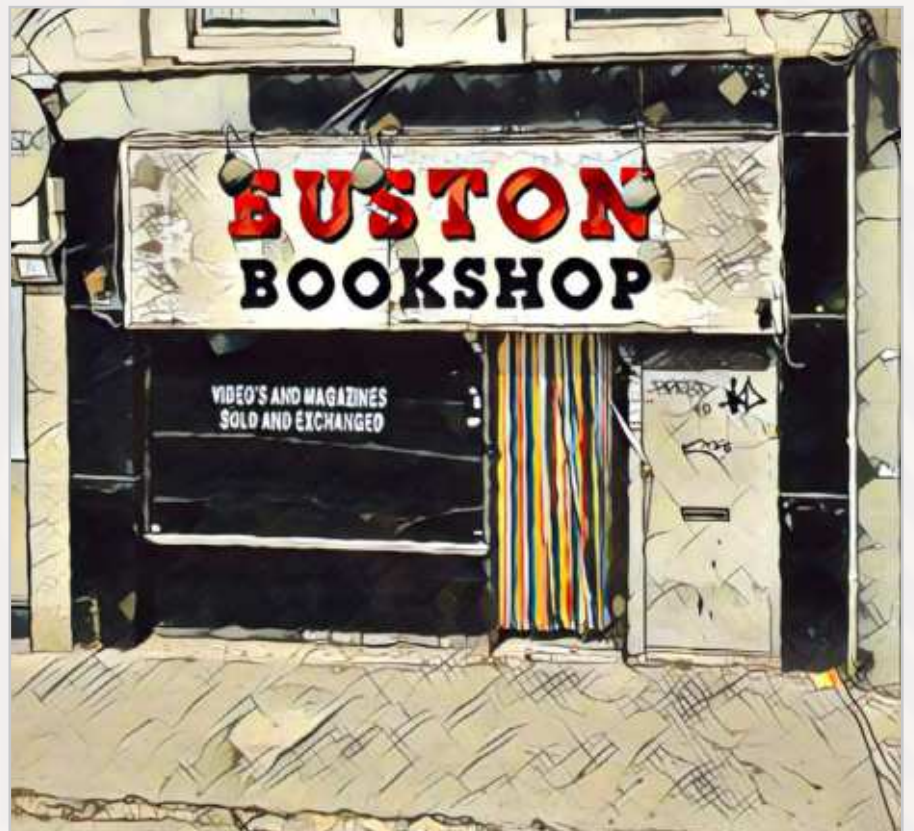
Villa

The textural Klimt style patterns and tactile quality of the Villa style looked great in urban scenes. I love the patterns it applied to open spaces like the sky and ground. It made waves out of the beach scene shown below right.



Transverse Line Two

I really like the Transverse Line Two's effect on this portrait of a cat. I would have liked to have experimented with changing the background, but unfortunately, the A.I. didn't recognize this as a portrait, so in this case, the Portrait Segmentation feature didn't work. I will probably need to manually change the background in Procreate. The effect looked great on the Euston Bookshop photo, too.



