



ADRIAN SCHAUB

— photographs with soul —

Photographs with soul

Inspirations for creative photography

May 29 2024

«One machine can do the work of fifty ordinary men.
No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man»

Elbert Hubbard, Writer (1856-1915)

“The best camera is the one you have with you”

Jay Maisel, Photograph (1931 -)

“The question is not what you look at, but what you see”

Henri David Thoreau, Writer (1817-1862)

Goal

-> The lecture intends to inspire the audience to pick up a camera, go out and capture their own image of the world

Agenda

- Basic technical knowledge (aperture and focal length)
- The photographic "Aromat" - the all-purpose settings
- important considerations: the three W's of the message (Why, (from) Where & hoW)
- Enhancing the message with the two C's (contrast and composition)
- The path to your own style ("finding not searching")
- Four inspiring photo books (Feininger, Fan Ho, Cartier-Bresson and Magnum)
- The most important thing: the f-factor

Disclaimer

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«If you disagree with some of my choices I shall be pleased. We arrive at values only through dialectic.»

Anthony Burgess, Writer (1917 – 1993)

-> not a comprehensive, objective photography course but a subjective tour d'horizon of elements of creative photography

Photography is painting with light

Photography is painting with light

- Film (or sensor) captures light
 - The aim is a "correct" exposure (not too bright or too dark)
 - Unit of measurement for light / dark: Exposure Value (EV, e.g. sunny EV 15, cloudy EV 13)
- Lens has two variables: Aperture and aperture time, where "small aperture and long time" corresponds to the same amount of light as "large aperture and short time"
- ISO = light sensitivity of the film/sensor: higher sensitivity enables the similar time/aperture combination with less light
- > trilogy: time-aperture-ISO

Exposure Value		ISO=400								
S.S	1.4	2	2.8	4	5.6	8	11	16	22	
1/30	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1/60	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1/125	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1/250	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1/500	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1/1000	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1/2000	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	

EV16	Sunny, Beach, Sand, Snow	EV13	Overcast
EV15	Sunny	EV12	Heavy Overcast
EV14	Slightly Overcast / Hazy sun		



Technical fundamentals :

