



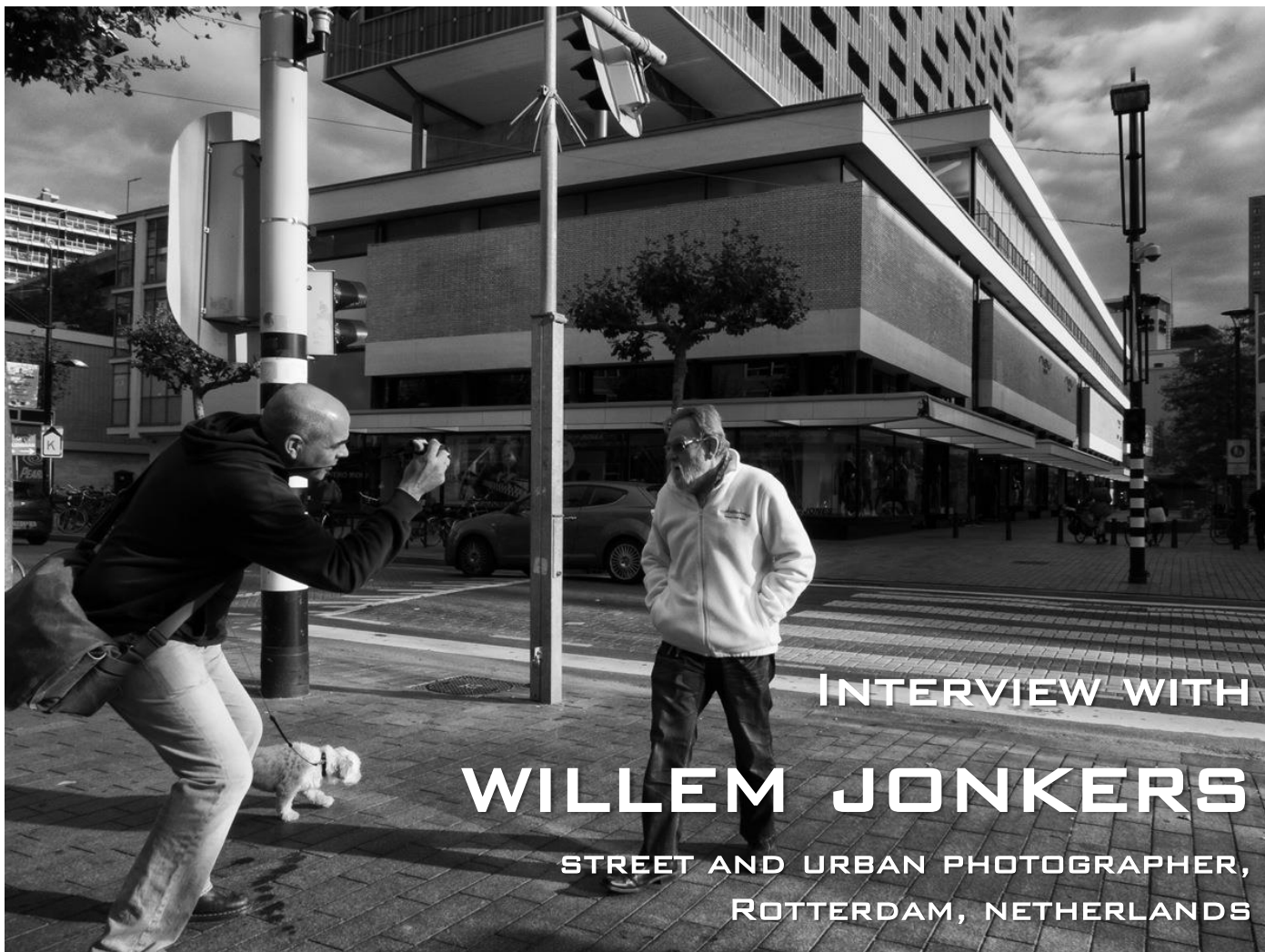
**EYE PHOTO
MAGAZINE**

BY STEFAN GIMER

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

#02

WEEK 26, JUNE 2015



INTERVIEW WITH

WILLEM JONKERS

**STREET AND URBAN PHOTOGRAPHER,
ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS**

HELLO WILLEM, WE ARE VERY HONORED TO BE ABLE TO INTERVIEW YOU FOR OUR FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER FORMAT ON OUR BLOG „THE WORLD IN MY EYES“.

