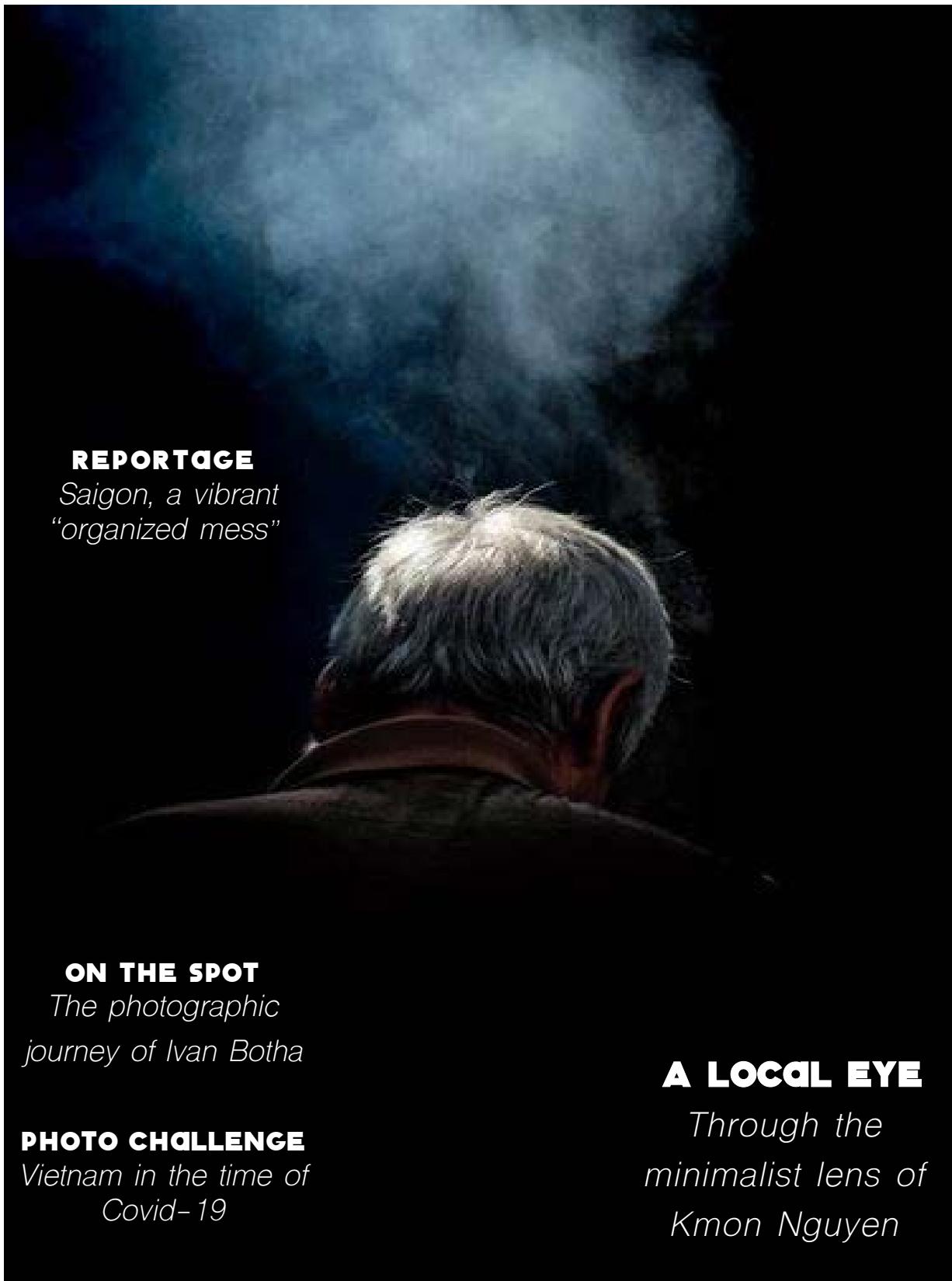


SPW

Magazine

May 2020
Issue # 1



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“organized mess”*

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*The photographic
journey of Ivan Botha*

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*Vietnam in the time of
Covid-19*

A LOCAL EYE

*Through the
minimalist lens of
Kmon Nguyen*

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"A picture is not just a click, it's a small fragment of time captured by the sensor of your camera, transmitting the feeling of the moment to the viewer."



A group dedicated to people willing to learn photography, practice and meet people with the same interests in Ho chi minh city, Vietnam. Join us on our weekly photo walks and meet ups. Let's discover the city together!



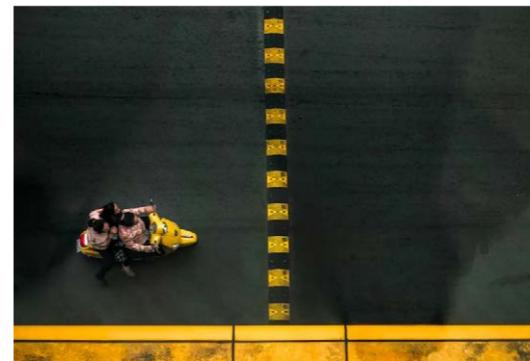
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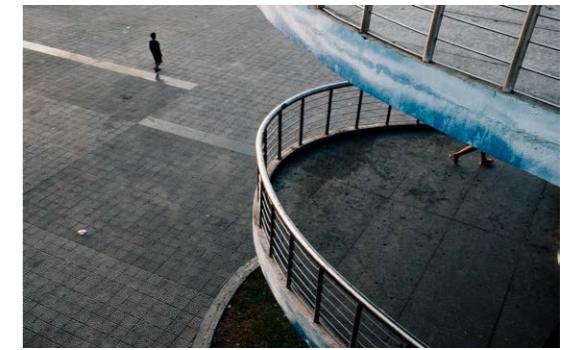
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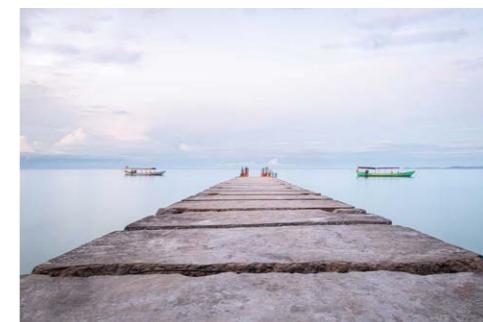
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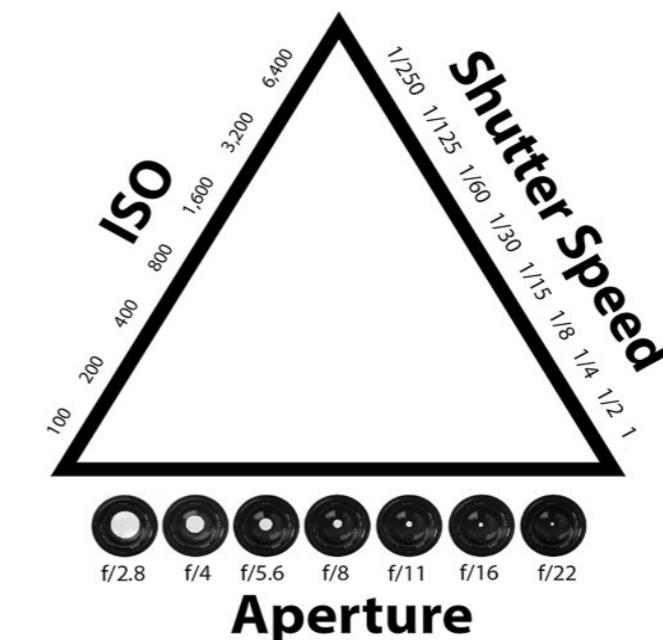


