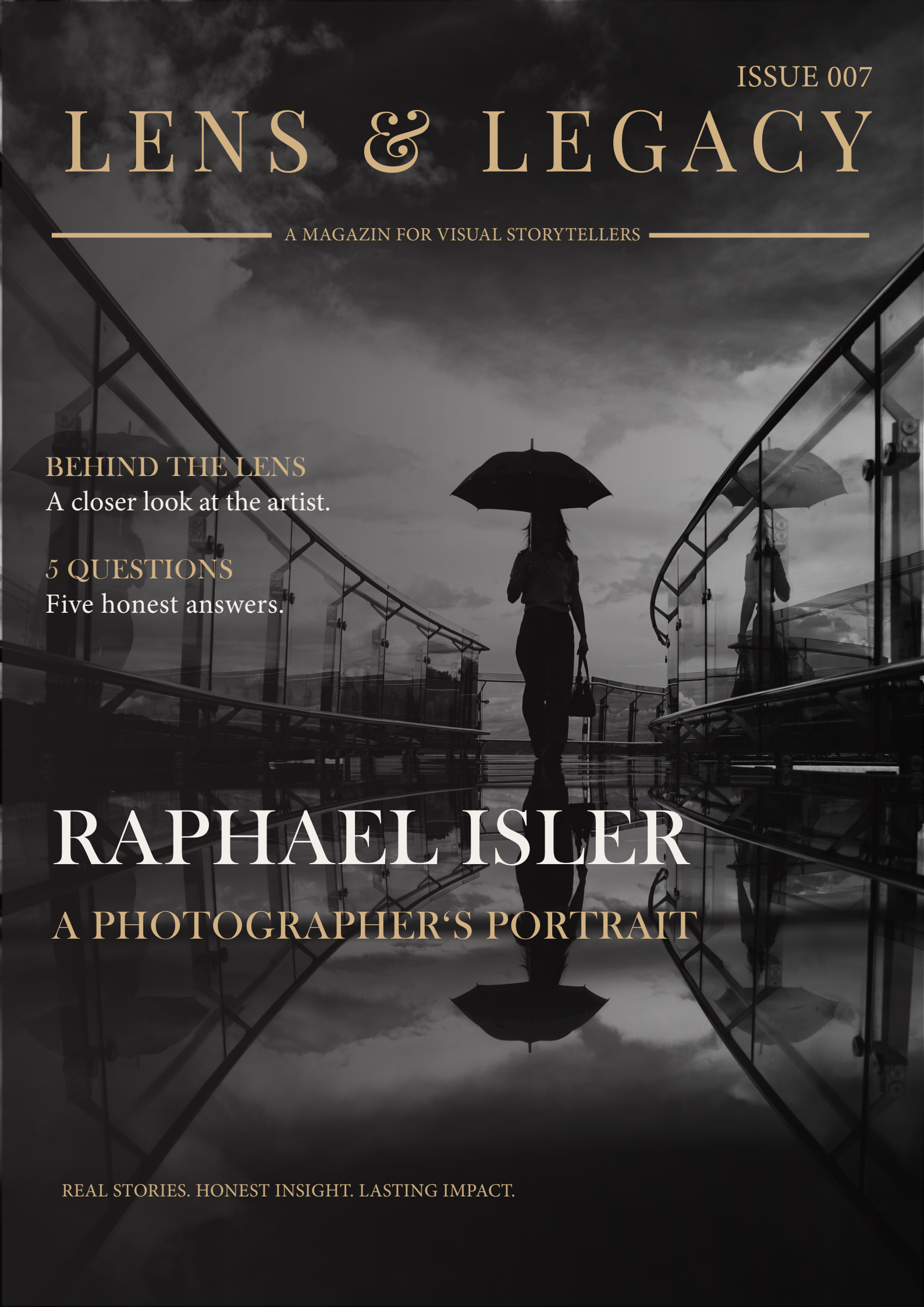


ISSUE 007

LENS & LEGACY

A MAGAZIN FOR VISUAL STORYTELLERS

BEHIND THE LENS
A closer look at the artist.

