

SHOOT!

Photography with Zilverblauw

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Foreword

Photography is looking and seeing. With your eyes, but especially with your heart. Photography makes it possible to capture moments in your life, so that you can return to them later. Photos have the power to let you travel through time and bridge distances. The camera is merely a side issue. After all, it's about the result: the photo, a tangible memory. Such a photo says much more about the photographer than about the camera with which he was taken. A good photo is a reflection of who you are the moment you take the photo. With a photo you can show the world through your eyes. Amazing, isn't it?

I've been taking photos since I can remember. Especially of everyday things that I notice and which I see the beauty of. Until about ten years ago I did that with the automatic mode on my camera. I assumed that I would never understand the technical part of photography: I was anything but technical and mathematics was the first subject I dropped as soon as I had the chance. When I bought my first single-lens reflex camera, I tried to understand photography through a book. That book was boring and full of difficult words and photos that didn't bother me. For me it was a confirmation of my suspicion: the technical side of photography was not intended for creative people.

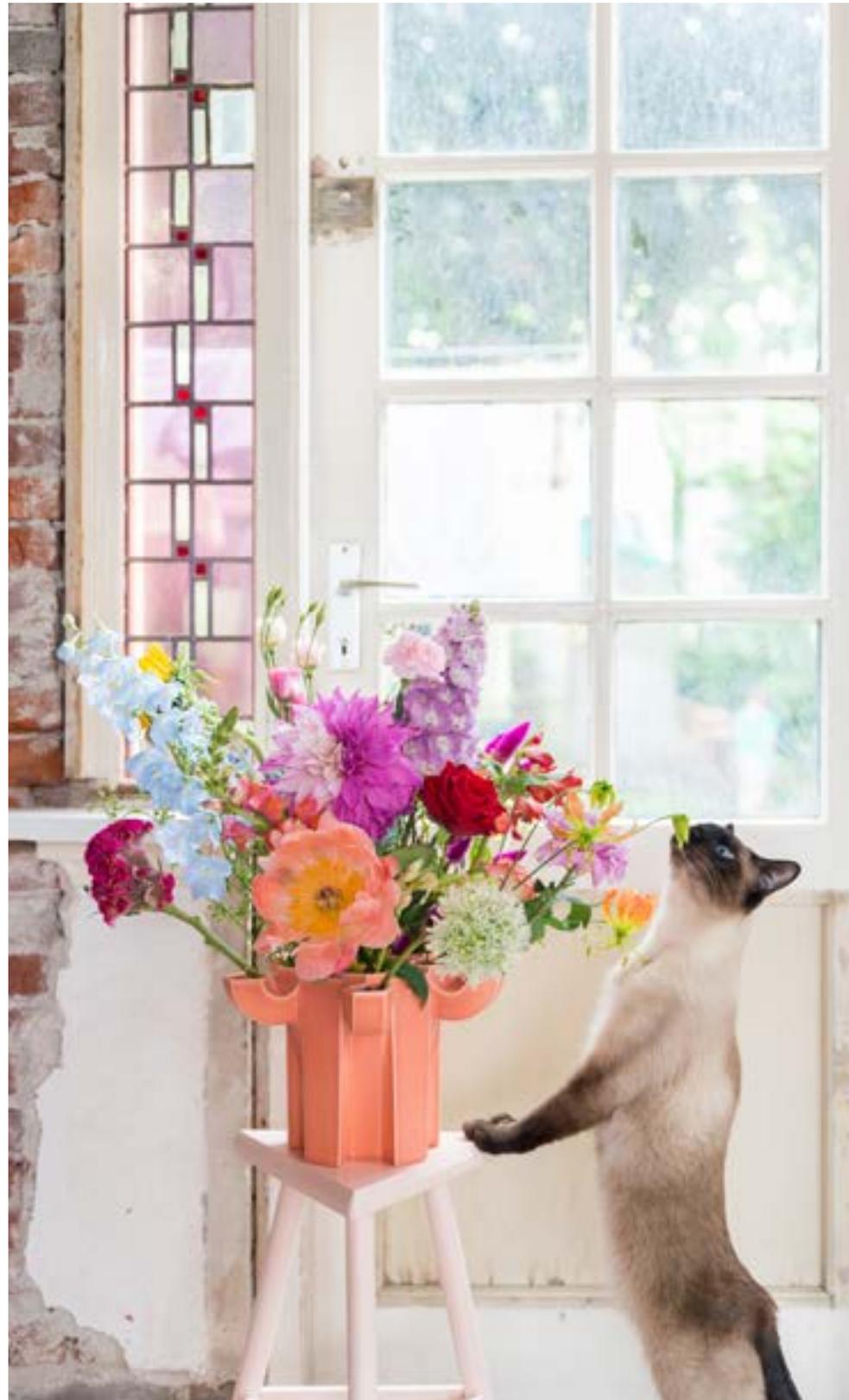
In 2010 I started sharing images from my daily life on my blog silverblauw.nl. A year later I created an account on Instagram under the same name. I wanted to convey the beauty that I saw around me to my readers and followers. Soon I ran into my own limitations: I could not make the image I had in my head with the automatic mode on my camera and that frustrated me immensely..

