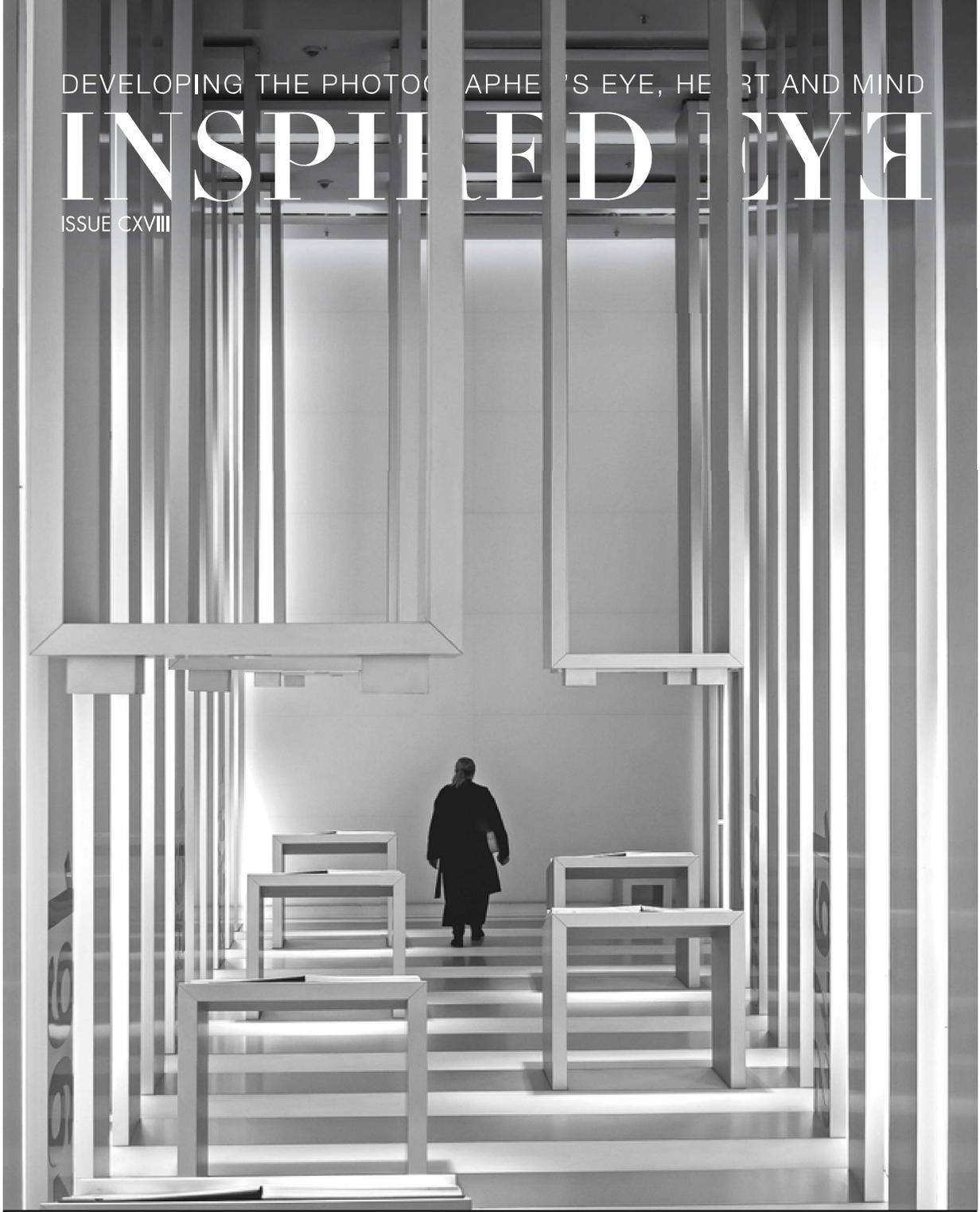


DEVELOPING THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE, HEART AND MIND

# INSPIRED EYE

ISSUE CXVIII



TO INSPIRE AND TO BE INSPIRED BY ALL OF THE PHOTOGRAPHY COMMUNITY

INTERVIEW WITH

# OLIVER J. HOLY



***Please tell us something about you, your life and interest, etc. Put as much detail as you like and then we will start the questions.***

My name is Oliver J. Holy, I am from Germany, married and have a 25-year-old daughter.

I am an electrical engineer by profession and work in technical sales.

***What inspired you to become a photographer?***

The biggest inspiration was and still is to capture my impressions, my emotions, and my thoughts in images.

These can be images in cities, in the countryside, or in nature, wherever I see situations and experience feelings, and can express them in the context of the surroundings.

***What age are you and at what age did you start your journey as a photographer?***

I am 55 years old and started my passion for photography 30 years ago when I borrowed my father's Canon film camera with a 50mm lens for a trip to San Francisco and documented my journey with it.

To date, 50mm (besides 28mm) is my preferred focal length. Every photographer should have at least one 50mm lens, preferably 2 ;-)



***Would you mind sharing some of the things you feel helped you along the way with your photography, (lessons, workshops, books, etc)...and also some of the things that may have hindered you, that you overcame on this journey?***

My meticulous work has helped me to improve my technique and image editing. Today's technology makes it easier to document visual impressions. However, a good eye for a subject cannot be replaced by even the best technology.

***Do you feel photography enhances your life? If so, how?***

Yes, I perceive my environment differently, much more intensely.