Cho Lon, which literally means 'big market' is Vietnamese, used to be a city in itself until it was merged with Saigon in the 1930's. However, the neighborhood, nowadays Ho Chi Minh's District 5, has preserved its unique charm and traditions. This is where Chinese culture is perpetuated in the city, making the area a must-go during Tet (Chinese New Year) celebrations.

This lively area is full of colorful alleyways, local markets and meditative pagodas where locals go about their daily lives. It is one of the most popular spots for photographers trying to capture authentic moments as modernity and urban development don't seem to have a grip on this part of the city.



Exposure



Aperture- Aperture is a measure of how open or closed the lens is. A wider aperture (or lower f-number) means more light will be let in by the lens, simply because the opening is larger. A narrower aperture (or higher f-number) allows less light to reach the sensor.



Aperture 1.8/
SP 1/800
ISO 100

Aperture 13
SP 30 sec
ISO 100



Shutter Speed- It is also known as exposure time. This relates to the length of time the camera shutter stays open. If the shutter speed is fast, your shot can capture motion. If the shutter is slow, then it can create motion blur effect.



Aperture 2.8
SP 1/80
ISO 2,500

ISO- Is the level of sensitivity of your camera to available light. The lower the ISO number, the less sensitive it is to the light, while a higher ISO number increases the sensitivity of your camera.

The Origins.

Humans of Vietnam is a project started by Therese Ton, a Vietnamese American artist, in 2014. Through this work, she wanted to showcase the real essence and diversity of Vietnam through stories of people living in the country. Inspired by the work of Brandon Stanton with Humans of New York, a vibrant blog in which the photographer featured photos of New Yorkers alongside quotes and anecdotes, she started to collect stories of Vietnamese people in order to share them with her family back in the US.

Therese traveled to Vietnam once every two years since she was 5 years old. At the beginning, she didn't get the true sense of Vietnam, of its culture & people as she used to travel only in the country's modernized parts.

She set out to investigate on life under the poverty line in different parts of the country. As she was conducting some research on organizations working in rural areas, she found Lasan Taberd, an organization run by catholic friars in the south of Vietnam.

Lasan Taberd guided her to different local communities where she was able to experience the true welcoming and friendly nature of Vietnamese people. The organization offered her the opportunity to work as a verbal translator and PR representative during her school breaks. This is when she started to pick up photography as a hobby and took advantage of her position to document the diverse traditions and customs of Vietnamese people.

Humans of Vietnam was her way to share her experiences with family and friends in a visual way. This project is also a key to understand better the life and stories of Vietnamese people and to unlock the secrets of their unforgettable smiles and friendly nature.

Stories

"The first time a man hit me, I was 12 years old. My dad came from a long night of drinking at 3:00 AM and it was one of his angry nights. Usually he would just push around my mom a couple of times before passing out but on that particular night, he came after me. I was walking towards the bathroom when he stumbled in and backhanded me across the face. I almost fainted because it hurt so bad, my skin like millions of needles were pushed into my face. I cried all night hugging my mom but the next day my mom told me 2 things that changed my life forever.



She told me that suffering and pain are inevitable in life and most people, the average, can't take it so they create greater pain and suffering for others like my dad.. Because the pain he caused my mom and me seemed greater than his own, so he kept on beating us for years to come.

But the second thing my mom told me was that only the very few people in the world who accept and live with pain and suffering are truly great. 80 year later, I still listen to my mother's advice and accept the pain in my bones, the poverty I live in, the suffering the world brings today. I don't live to be average, I live to be great."

"What's one piece of advice you would give to other people?"

"Don't trust anyone."

"Why?"

"This pretty girl I had a crush on at my school told me she liked me back and asked to see my lunch bag. Then when I wasn't look she stole all of my cookies and ran. So yeah, don't trust anyone....especially girls. They just break your heart and steal your cookies."



"I believe that we can have a cultural exchange with foreigners in Vietnam, in order to know more about different countries and traditions around the globe. I work in the administration department for a bank."

What I like most about Vietnam is the solidarity between people."



"What is your biggest dream?"

"Smiling without people looking at me funny. It makes me feel ugly inside. I want to be a dentist when I grow up to fix other people's smiles so when people look at them, they don't feel ugly- they will feel beautiful."



"I fought in Vietnam's war and those were really hard times, that I wouldn't wish for anybody. After the war, I started my rickshaw business".



Saigon, a vibrant “organized mess”

