

Rebecca Forster:

Detailed photographic development, influences and personal interests

As a little girl I was already very impressed by the photos of a successful photographer: my grandfather Leo Forster - I had never known him in person though, as he died when my mother was a child still. The photos and newspaper articles are carefully kept in the family, though. I especially loved a photo from the late 50ies, showing a



Leo Forster, late 1950ies

reversal of the typical male and female roles, see picture. Today, this really seems like a big omen to me regarding my favorite subjects. As a child and teen I then was additionally influenced by many travels, mostly Europe, especially Greece, Italy and France, but also North Africa and the USA: In the age of 8 I already took photos on all of these travels, focusing on animals there, the landscape and later also on museums with Greek and Egyptian art (especially statues fascinated me as a photographic subject). Besides I was very impressed always by classical paintings and fell in love with the Louvre in the age of 13. These paintings (and the statues, too) still have a huge influence on my work.

Influenced by my mother's passion for sewing, fashion and fashion magazines, in my early teens already I started to collect favorite pages from magazines as I discovered a big interest in fashion myself – also in fashion photography, although I became aware of this fact quite late: I needed to become 24 to realize it was mostly the (people) photography which fascinated me, not only fashion itself. The same counts for the photos of my favorite singers which I started to collect when I was 16. This was very important for my development as a photographer, as my eye got trained through this collection - one and the same person, photographed by so many great photographers, comparing those pictures - which are my favorites, and why? Soon I also started editing my favorite photos of them on computer (inventing new backgrounds, settings, costumes and more). I most likely have inherited my father's interest in

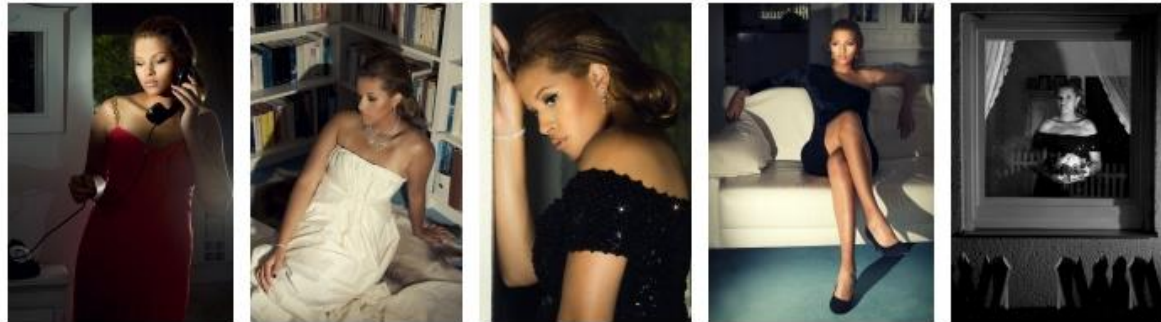
modern technics (both for cameras and computer) and, due to his job, always had access at home to the most modern technics. He also taught me in 2005, for my concert photography, several basics regarding exposure time, aperture and ISO.

My very first photography subject, and almost only one until 2010, were animals though. Having always taken animal photos as a child already, I became more serious about it in 2000 in the age of 14, when I got an analogue SLR camera as a present. The big technical break-through in animal photography I experienced after having learned to do all settings manually in people photography – it literally jumped on a new level in 2011 then.

From animal to people photography I came when I got my first digital SLR in 2010, and my mother needed a photographer for her election campaign. Seeing that, my friends wanted to be photographed by me, too: Suddenly I realized I could do the work on computer, instead of working with other photographers' photos of my favorite singers, with photos taken by myself - staged already, so doing more before the shooting and later less on computer. Besides that, another initial impulse for photographing people was modelling - I had modelled for other photographers since 2006, but was actually rarely satisfied with these photos, coming to the conclusion I was not photogenic. After having not received the photos of the shooting by another photographer in 2011, I furiously decided to take photos of myself, helped by a tripod and the automatic release. For the first time I was really satisfied with photos of me. Soon tired of all the running, I made my boyfriend my assistant, with all settings done by me and then giving (surely nerve-rackingly) exact instructions. He just had to press the button. This made things easier and allowed me to shoot outdoor, for example myself as a mermaid on a stone in the Aegean Sea. Now really having become obsessed by photography, I started to read books about camera settings, composition, how to instruct models... At first, naturally, I worked with available light, but soon I was hungry for more options: Late 2011 already I got a professional camera, a Nikon D3x with several great Nikkor lenses and an external flash system, and one year later I started to ask people to model for me - previously I had asked only good friends, but then I just had to ask one of the three beautiful Black girls in my neighborhood, Rabea. She luckily agreed, and soon I also had her two beautiful



sisters in front of my camera. That's how I came to my film noir project - I needed a model for a Hitchcock inspired photo shoot and Rabea seemed just perfect for me because of her talent and shape of face. But Grace Kelly was blonde and White... Arguing with myself I came to the conclusion that skin and hair color shouldn't matter and that people would be able to recognize the movie no matter of it.



Entry Title: "Amazing Grace"

Name: Rebecca Forster , Germany

Category and Expertise: Deeper Perspective, Student

Today I think that was the best decision of my photographer life ever, because it gave my photographic work a deeper perspective. Maybe at some point of my life I would have stopped and lost interest – but not this way, as I suddenly had to say something: The camera became my way to speak out against prejudice and wrong role expectations, things which had always made me furious since my childhood, having experienced them myself a lot. Exactly that series was then awarded 2nd in the "deeper perspective" category of the ipa 2016.

Inspiration and influences:

Cinema – Hitchcock (maybe most of all my inspiration sources), film noir, western

Literature & Philosophy - the philosophy behind and the rich images created by Oscar Wilde, William Shakespeare, Homer, Plato, Seneca, Dante, Bram Stoker, Robert Louis Stevenson, Mary Shelley Martha Grimes, J.R.R. Tolkien

Myth and fairy tale, fascinating me through unusual, strong women, metamorphosis aspects and atmosphere - Greek and Egyptian mythology, the Beauty and the Beast (especially the Beaumont-Version, illustrated by Binette Schroeder), Disney's Pocahontas; inspiring in a negative sense: gender roles and reasons for marriage in most other fairy tales

Art - statues of ancient Greece and Egypt, paintings by Raffael, Botticelli, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Delacroix, Vermeer, Dalí, Franz Marc

Nature – its beauty, strength and fragility

Photography – mostly the photographs taken by Jimmy Nelson and Philippe Halsmann, and the ones by my grandfather; photographs of my favorite singers and fashion photography since 2002, mostly from Vogue and Greek magazines

Personal experiences - for example issues with prejudice and role expectation