YOU ARE A VERY EXPERIENCED STREET AND URBAN PHOTOGRAPHER AS WELL AS GREAT BLOGGER WITH GREAT BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE.

WE WAS FASCINATED BY READING YOUR BLOG AND AMAZED BY YOUR STREET PHOTOGRAPHY GALLERY ON YOUR HOMEPAGE

WWW.WILLEMJONKERS.COM.

PLEASE TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOU TO BEGIN WITH.

FIRST OF STEFAN, THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME FOR THIS INTERVIEW. IT'S AN HONOUR! I'M NOT THAT EXPERIENCED THOUGH SINCE I FIRST STARTED ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO. I HAVE A DAYTIME JOB AS AN INVESTMENT ADVISOR AND STREET PHOTOGRAPHY IS JUST A HOBBY OF MINE. ALTHOUGH, I DO FEEL IT'S A BIG AND IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE AND MY DOG'S WHO IS ALWAYS ACCOMPANYING ME ON MY STREET WALKS.



HOW DID YOU GET INTO PHOTOGRAPHY IN GENERAL?

I ALWAYS HAD AN SLR, BUT ONLY TO TAKE VACATION SNAPSHOTS AND THAT KIND OF STUFF. MY WIFE SANDRA BOUGHT A COMPACT CAMERA AND SHE WANTED TO DO A BEGINNERS COURSE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TECHNIQUE. I JOINED HER AND GOT HOOKED TO PHOTOGRAPHY. AFTER THAT WE TOOK MORE COURSES TOGETHER AND WENT ALONG TOGETHER ON THIS PATH.

THAT'S CERTAINLY QUITE AN INTERESTING ENTRY INTO PHOTOGRAPHY.
STREET PHOTOGRAPHY, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS REALLY A SPECIFIC ART
FORM.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO STREET & URBAN PHOTOGRAPHY?

DURING THE PREVIOUS MENTIONED COURSES, WE TOOK ON STREET
PHOTOGRAPHY AFTER WE'VE TRIED DIFFERENT KINDS LIKE MACRO,
ARCHITECTURAL AND SO ON.

THAT WAS JUST NOT OUR THING...

STREET PHOTOGRAPHY IS SOMETHING I CAN DO AT ANY TIME DURING THE
DAY AND BESIDES THAT I JUST LIKE PEOPLE.



AGREE! PHILANTHROPY IS DEFINITELY ADVANTAGEOUS IN DOING STREET PHOTOGRAPHY.

WHAT EQUIPMENT ARE YOU USING NOW AND WITH WHAT DID YOU GET STARTED?

I STARTED OUT WITH A DSLR AND A ZOOM LENS... QUICKLY I LEARNED THAT THIS WASN'T THE WAY TO GO FOR ME.

I MISSED THAT PROFOUNDNESS IN MY SHOTS WHICH ONE GETS WHEN MOVING IN VERY CLOSE.

THEN I BOUGHT A FUJI X-T1 WITH A 23MM F1.4 PRIME.

AFTER SHOOTING FOR A WHILE I STILL FELT THAT THIS LENS WASN'T GETTING ME CLOSE ENOUGH AND I BOUGHT A 14MM F2.8 TO OVERCOME THAT ISSUE. LATER ON I BOUGHT THE 8MM TO GET EXTREMELY CLOSE...



ARE YOU USING FILM OR DO YOU SHOOT DIGITAL OR BOTH?

I USE DIGITAL.

I AM THINKING ABOUT GETTING AN ANALOGUE CAMERA THOUGH. I THINK SHOOTING FILM WILL LEARN ME TO BE MORE OBSERVANT AND BE MORE CRITICAL TO TAKE A SHOT OR NOT.

