

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

CHRISTIAN WALZL

Christian is a self-taught professional photographer. His love of art began at an early age. Christian was trained as a stone sculptor, which helped him to develop a sense of forms and shapes. He is also an oil painter which helps train the eye for motifs and colors. His combined skills of stone sculpting and oil painting has given him a special strength in photography.

Many years ago, I came to Switzerland to live and work in Zürich. Here in Switzerland, the quality of life is excellent, the people are open and diverse, which I like very much. We have a high standard of living, which allows me to live a carefree and free life. However, Switzerland is rather conservatively oriented, relying on traditional and proven values. This is rather a disadvantage for a creative or artistic profession because you don't necessarily want to break new ground or take risks.

Nevertheless, I follow my photographic style and would call it a "reduced style." With as little things as possible, I try to create something that tells a diverse story and inspires enthusiasm despite its supposed simplicity. I prefer my visual language and line management to be straightforward and without frills.

The first time I saw a picture on the monitor after an elaborate shooting, which corresponded exactly to what I had set myself as a goal in the planning, namely to inspire with the simplicity, it was probably one of the best experiences of my still young photographic career. It filled me with pride and awakened in me the ambition to achieve such a result with every shooting.

For an autodidact photographer, you need to have such moments because you have to work on everything yourself compared to studied photographers. This can be difficult because you often don't know where to start looking for what you want to know/learn. There are a lot of things you don't learn in an apprenticeship or a study, and you could fall back on that. But maybe this is what makes my way more free and unbiased. Even if I could turn back time, I would choose the same way again





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with education as a stone sculptor. It was a very good school to experience and to understand forms.

Stone sculpting was my first job. It taught me how to create a form, a figure from a misshapen piece of stone. Before you start, you have to think very carefully about how the result should look, which requires planning, imagination, and discipline. This is precisely what helps me as a photographer to transform an idea into a picture. And as in sculpture, the finishing touches come with the work on the object.

My first paid job as a photographer was a portrait shoot for a fashion store for their homepage and PR. I had to follow the client's instructions and could not use my creativity in the way I wanted to. It was not my style at

Also, the fact that I have painted pictures with different techniques helps my creative work. No matter if it was oil, acrylic or watercolor. Of course, oil is the medium where you have the most time between each step to think about what the next step is because each layer needs time to dry before you can continue to the next. In photography, I live a similar approach, I think carefully about every step for a photoshoot, from the planning to the finished picture, to get the desired result. But of course, in photography itself, the physical act is much more dynamic and faster.

By the way, I am the only one in my family who pursues an artistic career. Art has been a part of my life since I was a little boy. I grew up on a farm, and running the farm is a form of art. My parents were always very tolerant and let me live out my

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all. Compared to my last job for a private client. The client wanted the "Christian Walzl style," and so I was able to live my creative process to the fullest, which I prefer because it suits my nature.

This creative process in photography is similar to the process in sculpture in some respects, apart from the physical work, which is quite different. The sketches and drawings I made as a sculptor before working on the stone are now my photography subjects. And just like in sculpting, I try to find the perfect angle and form to create the sculpture, but with the models, in the right light. I want to harmonize light and shadow; I want to sculpt with light.

"craziness," they never restricted me, and I am very grateful for that. Art in the form of craftsmanship is, of course, an integral part of every farm in the form of carved figures, plates, ornaments, some of which are painted. Who knows, maybe this inspired me unconsciously to create art myself.

As a child on a farm, I had no idea how contrary my environment would be. And even as a sculptor, I was not really in touch with digital media and social media. These fast-moving and accessible media require you to stay active and reinvent yourself without being unfaithful to your style and identity. The difficult challenge is to stand out from the crowd and remain unique. It would be nice if

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new ideas and creative ways would not be subject to so many prejudices. It is categorized too quickly and rejected without thinking about what the artist's intention is and how he or she wants to go about it. This social media era makes many of the works getting replicated. It is followers who are desired and not free thinkers.

That is why I am always happy when my work is published and presented to the public. It fills me with pride and satisfaction that my way of making pictures is appreciated. It spurs me on to do it at least as well next time, if possible, even better. And of course, it also shows the whole team an appreciation of their work. An acknowledgment is essential because it is not only my work alone; there is a well-rehearsed team behind it.

Naturally, not everyone likes my work, and that's a good thing. But there is a fine line between individual perception and constructive criticism. Of course, I like to take justified criticism to rethink my own work and learn from it and develop myself further. It is part of artistic creation that one is confronted with criticism again and again. It would also be harmful if there were only yea-sayers. But in the end, my work is based on the idea that I have. And I remain true to my values and beliefs. So I take criticism to improve myself, not to change my thoughts. Individual perceptions usually don't offer a real basis for discussion, and depending on how they convey, they can even be hurtful.

But all these things help to achieve success. And even the definition of success is probably an individual perception. For me, this is certainly not the villa and the house by the lake, but a life that is as carefree and as normal as possible. Success, for me, means that I make what I like to do from the bottom of my heart, my profession and that I can live my daily life. All of these leads to a wonderful cycle that can only be good for the creative process.

And if I succeed in making a name for myself and my work is recognized and well-acknowledged, then I have achieved my goal as a photographer. And if I can look back on a career as a photographer with joy some time in the future, then I have probably achieved one of my biggest life goals.

Maybe my work will also allow me to give some advice to young prospective talents. To convey to them that one must always keep at it and never give up. Not to get stuck in categories and find what makes you and your work special. Also that you have to take risks if you are convinced that this is what you want. Success rarely comes by itself; there is a lot of hard work behind it.

And if anything of what I do should remain a legacy for future generations, it is hoped that my work has helped make photography and art neutral and unbiased in terms of gender, origin, sexuality, and the like. I believe that this would lead to a more diverse, lively, and honest art. To have moved something in this direction would probably be the most beautiful and valuable recognition I could get.

As for my favorite quote, which is the addition to everything: "...and beautiful legs ..."

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