By Dkle for Yusuketravels collective
@yusuketravels

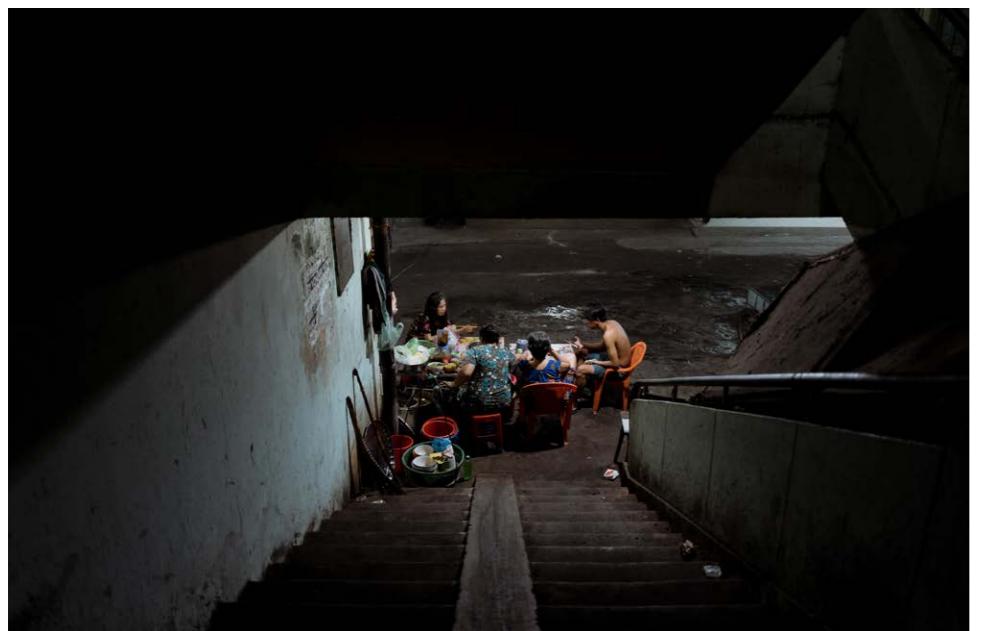
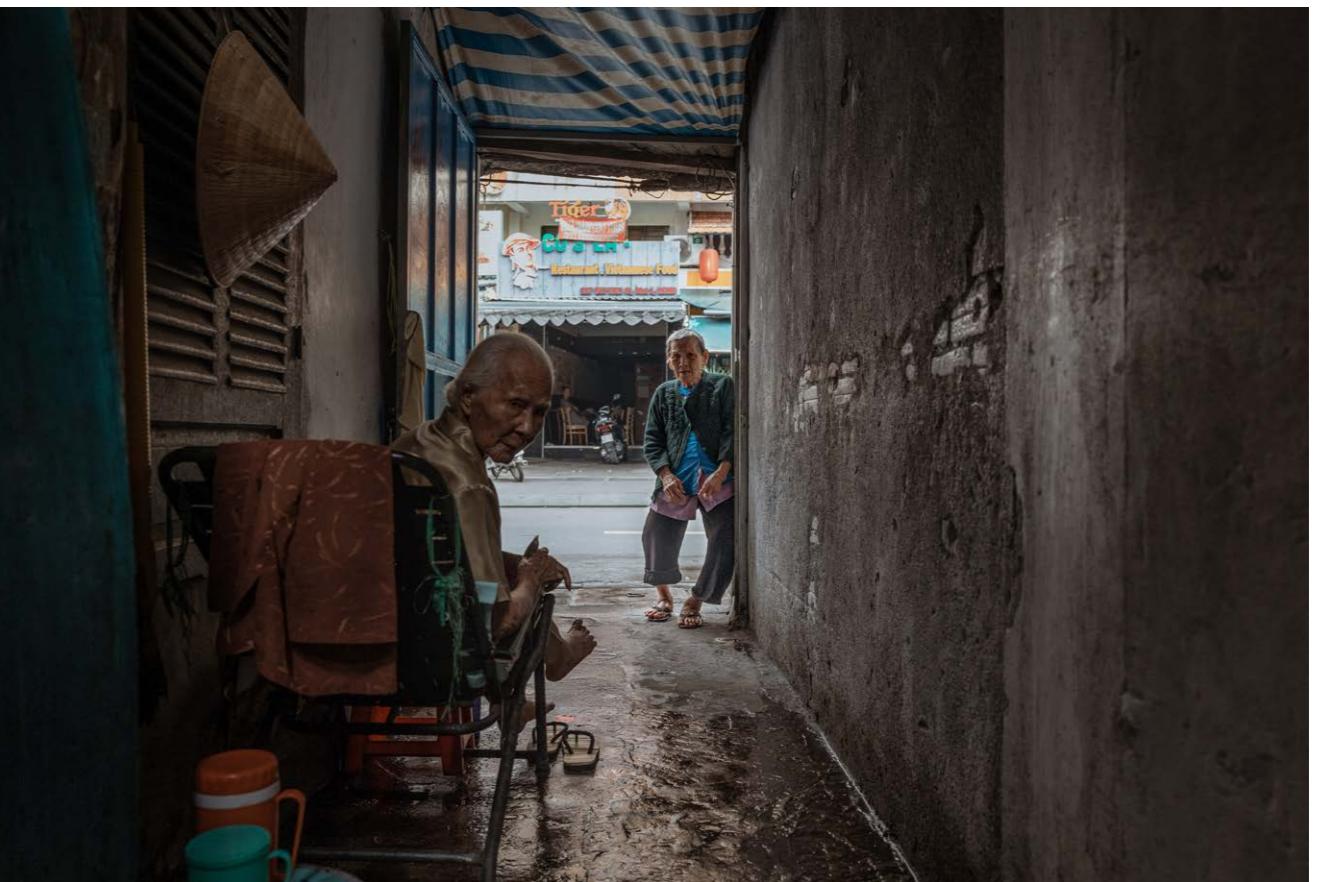
Saigon, a city where I was born, left to Paris as a young kid and finally back for good, almost 20 years later.

It's a vibrant, welcoming and intense city which I like to call an “organized mess”. It might sound weird but everything has its own place in this “mess”. If you know its “rules”, life can be wonderful in Saigon.

It's a real pleasure for me to re-discover the city of my childhood. Even though the city has been modernised a lot, I can still find here and there some of my childhood memories. The atmosphere, the colors, the tasty foods, the people and their kindness, everything is still here. You just need to take a pause, open your heart and free your senses to fully enjoy it.

Saigon is a kind of big playground mixed between modernization and tradition. For my part, I like to spend time walking around the popular neighborhoods where “real life” happens. It's for me the true charm of the city.
Happy to call Saigon home again!







Through the minimalist lens of Kmon Nguyen



Nguyen Tuan Khai, known as Kmon Nguyen in the world of street photography, is a 36 years-old Saigoneer. Kmon left his office work to fully live his passion – roaming the streets of Saigon with his camera in search of minimalist compositions to express his peculiar vision.