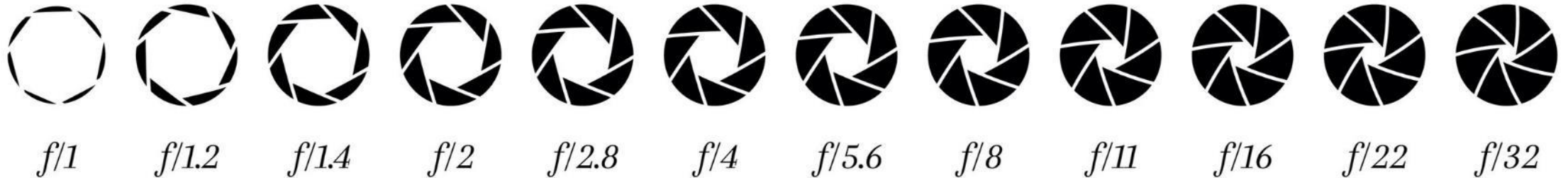
Aperture and focal length

Aperture

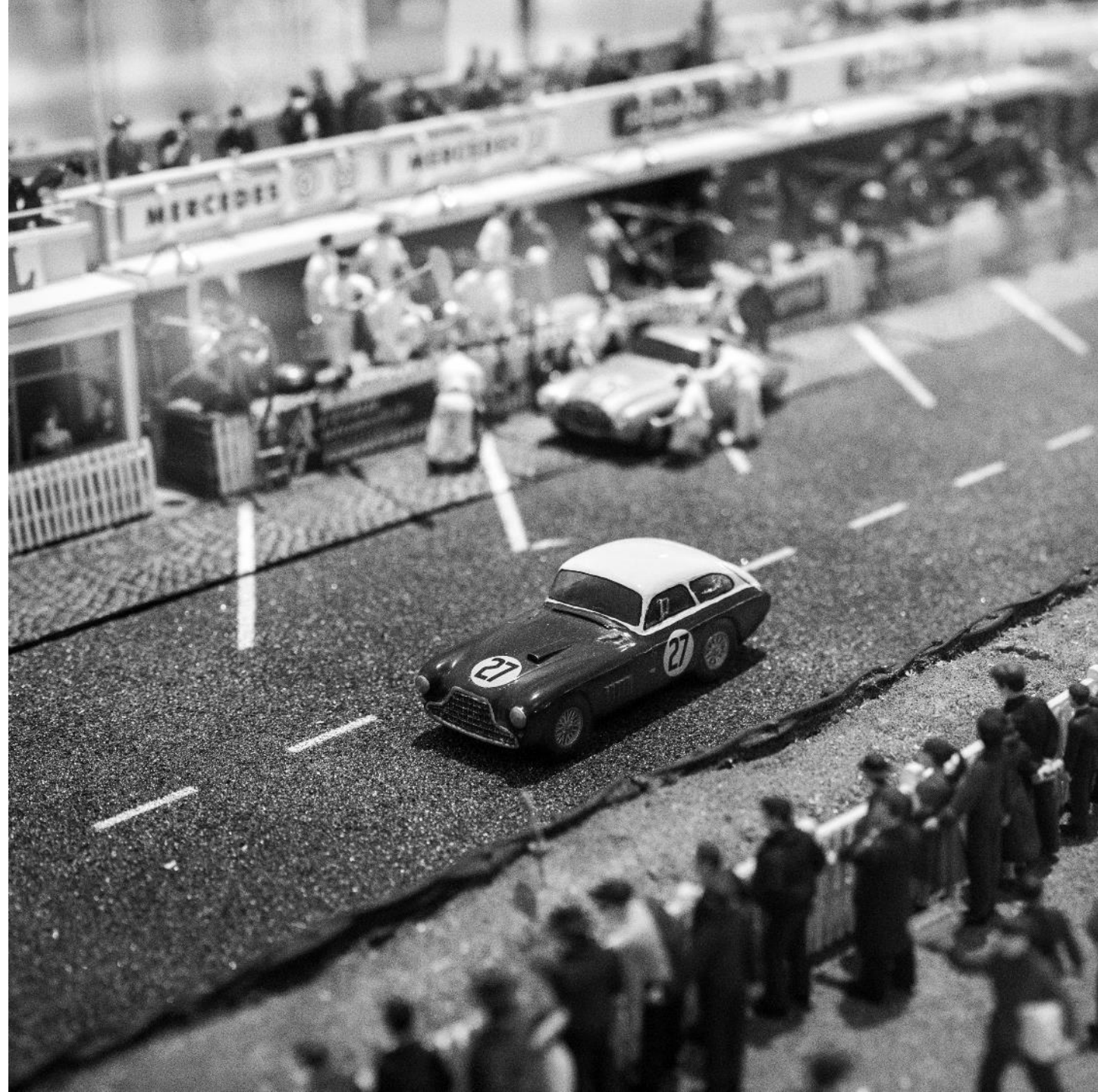
Aperture and shutter speed

Aperture

- For technicians: Large number = small aperture
- For creatives: Large number = large depth of field
- For nerds: number = focal length / aperture
 - Example: 50 mm focal length with 25 mm aperture = $f/2$, with 2 mm aperture = $f/25$
 - f = f-stop, where the f stands for focal length



Wide aperture - shallow depth of field



Medium aperture

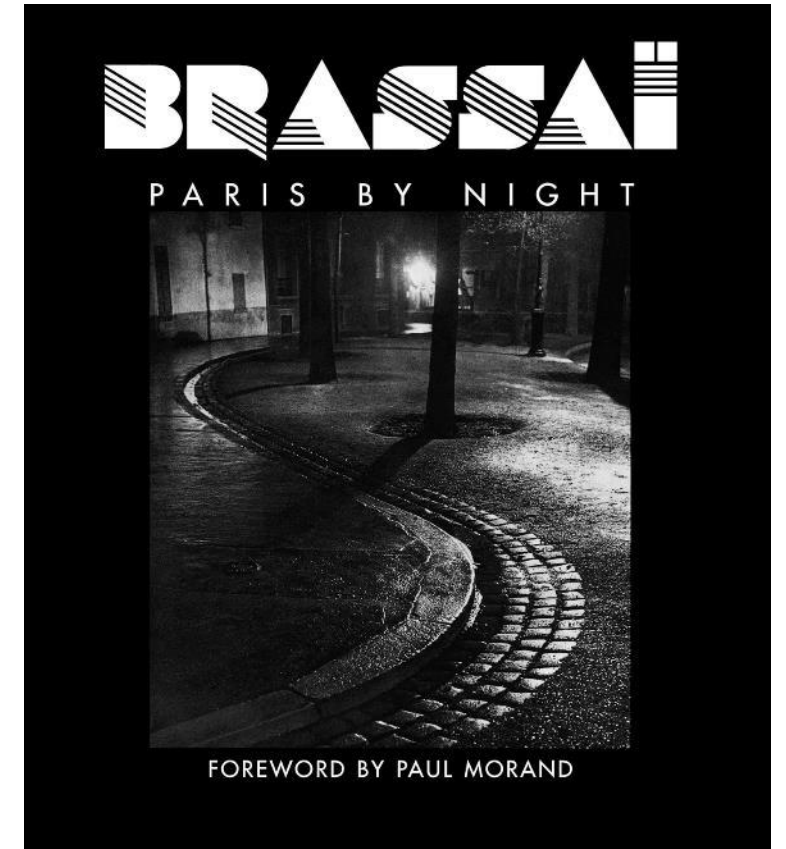


Small aperture - large depth of field



Shutter speed

- Brassai, Paris by night (1933): Gauloise or Cigarillo
- For technicians: Big number = short time
- For creative people: Large number = great sharpness
- For nerds: 250 = 1/250 seconds