5 QUESTIONS
Five honest answers.

RAPHAEL ISLER

A PHOTOGRAPHER‘S PORTRAIT

REAL STORIES. HONEST INSIGHT. LASTING IMPACT.

BEHIND THE LENS

INTRODUCING THIS ISSUE'S FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

Raphael Isler

EDITORS NOTE

Welcome to Issue #007.

This issue's featured photographer is Raphael Isler from Switzerland — and choosing him for this issue was a very easy decision for me.

There is something about Raphael's photography that immediately caught my attention. His work has a distinctive atmosphere, and I particularly enjoy the way he uses light, contrast and composition to create images that feel both considered and natural. There is a quiet quality to his photographs that invites you to spend a little more time with them.

What I also appreciate is the sense of personality behind his work. His images don't simply record a moment; they show a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world. That personal perspective is exactly what I look for when choosing photographers for Lens & Legacy.

In this issue, we're taking a closer look at Raphael's work, while also featuring a selection of other photographers and stories across our regular sections.

I hope you enjoy discovering his work — and the rest of this issue — as much as I have.

Eliah GK
Editor & Founder, Lens & Legacy

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Raphael Isler

BIOGRAPHY



My journey into photography actually began with film. I have always been fascinated by Hollywood, especially by the idea of using images to disappear into another world and tell a story whose ending you do not yet know. That fascination led me to making short films. Eventually, however, I realised how limited the possibilities could be. Film requires time, people, equipment and, above all, resources. Photography suddenly gave me a freedom I had been missing. I could go out on my own and still create an entire world. When I began photographing, I was immediately fascinated by black and white. There was something almost magical about it, mixed with a sense of nostalgia. Over time, I began to understand that photography, for me, would become more than simply capturing a beautiful moment. I am interested in the relationship between a person and the world around them. Often, a single figure exists within a much larger space, surrounded by geometry, light and negative space. To me, that space can tell just as much as the person itself. No one can ever fully know another person. We all carry our own thoughts and secrets, creating our own individual reality. Perhaps that is why, despite all the people around us, we are ultimately all alone in some way, each living inside our own mind and our own world. What I want to create through photography are moments that remain. Images that can still evoke something years later, perhaps even a sense of nostalgia. My goal is not to create thousands of photographs. I want to eventually have perhaps thirty images that I could print large, stand in front of an audience with pride, and say: These are mine. This is how I see the world.

BASED IN
Switzerland, CH

GENRE
Fineart, street

INSTAGRAM
isler.noir

What‘s one piece of advice that quietly changed the way you photograph?

The advice that has probably changed my photography most quietly was to focus on what is essential. When I first discovered Alan Schaller’s work, I began to understand how much power a photograph can have when it is built from very little. A person, some light, a shadow or a geometric shape can be enough when everything works together. Since then, I have stopped trying to put as much as possible into a frame. Instead, I increasingly ask myself what I can leave out. I pay more attention to negative space, lines, contrast and the way a person exists within these elements. For me, minimalism does not mean making an image empty. It means leaving only what truly contributes to it. The fewer elements I need, the more important the moment becomes when they all come together.