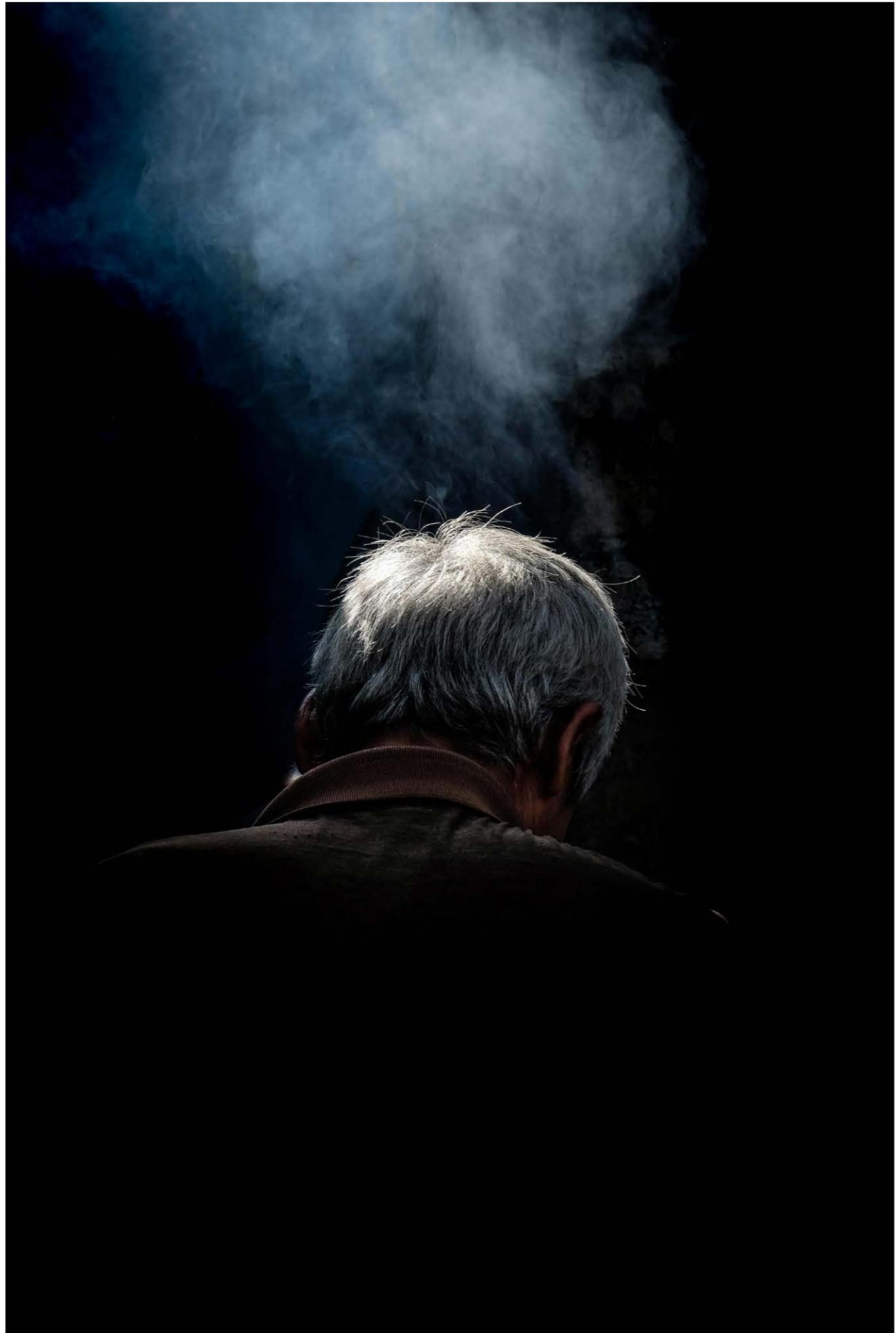


Minimalist photography comes from the notion of minimalism in art, a style used by many 20th century artists. It emphasizes on the use of a minimal amount of compositional elements, such as shape, color and lines. It aims at conveying a concept or message in

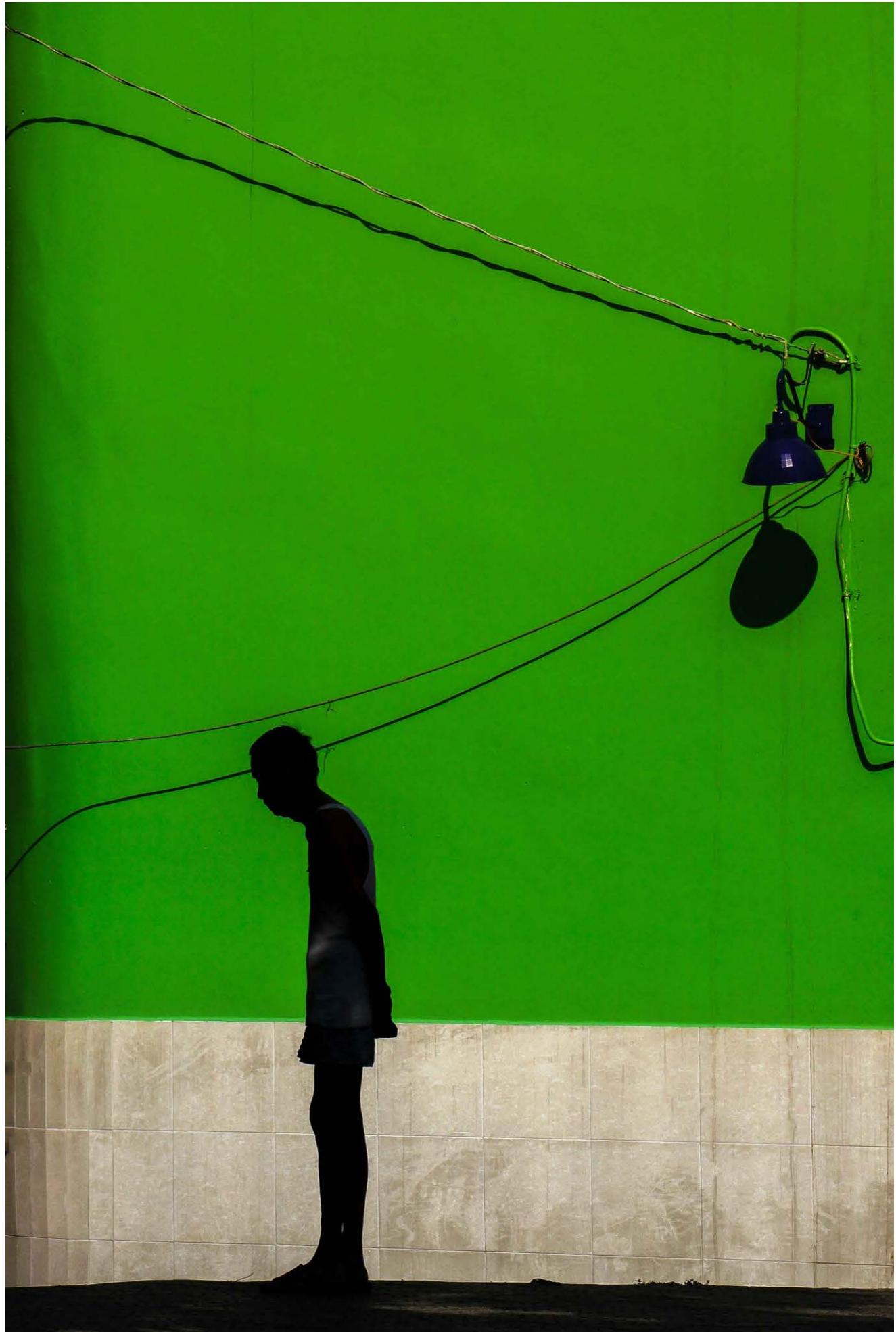
order to provide a unique visual experience or elicit an emotional response from the viewer. Therefore, minimalism goes beyond just capturing the moment, it requires visualization and imagination, two qualities that Kmon doesn't lack of.

As Picasso used to say: "Art is the elimination of the unnecessary" and Kmon embodies this in his pursuit of minimalism by seeking simplicity in every street corner. "Life can be very complicated but I choose to look at it in a positive, light, fun and simple way. My motto in photography and life is just 'Keep it simple'. I want to inspire photographers around me to take this path and see photography from a new perspective". His wish seems to be on the way to become reality, as more and more photography enthusiasts have been exploring the genre of minimalist photography in Saigon. To be continued!





