

photography there is no stage, no lighting, no time for analysis. The street photographer is only one individual in a world that is constantly moving, so unless you have a very sharpened sense of observation, you're going to miss things. Observation is the key to everything; and you need to be fast because the world is moving. People are walking, an ice-cream is melting, a ray of light falls somewhere, but it's only for an instant and it's up to us to freeze that moment. That's why it's very important to realise what is essential. And be able to convey a message in a fraction of a second."

There are wider occupational hazards facing street photographers – the most immediate being the mushrooming power of the internet. Mollica recognises the threat this can pose to professionals whose work can often be eclipsed by the live streaming on mobile phones of passers-by who happen to be present at a momentous event – the 7/7 London bombings being a prime example. But with characteristic optimism, Mollica views the internet as an ally. "I never bought into this panic state that the internet has created in the world of traditional photography." So Mollica has set up Photowrap, a series of online photography tutorials which has furthered his reputation and created another source of income.

"There's no point standing alone against something like the internet," he says. "You have to be open to it, try to become smarter, take better pictures, adapt to the changes and, if you are clever, use them to your advantage."

Not everyone uses the internet to its full potential and Mollica admits his pet hate is the ubiquitous Facebook party photo: arm out, big smile, snap. "That is why you cannot treat a street photographer like shit when he takes your photo in the street. If it wasn't for us, the world wouldn't have a visual memory. We are the preservers, the archivers. If we stop taking pictures, you tell me which kind of memory is going to be left of nowadays."

To see more of Mimi's work visit www.mimimollica.com



Hamburg, 2007.

SIEGFRIED HANSEN – THE ENGINEER

"Because I don't have to make a living from my photos I can do what I want. I have the freedom to go outside and make pictures that I want to and I'm very grateful for that. For me the most important thing is to be able to practise my passion."

"Sometimes you get lucky, but luck only really happens when you are prepared for it."

Echoing the words of famous golfers, economists and gamblers the world over, the fact that Siegfried Hansen



London, 2006.

SIEGFRIED HANSEN

HIT THE STREETS

builds his photography work on this premise is a pretty good place to start. In street photography it can be argued that more luck is needed than on the average staged shoot, but the Hamburg-based civil engineer has spent 10 years working out exactly what preparations are needed to help him on his way. For a start, he never leaves his house without his camera, admitting to leaving behind keys, phones and wallets before he'll forget his lens, and even remembering to pocket a spare camera in case his main one packs up. What's more, he has developed his own failsafe optical game, which ensures he can always pick out the anomalies in his surroundings which will come together for a perfect shot.

"It's a very concentrated effort," he tells me in slow and considered words, "I am focused the moment I go outside. I call it scanning. I look at the foreground and background simultaneously, flicking between the two. This game I do constantly." Hansen calls this game "finding the second layer". His eyes never stop darting up and down,

"That special humour that I have, I'm just lucky, because I see things that others don't." Siegfried Hansen

foreground to background, until he finds that elusive connecting element. "If I see a balloon, I always look behind and in front of it at the same time. I look in the mirror, I look in the window and into the shadows. Over the past 10 years I have practised it and now for me it's normal not just to see the one thing in the foreground but also to see the shadows, the lines and all those strange little connecting elements."

One example of these elements might be a free-runner who suddenly leaps into the background of a close-up of two children, who look the other way and miss the extraordinary action. Or it might be two swans which draw the viewpoint of a lone man down towards a happy couple on the bankside ahead of him. It could just be a looming shadow that advances on a small bewildered child who can see the source of the shadow, where we, of course, cannot.

Hansen is always working for that 'top shot'. For him, this is what defines street photography, seeing it as an art form that is all about the little surprises in life. This makes it hard for him to get commissioned by magazines, which are looking for a story, or galleries, which are looking for a continuous theme, but he is resolute about sticking to his own artistic aims, and he does this simply because he can. Hansen took up street photography as a hobby after being inspired by an exhibition in Tokyo on the work of the Hungarian-born photographer André Kertész. He became fascinated by the subtle play between the picture planes in Kertész's work, and it spurred him on to invest in a good camera and to spend every weekend wandering the streets of his native Hamburg to try to master that interplay for himself.