WHEN I GO OUT I TAKE 50 TO 75 SHOTS WHICH USED TO BE LIKE 200 SHOTS, SO I'VE LEARNED THAT A BIT ALREADY, BUT IT CAN BE BETTER.

BESIDES THAT, I THINK FILM LOOKS MUCH NICER. MORE SOFT, CRISP... MORE REAL!



WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE MOTIFS IN STREET AND URBAN PHOTOGRAPHY AND WHY?

JUST PHOTOGRAPHING EVERYDAY PEOPLE AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY, INTERACTING WITH THEM SOMETIMES, BEING OUTSIDE WITH MY DOG WHO IS ALWAYS WITH ME, FEELING THE VIBRANCE OF THE CITY.



WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVATION FOR DOING STREET AND URBAN PHOTOGRAPHY?

I LOVE PEOPLE. I LOVE INTERACTING WITH THEM, WATCHING THEM DOING THEIR THING AND APPROACHING THEM VERY CLOSE. THOUSANDS OF SECONDS PASS BY EVERY SECOND.

CATCHING AN INTERESTING CHARACTER IN MY OWN INVASIVE WAY IS AN AWESOME EXPERIENCE EVERY TIME I DO IT.

THE INTERACTIONS I GET SOMETIMES ARE MOSTLY VERY NICE WHICH IS THE CHERRY ON THE PIE.



ONE OF THE MOST CAPTIVATING SERIES, WE FOUND ON YOUR HOMEPAGE IS THE 8MM EXTREME WIDE ANGLE GALLERY.

I'M REALLY CURIOUS ABOUT HOW YOU'VE DISCOVERED THIS ULTRA WIDE ANGLE FOR STREET PHOTOGRAPHY.

THE RESULTS, IN MY OPINION ARE BOTH: QUITE UNIQUE AND OUTSTANDING.

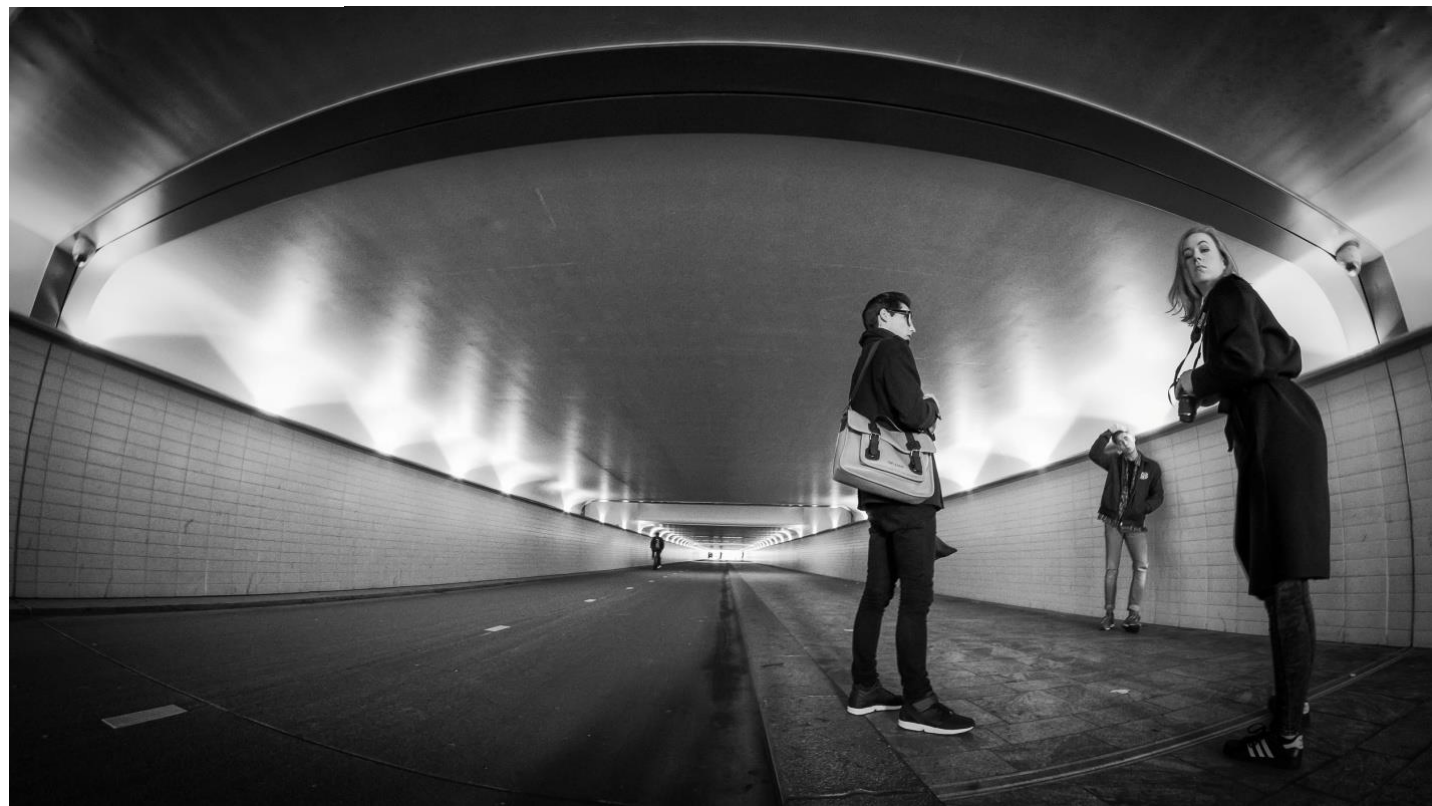
I SAW A STREET SHOT FROM ANDREAS SEILER WHICH HE TOOK WITH A FISHEYE AND THOUGHT IT WAS INTERESTING, BUT NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT THEREAFTER.