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Leaving a footprint in Vietnam by Rod Sot



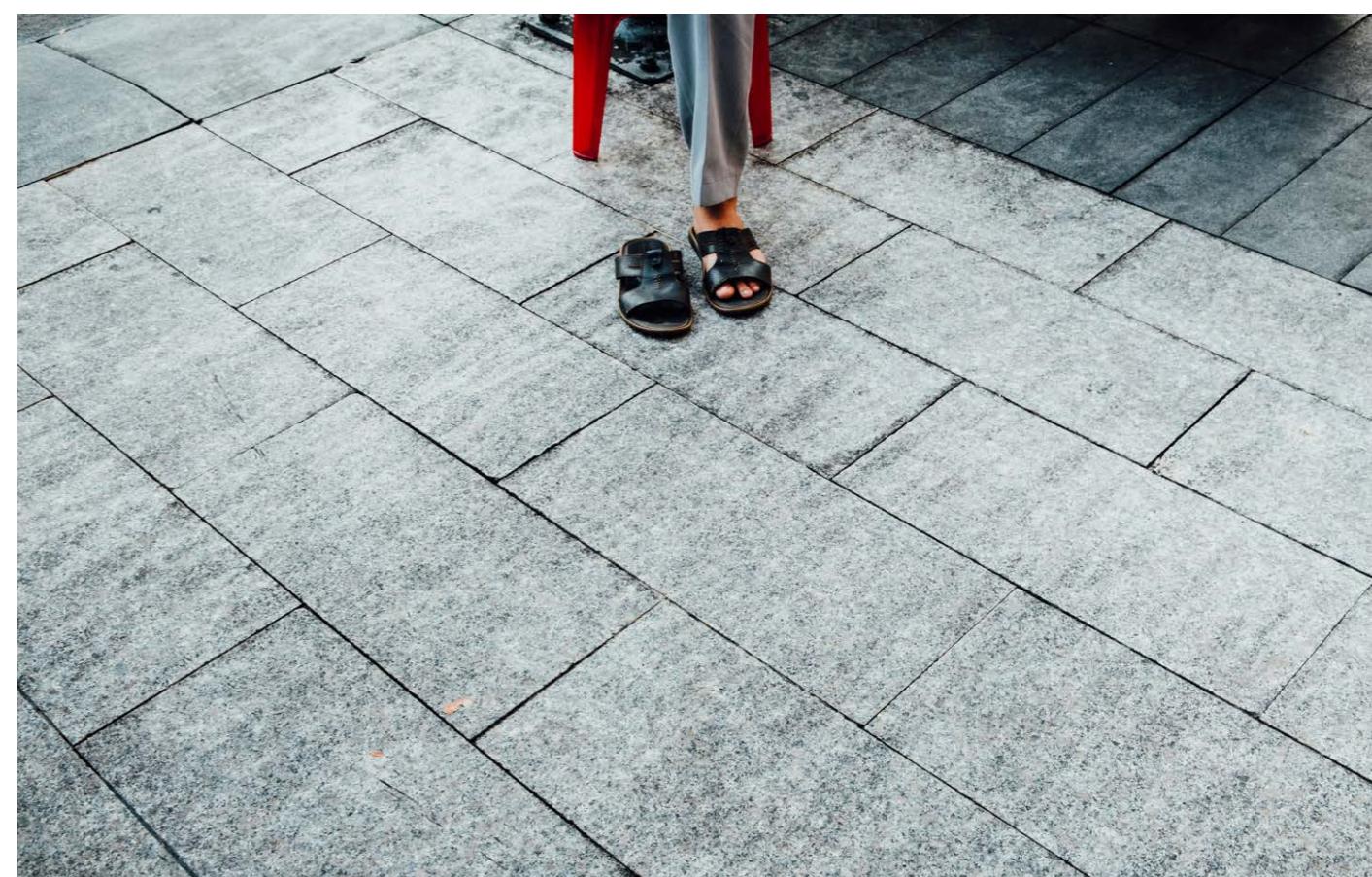
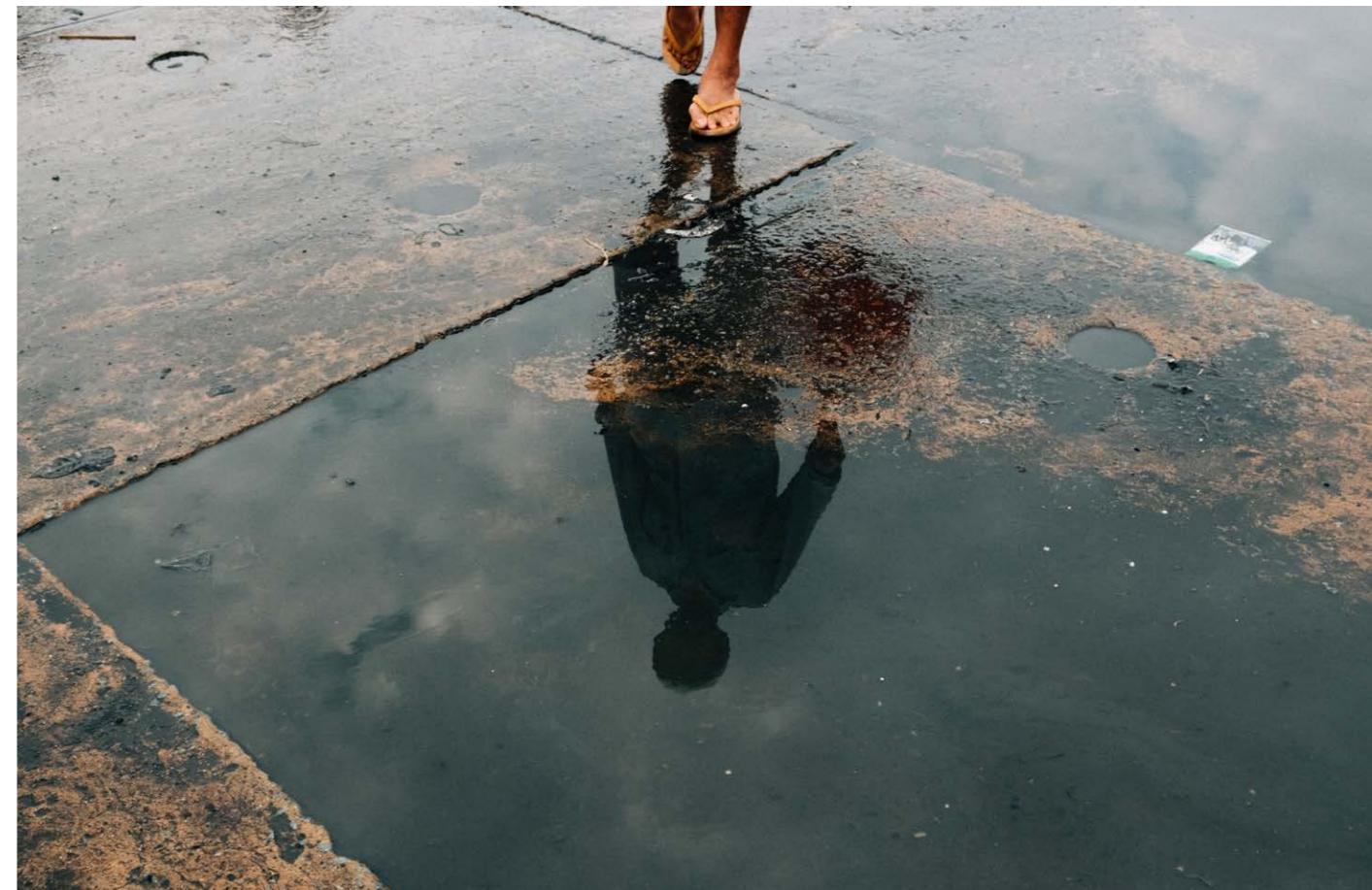
Continuously, I make photos, create images. Sometimes they are simple, other times complex, sometimes they are chaos, sometimes organized. I am putting together elements that already existed and vibrated in a way that pushed me to pull the trigger. I like to experiment, mix techniques, compositions, ways of looking. In this spirit, everything can be turned into an interesting image.

