



ADAM MAZEK

Diaries

December
2018

p. 11



BORN IN THE USA?

- Cover: post „Inspired by Hiroshige”

About the fact that my name is not Bruce Springsteen and that I was not born in the USA, I wrote in the post entitled "Born in the USA?". My name is Adam Mazek, and I was born in Olesno, Poland. However, sometimes I come back to my memories of being in the United States of America. I often remember one thought that first appeared in my head after returning to my homeland. What was that thought? It was a statement that the only country I could live in, apart from Poland, was the United States. I was in the USA in 2006. I flew there as part of the student program "Work and Travel" with my colleagues from university, whom I cordially greet at this point! In the USA, we worked in a printing house in the beautiful state of West Virginia. The visit to North America was an excellent experience for me.

In addition to West Virginia, I saw cities such as Baltimore, Washington, and New York. In the latter city, I visited my family, who have lived there since the late 1960s. It is also a great moment to greet you and thank you once again for a beautiful and warm welcome! New York, thanks to the dominant, widespread American culture (with cinematography, music, and broadly understood art at the forefront), which reaches practically every corner of our planet, was a familiar place for me. In New York, I felt as if I was in my hometown and had known the city from an early age. I love watching Madonna's music video "Papa don't preach," which shows the essence of the '80s and the USA and New York.

BORN IN THE USA?





BORN IN THE USA?

- Images on p. 2-4: post "Born in the USA?"

Sometimes I would like to move to the scenery from the clip mentioned above. Summing up, I would like to emphasize that the USA in general and New York itself are places where I could easily live and settle in quickly. Nevertheless, I hope that I will live in Poland until the end of my days.

PS

Photos posted in the post "Born in the USA?" are photos I took in 2006 while in the USA.

FUN

I wrote about it many times, but in the next post entitled "Fun," I wanted to emphasize it again. The most important thing in photography for me is to have fun in the whole creative process. I was reminded of this recently while taking pictures. Between 14-17 of July 2018, I photographed the streets of Warsaw for four days in a row. There would be nothing special about it, but I want to emphasize that I walked in the rain all these four days, getting wet. Then I remembered how fun it is to take photos in rainy weather. At this point, I should emphasize that when taking pictures outdoors, it is essential to have a suitable rain jacket. However, I didn't have the coat with me for the first two days (July 14-15). During these two days, I got wet. Then I remembered how easy it is to fall in love with the refreshing rain on hot summer days. It was a child's joy to get wet during long, photographic journeys.

- *Post „Fun“ (also p. 6)*



FUN

However, to avoid catching a cold, between July 16-17, I took a raincoat with me. Back then, I remembered the importance of having fun doing all the things we love. Joy should be the most essential part of our passion, and it should keep us moving forward. If we do not enjoy working on our hobby, this activity is not our passion. The ideal situation is where we have a pure, sincere, childish play. I had one not only on July 14-17, 2018 but also on other days. There are no people in the streets when taking photos in the rain. The entire visual environment, including buildings, roads, sidewalks, and mundane objects, becomes clean and minimalist. In conclusion, my Dear Friend, I remind you that the weather should not be an obstacle to your passion. If you love taking pictures in the streets, if you really enjoy taking it, then do it, no matter what.