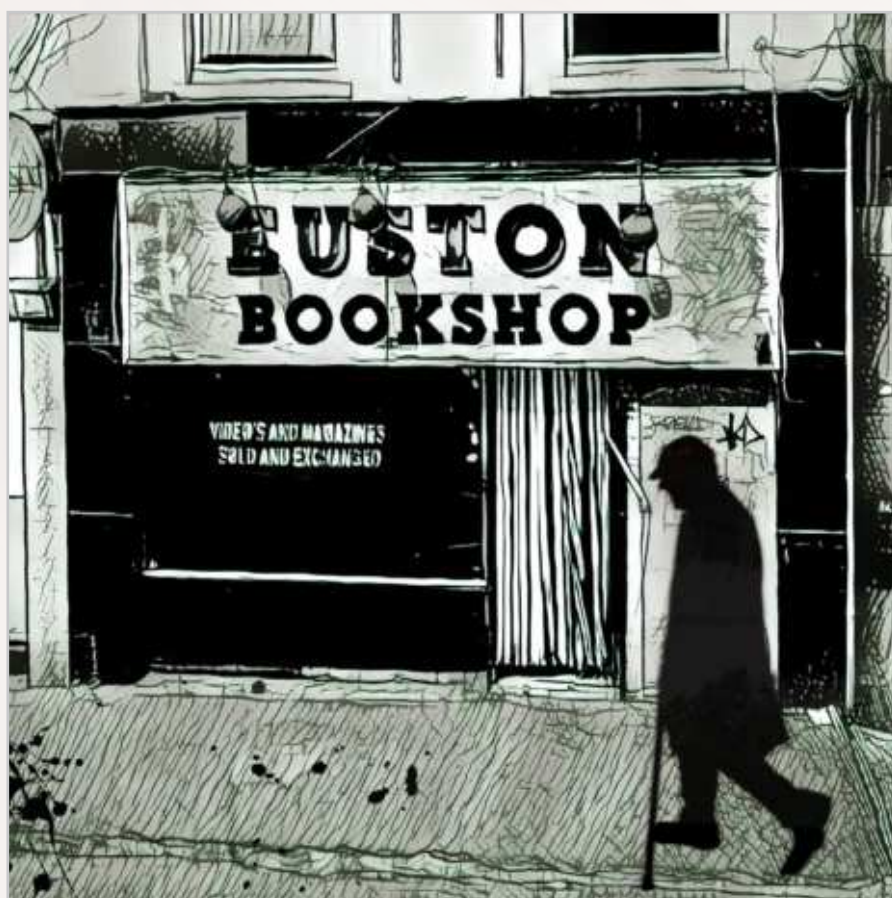
Polo

If you like a highly stylized look, the Polo style is worth checking out. I love how Polo interpreted this ginger tom.



Taking Prisma Further

As much as I love the effects of Prisma, I rarely take selfies, and I'm always wanting to push the final result further. I'm much more interested in using the effects by combining them with other elements. Opposite, I have combined an altered cut-out photo of a man with some extra black splatter marks to kindle the sparks of a story using the Procreate app on my iPad. This is just the tip of the Prisma iceberg; there's lots more to explore here, and I'm excited by the prospects.



Printing Your Prisma Art

I rarely use an app unless it can save images at a good enough resolution for printing, and thankfully, Prisma will do just that. For example, for a photo such as the one on the next page, it could easily be printed as a 6-inch square image and still maintain good detail. At 12 inches square, you would probably start to see a little loss of detail.

What I experienced in the Prisma app was overwhelmingly good, but here's a list of what I liked plus what I think they can do better:

What Was Great!

- Easy to use and navigate.
- Zoom feature is great for getting a close-up look at effects on the image.
- Well-organized and well-presented categories.
- Great range and quality of effects — the hand-drawn and painted styles were particularly impressive.
- Good value if you take advantage of a sale.
- Especially great for portraits and landscapes, but also for general shots.
- Vivid frames are great, fresh and more artistic — different from the more photographic frames or cheesy stars and hearts frames.
- Free version to try for three days.
- Updated regularly, which shows that this app has a dynamic ecosystem where new filters are coming regularly.
- Useful search function if you want to find a specific style. Type the style's name in the search bar in the library.
- Saves at a reasonably high resolution.

Areas Where Improvements Are Needed

- I would like to see A.I. improvements in the Portrait Segmentation feature to recognize animal faces as well as human ones.
- I would like to see the newly introduced crop option for all styles.
- I would love to see images save at an even higher resolution for printing larger images.
- Viewing the whole picture in the preview screen is a problem — currently, in preview mode, you can't see the top part of the image.
- Introduction of a brush mask so you can brush away some of the effects and have more control over the look of the final image.

Whether you want to produce a fun image of your pet or a family member or utilize some of the quick illustration conversions to include in your own art, this app is a lot of fun to experiment with. I feel like I have only scraped the surface, and there's lots more to explore. I think Prisma, particularly if you can take advantage of a special offer, is definitely worth the plunge!