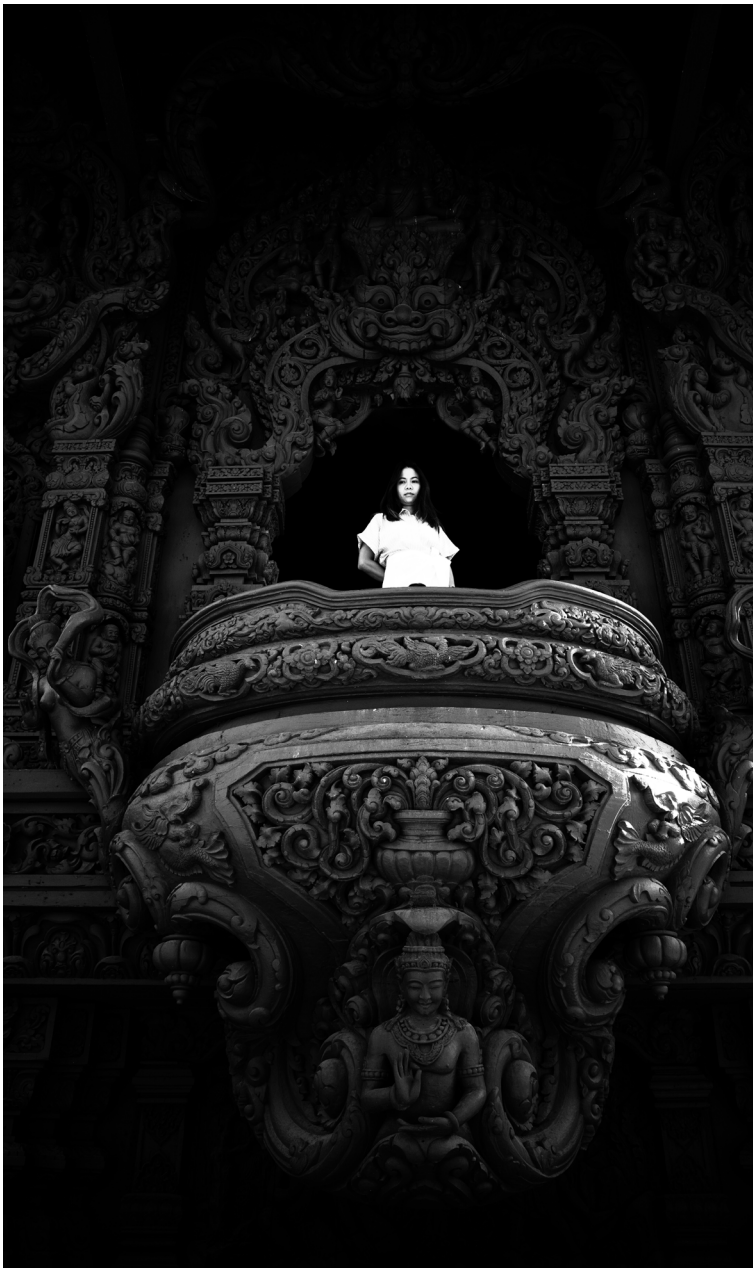
Which photograph changed the way you see the world?

There was no single photograph that suddenly changed the way I see the world. It was more of a process that developed over time. I kept looking at my own photographs again and again, asking myself why some images worked while others didn't, even when they were technically similar. Eventually, I realised that the answer was not really in the technique. A photograph can be technically perfect and still leave me feeling nothing. Another can be much simpler and immediately affect me. Over time, I started looking at the world differently. I stopped looking only for subjects and began paying attention to the relationship between light, space, shapes and, above all, the figure within them. That person does not have to do much. They simply have to exist in the right place. Maybe no single photograph changed the way I see the world. It was the constant process of looking, comparing and questioning my own images that changed it. I think eventually you stop photographing only what you see and start photographing what you feel.



What‘s one photography rule you happily ignore and why?

One photography rule I am happy to ignore is the idea that a street photograph must always be completely spontaneous and unstaged. In the beginning, I believed that if I influenced a moment or asked someone to stand in a particular place, I was somehow cheating. I loved the idea of capturing time exactly as it happened, but I eventually realised that this way of thinking could also become a limitation. If placing a person somewhere deliberately makes the light, space and composition work together, why shouldn’t I do it? The photograph may no longer be traditional street photography, but that doesn’t matter to me. Today, I care much less about whether an image belongs to street photography, portraiture or another genre. If creating a photograph requires a small intervention, I am comfortable with that. What matters to me is not the category, but whether the image works and whether it reates something in the viewer.