MUSIC'S PROPERTIES

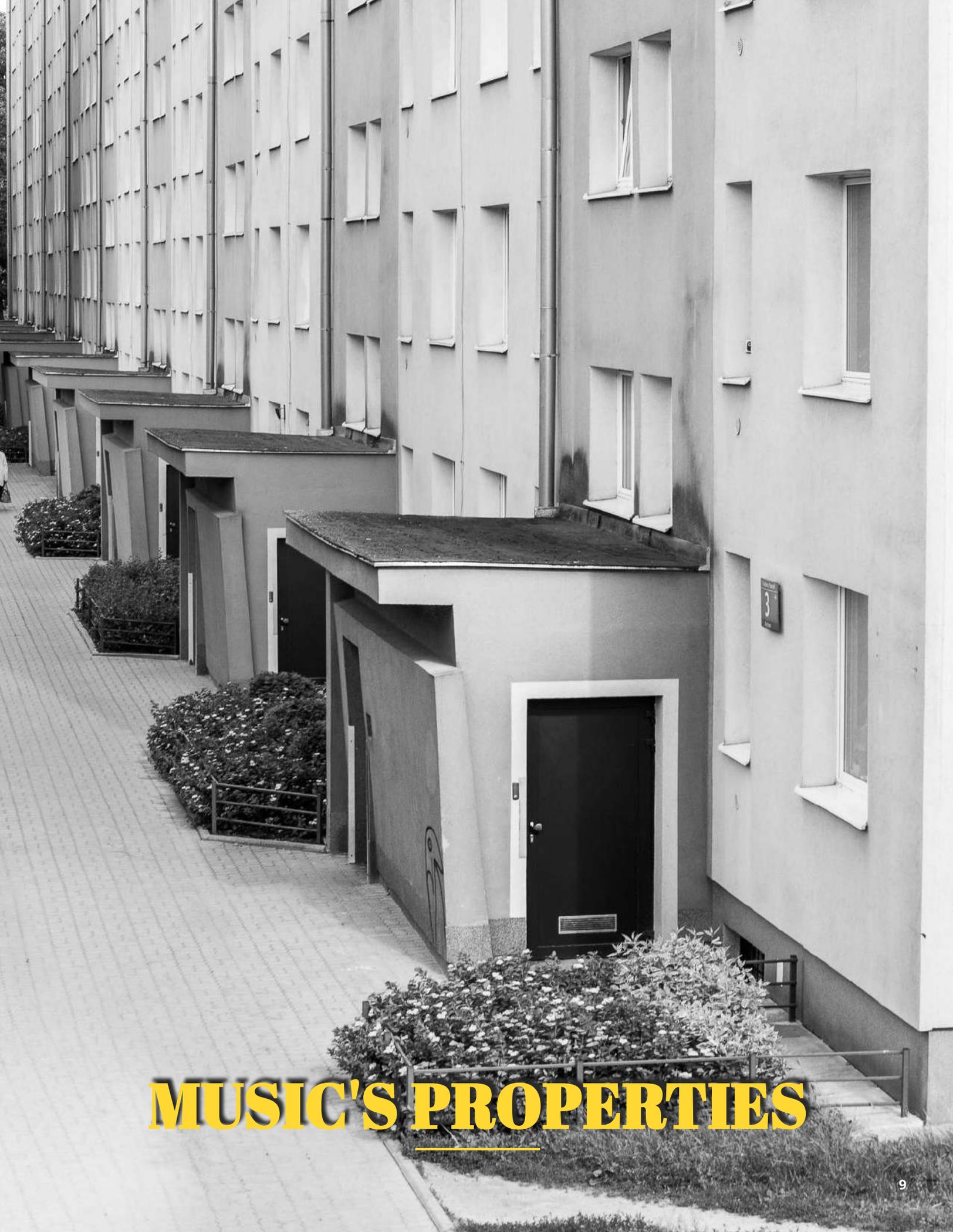
MUSIC'S PROPERTIES

Some wisdom (probably the so-called urban legend) says that if a pregnant woman listens to classical music, her baby will be intelligent and gifted with extraordinary talent (post: "Music's properties"). I'm not a doctor, so I don't know how much truth there is. However, if the expectant mother listens to the music she likes, her mood will be positive. Thus, her overall health should improve as her degree of good mood increases. It seems to me that her child's development will also run smoothly then. I know for sure that music has soothing, even healing properties. I believe this is a perfect example of how art can improve people's life satisfaction. In my opinion, music is a prime example of how art can stimulate our mood. If we get up early in the morning, we usually need energetic music. After a long, tiring day in the evening, we often listen to some calming songs. I am no exception.

I can't imagine the world without music. It is a fact that I do not listen to music while photographing in the streets. Still, the music in my imagination accompanies me during my creative activities. I often hear songs from artists/bands such as Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, David Bowie, The Rolling Stones, Dire Straits, Pink Floyd, Michael Jackson, Madonna, or Metallica. This is especially true during my photographic walks. During both shooting and writing, I hear all sorts of songs practically all the time. My thoughts just humming to me different melodies. While preparing my next post for www.adammazek.com, I love listening to music and letting the creative flow permeate my mind, heart, and soul with it. Summing up the text about the properties of music, I would like to emphasize that I sincerely encourage all future mothers to listen to music that suits them to relax. This advice is addressed not only to expectant mothers but, in fact, to every human being.

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Images on p. 7-9: post „Music's properties“



