

Interview with Sergiy Lebedynskyy

Can you tell us a little about the photographic techniques that you use?

I shoot with a Leica M6 and Olympus Pen D, I use b&w film, typically the cheapest I can find. And, of course, the darkroom is the most important part. For printing I take soviet photographic paper from the 80s and use lith developer. Lith printing on aged paper is unpredictable, you have a feeling that the time is working on every print with you. In the end you receive an archive-like looking print, which I call document. With this method, I make prints of what I photograph in Ukraine. The changes in the country are so rapid that what you photograph today is already history tomorrow. Therefore the method becomes a part of the concept.

What does photography mean to you?

Photography for me is the continuation of the personality. I put my statement and life's position into it. It makes your work concrete and strong.

How do you think Ukraine is perceived in the West and do you think it's accurate? What aspects of Ukrainian life and culture would you like to show to people?

The West is huge. All countries have lots of their own problems. It is very difficult to understand the situation from a distance, as there are lots of details which count. Mostly we are well understood only by countries which had to deal with soviet aggression in the past. Ukraine is a young country with a typical post-soviet syndrome which is looking for its place in the world. This decisive historical period I'm trying to interpret and show to others.

What was your initial reaction to Euromaidan and hopes for its outcome?

I was very indignant after the sudden change of course of the government, after the bare lies. And I fully understood why students gathered at Maidan. What happened afterwards, made me speechless. We have seen such pictures only in Russia, when people were hit and taken into prison. It was such a shame, just a no-go. The first hope was that we'll have a political solution, but Maidan has revealed all the problems Ukraine had.

Have events over the last year changed your relationship with Ukraine and how you see it? Do you think this has impacted on your photography or your art?

Last year showed me how many active, smart, hardworking people we have. I feel better now, Ukraine is not lost. Of course photography as part of my reaction became more rush, bold and expressive. I have more to tell and show, and I will. The importance of every opinion today is tremendous.

you can find more info about Sergiy on the page of [Shilo Group](#)

Interview with Alexey Ostrovskiy

Tell us a little about the photographic techniques you use.

I have very cheap equipment. As you know, I am doing my shots using a homemade camera, 18 by 13cm, and photograph exclusively on photographic paper. I love working with photo paper so that I can watch the process of developing; it gives extra flavour to the creative process. Besides expired paper can be cheap enough to buy. Traditionally, I use modified lenses from 35mm film cameras, with a few exceptions. I sometimes use an ordinary magnifying glass and "ortagoz"*.

**an old Russian lens made by GOMZ*

What does photography mean to you?

Mainly the process. I like the mood that I get into when I mess around with my camera. It is much more complicated than when photographing with a digital camera - in the viewfinder the image is flipped, for long exposures the exposure is calculated intuitively by eye, when a picture is shot it also needs to be processed in a darkroom, and the camera itself is quite heavy to handle. Thus photographing turns into a kind of ritual, and this will inevitably be reflected in the photographs themselves.

Do you think that Ukraine is understood by the West?

This question is difficult to answer, any answer will say more about my attitude. Of course I want to believe that Ukraine is understood beyond its borders, that we live in a humane world based on mutual understanding and cooperation. But I think Ukraine is too silent and quiet, maybe even expressionless, if I may say so. Time flows slowly here.

What aspects of Ukrainian life and culture would you like to show to people?

I'd like to focus on the role of the irrational in the life of Ukraine, on what is called cardiocentrism. I think Ukrainians are prone to melancholy, contemplation and self-reflection.

What was your initial reaction to Euromaidan and hopes for its outcome?

I didn't resent the decision of Yanukovich to delay the signing of the documents as much as his reaction to the demands of Maidan, to the events that occurred there. That's why I supported the Maidan to a certain extent. But this year we had a lot of unpleasant things to learn. Something that had always been with us, and we didn't notice or did not want to see.

Do you think this has influenced your photography or your art?

Not affected directly. At least on a mental level these areas do not overlap in any way.

you can find Alexey's photographs on his [page](#)