Fast shutter speed - "freezing" the movement





Average shutter speed - sharpness depending on the subject





Slow shutter speed - motion blur

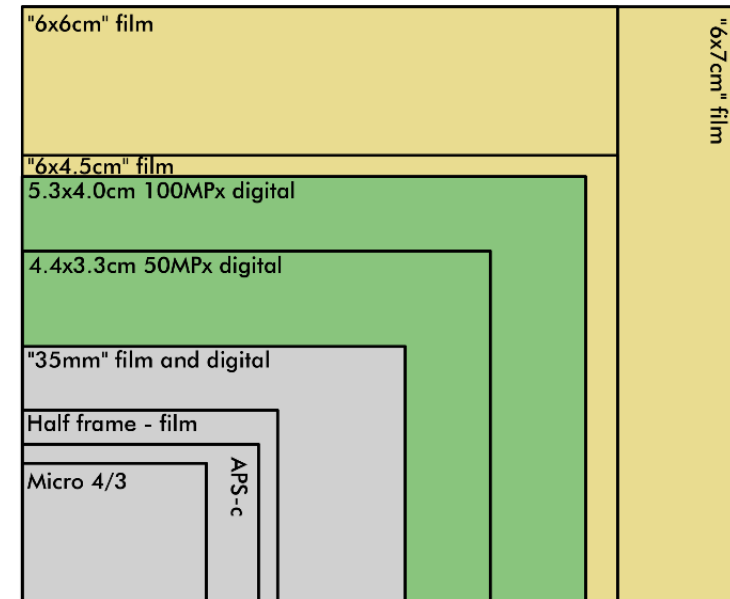
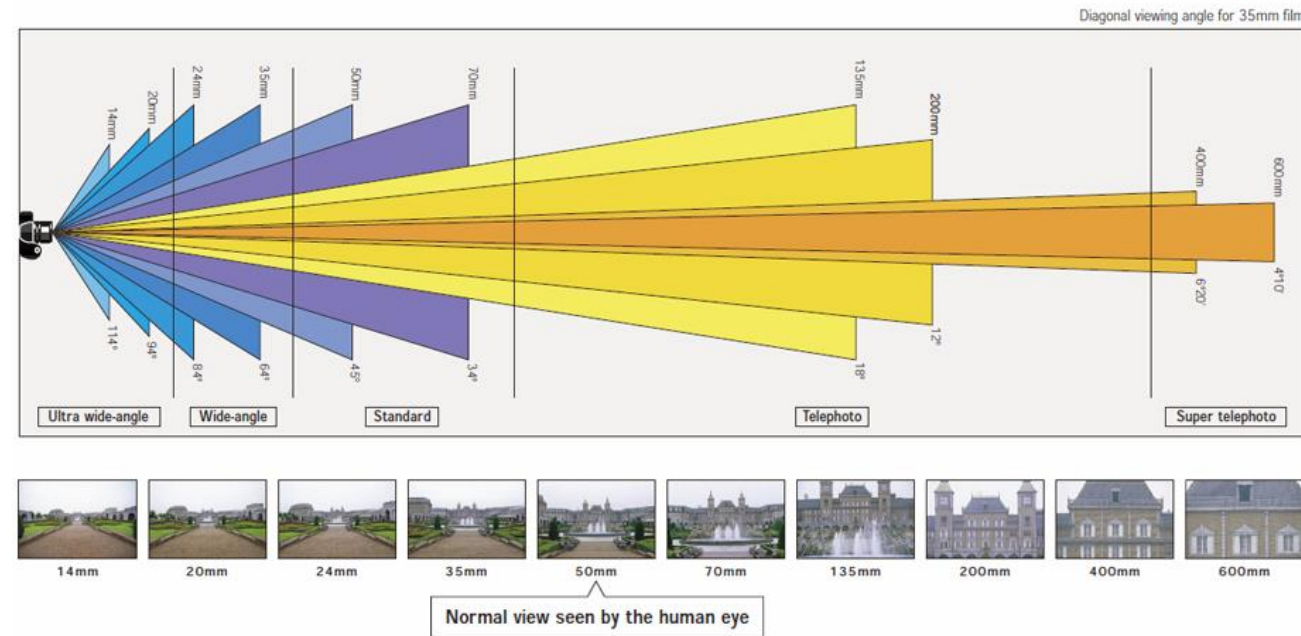




Focal length

Focal length

- For technicians: Large number = small image section
- For creatives: Large number = small depth of field
- For nerds:
 - Focal length = distance between the main plane of the lens and the film/sensor
 - Focal length depends on the sensor, i.e. "normal lens" (approx. 46 degrees) is
 - 85 mm in analog Medium Format (6 x 6 cm)
 - 65 mm in digital Medium Format (4.4 x 3.3 cm)
 - 50 mm in analog 35 mm / digitale full format (3.6 x 2.4 cm)



Wide angle



Standard lens



Telephoto lens



Macro lens



Fixed focal length or zoom?

Focal lengths in practice

For practitioners (I): Advantages and disadvantages of the zoom

- Advantage of zoom: flexibility
- Advantage of fixed focal length: conscious choice of focal length

For practitioners (II): Planning instead of carrying

- Multiple lenses are physical ballast (weight, space)
- Several lenses are intellectual ballast (need to make decisions)
- > Take only lens with you that suits the purpose (telephoto for zoo, macro for plants etc.)

For practitioners (III) "one size fits all"

- Standard lens "fits" for 99% of situations

Standard Lens – Extreme Long Shot (ELS)