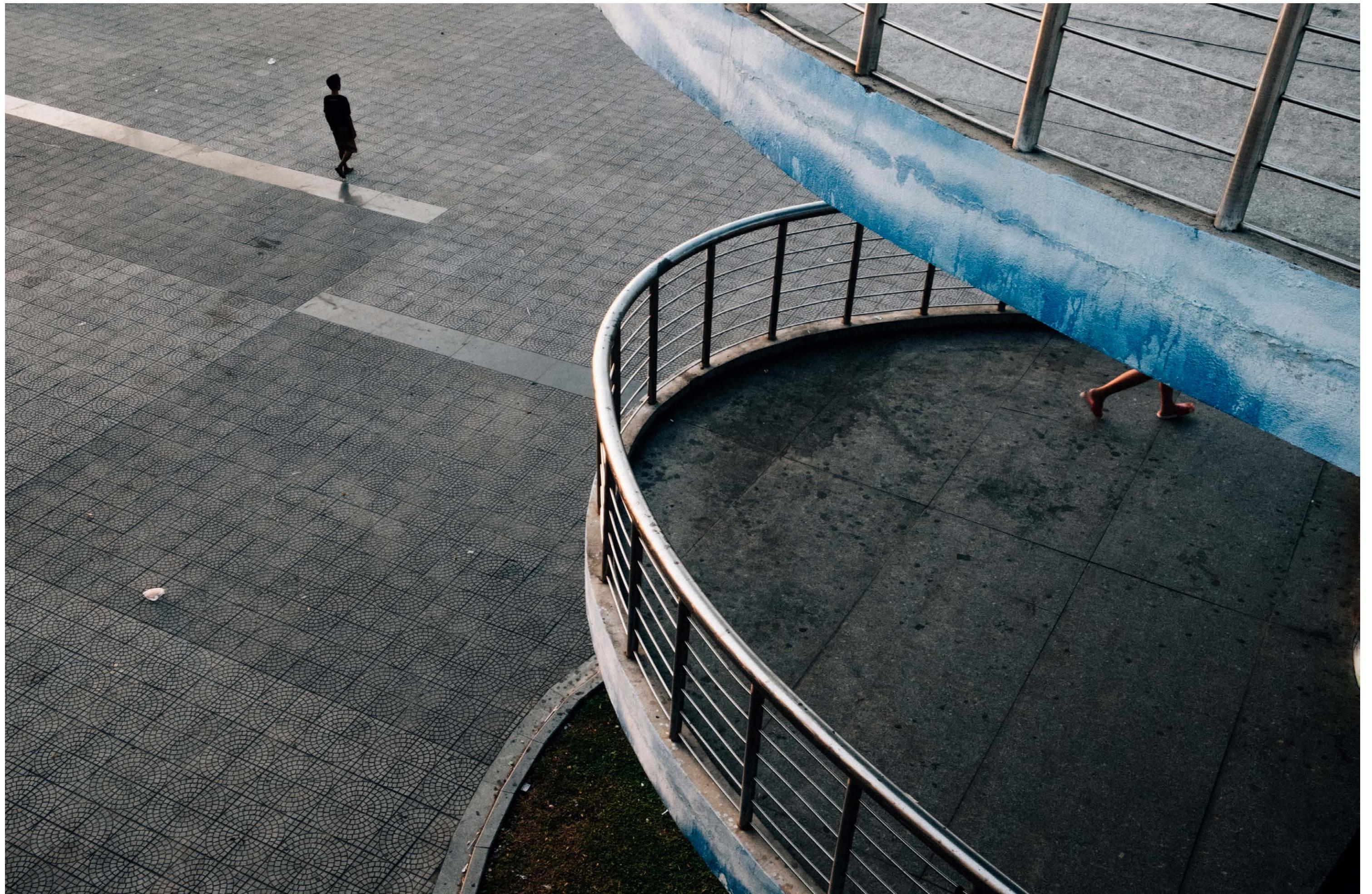
I firmly believe that a photographer not only captures reality but mixes it with his own fears, emotions, hopes or thoughts, which translate into shadows and lights in an image. When composing and looking through the viewfinder of a camera, your whole mind and beyond is turned to the moment in front of you. It's inevitable that each photo carries a piece of you, posing more questions than answers.

The experience I had living in Vietnam was wonderful, it was a driving force in my photographic work. Here you have infinite possibilities, the stimuli never end.

I invite all the people who make photos to see beyond and ask themselves why they do it, beyond the merely superficial. When the answer appears and the truth is reflected, after that, nothing is the same as before.







The photographic journey of Ivan Botha

Ivan Botha is a self-taught, free-lance photographer from South Africa who has been living in Vietnam for the past three years. His love of photography started four years ago, when he borrowed an old Olympus camera from a friend in order to capture moments on a trip across China.



