

INTERVIEW WITH FRANK PETERS

I have the pleasure today to introduce Frank Peters the Winner of the Int'l Photography Awards 2019 in Minimalism Category. His work is characterized by simplicity, beauty, and mood, and shows a masterful handling of the tones across the image.

Q. Thanks you Frank for accepting my invitation, to answer some questions about your work for "Inspirations". Can I start by asking you what made you first pick up a camera?

Frank. Hi George, thanks for the invitation. The magic of photography was taught to me by my beloved father who sadly passed away last year. He unknowingly introduced me to a form of expression that would become one of the most valuable in my life. My father made slides and once a year, mostly before Christmas, the projector and screen appeared with that specific smell and we as a family looked and laughed at ourselves at younger age. My father had also a good eye for landscapes and photographed the polders and nature around the city where we lived. I loved his winter photos. Through his photography we entered another world. I'm very thankful for that experience. Later I set out to capture the world around me with my own camera, an analog Pentax.



House in Snow, Zeeuws Vlaanderen, Netherlands

Q. As we can see from your site you have a strong interest in poetry. Would you like to share with us one of your poems? And more on this, I would be interested to know if you find inspiration in poetry for your photography or you think there is another connection between these two apparently unconnected art genres.

Frank. My poetry and photography have long lived separate lives. Poetry is completely unpredictable. Ideas and sentences come into my mind and when there's a beginning I start to shape the thoughts into a poem.

Photography is more planned. I don't drive to the beach to write poetry, but I do drive there to take photos. Although they seem unconnected I brought them together a few years ago in an article in the Dutch Mountains Magazine where the poems I wrote about mountaineering were combined with my landscape images of the Dolomites.

The last two years my poetry has developed into a minimalistic direction just like my photography. The poems have become shorter, the images emptier. By reducing thoughts and photos to the minimum, I search for the essence.

At the moment they fit together and reinforce each other. Some new poems, I wrote while I was working on my photos and some new photos were inspired by my poetry. My idea is to publish them together:



Passing Away

Traveling with
the speed
of darkness,
in the light
of infinity.

*Escape from
Monotony,
Zeeland,
Netherlands*

Q. You work mainly in black and white but many of your works are in color. Do you think there is a fundamental difference between these two types of photography or simply there are images that look better in color or BnW?

Frank. B&W and monochrome are more suitable for fine art photography in my opinion because there is more soul in this palette and more drama. I can express myself better through this kind of work, but it is not a dogma. It may change, could be interesting though.

My commercial work is more colorful. For travel articles in magazines, newspapers or travel blogs I need more 'realistic' photos so color suits best. But there is not a hard border. Sometimes an image works better in B&W. So it is a bit difficult to say. As I look upon it now, both is true. There is a fundamental difference and there are images that look better in color or B&W. And sometimes a photo looks great in color and B&W!

George can I ask you a question? I'm a great admirer of your work. You create one of the finest B&W images I know but are you also interested in color? Do you like to view color images and do you consider color photography yourself?

George. *Well, I suppose it is not so common for the interviewee to ask questions, but why not :). I started my trip in photography in color; I've even published a photo album with color images some years ago. I follow the work of many photographers working in color and I really find their work amazing, but I feel that I can better express myself in B&W.*



The Gate, Durdle Door, Jurassic Coast, England

Q. *Do you use any special equipment (filters etc) or techniques in your workflow? If so, tell us some things about the HOW and WHY behind your choice.*

Frank. In my fine art work I use a lot of long exposures. I love to work with slow shutter speeds because they can minimize the composition and give beautiful gradients. On a more personal level I'm pretty slow by nature, so long exposures suit me quite well.

I work with the LEE filter system and I have the Little, Big and Super Stopper. I'm very satisfied with the system and I like the bluish color cast that comes with LEE. If you want to get rid of it, it is easy to correct in post-processing, but I like it and sometimes the blues work better when I use a red filter in a B&W conversion in editing. In post-processing the NIK-collection is very useful to convert images from color to B&W.

