

Jean-Marc Caracci

Photographer

You've been on a European tour working on your project "Homo Urbanus Europeanus." How did you get the idea for the project?

The idea came to life in Chicago in September 2006. It was my first time in the U.S. and I was impressed with the size of the buildings as European buildings look rather small compared to those in the U.S. I usually take photos of people and buildings from a distance. A photo by photo, my interest in the connection between the people and buildings was growing. People aren't aware of the buildings in their surrounding – they don't know where they are or which building they pass by. So I wanted to show people where they are, where they work, walk, sit for a cup of coffee ... So I started to isolate people in a natural setting with a natural background. When I came back home to Montpellier I thought of making photos of European capital cities in the same way. I think it's very interesting.

What's the message of "Homo Urbanus Europeanus?"

The main idea is to show to the European people not the differences, but the similarities between them. Simply – this is Europe. If you go to the U.S. or China, you'll see the difference. Europe has a long tradition and rich culture. And the idea is to show all the beauty of Europe and tell people that they should enjoy living in Europe.

Which cities have you visited for the project thus far?

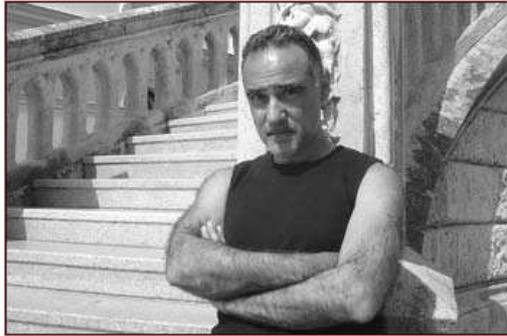
I first went to Bratislava, but I didn't do a good job there so I think I have to go back. I've been to Riga, Vilnius, Sofia, Madrid, Rome, Warsaw, Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade is the tenth capital I've visited. I further plan to go Tallinn, Helsinki, Reykjavik, Oslo, and Stockholm. Altogether I plan to shoot in around 20 capital cities.

What are the major differences between the eastern and western cities?

If I speak about photography – shooting – there's no difference. Architecture wise, Rome, for example is not so interesting for me. It's all Roman architecture and there aren't many new buildings. Also in Sofia – hardly any new architecture. I found new architecture in Ljubljana, Latvia and in Belgrade. I like to walk in a city that has an old and new part so I can mix the photos. If I'm only surrounded by old buildings – that's less inspiring for me.

And what about differences in the people of the West and East Europe?

It is believed that the East is more conservative than the West, but I wouldn't agree. Maybe in Riga, where people are not that much open. From what I've seen and experienced in Warsaw, Sofia, and Belgrade - people are so friendly and



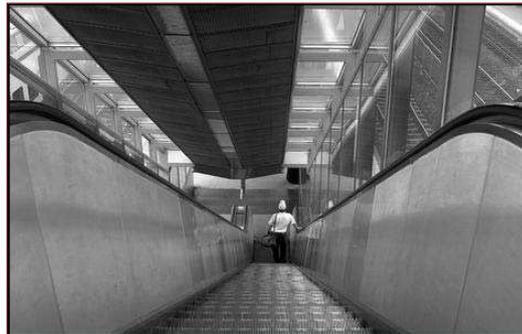
helpful. In such countries, I feel very good and welcome. I would even say that they are friendlier than people for example in France. I believe that there is no country better than the other. Unfortunately I don't have the time to get to know a city or country deeper – I only get to scrap the surface. But from what I've seen on the streets, I cannot really tell a major difference between people.

When you take photos in a city, what is that you look for?

I look for the lines and aesthetics. Also the shadows. The time of the day is very important for my photos. When I take a photo of a person I want to catch the right position of the body – sometimes on a sunny and sometimes on a cloudy day. I want to catch a beautiful image and make photos that

are appealing to the viewers. It's all because I think that we all should enjoy the life. And if you lay your eyes on something beautiful, you can definitely enjoy.

How did you fall in love with photography?



Helsinki

It was because of my brother – one of my brothers. I have many siblings – we're a big family, originating from Sicilia. I was born in Tunisia and when I was nine months old, my parents moved to France. So my brother took me to a photo lab and thought me everything. Also, I think I make photos because I don't have a good memory. Gradually, photography became my passion, my life. I like to shoot people. One a psychologist told me that I was probably looking for myself. I like when a photo is funny and provocative.

Why do you make only black and white photos?

Color is everywhere around, while black and white is like a dream. It's different, very beautiful, and very poetic.

How did you like Belgrade?

I like Belgrade very much. I like the scent of the city and the smell of the food. Serbia is a country that I'd like to come back and enjoy.

In your opinion, which is the most beautiful building in Belgrade?

Maybe, the French Embassy. Another beautiful building is the St. Marco's Church.

Once you finish the shooting, what

are you plans for the project?

I want to have exhibitions in all the cities that I've visited. I've started to contact galleries and French Cultural Centers to try to organize exhibitions. It's not a problem to exhibit, but it's always the problem of getting paid. My final goal is to publish a book for each capital, which would feature mainly photos of that particular city and also a selection of works from other cities.



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Belgrade



Rome



Zagreb

Warsaw