What‘s one mistake every photographer should make at least once?

A mistake I made many times was going out with my camera and deliberately searching for subjects. I felt like I had to photograph something simply because I had brought my camera with me. As a result, I tried to force photographs instead of allowing them to happen. Today, I simply try to carry my camera with me as often as possible and keep my eyes open. Many of my best photographs have happened in places or moments where I least expected them. You don’t always have to be searching for a photograph. You have to be ready to recognise one when it suddenly appears in front of you. At the same time, that doesn’t mean walking around without intention. Sometimes you need to stop, slow down and really study your surroundings. Light, geometry, movement and a person sometimes need time to come together. You can’t force a great photograph. But you can learn to recognise one.



Looking back to when you first started photography, what advice would you give your younger self—and aspiring photographers today?

To other photographers, I would say: keep looking at your favourite photographs and pay attention to which ones truly move you. Not just the ones that are technically perfect or receive the most likes. The image that creates something inside you is probably closer to your own photographic language than you realise. Follow that feeling and try to understand exactly what itis that draws you to it. Looking back, I would also spend much less time going through different camera brands and lenses. If I could start again, I would probably buy a Ricoh GR IV Monochrome from the beginning and spend the money I saved on travelling instead. I think many photographers focus too much on the latest technology. A better camera can give you more possibilities, but it cannot teach you to recognise a moment worth photographing. In the end, it is not the camera that matters, but what you can see in the world through your own eyes.



Crossing Into Gold

Gert Ròdà

I was standing at this usually very busy intersection at Gammel Strand in Copenhagen on a hot Sunday afternoon, hoping for something interesting to shoot. I had actually given up hope and was thinking about going somewhere else when this young lady caught my attention. At first, it looked like she was going in another direction, but suddenly she changed her mind and walked straight into my frame. It felt like time and traffic stopped for just a moment, just for her. She crossed the road at the green light, and everything fell into place—the young lady, the colours, the shadows, and the light. Even the green pedestrian signal seemed to add something to the story: permission to move forward. Altogether, the photograph felt like a fleeting urban moment made significant by timing—a brief intersection of light, place, movement, and human presence. What struck me afterwards was how empty Copenhagen suddenly seemed. Gammel Strand is rarely this still, but for those few seconds, the intersection became almost like a stage, with the warm wall as a backdrop and a single person stepping into the light. I also like the way the frame seems divided into two worlds: the great golden wall in sunlight and the darker façade beside it. She appears almost at the boundary between the two, moving through that narrow strip where light and shadow meet. Against the scale of the architecture, she is very small, yet because the street is empty, she completely holds the picture. There are little details I didn't consciously arrange but which became important afterwards—the red of her shoes, the green pedestrian light, and the long shadows of the traffic signals. And because we never see her face, she remains anonymous. For a few seconds, she is simply a person passing through the city, with no beginning or ending to her story beyond the edges of the frame. It is one of those photographs that reminds me why I sometimes stay in one place and wait. You can choose the composition and watch the light, but you cannot plan the person who eventually completes the picture. A few seconds earlier or later, and the photograph simply wouldn't exist. The picture existed for only a few seconds, and then Copenhagen carried on.



(C) Gert Ròdà - groda71 Instagram
Shot with: Canon EOS R7, Canon RF-S 18–150mm

THE ARTIST AND HIS CAMERA

I've been following Kimin Choi's work for some time, and what continues to draw me in is the distinctive way he sees and interprets the world around him. There is a quiet confidence in his images, combined with a strong sense of atmosphere and emotion. His work has a visual identity that feels genuinely personal — and that's exactly why I wanted him to be part of Lens & Legacy.

KIMIN CHOI AND HIS CAMERA

Photography began for me with an interest in how an ordinary moment can be transformed within the boundaries of a frame. Over time, I became increasingly attentive to relationships—between people and space, light and darkness, movement and stillness, and the elements that briefly come together before separating again. Today, I work primarily with the Leica M11 Monochrom. Black and white is not simply an aesthetic choice for me; it is fundamental to how I read and construct an image. I am drawn to strong contrast, geometric lines and planes, patterns, negative space, and the presence of a person within those structures.