I prefer to use a mechanic timer, because remote controlled timers can cause problems with batteries, especially when connected to mobile phones. Mine is often more empty than full at the end of the day and I don't want to take risks during beautiful evening light.



Pano Poles, Oesterdam, Zeeland, Netherlands

Q. You describe yourself as a fine art, travel and landscape photographer. What does the term "Fine Art" mean to you? I would also be interested to know what the differences between these 3 photographic genres are.

Frank. To me fine art photography is the creation of tranquil, non-existing, moving moments. Images that tell more about the photographer than the beauty of the images reveals. As far as I can judge for myself my work is mainly about the search for balance, perfection, the flee from reality and the unknown. Things that I try to find and discover in real life as well, but usually I manage it better in the photos😊.

My travel and landscape photography is still personal but more documenting than expressing.



Jetty, Ouddorp, Zeeland, Netherlands

By the way I'm very interested in your view on fine art photography. What does 'fine art' mean to you?

George. *More or less I agree with your statement. Fine Art for me means to abstract myself from reality and rather recreate it according to my vision and imagination. This is what art in general must do. A fine art photographer is nothing more (or less) than any other artist; The only difference is that he has chosen photography as his tool for creation.*

Q. *More on this, do you think that photography should strive to depict reality, or should it aim to create illusions as other kind of visual arts do?*

Frank. Both. I like to create illusions, escapes from reality, searching for beauty. But in journalism and documentary it is important that photography depicts reality although that is arguable. Photography is a 2D display of a 3D reality seen through the eyes and mind of a person with his own unique character and history. So reality in photography doesn't really exist, it is always an illusion in its own way. But in journalism and documentary the importance is documenting a story. In art it is more about creating a story.



Q. *Most of the photographers I know, myself included, used to be inspired by or simply listen to some kind of music while processing their images. What music do you like and is there any connection with your work?*

Frank. Music! Music is a great inspiration source to me. I've worked several years as a DJ at the local radio station of Dordrecht (the place where I used to live) and played a lot of music. I presented the morning show, among other things. I like several genres, from Spanish bagpipe player Hevia to Italian singer Mina ('Io e te da soli' still breaks my heart) and from Mowtown music to Dutch poet Frank Boeijen. I can also appreciate Irish folk and I love the music of Billy Joel, especially his album work. He is an artist who can tell stories in such a beautiful and strong way that I get Goosebumps. Other inspiring bands and artists are Dire

Straits, Bruce Springsteen, John Denver, Counting Crows. I'm also a big fan of The Eagles. There is something magical in their voices, something so addictive in their melodies.

Besides that, I've a soft spot for country music. It sounds a bit like a guilty pleasure, so don't tell anybody:-), but put Jolene of Dolly Parton on my earphones and I can listen to it for an hour and more. Same applies to The Marshall Tucker Band, The Jayhawks, Alabama.

Lately I was filming a documentary about Dutch artist Ad Arma (painter, ceramicist, sculptor, glass artist). He also plays music while working. And his favorite is very experimental jazz. Normally I get really nervous from jazz and I don't like it at all, but this was so good that I got into a bit of a trance. Great to discover new kinds of music as well.

I can't imagine travelling without music. When I'm in my car, on a plane or in a train I listen to music. Even when I'm taking photos I sometimes like to listen. It depends a bit on where I am, but along the New York skyline I listened to Billy Joel for example and along the Dutch coast to Frank Boeijen.

When post processing my images, I also listen to music but strangely it doesn't affect my work. I can't find any Eagles, Hevia or Dolly Parton in my photography and the mood of the music doesn't really effect the mood of my images, at least I'm not aware of, but music does affect my poetry. While listening to the right music at the right time ideas and sentences come into my mind.

What kind of music do you like to hear yourself while processing and does it affect your work?