Subscription

A subscription gives you access to all the styles, and you'll also be able to save them in HD.

You can also try the app out for a three-day free trial, after which you can choose from several paid subscription plans. At the time of writing, you can save 23% on an annual Premium plan and pay \$22.99 instead of the regular price tag, which works out to \$1.91 a month. That's a pretty good deal if you're using the app regularly.

This app is available only on the App Store for iPhone and iPad.



About the Author

Nicki Fitz-Gerald is an artist who enjoys experimental photography and art. She is also a teacher and co-author of the book *The Art of iPhone Photography*. She is currently writing a new book about digital collage and mixed media for a major art book publisher scheduled to be in the bookstore's next year.

Nicki is the founder of one of the world's longest-running iPhone photo artistry sites, iPhoneographyCentral.com. Her iPhone and iPad are her main tools for creating art and videos, and she shares these skills via online classes and real-world workshops around the world, from Los Angeles to Dublin.

Nicki recently launched her seventh online digital art course, *Creative Pet Portraiture with Procreate*, which introduces a fresh approach to creating expressive portraits of pets.

Find out more about Nicki's work and information on classes here:
https://linktr.ee/nickifitzgerald_iphoneart

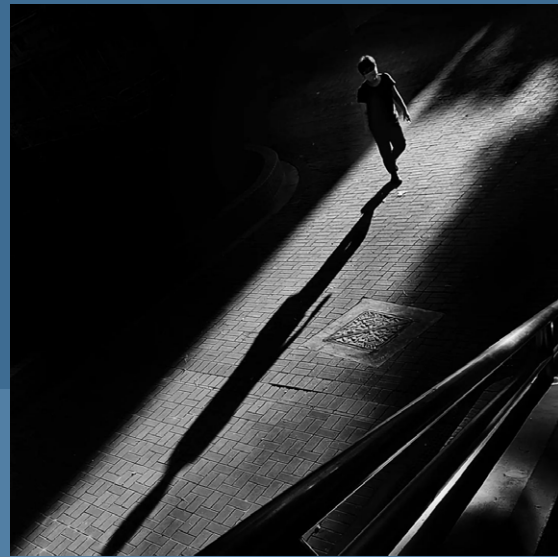
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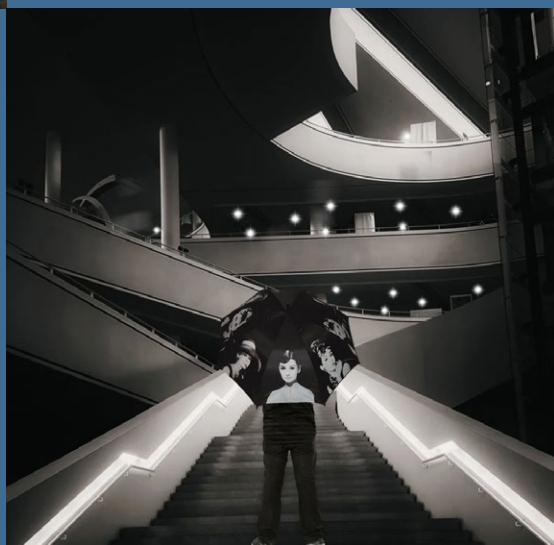
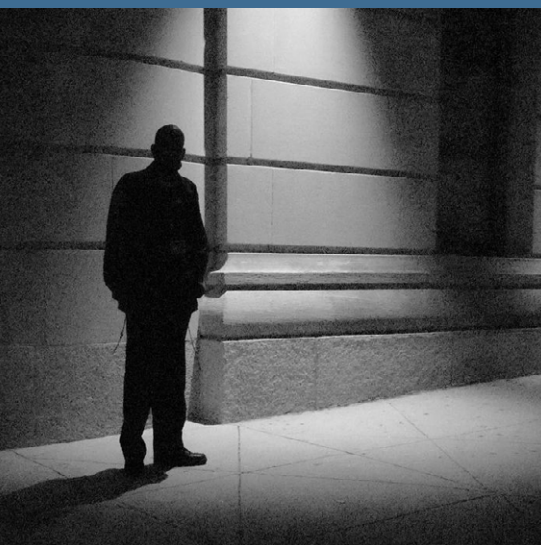
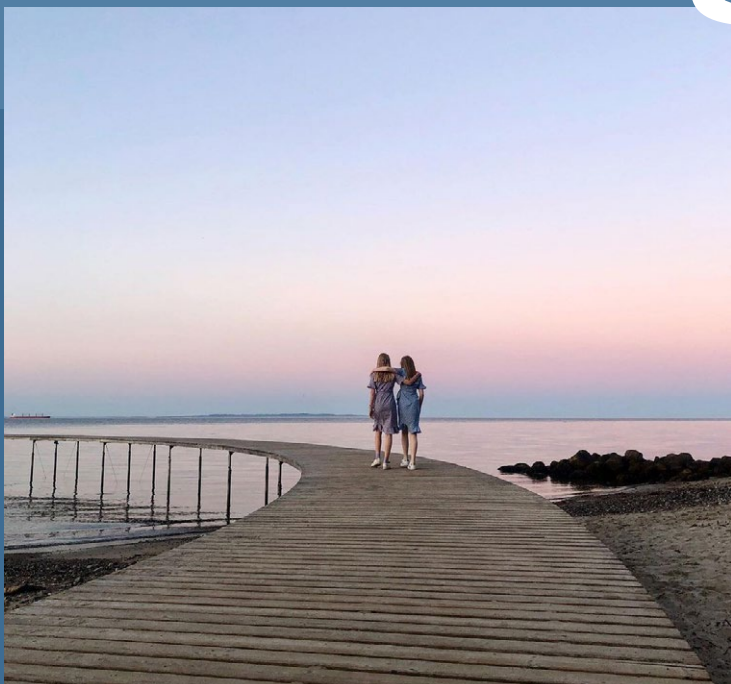
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Five Inspirational Photographers To Follow on Instagram