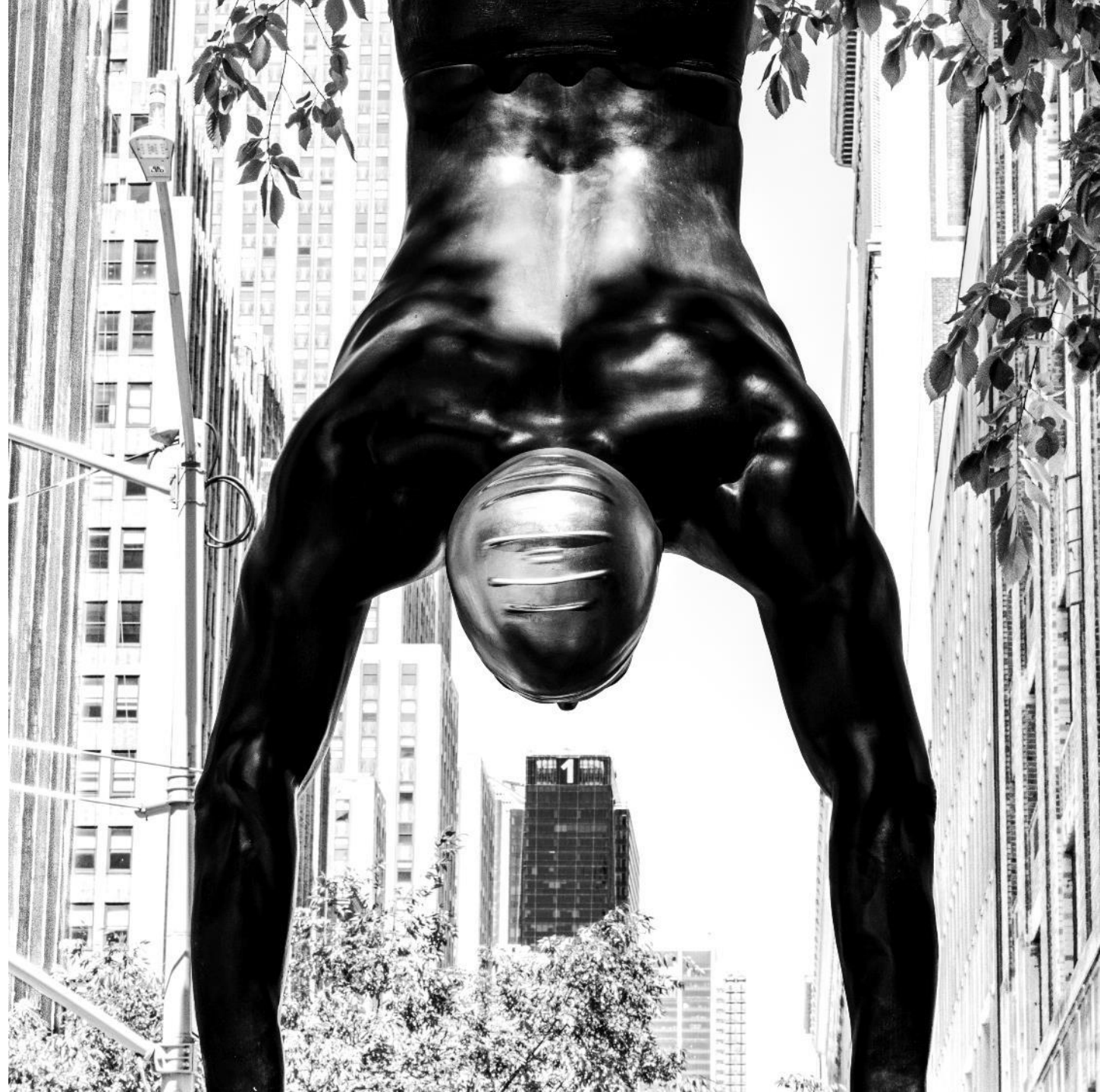
Standard Lens – Long / Wide Shot (LS)



Standard Lens – Medium Long Shot (MLS)



Standard Lens – Medium Shot (MS)



Standard Lens – Medium Close-up (MCU)



Standard Lens – Close-up (CU)



Standard Lens – Extreme Close-up (ECU)



Always ready - the photographic Aromat

- “Aromat” = Swiss culinary all-purpose weapon
- My photographic “all-purpose” basic settings are
 - Standard lens
 - ISO 400
 - Shutter speed presetting: 1/125 sec
 - Manual focus with autofocus support (AF-D)





Reflections on the picture's message

Why? (from) Where? How?

1. why?

Message

First question: "Why am I taking this picture?"

- What do I particularly like about this scene?
 - > Henri Cartier-Bresson: "de quoi s'agit-il?"
- should be understood without accompanying words
 - > Martin Mull: "writing about music is like dancing about architecture"
- Content is more important than technology
 - > Dan Winters: "the why is more important than the how"



Weather moods





Night mood





Summer mood





People's facial expressions





Animal facial expressions





Animal interaction





Body posture





Shapes and structures









2. From where?

Message

Second question: "From where can I best capture this?"

- Choose perspective
 - physical: eye level, above or below
 - Exposure: illuminated or backlit
 - direct or indirect (mirror)