IT WAS STEVEN GONZALEZ WHO INSPIRED ME TO GET ME THAT 8MM.

I THINK HE'S A VERY INSPIRING PHOTOGRAPHER, ARTISTICALLY WISE AND HAD A CHAT WITH HIM ABOUT THAT LENS.

I BOUGHT IT AND FOUND MY OWN WAY WITH IT.





THROUGH THE USE OF AN 8MM AND GOING IN REALLY CLOSE I INVADE PEOPLES PRIVATE SPACE.

WHAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THAT IS NOT A CONCERN FOR ME, SINCE I DON'T CARE WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF ME IN GENERAL.

THAT'S A STRENGTH I HAVE AND USE THAT TO THE FULLEST IN MY PHOTOGRAPHY.

I THINK THROUGH THE USE OF THIS LENS I LET PEOPLE COME OUT VERY PROFOUND AND LET THEM FILL THE FRAME WITHOUT CROPPING AFTERWARDS.

IT REALLY SETS MY SUBJECT AT THE CENTRE STAGE WHICH IS WHAT I LIKE TO ACHIEVE IN MY SHOTS.

BESIDES THAT, WE AS A HUMAN RACE ARE SO TINY WITHIN THE BIGGER PICTURE OF EARTH AND THE UNIVERSE, WHICH MAKES MY SHOTS VERY CONTRADICTIONARY.

WE'RE ALL IN A BUBBLE...

WHAT DAYTIME, IF ANY, DO YOU CONSIDER AS THE BEST TIME FOR STREET PHOTOGRAPHY?

I LIKE SHOOTING IN THE SPRING AND THE SUMMER, BUT LOVE THE LOW LIGHT DURING WINTERS.



DO YOU PREFER HARSH LIGHT SITUATION, WHICH GIVES YOU EXTREME CONTRASTS FOR YOUR STREET CAPTURES?

I DON'T REALLY TIME MY PHOTO WALKS, BUT EARLY MORNINGS AND LATE EVENINGS ARE THE BEST TIMES I THINK.