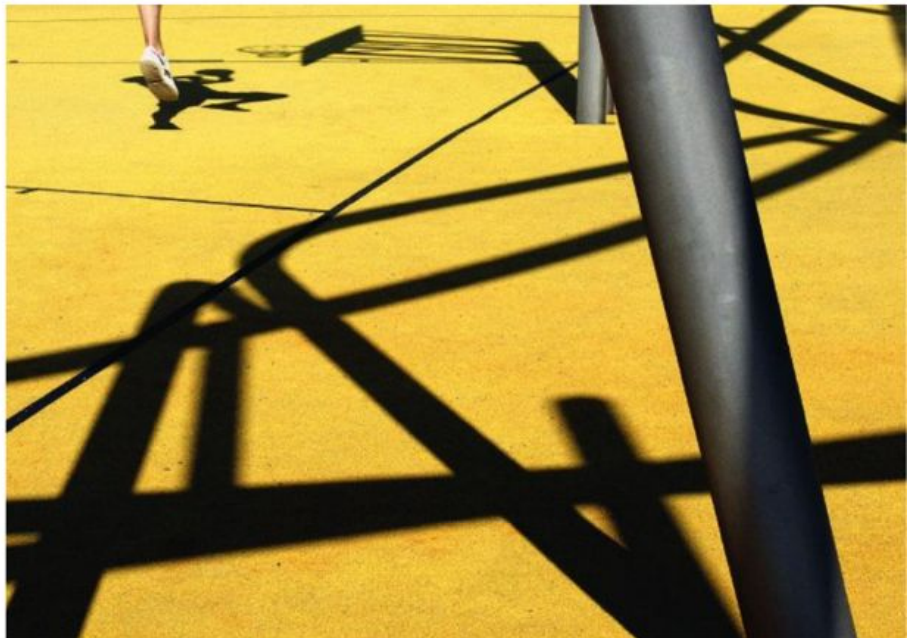
"Because I don't have to make a living from my photos I can do what I want. I have the freedom to go outside and make pictures that I want to and I'm very grateful for that. For me the most important thing is to be able to practise my passion."

It is easy to see how working as a civil engineer has influenced Hansen's work: there's a graphic exactitude in every shot that belies the accidental nature of his compositions. Lines converge to point at a random element; shadows collude in order to highlight an inadvertent human exchange. Hansen says: "The shapes and elements are all there, but I walk around and around, taking them in from different angles until suddenly they resolve themselves into a perfect composition. As long as you train your eyes, you can see things wherever you go."

But it's not just a set of hawk's eyes that lands a street photographer like Hansen with the shot he needs: it also helps to have a healthy dose of good humour. Hansen is