Eye level



From above





From below



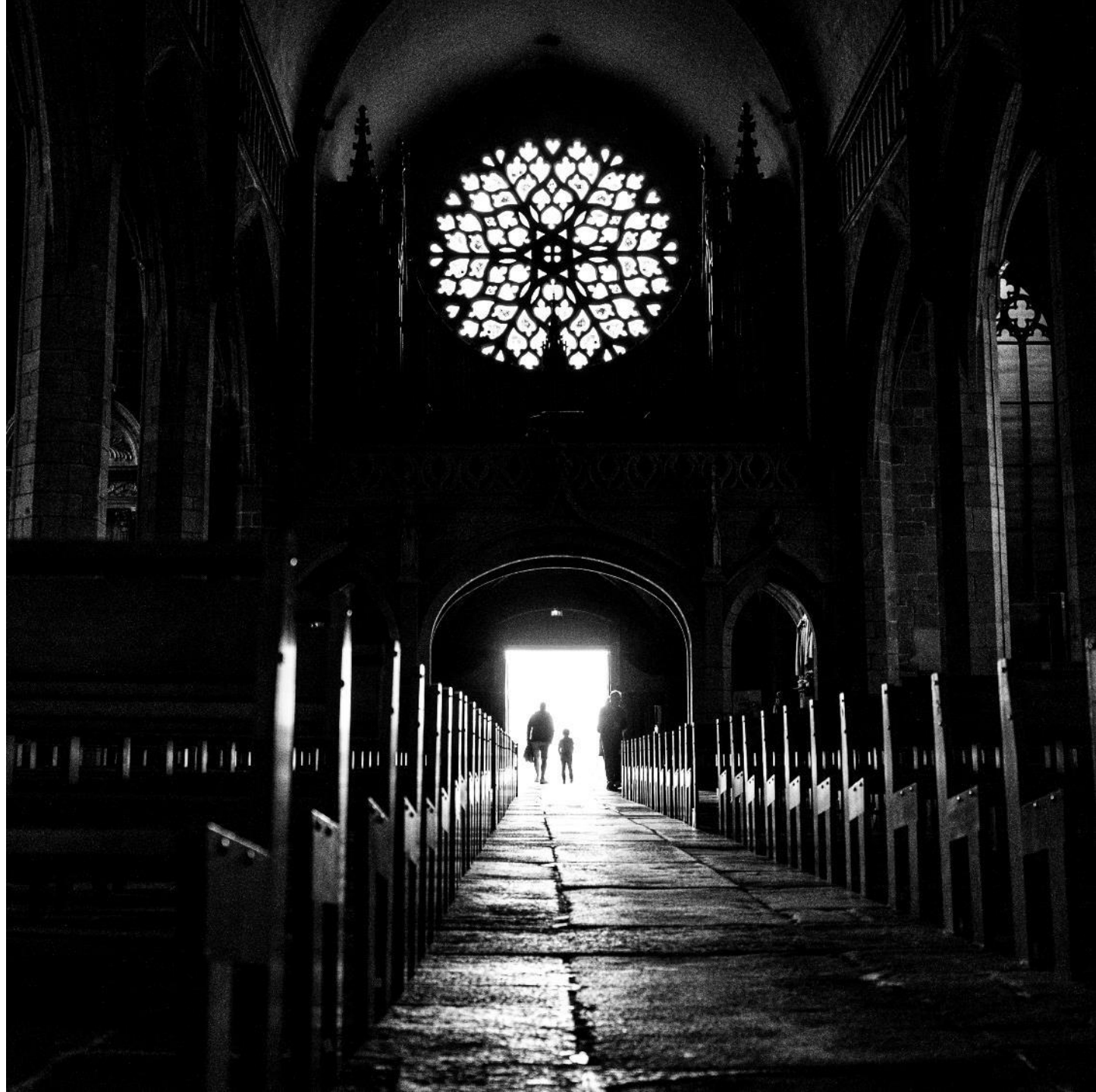


Illuminated





Backlight





In the mirror



DOUANE



(Also) in the mirror





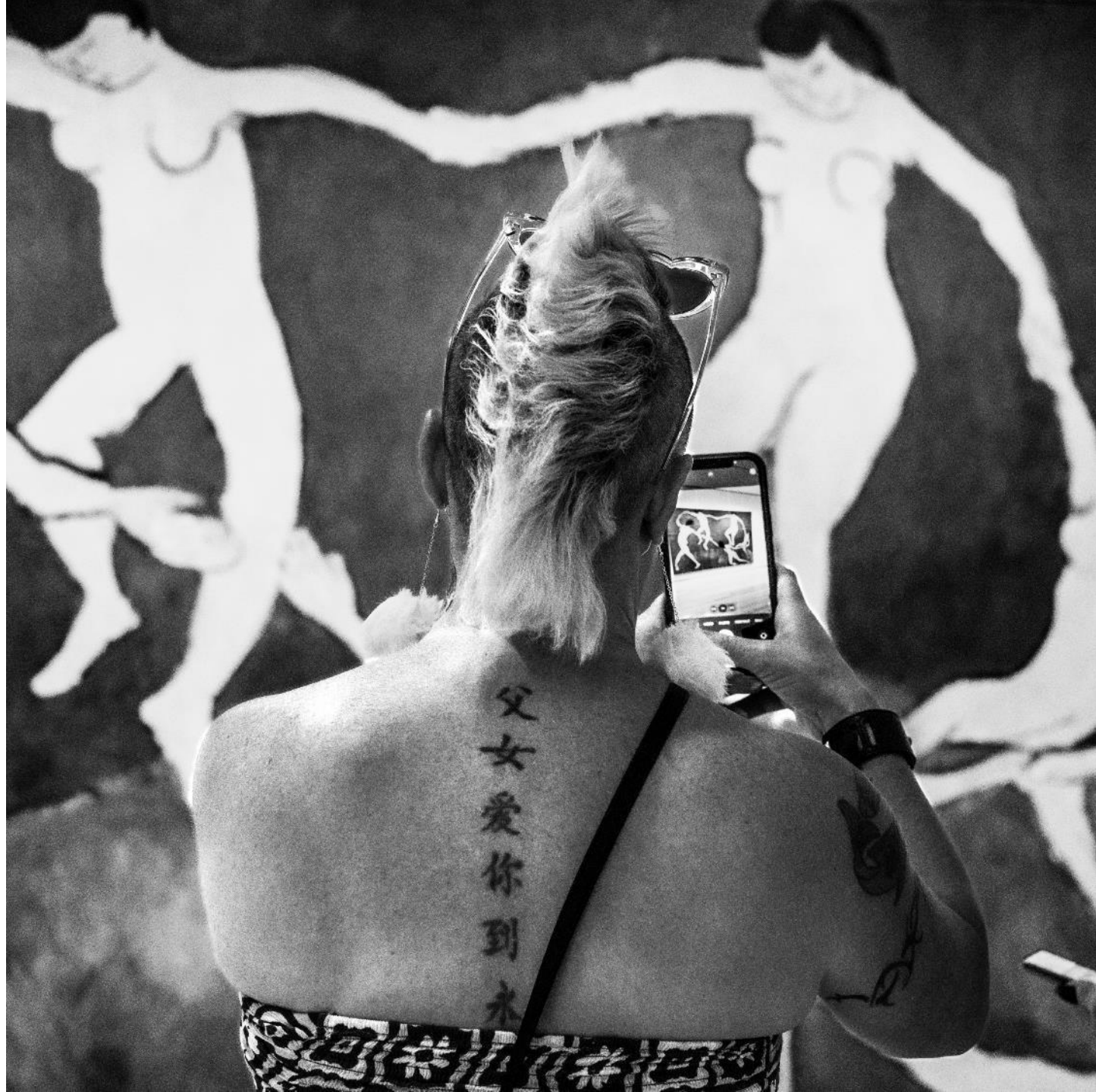
Complementary mirror





Image expansion by cell phone





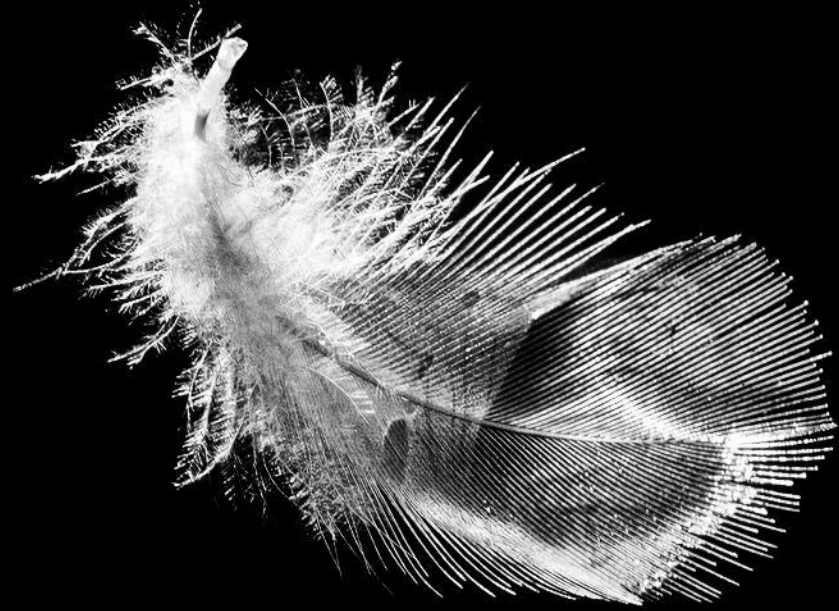
3. how?