Kimin Choi, South Korea

Leica M11Monochrom
Leica Elmar-M 24mm f/3.8 ASPH.
Instagram - sinya_pic

THE ARTIST AND HIS CAMERA

At the same time, my work is not defined by contrast alone. I am equally interested in the tonal range between black and white, particularly the subtle gradations of midtones. They connect light and darkness while giving an image depth, continuity, and atmosphere. This reflects something central to my photography: I am constantly looking for connections—between a person and a place, between different visual elements, and between a fleeting moment and the atmosphere surrounding it. Rather than fitting every photograph into a particular visual formula, I respond to the character of the scene in front of me. Sometimes lines, planes, light, and shadow establish the image; at other times, a gesture, an expression, or a relationship between people becomes its center. What matters is recognizing what is essential to that moment and bringing those elements together within the frame. The visual form may change, but the way I observe and construct a photograph remains consistent. What draws me most to the Leica M is the direct connection it creates between myself and the act of photographing. The pace of my walk, the subtle movement of my body as I breathe, the way I raise the camera, and the movement of my fingers all become part of the rhythm of making a photograph. The Leica M keeps me conscious of these movements and in control, allowing me to remain fully engaged with the scene. Distance, focus, framing, and timing remain in my hands until the camera begins to feel less like a separate piece of equipment and more like an extension of my movement. Walking, stopping, breathing, framing, and releasing the shutter become one continuous rhythm—almost like a heartbeat running through the act of making a photograph. My primary lens is the Leica Elmar-M 24mm f/3.8 ASPH. I also work with 15mm and 28mm focal lengths, but 24mm provides the balance I prefer. It allows me to work close while retaining enough space for structure, scale, context, and negative space. If I could keep only one camera and one lens, I would choose the Leica M11 Monochrom and the Elmar-M 24mm f/3.8 ASPH. Together, they give me the directness, control, and freedom to translate the way I see into a photograph.

Four Shots, Four Stories

These four photographs, the stories behind them, are by Frieda Lams (Instagram: urbanstills.byfrieda), a photographer from Belgium whose work I deeply admire. What immediately draws me to Frieda's photography is her distinctive way of seeing and the atmosphere she creates within her images. There is a beautiful balance between composition, light and emotion, giving each photograph its own character and presence. Her ability to turn an ordinary moment into something memorable is exactly what makes her work stand out — and why I am happy to feature her in Lens & Legacy.

Sky High

The day I took this shot, it was -9°C, it felt like -17°C. There was no one on the streets. I had to take off one glove to shoot. After a while, my fingers were frozen, I couldn't feel them anymore. It had not been that cold in Berlin for 16 years. I did not give up.



Urban Elegance

One of my favorite pictures, the only one I've printed so far. It has been hanging on the wall of my living room for a few weeks now. I took several shots, with a cyclist, a man walking his dog, a runner …. But then this Vespa passed by. This was exactly the atmosphere I was looking for.



When Light And Shadow Meet

One of the first pictures I took when I started exploring this type of photography and still one of my favorites. When the sun is out, this place in Antwerp turns into something magical, with a wonderful shadow play. The man walking his dog adds to the sense of peace and tranquility created by this magical setting.



The Early Shift

Paris, my favorite European city. I had been wanting to take a shot from these steps for a while already. I had something else in mind. Something more classic. And suddenly, there was this man with a broom and a cart, early in the morning, wiping the steps, before the crowds arrived. That was what I really wanted to capture!



WHAT WE SEE MATTERS

Every photograph
is a small piece of time.
Some disappear.
Some stay with us.

Thank you for looking.
Next Sunday,
we continue.



Quiet.Grain - Eliah GK
Founder of Lens&Legacy

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