

INTERVIEW WITH  
*AMIRA ISSMAIL*  
PHOTOGRAPHER, HAMBURG, GERMANY





Stefan Cimer  
Editor

Dear Friends and Readers!

Our twelfth issue takes us to Hamburg, Germany.

Photographer and artist Amira Issmail invites us to dwell and enjoy her artistic visions. The combination of vivid portraits and documentary photography is a captivating reflection of Hamburg's society.

Amira is a well known and popular part of the scene.

Please join us on this vivid journey full of captivating and remarkable pictures.

Enjoy reading



***Please tell us a little bit about yourself to begin with.***



I was born in the north of Germany - near the Danish border.  
My father was from Iraq - my mother German.

I lived in Tokyo - I mention this, cause Tokyo impressed me the most.  
Basically I'm not that good in talking about myself - that's also a reason, why I'm taking photos  
- they tell a lot about me, even more as about my models.



## ***What is street photography for you?***

A form of meditation, I become really focused ...

Being outside – getting in contact with the nature, breathing the fresh air.

In buzzwords: social contacts, fun, art, rebellion, adrenaline, passion, freedom and expressing myself.



**Could you share with us how you first became interested in photography in general?**

I think – it was quite early, but can't remember exactly – I was always interested in any kind of art.

I started taking photos only two years ago. Out of boredom. I just took my red Kodak pocket camera, which I was using to photograph my clothes and hit the streets.

Quite soon some scater boys ran in front of my camera – that was the key moment – so I thought to myself – that's an amazing effect, maybe I try it with other people too. And that's how it started – totally out of the blue.



**Amira, I've browsed through your fantastic work on Facebook and found a lot of impressive street photos. Would you say that street portraits characterize your work most?**

That's interesting – I never thought about it – but I don't think so – just a part of my work.

I'm interested in portraits, because I want to know, what people offer me; it's like my personal diary. There are a lot of portrait photographs on my Facebook page, because I'm meeting so many people and they like to see their photos. Beside of that it's also good advertising for me. I'm showcasing only a small part of my work on Facebook, so it's no statistics.



**What is it in your subject that makes you want to capture them and what equipment are you using to achieve your artistic vision?**

People make me want to capture them mainly. I observe colors, pattern, structures, shadows interactions, locations and emotion, a lot of things.

I'm using a Nikon D5300 now. One of my photo books is always in my bag, to show people my work. My MP3 player goes with me everywhere, music is important to me. It keeps me swinging all day long. No smart phone! Model release contracts. An important piece of paper, particularly in Germany. My business cards and a few other things.



**How much do you interact with your subjects and what kind of reactions do you get?**

A lot. I'm approached by people all the time. I'm also well-known and instantly recognized in the streets of Hamburg. I get mainly positive reactions; people are interested in what I do and who I am.

I love being in contact with people, it makes me and them laugh and smile a lot and many people, surprisingly, ask me to take their picture.



**Among your works, would you name one as your favorite and why?**

Yes, this photo is one of my first and it touches me a lot. There have been actually two boys playing. I suppose it got to hot for him.  
It's interesting how reality and visual impression are differing sometimes.



***Has your style of shooting changed since you first started?***

There should be a development of course, I'm using the flash also by daylight now, but I'm still interested in the same things.... it always depends on what kind of people you meet – right time – right place – these are the key words – and weather is the main problem here in Hamburg – we're not that blessed !!



***Are there any photographers how took influence on your photographic work and style?***

I'm mostly influenced by fashion photographers and movies (mainly American and French). I'm eclectic, I'm getting my ideas from different things and styles – I get inspired by so many things and I put them all together to create something of my own - unique.

André Putman was using it in the interior design for example – also to be found in the philosophy – taking the best out of different styles and then mixing it – that's the attraction! I see myself more as an artist – street photography is just a genre – I'm using – I'm interested in life and people!



**What are some of the most important lessons you have learned from shooting on streets?**

People are very friendly and open – they are happy to see me! I stick out. Everybody is noticing me by my style and I'm carrying a big camera with me. Everybody should have the chance to say no, I don't want my photo to be taken.

Take care of your camera. Be yourself and always take humour with you.

Don't judge about your street models and try always to make them look as best as possible – try to make them to little stars!

As Andy Warhol once said: "In the future everybody will be world famous for 15 minutes."



**Are there any special projects you're working on currently which you would like to introduce here?**

Don't cross your bridges before you come to them. Things come different and unexpected – that's what life taught me – let me surprise you!!

Stefan – thanks so much – I'm honored being part among all the other amazing street photographers and as you told me the first from Germany– my respect to you and your team, because you told me – it's a non-profit project.

***Amira, thank you very much for taking your precious time and let us have your thoughts and views!***





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<https://www.facebook.com/amira.issmail>

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