In the end it was the will to be in charge of my camera instead of my camera being the boss who made me decide to start photographing completely manually (set by myself) from one day to the next. I did everything by feeling. By looking at light and having my camera follow. I rarely looked at the settings, I arranged them intuitively. Only when I did that for a few years, I was able to take a step back and see what I actually did with my camera. That intrigued me immensely. And I wanted to share that knowledge.

In 2014 I played with the idea of making a book about my passion and in 2015 Shoot! It soon became apparent that there are more people who experience photography like me. Now, in 2019, it's time for a new version. Completely up-to-date and with new assignments.

In this book you will find no professional language, no difficult graphs and as few complicated terms as possible. This book is about watching, seeing and photographing with your heart. And yes, that requires some technology, but I promise I won't make it too hard. The goal is that you can capture your life as you see it, in your way. Because if I can do it, you can do it too.

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About seeing, coincidence and creativity

**Really good photos are photos that touch you.
That evoke something with you: a feeling or memory.
Photos that are unique and characteristic of you as a
photographer. How do you take such photos? Step 1 is
learning to look.**

See beauty

Photography has always played a role in my life. As a child I was already photographing, with simple cameras that I borrowed from my parents. I bought photo rolls from my pocket money. I took pictures of everyday things, such as our cats and my bedroom. When I went to study and went to live on my own for the first time, I started to look more consciously at the world around me.

In retrospect, that was the moment when I started to take photography more seriously. In my first, tiny house, I solemnly decided that I would never buy anything ugly. I wanted to surround myself with beautiful, special things that would make me happy. That wasn't about materialism: I can find beautiful things just as well in the cycle as in an expensive design store. It was about looking consciously. Making a conscious choice to surround myself with beauty. Because why eat from an ugly plate when there are so many beautiful ones? Soon I didn't just pay attention to beauty indoors, but I noticed it everywhere. I suddenly saw beautiful details on buildings that I never saw before. Daisies on the sidewalk. The long shadows as the sun almost sets. Nice packaging in the supermarket. Two dogs that matched in color. All things that I might have overlooked before. I discovered how lucky it

made me look at the world in this way. In the years that followed, it became a sort of secret hobby to constantly be on the lookout for beautiful things. At a certain moment I decided to take a more active picture of my beauty with my camera. A little later I decided to share the things that made me happy, the beauty that I documented, on a blog and later on Instagram. At the time I did not realize for a moment that it was perhaps special what I did, what my house looked like or how I took my photos: after all, I had been doing this for years. The choice I made as a student influences my life to the fullest today.

If you learn to look well and consciously, there is a lot of beauty around us, usually in the simplest things. All you have to learn is see. People often think that being creative or artistic is always about making great,

complicated, pretentious things. I believe that it is precisely in the small, in what that otherwise remains invisible. Helena Bonham Carter, one of my favorite actresses, once said the following, which I totally agree with:

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"I think everything in life is art. What you do. How you dress. The way you love someone, and how you talk. Your smile and your personality. What you believe in, and all your dreams. The way you drink your tea. How you decorate your home. Or party. Your grocery list. The food you make. How your writing looks. And the way you feel. Life is art."