George. *Since I'm not the interviewee here, I'll answer shortly. As strange as it may seem I'm a fan of hard rock music (Metallica, ACDC, Guns and Roses etc). It is obvious that my music doesn't affect the mood of my images, but it keeps me alert and helps me concentrate while I edit my images. I know it's a bit weird, but ... ☺*

Q. As a winner of the Int'l Photography Awards 2019, what do you think is the role of photography competitions in the development of a photographer?

Frank. I think an artist wants to make what he/she thinks is beautiful and important, at least that applies to me, so in the development of the creative process of a photographer, competitions don't play a major role, but in recognition they play a huge role! I was jumping in the living room when I heard I won in one of the most prestigious contests in the world. In earlier years I had received several honorable mentions and won smaller competitions which I was already very happy with, but this was the first global contest.

As an artist you try to get recognition, you want your work to be published and appreciated. But it is not easy and I had and still have to overcome a lot of disappointments and rejections. To create the special photos which are worth sharing can be very hard too. I climb mountains, walk miles, wake up early, suffer cold, wait for hours, make stupid mistakes (like forgetting to put the big stopper in front of my lens after composing the image) etc. Only a few photos pass your own quality requirements and it is rewarding when they are not only meaningful to yourself. So winning the award certainly gave me a big boost to continue and it opens many doors. In that case the role of photography competitions is very important.



Spaceman, Cadzand, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, Netherlands

Q. What do you believe is the role of Social Media for the promotion of your work?

Frank. Social media are one of the best inventions after the wheel and spotify. I still have to figure out how to use instagram and facebook in a more effective way but the opportunities are endless. Socials are above all an inspirational worldwide platform where you can discover new work and artists. They are fairly inexhaustible sources.



Oosterstaketsel Pier, Blankenberge, Flanders, Belgium

Q. Tell us a bit about your current projects and future plans.

Frank. At the moment I'm developing my fine art photography in B&W and monochrome color. I've published my first book 'The Story of my Light' wherein I tell the stories behind the photos (texts in English/Dutch) and I have ideas about a new book in which I'd like to combine poetry and photography. Lately I've bought a drone which I want to use more frequently. I'm still learning how to get the best photos from birds' view, but I've made a few satisfying images. This new possibility is very interesting.

Q. What is your favourite image of yours and why?

Frank. Difficult question, are you OK if I start with my favourite image of one of the photographers who inspire me?

It is 'Last Light' by Michael Levin: <https://www.michaellevin.ca/colour/1311/4>. The work is delicate, rock-solid in composition, technically perfect, edited stylishly, subtle in pastel shades, it has soft gradients, rhythm, space, is serene and takes you into another world. 'Sea Stack' <https://www.michaellevin.ca/b-w> is also one of his masterpieces. I love the simplicity and tones of this image.



House in White, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, Netherlands

From my own work I would choose 'House in White' part of the winning series in the International Photography Awards. In this image I put everything what I have. It has a minimalistic composition, depth because of the unpaved road and mood on account of the mist. I'd like the gradient in the sky and I'm satisfied with the post processing but most of all it tells the story of the region where I'm living in. This part of The Netherlands is sparsely populated, the landscape is rural and empty and that is reflected in this image.

Q. Finally, if you could give just one piece of advice to an aspiring fine art photographer, what would you tell them?

Frank. Find your own way, but first of all master the craft of photography. Learn the rules to be able to deviate from them.

And I'd like to name a few other photographers who inspire me:

Anthony Lamb: <https://www.anthonylambphotography.com/>

Wilco Dragt: <https://www.wilcodragt.nl/>

Joel Tjintelaar: <https://www.bwvision.com/>

And a photographer from Greece called George Digalakis, do you know him?

<https://www.digalakisphotography.com/>

Thank you very much for the invitation to have this interview. I really liked it because of the interesting questions. Best regards from The Netherlands, Frank.

More about Frank and his photography on his site www.frank-peters.nl and Instagram accounts [FrankPetersPhotographybw](#) & [FrankPetersPhotography.clr](#)