***If we are speaking specifically of photographers, which are the ones of the past and present do you admire?.***

In street photography, of course, Henri Cartier Bresson, Saul Leiter, Paul Hoepker, Joel Meyerowitz, come to mind.

***What purpose does photography serve for you?***

I can convey my impressions and feelings in images.



***Do you do photography for hire or as an art form?***

Both

***What do you do for work and how does photography fit into that?***

I only take photos privately, my camera is always with me.

***What genre of photography are you most comfortable working in?***

I prefer taking photos in cities, typical street photography, and of course while traveling.

***When you work, are you working on different series or just finding photos that fit the way you feel at the moment?***

Both.

In series "Storytelling," you can document stories better than in individual images taken out of particular contexts.

***Can you describe a few of the trigger mechanisms that make you want to stop and shoot?***

This can be on the one hand great static scenes that only need one lively element, such as a person or a prominent motif. On the other hand, they can also be snapshots that are not reproducible, where one simply has to be quick.



***How strong of a connection do you have with your subject matter and can you describe that connection?***

I have a very strong attachment to scenes and moments because I want to express my feelings and impressions.

People are usually arbitrary and unknown because they are only a part of the whole, but in certain scenes, they represent dimensions and give the images dynamics.

***What are your recurring themes?***

Scenes and ambiances in cities and imposing landscapes.

***What camera are you working with currently?***

I work in a hybrid manner.

On one hand, I have analogue cameras such as a Leica M6 and Nikon FM2, and on the other hand, for the love of my passion for black and white photography, I use a Leica Q2.

For landscapes and long exposures, I rely on a Sony A7RIII."

***What is your favorite Focal Length or Field of View?***

If I could only take 2 focal lengths on a world trip, it would be clearly 28mm and 50mm.



***What is the distance to your subject you are most comfortable with while working?***

I prefer to work with a lot of distance to give the image the necessary space.

***How do you see the relationship with your camera? Is it a friend, tool, or whatever?***

My Leica cameras are more than just good friends ;-)

***Do you have a preference for Black & White or Color? Please explain why.***

My preference is for black and white photography. I love the focus on contrasts, lines, and shapes, as well as the abstraction of light and shadow. In black and white, I can express my emotions more effectively.

***Are you self-taught, educated, or a little bit of both?***

I work exclusively as a self-taught individual and constantly strive to improve myself.

***How do you feel about being photographed?***

Although people often represent invigorating elements in my pictures, I always maintain their identity, individuals are not recognizable in detail. Especially in



Germany, this is a very critical and sensitive issue. I can deal with it myself, as long as the situation allows it, does not make me appear in a bad image, and especially my name is not in the context.

***Do you like to work by yourself or to have someone with you? Please explain why.***

Both. When I am alone, I don't have to consider anyone else and can focus entirely on a scene or a motive. With like-minded photographers, it is, of course, more enjoyable and above all, more fun ;-). It is always interesting to see how other photographers capture the same motives and scenes at the same time.

***Do you listen to music while you are shooting? How do you feel the music enhances the visual experience?***

Music would distract me from taking photos.

***Do you have a preference for images in an analog or a digital state?***

I am on the go as a hybrid. However, when I go out to take pictures, I decide beforehand whether to use analog or digital. Analog pictures have a very special, unique style for me. Analog photography slows me down even more, as I put more thought into the composition of the image and adjusting the most important parameters before pressing the shutter button.



***How important is the post-processing of the pictures in your work?***

Important but not the most important. The best image editing is useless if you don't have an eye for the subject. I try to edit as much as necessary and as little as possible.

***Where in the world are you located?***

Southern part of Germany

***Where is your favorite place to work?***

I really enjoy taking pictures in my hometown Tübingen.

Otherwise, I am always happy to be in Hamburg, a wonderful city full of great subjects.

Furthermore, I really like Lisbon and Barcelona.

***When you're feeling somewhat slow or lost, how do you find your way back to find inspiration to get working again?***

I'm trying to generate certain themes, such as only photographing with a 50mm lens, capturing people who are busy with their phones, or finding subjects with dominant red tones, and so on.



***Do you exhibit your work in any form?***

I occasionally make photo books about travels or specific themes. My goal is to someday have an exhibition of my best photos.

***Do you go to exhibitions or do so on the web?***

I enjoy visiting exhibitions as printed photos in appropriate presentation often have a better impact than on a screen. However, during the pandemic, I had to rely on the internet.

***Do you collect other photographers' work?***

Only books, no individual pieces.

***How do you feel about the current state of photography?***

Unfortunately, social media is flooded with content, causing images from many good photographers to get lost in the sea of data.

That's why I love analog photography, which, despite its resurgence and increasing popularity, remains distant from this trend.

***How satisfied are you in your current state of photography and what would you like to improve upon?***

I am trying to perceive my environment even



more precisely, to better recognize details. I am also trying to express my feelings even better in images.

***Can you describe how you judge the success or failure of your work?***

I don't measure my pictures, otherwise I lose the fun. The fun is the most important thing about photography and ultimately a prerequisite for a good picture. Of course, one is happy about a nice comment.

***What would you be doing now if you had not picked up the camera?***

To pick up a book.

***What do you dislike about photography?***

People who only give a like to receive a like back but who are not interested in or look at the pictures.

***If you would like to make a closing statement, we'd love to hear what you have to say.***

I'm very happy to be a small part of Inspired Eye Magazine.

Thank you very much for the interview.

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