By learning to look and see consciously, you automatically develop your own taste and style, which contribute to the individuality of your photos. If you look at the photos in this book you can easily distinguish my style: light, colorful and with graphic elements. That style says a lot about my character and how I see the world. I like that about photography: that you can show the world through your eyes. The clearer your own taste and style is developed, the more your photos are a reflection of your world and the stronger your image often.

BEAUTIFUL PHOTOS CALL EMOTIONS

The most important thing to be able to take a good photo is not the camera, but you, the photographer. You are the one who takes the photo, the camera is no more than an instrument. Often, the photos that are most dear to you are not your most beautiful or best photos, but those that evoke an emotion with you. Photography is no different than any other art form, such as music: you have to feel it. A piece of music can become perfect

carried out, but if it doesn't hurt you, it's worthless. Therefore, always ask yourself whether the photo you have taken creates the feeling that you intended.

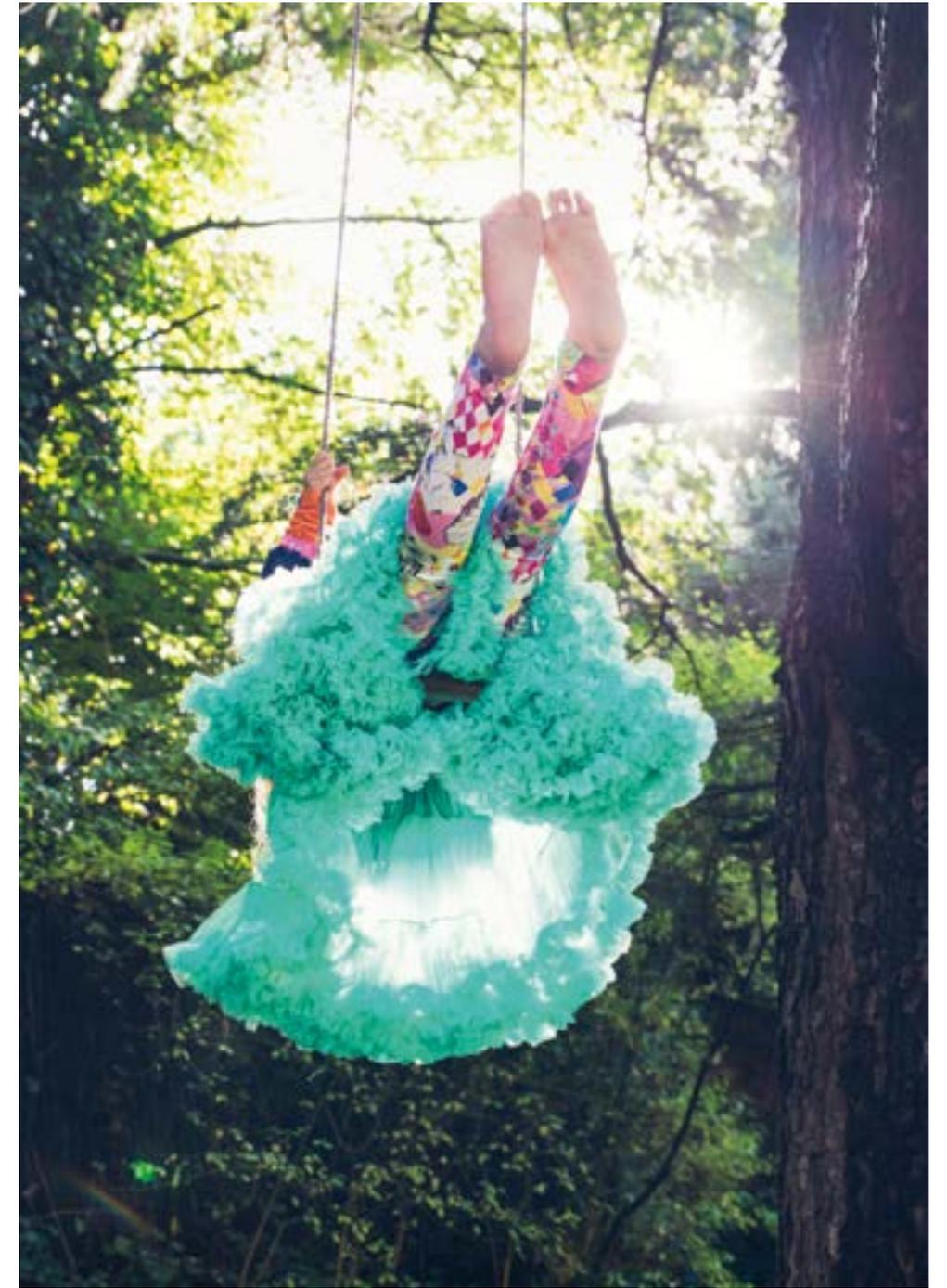
TO BE FLEXIBLE

Contrary to what you might think, professional photographers don't always take the perfect photo in one shot. It is much more often a coincidence that creates a good picture. Photos become more interesting when they have something unexpected in them. The photo on the left, which I made of my son Wolf, is a good example of that. What had to be a cheerful picture of a child about to celebrate carnival, became a stubborn, characteristic portrait. Other than expected and not as planned, but therefore very successful. Sometimes I take a hundred photos, one of which ultimately meets my expectations, sometimes the first time it hits the mark. Hold on, even if it takes a little longer. Flexible handling of what is happening around you ultimately yields the best picture.



I believe that being creative or artistic is in the small, in what that otherwise remains invisible.





Photos ensure that you can show the world through your eyes. I don't think we can get any closer to magic.

SHOW WHAT MOVES YOU

Photograph what you want and do not be guided by what is "common". It is very obvious to take the standard holiday photos: a view, the beach, a terrace. But does that really make you hot? Isn't it much nicer to record the things that made the holiday so enjoyable for you, such as those nice neighbors, the beautiful wrap of that delicious ice cream or the cute kitchen where you did the dishes? Show what moves you, how you look and what you see, and not just on vacation. Try to give your photos something of yourself and you dare to stand out. The world is your playground.

SEE THE WORLD AS A PHOTO