Pati John - [@pati.john](#)

Pati John is a mobile photographer and artist who captures a mixture of street photography and abstract mobile art images. Pati's work has received numerous awards in photography competitions, such as the Mobile Photography Awards and the MIRA awards. Pati was also voted Art of Building Photographer of the Year Finalist by CIOB. Pati overlays the lines and patterns found in her surroundings, which help create both interesting and fun images.







Joyz Kwok - [@joyz_kwok](#)

Joyz Kwok is a mobile photographer who has won recognition in the Mobile Photo Awards as well as various other online community hubs. Joyz work uses dark shadows and silhouettes, lines, and the shapes created by these elements to capture a collection of images filled with interest and atmosphere. Many of these photos feature lone figures, which helps to give a sense of isolation. If you are interested in black and white street photography, then be sure to follow Joyz.



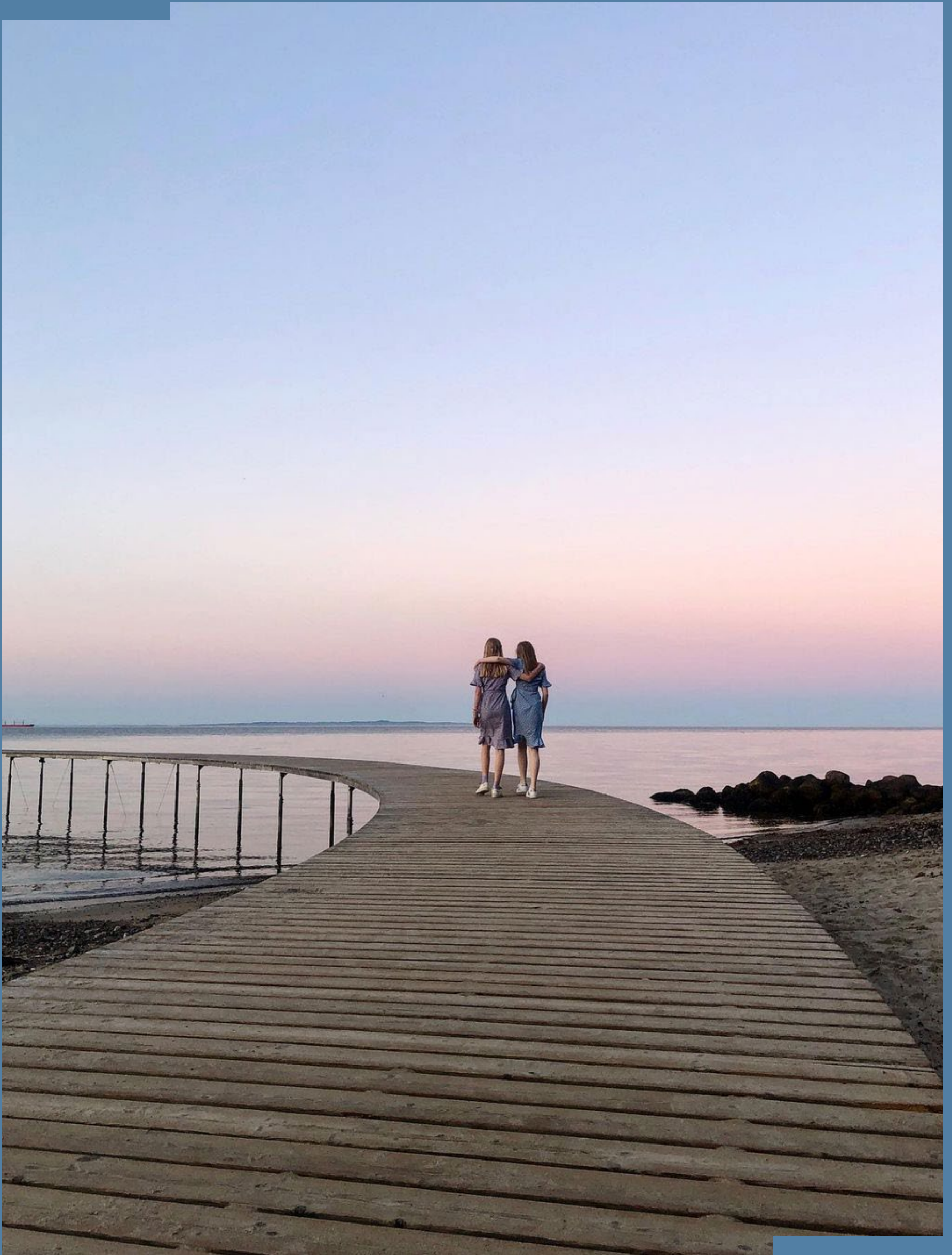






Mia Wennerberg - [@miakbh](#)

Mia Wennerberg is a mobile photographer from Copenhagen, Denmark. The photos Mia shares on Instagram reflect a sense of peace and calm. Whether shooting landscapes, nature or street photography, Mia captures a beautiful minimalist look and feel in the photos she takes. Her compositions are so simple and illustrate how effective this approach can be. For a calming collection of images that make expert use of negative space, be sure to check out the work of [@miakbh](#).









Abhay Kanvinde - [@abhaykanvinde](#)

Abhay Kanvinde is a mobile photographer from Pune in India. His collection of Instagram images is full of some stunning portraits of people on the streets where he lives, people going about their day and the surrounding area. Looking through his photos, they really do give you a good sense of the vibrancy of life. Follow Abhay on Instagram if you are looking for some superb examples of portraits and candid street photography.





