
BUILDING A PHOTOGRAPHIC STYLE

Whether you are a committed amateur, aspiring or seasoned professional, having a personal style is critical to enable you to stand out from the competition and establish a brand that clients can trust and come back to.

To be noticed as a photographer, you need to create a stand-out body of memorable work. This will be a key component of your brand and is your visual identity.

Your uniqueness will be embodied by the approach you take to the subjects you shoot, the knowledge you bring to your work and how you present the images. In addition, explaining why you create the work you do is a crucial part of this expression of your practice as a photographer. Brought together, this embodies your style and is at the basis of your brand.

This is where your value lies.

As all established, successful photographers would testify to, the only way to develop a style is to be actively shooting on an on-going basis, making time for it and genuinely be open to making mistakes along the way. Having purposeful personal projects with distinct intentions behind them will help enormously rather than relying on a more random approach whereby you are capturing images in a serendipitous (albeit at times successful) manner.

It really is a matter of pushing through any barriers you find along the way – shooting when you feel spent, applying yourself yet again when previously a project yielded very little, if anything.

A style can take many years to hone and is part of the discovery process that all photographers have to go through if they are to separate themselves from the 'noise'. Identifying what that style is and finding the visual language to describe it requires continual analysis and deconstruction of your work and practice.

Understanding your own aesthetic, your choice of subject matter, whether you are more literal or conceptual, graphic or narrative in your approach and so on...is all part of this self-scrutiny. It can sometimes take an outside eye to help identify the threads running through a body of work but with a conscious effort it is possible to do this yourself. Look for common themes, structures within the images, reasons behind selecting

one subject over another...dig deep into why you shoot what you do and you will start to reveal and be able to explain your style to others. This is far more compelling to a potential client (be they a gallery, prospective agent, buyer of your prints, etc.) than simply explaining what it is that you create.

At best, your style will be authentic to you personally in some way, be reflective of some aspect of your personality and not something that is purely manufactured on demand because you are capable of doing so. This is where clients will understand the value in what you do and be prepared to pay for it.

The key to developing a style is to be true to yourself; your work has to come from the heart. Don't copy anyone; though be mindful and knowledgeable of what has come before and what is current in your arena.

It will take time and dedication but the rewards will be tangible.

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