DURING MY INVESTIGATIONS ABOUT STREET PHOTOGRAPHY I FOUND THAT IN MOST CASES, STREET PHOTOGRAPHERS PREFER TO PROCESS THEIR PHOTOS IN BLACK AND WHITE.

HOWEVER YOU HAVE SOME REAL VIBRANT PICTURES IN YOUR GALLERY AS WELL.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS BEHIND THE PROCESSING?

WHAT IS YOUR DECISION TO LET A PICTURE REMAIN IN COLOUR OR TO PROCESS IT IN BLACK AND WHITE?

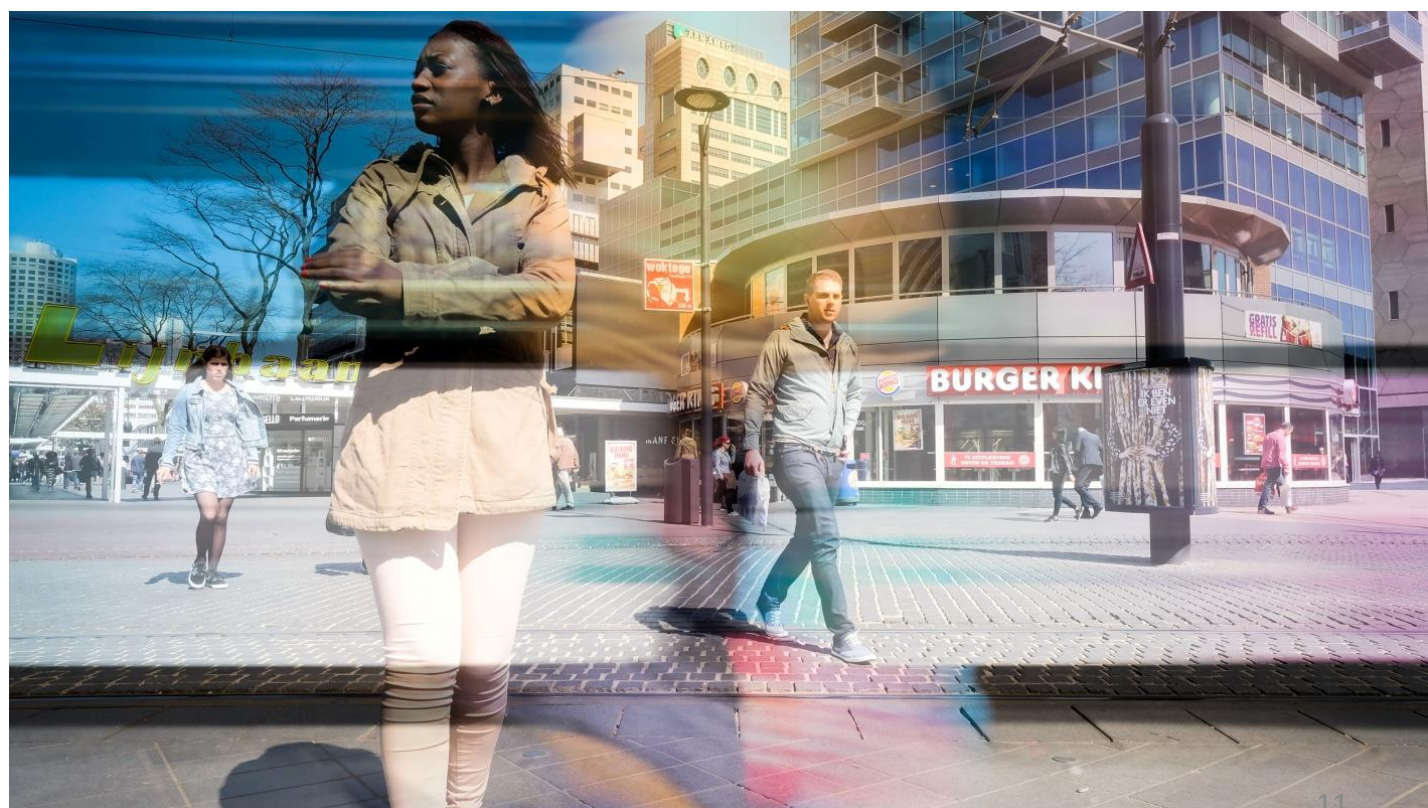
SOMETIMES A PERSON STANDS OUT THROUGH VERY COLOURFUL CLOTHING OR SOMETHING, THEN I CHOOSE THAT.

