

## Through the eyes of Amean J

by Ahmed Hayat

**Who is your biggest inspiration?**

Helmut Newton, Stanley Kubrick & Garry Winogrand

**What first sparked your interest in Photography?**

My brother's camera, I borrowed it and there was no turning back.

**Is Photography talent-based or is it a learning process?**

I feel it's a bit of both, as for me I've learned everything I do today. It was the interest in me that made me learn and explore photography. I ended up with a BFA in photography in 1997.

**Tell us something about your equipment used in your shoots?**

I used to be a dark room buff, but I haven't touched a film in 3 yrs. Sometimes I miss it, but love skipping to generations by using digital.

**What do you click most?**

People

**Who has been your favourite person/artist/celebrity/whatever to photograph?**

There is no one person that I photograph regularly, so can't really say if there is anyone specific. I do photograph my nephew and niece quite regularly to document their age and enjoy it immensely.

**What do you think about wildlife photography and how is it different from the rest?**

Wildlife photography is a different league all together, I really enjoy looking and reading about it, but not my area to photograph. I had been photographing



zoo's around the globe for years but that was more about the spaces that animal live in.

**What, in your opinion, makes a good photograph?**

Besides the obvious, an honest vision and the urge to record, document and share reality from your perspective.

**Do you think the future of photography lies in the digital world or will traditional techniques always survive?**

Knowing the traditional will surely help, as we do stand on the shoulders of our ancestors. But digital is the way to go... I feel there is no turning back now.

It is sometimes said that 'a picture is worth a thousand words'. Which of your photographs do you think reflects this phrase?

Wow, didn't realize how many book I must have written. I shoot like a mad hunter in the wilds or a soldier in a lost war, there are so many images in my archive, that I really won't be able to pin point.

**Can you please tell us about "18% grey", the formation and stuff?**

After graduating in fall 97 18% grey, a Karachi based photo studio was established by me in 1998. Here our small team ensures attention to detail, respect for deadlines and quality. Team at 18% grey does more than understand a brief. They actualize it. Black & white, monochrome or Technicolor, stillness or motion, person or product, landscape or industrial, 18% grey's diversity is reflected in its portfolio. The Team has worked with diverse clients, using photography for advertisements, graphic design, annual reports, corporate profiles, and print &

multimedia productions.

## **How is the trend of Photography in Pakistan?**

In the recent years due to the media explosion in the region, photography has also been affected. Positively I feel. People have access to global exposure but also have the urge to work with better and more powerful images. Competition amongst the multinational and as well as the locals has become extremely fierce, forcing the photographer to produce images better day by day.

## **How is the market in Pakistan for photographers?**

It was an area which was over looked, and that is one reason why I feel we are kind of lagging behind as compared to the images produced in the region, but at the same time the need is immense and supply is limited, meaning Yes! we still need good professional educated photographers in Pakistan.

## **What do you prefer: Black/white or Color?**

Recently its color, though my personal work could get very monochromatic at times where the only color is of true skin.

## **Have any of your photographs gotten you into trouble?**

No major trouble yet, but few controversial projects, one such project was Moharram [though one of the images is being used in an upcoming book on Islam in the sub continent]. And I'm working towards an exhibition that might stir few things... but the word trouble never stops an artist and shouldn't.

## **Tell us something about yourself & about your life?**

I come from a conservative memon family; orthodox businessmen; I was kind of the black sheep of the family and decided to take a different route. Joined the Indus Valley in 92 and after 2 yrs

of architecture left for the US where I changed 3 schools and 2 majors, finally graduating in 97 from the Academy of Art College in San Francisco with a BFA in Photography. Few years later I went off to spend a year at the Vancouver film school and last year I took off for grad school to the UK. Just graduated with a MA in media, culture & technology from the University of Luton. I have been working in between and now finally back in full swing. I also teach part time at the Karachi University and at the Indus Valley school as well.

## **Advice for budding photographers?**

People with an interest in photography tend to jump into taking creative photographs right away, at times skipping the learning process of looking. First, one must learn to look, second is to know how to record and thirdly be able to use images for visual communication.

## **Future plans?**

I'm back in Karachi and hoping to share visual knowledge with upcoming students as well as explore the subcontinent.