Message

Third question: how ?

- single subject -> cut out without background
- Subject in context -> background blurred but recognizable
- Scene -> all in focus

Cut out





In context

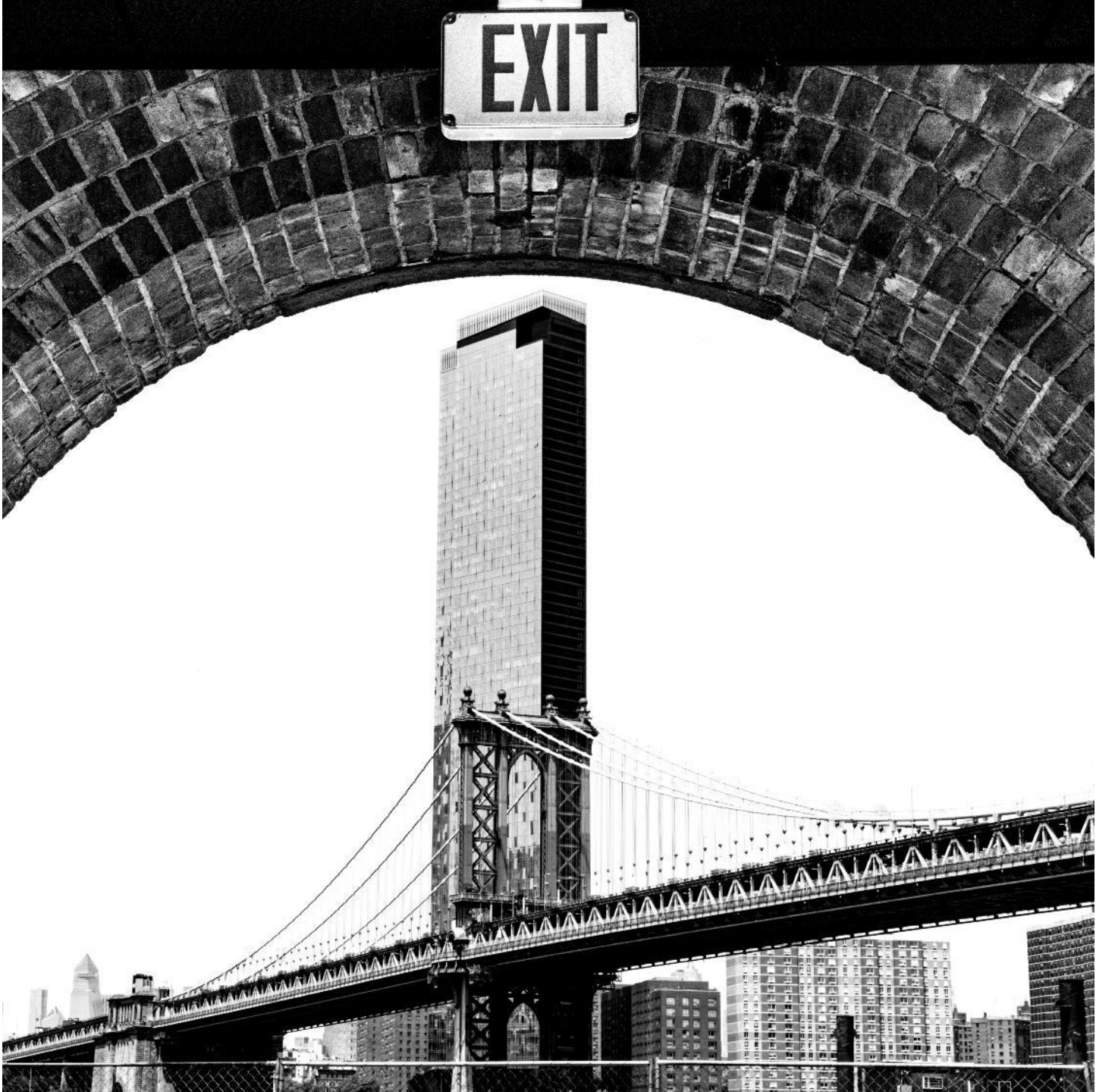




Scene



EXIT



Enhance the message

Contrast and composition

Contrast

Contrast

Categories:

- Color contrast (7 contrasts according to Johannes Itten)
 - > black and white: light-dark
- Content contrasts (image statement)
 - > large-small, ugly-beautiful, angular-round etc.
- Missing contrasts
 - > high key & low key, everything round, regular

Light-dark





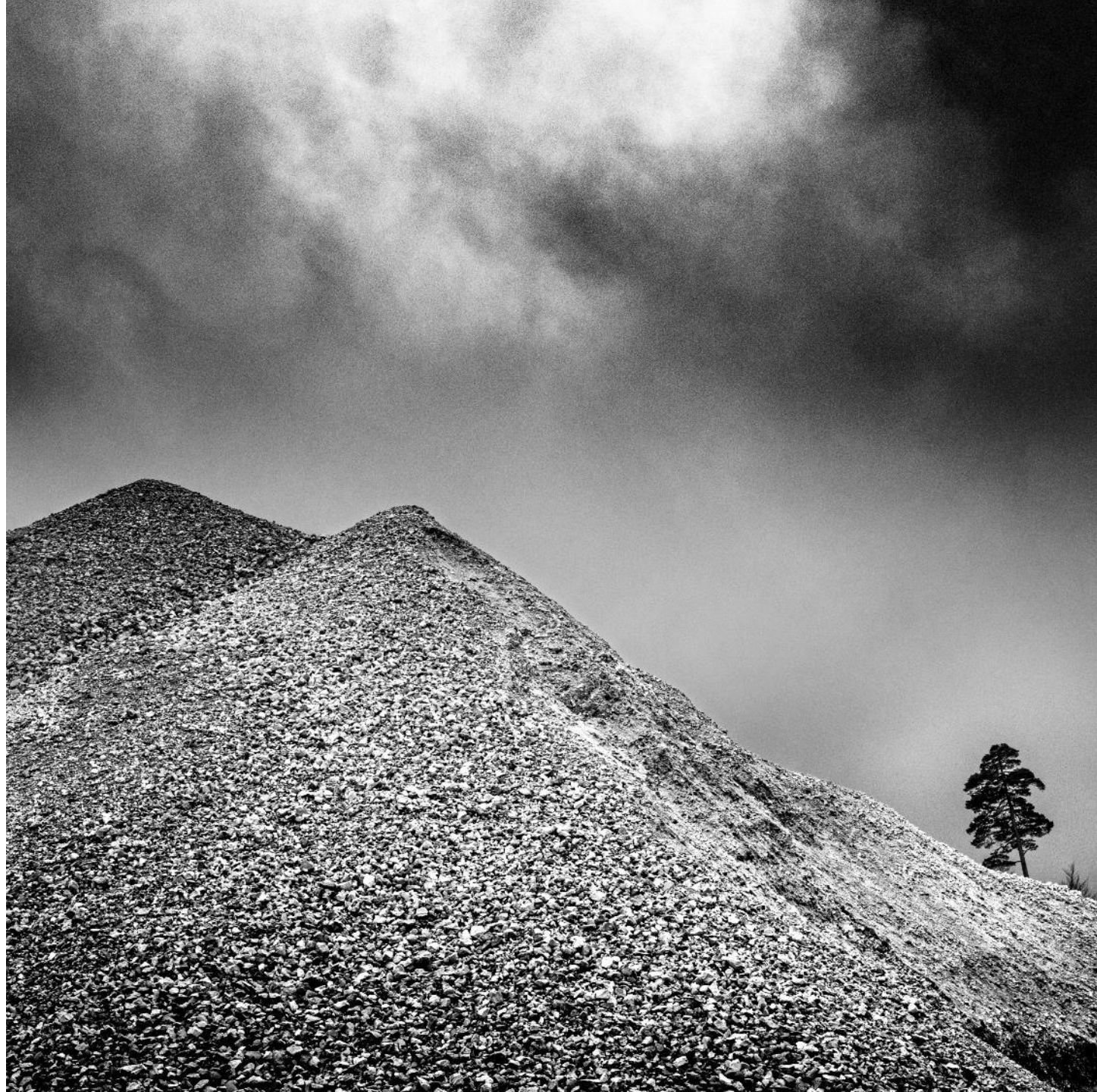
Silhouettes





Large-small





Round and angular





"Round people" in an angular world





Irregular animals in a regular environment





Stripes





Rows





High key





Low key





Contrasts in content





Composition

Composition

- Proven principles: golden ratio, rule of thirds
 - > good to know, but „Consulting the rules of composition before taking a photograph is like consulting the laws of gravity before taking a walk“

(Edward Weston, Photograph)

- Post-processing: Picture isnt finished in the camera
 - > cropping: „if your pictures aren't good enough, you are not close enough“

(Robert Capa, Photograph)

- Leitmotif: de quoi s'agit il?