BUT MY COLOUR WORK IS ACTUALLY A BIT EXPERIMENTAL.

I PREFER B/W BECAUSE IT DOESN'T DISTRACT TOO MUCH FROM WHAT THE IMAGE IS ALL ABOUT. IF YOU JUDGE A COLOUR SHOT, IS IT THE COLOUR THAT YOU LIKE OR IS IT THE WAY THE SUBJECT IS PHOTOGRAPHED?

I FIND IT VERY HARD TO JUDGE A COLOUR SHOT BY IT'S MEANS AND NOT GET DISTRACTED BY IT'S COLOURS.

DON'T EXPECT MUCH COLOUR WORK FROM ME I GUESS...



WILLEM, CAN YOU REMEMBER A VERY SPECIAL INCIDENT WHILST SHOOTING ON STREET AND WOULD YOU LIKE TO TELL US A FEW WORDS ABOUT IT?

THERE'S NOT ONE VERY SPECIAL INCIDENT, SINCE I FEEL ALL MY INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS WHOM I PHOTOGRAPHED ARE SPECIAL. OFTEN PEOPLE SEND ME AN EMAIL WITH A REQUEST FOR THEIR PHOTOGRAPH AND THEY ALL ARE VERY ENTHOUSIASTIC ABOUT MY STUFF.



DO YOU THINK IT'S MORE DIFFICULT TO DO STREET PHOTOGRAPHY IN YOUR COUNTRY THEN IN OTHERS? HOW IS THE LEGAL SITUATION IN THE NETHERLANDS?

IN THE NETHERLANDS, THE PHOTOGRAPHER HAS THE RIGHT TO PORTRAIT AS LONG AS YOU DON'T SHOOT FAMOUS PEOPLE OR SELL YOUR PHOTOGRAPH TO A COMPANY WHICH WILL USE IT IN AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR EXAMPLE. IN MY COUNTRY YOU CAN PHOTOGRAPH ANY PEOPLE YOU WANT. ESPECIALLY IF IT'S FOR JOURNALISTIC OR ARTISTIC PURPOSES.

HOW DO PEOPLE REACT TO YOU ON STREETS? DO YOU EXPOSE YOURSELF AS A PHOTOGRAPHER OR ARE YOU TRYING TO BE INCONSPICUOUS IN THE CROWD?

BY GOING IN AS CLOSE AS I AM, I GET NOTICED. PERIOD. MOST OF THE TIME PEOPLE ARE VERY SURPRISED WHEN I BEND OVER DEEP TOWARDS THE GROUND RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM, BUT THEY DON'T SAY ANYTHING IN GENERAL.

MOSTLY THEY JUST SMILE AFTERWARDS AND EVEN APOLOGIES SOMETIMES FOR GETTING IN MY WAY, NOT REALIZING I TOOK THEIR PHOTOGRAPH.

WHEN GOING IN THAT CLOSE PEOPLE SEEM TO THINK I PHOTOGRAPH SOMETHING ELSE, BECAUSE THEY DON'T EXPECT THIS.

IF THEY DO REACT, I JUST EXPLAIN WHAT I DO, GIVE THEM MY CARD AND OFFER THEM TO EMAIL THE SHOT.

PEOPLE JUST WANT TO KNOW IF I'M NOT SOME KIND OF FREAK WITH POOR INTENTIONS.



HAVE YOU EVER HAD TO FACE UNPLEASANT OR DANGEROUS SITUATION ON STREET?