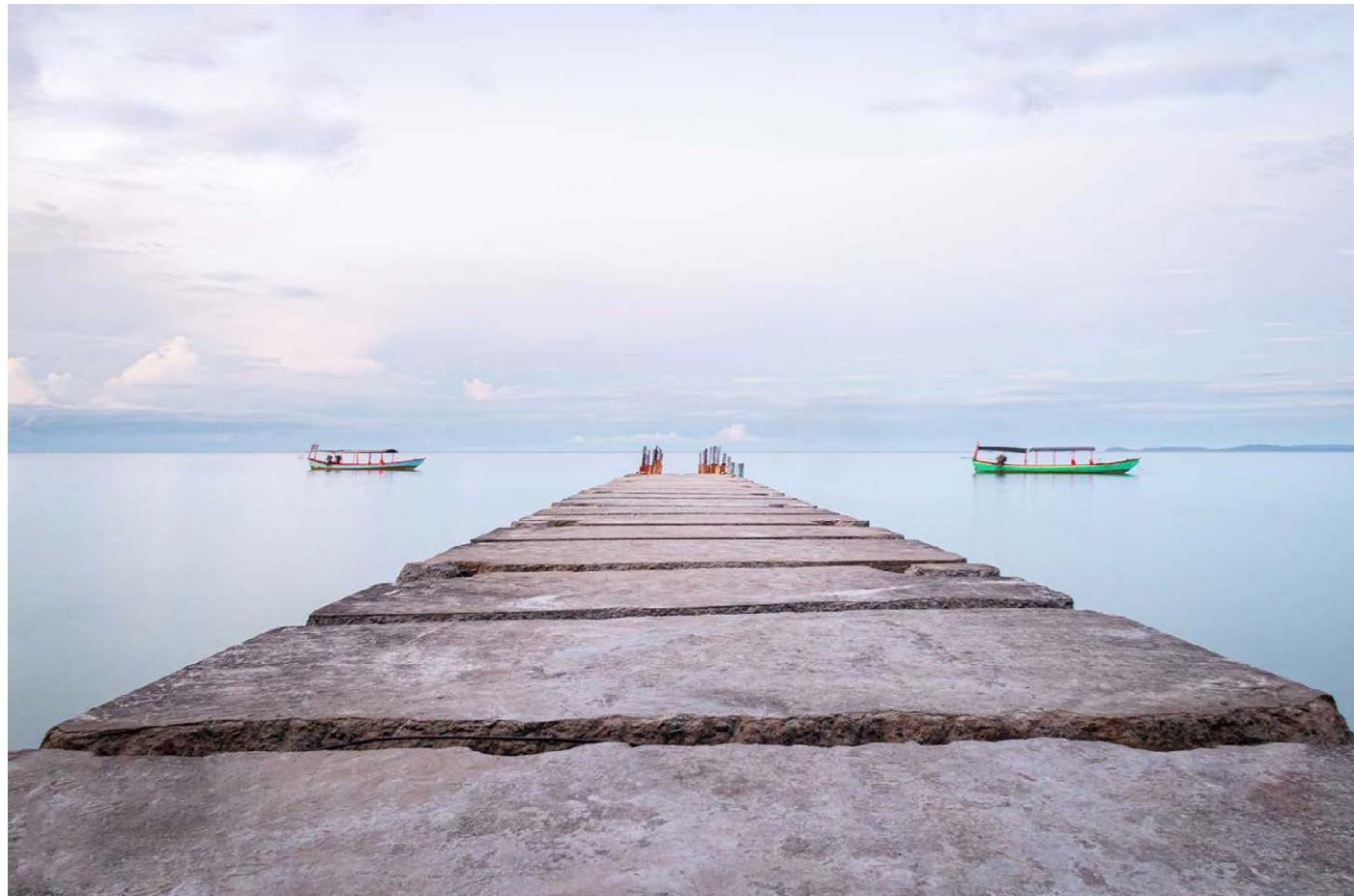
Ivan sees photography as a journey, where trial and renewal are essential. Although Ivan enjoys keeping things fresh through continuous experimentation, landscapes are his primary muse. For Ivan, it is all about the light when it comes to landscape photography. Nature and cities are static but take on different personas, depending on the time of day and quality of light.

2020 is definitely a weird time to be alive, with most countries experiencing prolonged self-isolation and people spending so much time indoors. Ivan hopes that people will show more appreciation to our natural world when things get back to normal.

In 2019, Ivan took part in an exhibition organized in Ho Chi Minh City by Saigon Photo Walk : '*Children of Saigon*'.

Alongside a few other local photographers, Ivan showcased street photographs of children going about their daily life in districts around the city. "Saigon is bursting with opportunity for street-photography, there's not really such thing as a quiet street here, all alleys are bursting with life," Ivan enthuses.







Vietnam in the time of Covid-19

Our first monthly theme is a pretty obvious pick but one we could simply not ignore. We have selected pictures taken in Vietnam over the last months to tell a visual story of the country's response to the global pandemic.

As street photographers, we have been privileged witnesses of the steady slowdown Vietnam has been experiencing following the virus outbreak since late January.

Awareness campaign leaflets at each corner of the streets, security guards checking your temperature at every gate and face masks spreading like wildfire have become the new reality depicted in this series of photographs.