-> Use composition to support the message



1:1 Simplifies images and accentuates minimalistic scenes. Evokes a sense of nostalgia as the format is similar to classic Polaroid prints and was the first standard format of Instagram.	2:3 The vast majority of images have this standard ratio, which is equivalent to the classic 4x6in photo, the default format of 35mm cameras.	4:5 Commonly used by micro four thirds cameras and social media platforms such as Instagram, which adopted this aspect ratio for vertical portraits.	5:7 Provides a harmonious and visually pleasing ratio to the human eye. More elongated than 4:5, it offers better scope for wide landscapes.	16:9 This panoramic format, known as a storytelling ratio, has become popular in film and cinematography since the introduction of 'widescreen' TVs and computer monitors.
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Empty spaces





Guiding lines





Your own style

Your own style

Goal: Recognition value "this is a Schaub"

Motto: Don't seek, find

- > Look at your own favorite pictures for similarities
- > capture in writing
- > Consciously photograph according to your own style

Your own style

Example. Adrian

- black and white
- Focus on a few elements
- Thought trough use of sharpness
- Post-processing limited to traditional darkroom methods
- Uniform square format

Reduce to the Max based on four paradigms (black and white, simple, square, authentic)

-> Gummy Bear Challenge









Photo books

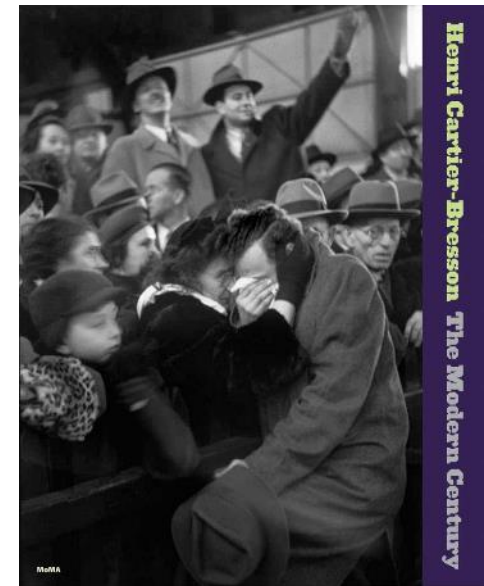
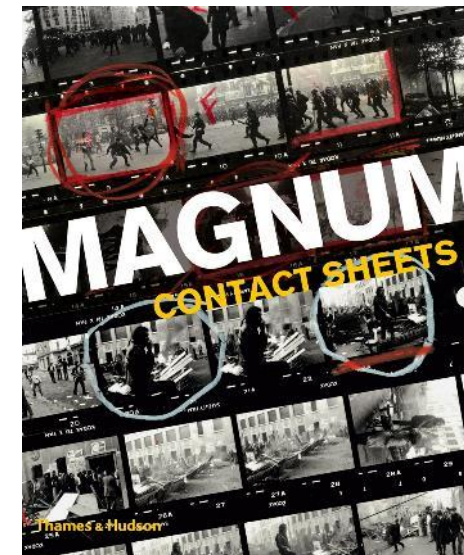
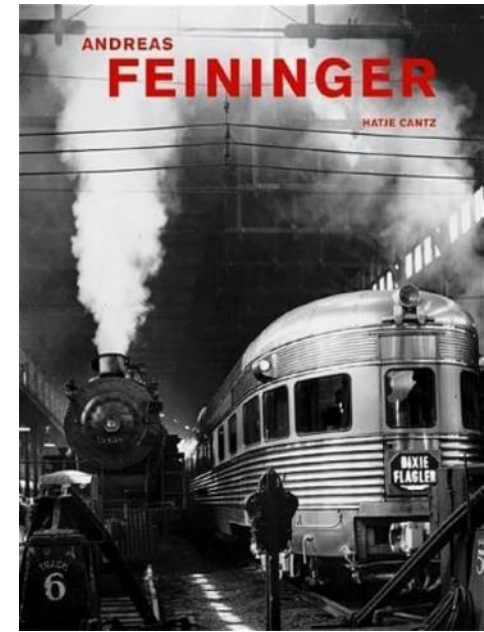
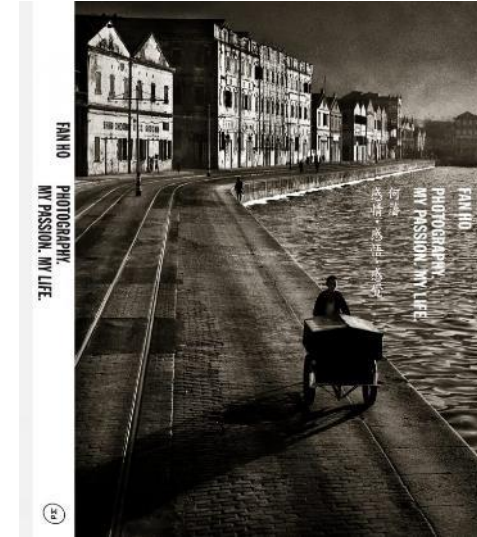
Inspiring books

Andreas Feininger: "That's Photography"

Fan Ho: "Photography. My passion, my life"

Henri-Cartier Bresson: "The modern century"

Kristen Lubben: "Magnum Contact Sheets"



The most important factor: the f-factor

The most important factor: the f-factor



Photographing (and editing) with fun -> Photographs with soul

PS: AI has no fun ;-)

Conclusion

Conclusion

- Before shooting, consider what the message of the picture should be ("de quoi s'agit-il?")
 - “why do I like something so much that I want to photograph it?”
- Goal-oriented use of “technology”
 - Choice of perspective
 - Choice of sharpness / blurring
 - Choice of contrast and composition to support the message
 - Gear: less is more
- There are no universal rules (except that it has to be fun for the photographer)

“Millions of potential masterpieces happen each moment and go unphotographed”

(Dan Winters, Photograph, 1962 -)

“Nothing good happens unless you do it (Es gibt nichts Gutes, ausser man tut es)”

(Erich Kästner, author, 1899-1974)

Thank you

For your time and interest

Slides (German and English): <https://adrianschaub.com/news/>

Video (English): <https://youtu.be/HPMhGA7Q2Y8>

Now: Book sale and signing

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