

It has only been 5 years since you first picked up a camera with the intention of combining travel with a creative pursuit. And yet stylistically your work demonstrates a consistent mature vision. How were you able to achieve a refined evocative style in such a relatively short amount of time?

I realised early on that I was drawn to evocative, contemplative, monochrome images. Within a year, I started to reflect that aesthetic in my own work. It was very much an intuitive response; I didn't have a creative vision and I think I would have struggled to explain why my images looked the way they did. A few years ago, I started writing about my photography: crafting my artist's statement, publishing blog posts, writing articles etc. It was transformational. It takes a lot of thinking, study and self-examination to be able to articulate one's thoughts and feelings. The process of writing about my work exposed me to new ideas and different ways of seeing the world and helped me understand why photography resonates with me, what inspires me, what I want to express through my images and why my images look the way they do. All of those ideas coalesced to produce a creative vision that is the foundation on which I've built and continue to refine my

portfolio



Bodies of water often are often featured in your images. Why does water attract you and specifically what is it about the Venetian lagoon that speaks to you?

I love being by water and, in particular, the sea. The space, the emptiness, the murmur of the waves - it decompresses my mind and unlocks my creativity. As a keen traveller, I also love the sea's promise; it whispers of faraway places and reminds us of our common humanity. Creatively, incorporating water into an image simplifies the composition and creates a sense of space, and by using different exposure times I can influence the viewer's perception of time. There are a number of water-based locations that inspire me and that I return to frequently, but the Venetian lagoon occupies a special place in my heart. I'm inspired by its fragility, its uniqueness, its audacity to exist, its contrasts, its light, its sublime beauty, its romanticism. At times, when lagoon and sky

seem to merge into a single sheet of silver-grey satin, I feel as if I'm standing at the edge of the world. There's nowhere like it. Visitors to Venice who confine themselves to the city centre don't know what they're missing.



The paradox of your work is that although you do not photograph people, there is great humanity in your images. They are suspended in time, away from the cacophony of life, and invite us into an embrace of contemplation and introspection. How does your interest in the Zen Buddhist philosophy of “Ma” contribute to the visual respite you provide in your images?

I've been fascinated by Japan ever since my godfather gave me a book about the country when I was a child. I became aware of the concept of ma only fairly recently; it's surprising because in Japan ma is a way of life and an intrinsic part of its art and culture. Ma translates roughly as a

'gap', 'space', 'pause' or 'the space between two parts', but as well as a physical space, it also signifies a pause in time. It manifests itself in different ways, but ultimately ma is the time and space in which we experience life; it creates the moments of awareness and quiet reflection that we need for our thoughts and imagination to flourish, allowing us to truly feel the quality of an experience. Discovering the concept of ma was a revelation as it encapsulates so many aspects of my photography: the act of photography creates ma in my life, the way my images look is an expression of ma, and the sense of introspection and quiet contemplation in my images encourages the viewer to find their own moment of ma.



You've written about the myriad of characteristics that are present when you photograph: "knowledge, technical and artistic experience, grit and determination, vision, and hope." Can you

please expand on this notion of anticipation in your work?

All of my images are taken outdoors. This means that however well I know a location, plan a shoot or have a vision of what I want to express, there will always be an element of the unknown and the uncontrollable. A significant part of photography consists of turning up at a location time and again hoping that something magical will happen. Quite often it doesn't. But occasionally, if you show up enough times, your patience and dedication is rewarded with something wonderful that enriches you not just as a photographer but as a person. For me, that sense of hope and anticipation is what makes photography so rewarding and enjoyable. And why the photographic experience is at least as important as the images I produce.



Your cover image for the book was shot during a 7-minute perfect storm of time, location and

weather. Can you please share with us how each piece of the puzzle contributed to how you were feeling at the time of the capture?

The cover image for the book was the culmination of a magical trip in January 2017. It was bitterly cold and I saw my first snowfall in Venice, which was very exciting. When I set up my tripod on the Zattere by the Dogana, I didn't think the trip could get any better. It's one of my favourite locations for sunset; setting up my tripod there is often little more than an excuse to watch the subtle changes of light on the lagoon and the façade of the buildings. When the sea mist started rising from the lagoon as the sun disappeared beneath the waves, I felt so many emotions: wonder and awe at the majesty of the sight, excitement, gratitude to have witnessed it (particularly whilst my camera and tripod were set up) and blessed to share the moment with a friend. I also felt a moment of panic - the sea mist lasted for such a short time and I was keen to capture the image! But even if I hadn't taken a single shot, it would have been a magical moment: the experience is everything.

Lisa Katsiaris

Dream of Venice in Black and White

JoAnn Locktov

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