SIEGFRIED HANSEN

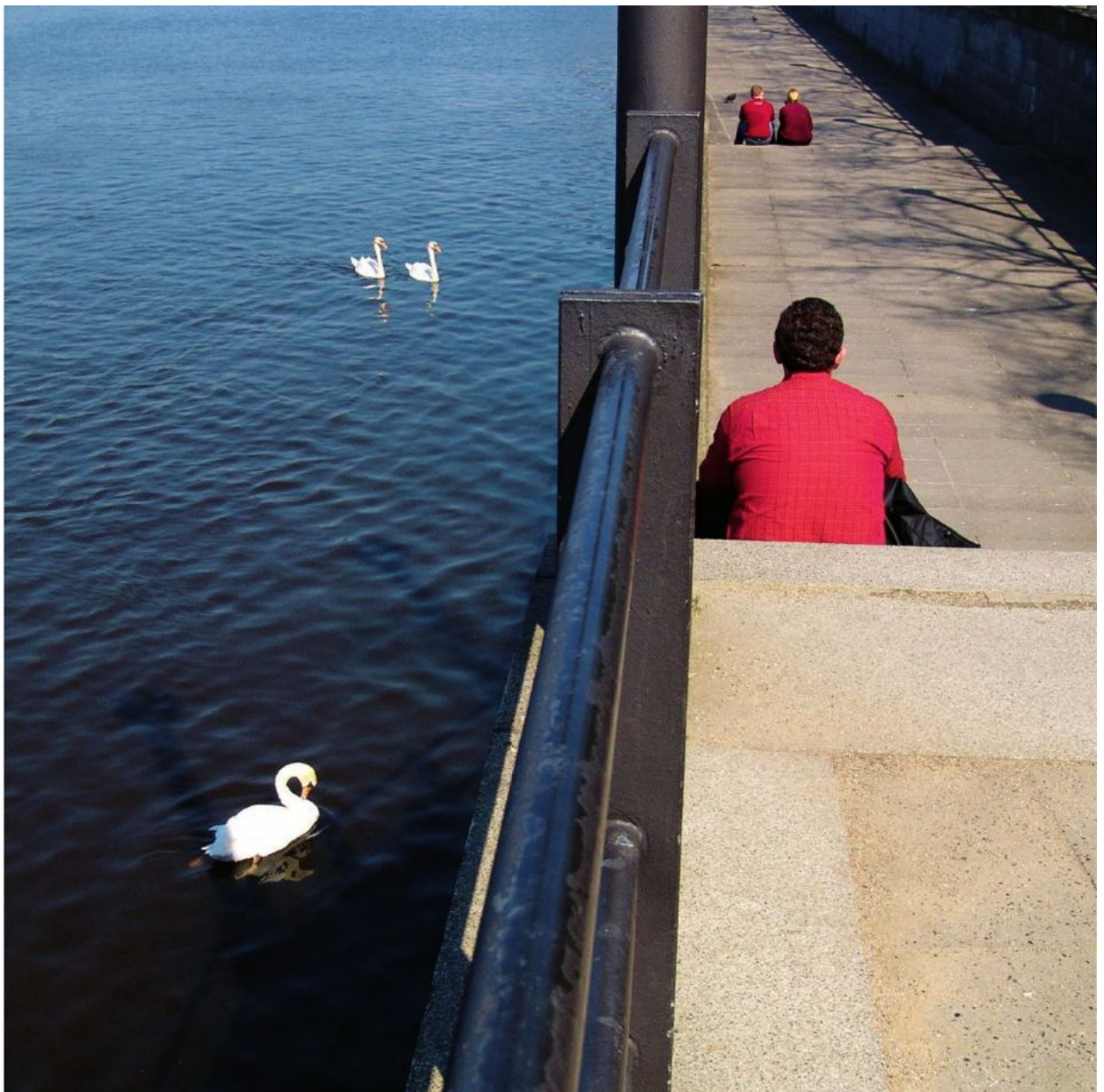
Working in his native Germany, where privacy laws are extremely strict, Siegfried uses a combination of good humour, his training as a civil engineer and an appreciation of the beauty of seemingly insignificant events to create his images.



lucky enough to possess that droll sense of humour that allows him to spot the unexpected in otherwise familiar surroundings. It's a trait that few possess: "You can't learn this – you either have it or you don't," he says. "That special humour that I have, I'm just lucky, because I see things that others don't."

Needless to say, having plenty of spirit also helps when having to deal with a population that is exceptionally suspicious of a lone man wielding a camera. In Germany there are strict laws on citizens' rights to their own image, and a photographer can be sued if he publishes a picture of somebody who hasn't given their consent. To avoid run-ins with the law, Hansen has become adept at taking street shots where the people become mere accessories

Above: Hamburg, 2009.
Opposite:
Hamburg, 2004.



within the scene: the side of a face or a retreating back, all become nothing more than building blocks in his extraordinary, fleeting worlds.

“For me it is interesting that when you look at the street, most people don’t see the beauty of the small things,” says Hansen, articulating the effect he would like his photographs to have on viewers. “I would like for people to open their eyes. I see so much that most people miss as they are running to their next destination. I make the pictures to share these wonderful things I see. It’s a childlike wonder that I am lucky to have and I love that I am able to share it.”

To see more of Siegfried’s work visit www.siegfried-hansen.de

GEORGE GEORGIU – THE RACONTEUR

“I didn’t want to be just another guy recording, but I found it hard to be totally impartial – and in order to really listen to the stories, you have to be impartial.”

Interviewing George Georgiou is somewhat different to the Q&A style interaction that you come to expect when

GEORGE GEORGIU

Drawn to portray life in regions of conflict and political turmoil, George seeks out the less obvious standpoint for his images. A member of Panos Pictures, he has several international awards, including two World Press Photo prizes.