SOMETIMES PEOPLE REACT A BIT ANNOYED, BUT WHEN I EXPLAIN THEY'RE OK WITH WHAT I DO IN GENERAL.

IF THEY DON'T WANT THEIR PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN, I DELETE IT.

IF THEY REACT ANNOYED OR ANGRY AND MOVE ON, I MOVE ON TOO AND REALLY COULDN'T CARE LESS.

SO UNPLEASANT OR DANGEROUS? NO, NEVER... JUST BECAUSE I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT AND THUS DON'T EXPERIENCE IT LIKE THAT. JUST BE POLITE IF THEY INTERACT AND SMILE.

OFFER THE PHOTOGRAPH AND MOVE ON.



DO YOU HAVE ANY IDOLS IN PHOTOGRAPHY OR IN STREET PHOTOGRAPHY (LIKE THOMAS LEUTHARD, ZACK ARIAS OR ERIC KIM, TO NAME JUST A FEW)?

NO. I DO THINK THERE ARE GREAT STREET PHOTOGRAPHERS OUT THERE, BUT I DON'T IDOLIZE THEM.

I'M IN SEARCH AND PROGRESSING TOWARDS INVENTING AND DEVELOPING MY OWN STYLE.

BESIDES THAT, I THINK PEOPLE LIKE ERIC KIM DO A GREAT JOB GETTING KNOWLEDGE OUT THERE, BUT THEY'RE ALSO VERY GOOD AT MARKETING THEMSELVES AND ASK A SHIT LOAD OF MONEY FOR A WORKSHOP (\$1.200 FOR 3 DAYS) WITHOUT ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHING TO BE A VERY GOOD OR DISTINCTIVE STREET PHOTOGRAPHER THEMSELVES.

I DO LIKE BRUCE GILDEN AND MARK COHEN IF I MUST NAME A FEW BIG NAMES. I LIKE THEIR STYLE AND CLOSENESS.

ALSO MICHAEL ERNEST SWEET IS ONE I THINK IS VERY GOOD. ALSO BECAUSE OF HIS OWN STYLE AND HIS CLOSENESS TO HIS SUBJECTS.



HOW DO YOU THINK STREET PHOTOGRAPHY WILL DEVELOP IN FUTURE?

IT WILL BE HARDER TO DISTINGUISH FROM ALL THE OTHERS.

BUT WITH ALL THE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS I SEE A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR STREET PHOTOGRAPHY.

ALTHOUGH, THERE ARE SO MANY NOWADAYS, IT WILL BE MUCH HARDER TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR YOUR WORK AND AS AN ARTIST AS OPPOSED TO A FEW DECADES AGO.



DO YOU HAVE ANY CURRENT PROJECT YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT?

I DON'T HAVE ANY PROJECTS GOING ON RIGHT NOW, BUT I'M TRYING HARD TO EXPLORE AND GET THE MOST OUT OF THE 8MM.



THANK YOU VERY MUCH WILLEM FOR HAVING YOUR TIME AND YOUR PRECIOUS THOUGHT ABOUT AND BEHIND YOUR FANTASTIC WORK. WE ENJOYED BOTH, CONDUCTING THIS INTERVIEW AND DOING THE EDITORIAL WORK AS WELL.

PLEASE CHECK WILLEM'S FANTASTIC SITE FOR MORE PHOTOS AND ENJOY HIS INSIGHTFUL BLOG AT WWW.WILLEMJONKERS.COM.

EDITORIAL NOTICE:

PUBLISHING, LAYOUT AND CONCEPTION: STEFAN CIMER
EDITOR: ELLA CIMER
LOGO DESIGN: ANDREAS BURGHARDT
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PHONE: +43 680 214 72 17
E-MAIL: EYE.PHOTOMAGAZINE@GMAIL.COM
EYE - MAGAZINE: [HTTP://EYE-PHOTOMAGAZINE.WEEBLY.COM](http://EYE-PHOTOMAGAZINE.WEEBLY.COM)
FACEBOOK: WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EYE.PHOTOMAGAZINE