Try to see the world as a photo, even (or exactly) when your camera is at home. Look at the light and notice how it changes color throughout the day. See how the sun forms shadows and what that does with contrast and color. Broaden your view - literally. Look up or down, and experience that the world will look very different. The more aware you are of your environment, the easier it is to capture it.

LOOK AT COLORS

The atmosphere of a photo largely determines the feeling that you have with it. Colors and light play an important role in this. The colors in your photo together form a whole. That whole evokes an emotion with the viewer. For example, white is a very intense color, it makes your photos radiant, clear and light.

As your camera has one, look then once more often through the viewfinder instead of to the screen.

That's not how you get obstructed by incident light and you see the composition better

But black can also work surprisingly well. Martin Luther King once said: "You can only see the stars in the dark." You can use black very well to make other colors on your photo stand out well and the use of the color black gives your photos a lot of atmosphere. Colors can help you tell the story of your photo. You can add color to your photos through styling, but also through your subject and composition consciously to choose.



Looking for inspiration? For a change, don't look at the work of photographers who have about the same style as you, but at photographers who do something completely different. Their fresh perspective can give you that little push to push your limits.

Do it yourself

ASSIGNMENT 1: WHAT DOES YOU MOVE?

Try taking pictures of things that affect you for a day. That can be anything, as long as it matters to you. The cup from which you drink coffee, the legs of your baby, your favorite sweater, a bird in the sky, does not matter. Evaluate your photos at the end of the day: which colors appeal to you? Is there a line to be found in the photos you have taken? How did you feel about being more aware of looking and seeing?

ASSIGNMENT 2: EMOTION

Search for your most precious photos and wonder why they are so dear to you. What kind of feeling do they give you and how is that? Pay attention to the colors, shapes and structures and wonder how they contribute to the feeling that the photos give you. Also funny, especially with older photos: do you remember which camera you took these photos with? Oh no? Do you see that this is not that important at all?

ASSIGNMENT 3: YOUR POSITION

Choose a situation that appeals to you and try to capture it in as many different ways as possible. If you are drinking tea with a piece of cake, then photograph all the elements of that situation: your company, your cup, the tea, the cake as a whole, the fork, the cake tip, the empty plate and the mess afterwards. What else can you come up with? Try to look consciously at what is happening around you and what you like about it (or not, that is also possible). Take at least twenty photos and discover which ones appeal to you the most. Why do you think these photos are your favorites?