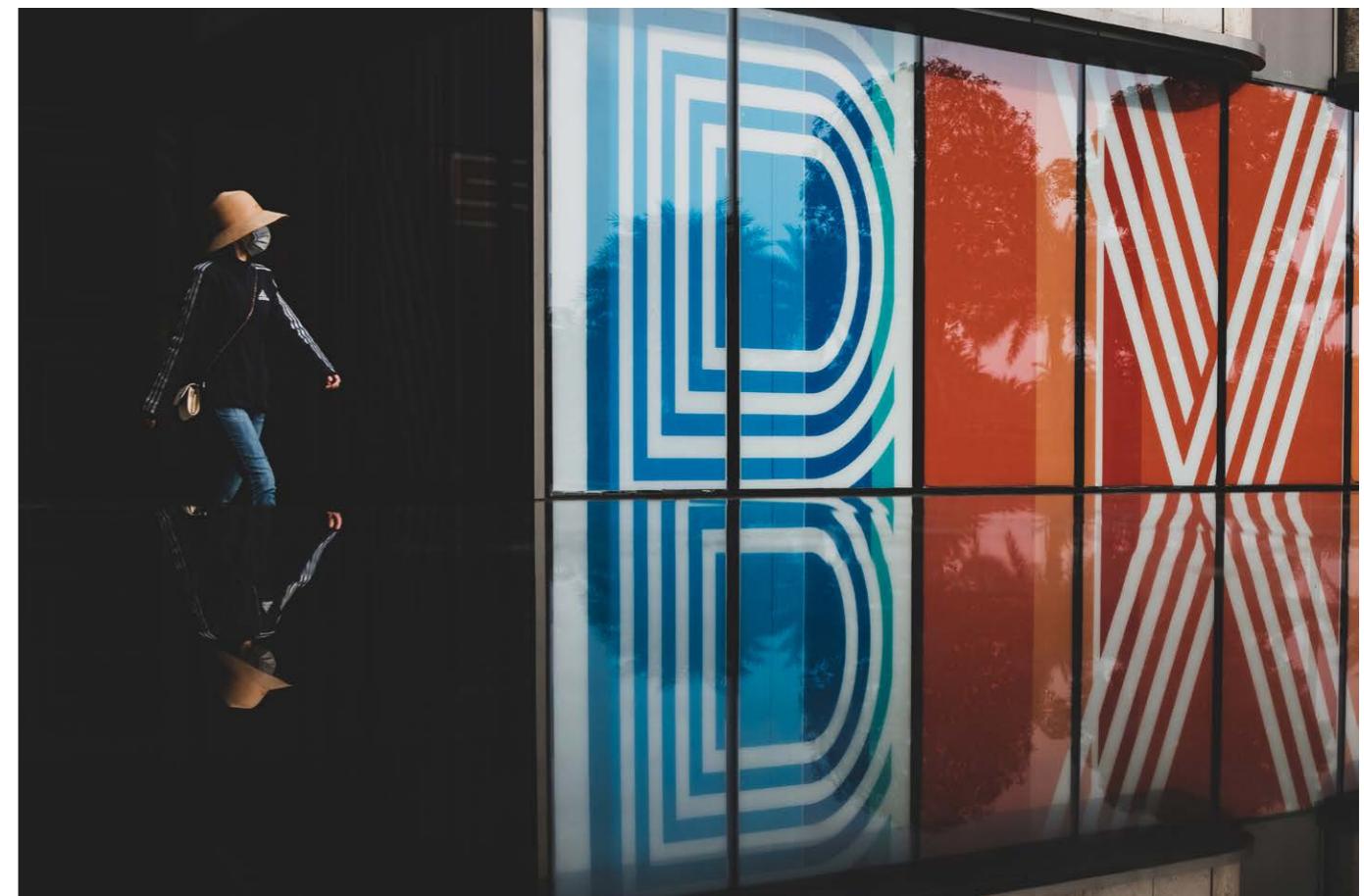
Adrien Jean



Maxwell Gutteridge



Pham Viet Anh Minh



Adrien Jean



Maxwell Gutteridge

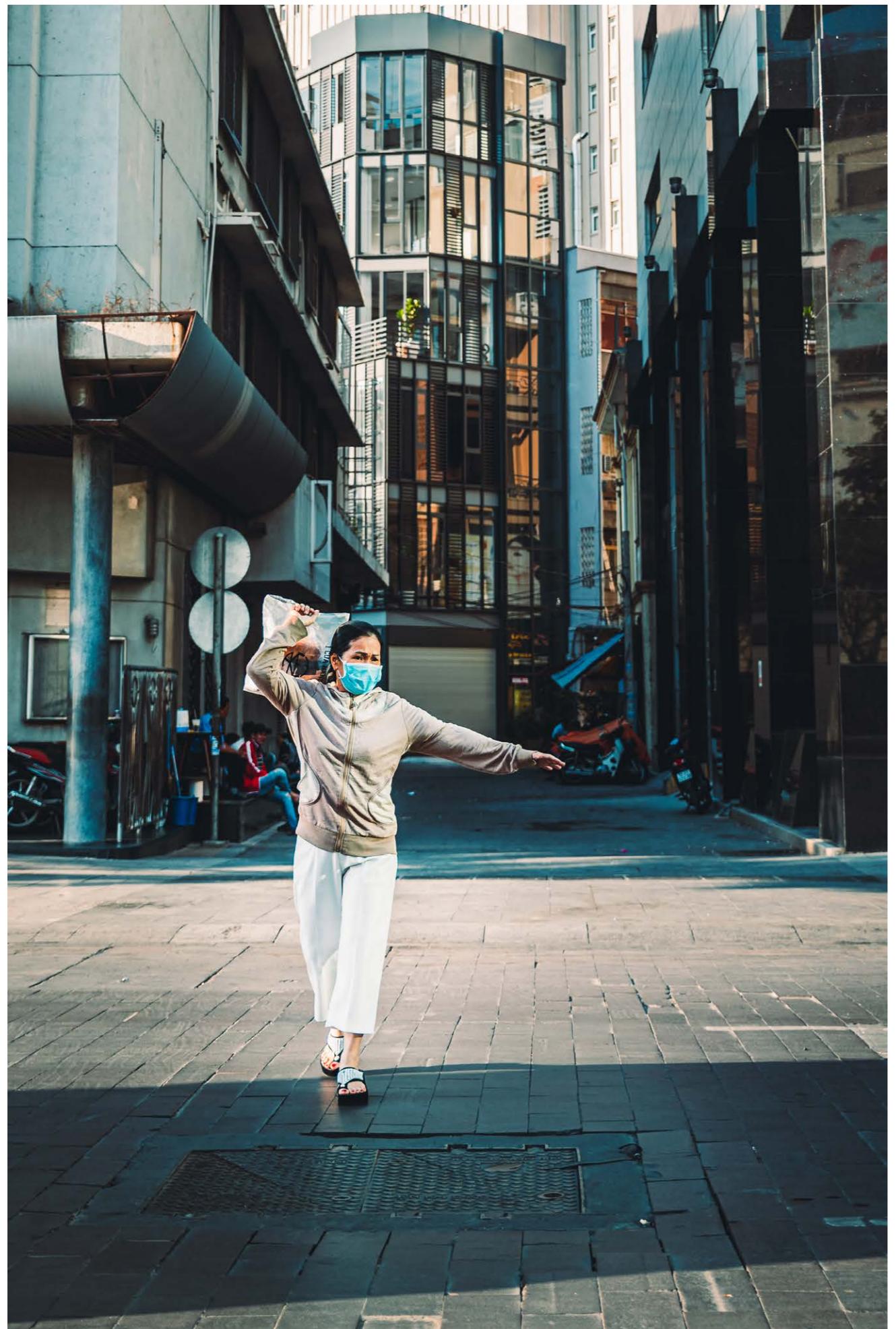
Adrien Jean



TuanMark/Soha.vn



Maxwell Gutteridge



Ivan Botha



Adrien Jean



Life in red



Share your creativity in our monthly challenges and stand a chance to be featured in the next magazine. Now that things are returning back to normal in Vietnam, grab your camera and hit the streets to put theory into practice.



For this monthly challenge, we will focus on colors and particularly "RED". It is a very important color in Vietnam as it is a symbol of luck and is used in most Vietnamese celebrations. Submit



your pictures with a predominance of red on the Saigon Photo Walk facebook page or on Instagram with #spwred. Time to see life in red!



Collaborators and contacts

Adrien Jean, a self-taught French photographer, has developed an ever growing passion for the craft since he first set foot in Vietnam in 2014. The streets of Saigon, a place he now proudly calls home, has become his playground for experimentation & inspiration. Exploring the city through his lens has helped him to get a better grasp of the local culture and to connect with people in a deeper way.

<https://adrienjeanphotography.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/adrienjeanphoto/>



Juan Carlos Duran Solorzano, professional photographer from Mexico and founder of Saigon Photo walk. He focuses on people and their culture, currently exploring Vietnam to create a community of photographers where everybody can learn and share each others perspectives of Vietnam. He has hosted and participated in multiple exhibitions around Vietnam.

www.juancaphotography.com

www.instagram.com/photo_walk_worldwide