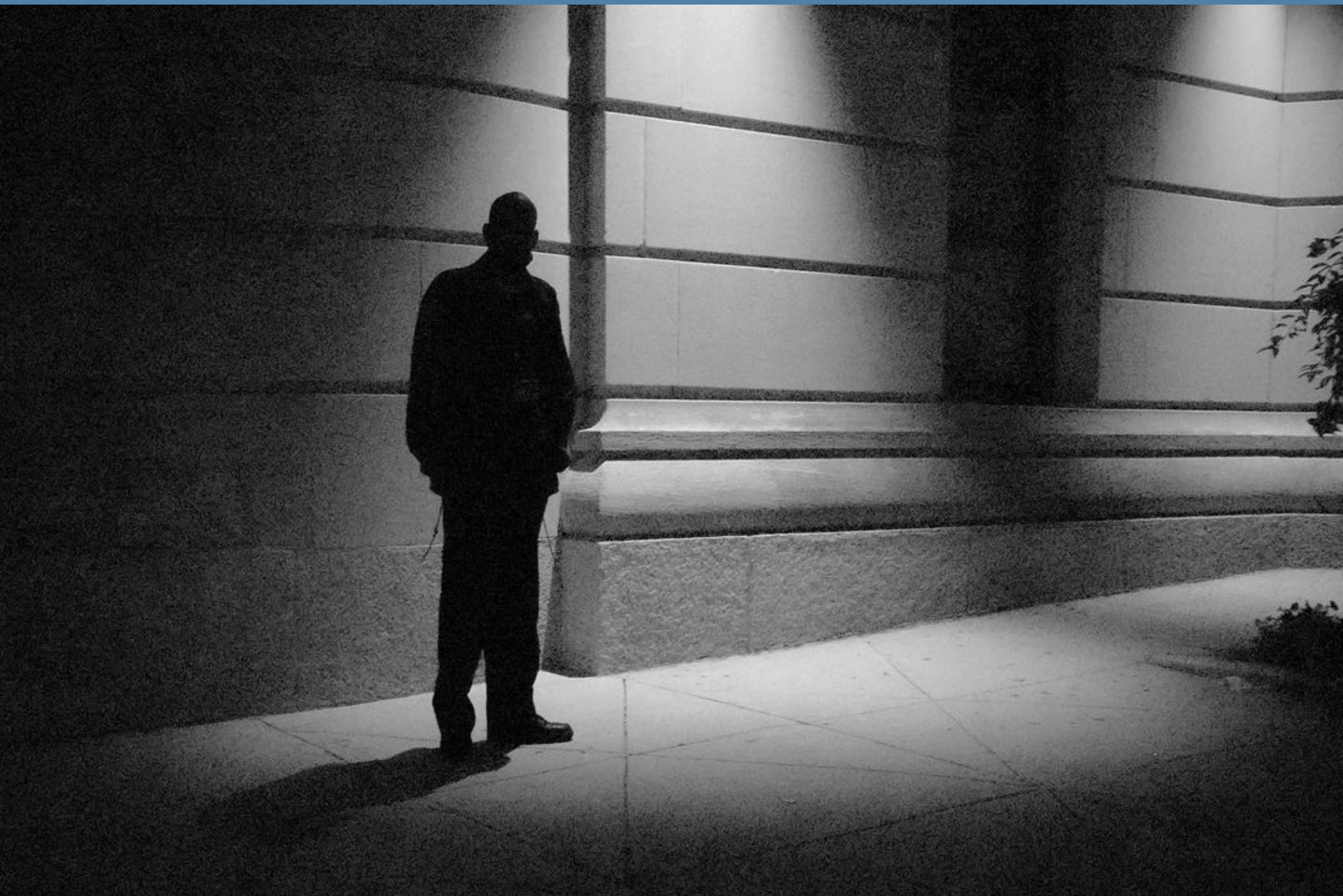




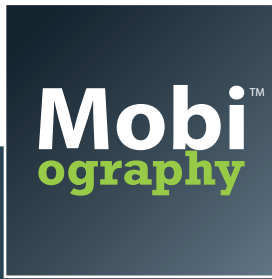
Jeff Larason - [@jeff_larason](#)

Jeff Larason is a Boston-based street photographer and moderator of the [@bostonstreetscollective](#) group on Instagram. Jeff's work uses the bold shadows and silhouettes created by harsh shafts of sunlight on the Boston streets. Shot in black and white, his images also capture lone figures that he expertly frames in these pockets of light. If you are a black and white street photography fan, then make sure you follow [@jeff_larason](#).









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