MUSIC'S PROPERTIES



FALSIFYING OF THE REALITY

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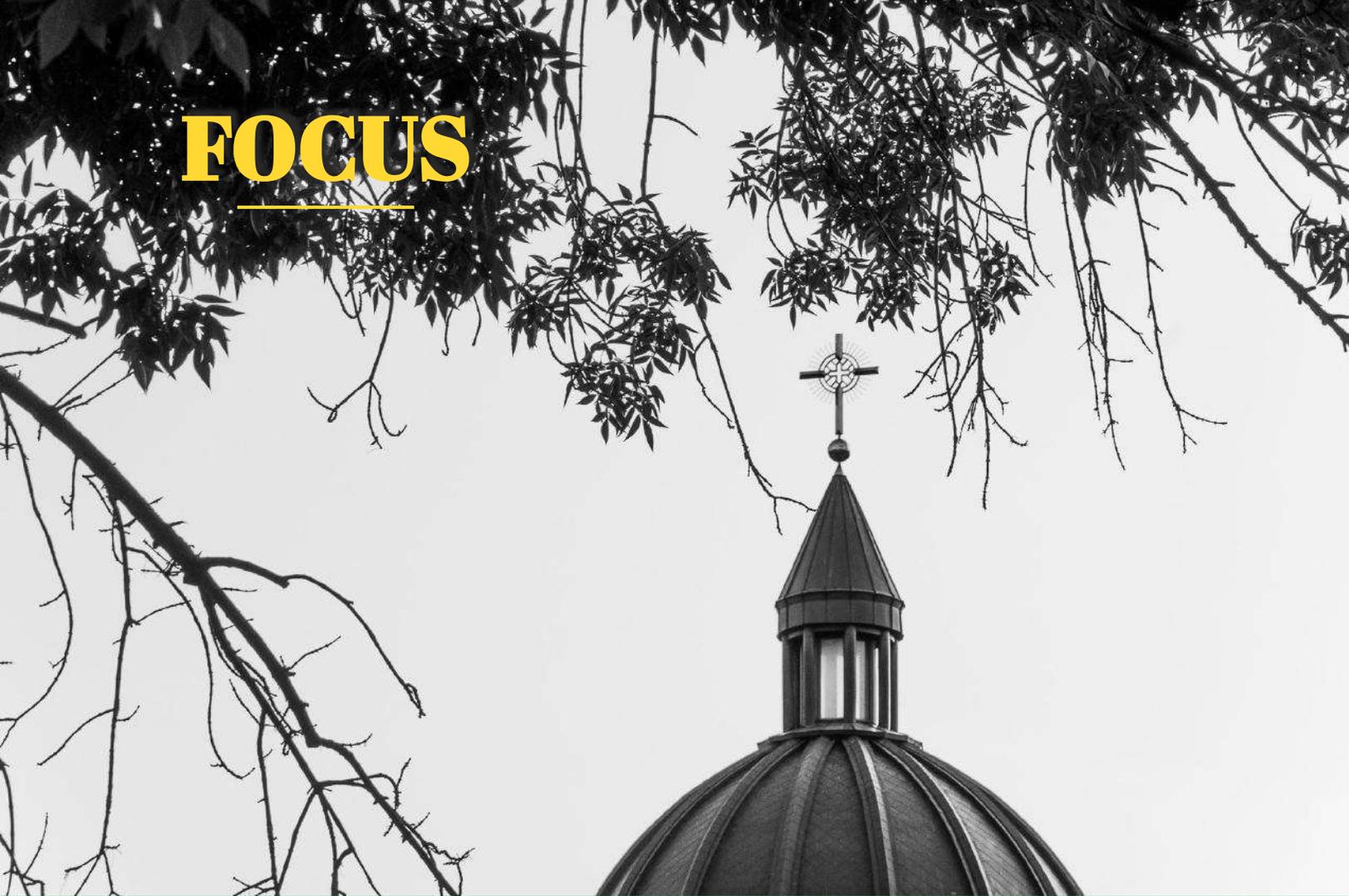
I wrote that I do not like falsifying reality in advertisements in the text entitled "Falsifying of the reality." Faking reality on television is common. Also, unnaturally beautiful people often appear in ads on websites. In the streets, we see banners with over-colored colors. Nowadays, we all see perfect, flawless, artificially smiling people who convince us that when we buy X's products, we will be as happy as those shimmering artificial people on the screen or on the poster. I have the impression that we are helpless when confronted with overwhelming advertisements. I realize that this kind of communication is an inevitable part of modern capitalist society. That's why my photos are black and white (with lots of shades of gray, of course). It is also one of the reasons why I enjoy visiting ordinary, down-to-earth, boring places in my city. I try to see unique, breathtaking, strange, peculiar worlds there.

I don't use Photoshop when editing my photos. This means that my images are digital photos, not technically twisted graphics. One significant advantage to using Lightroom (some would call it a disadvantage) is that you cannot edit pictures indefinitely (unlike Photoshop). Lightroom is a digital darkroom. All the tools that we have in this program were available to people who deal with analog photography. The difference is that in Lightroom, we edit photos virtually, not in a photographic darkroom. For me, images converted in Photoshop often falsify reality. As I mentioned earlier, we see this phenomenon in almost all advertisements. Therefore, I don't really plan on using Photoshop. I'm tired of presenting reality in a not entirely honest way. I try to show the reality around me, painfully honest. My goal is to give Warsaw simultaneously as it looks but through the prism of my specific, artistic perspective.

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Image on p. 10: post „Falsifying of the reality”

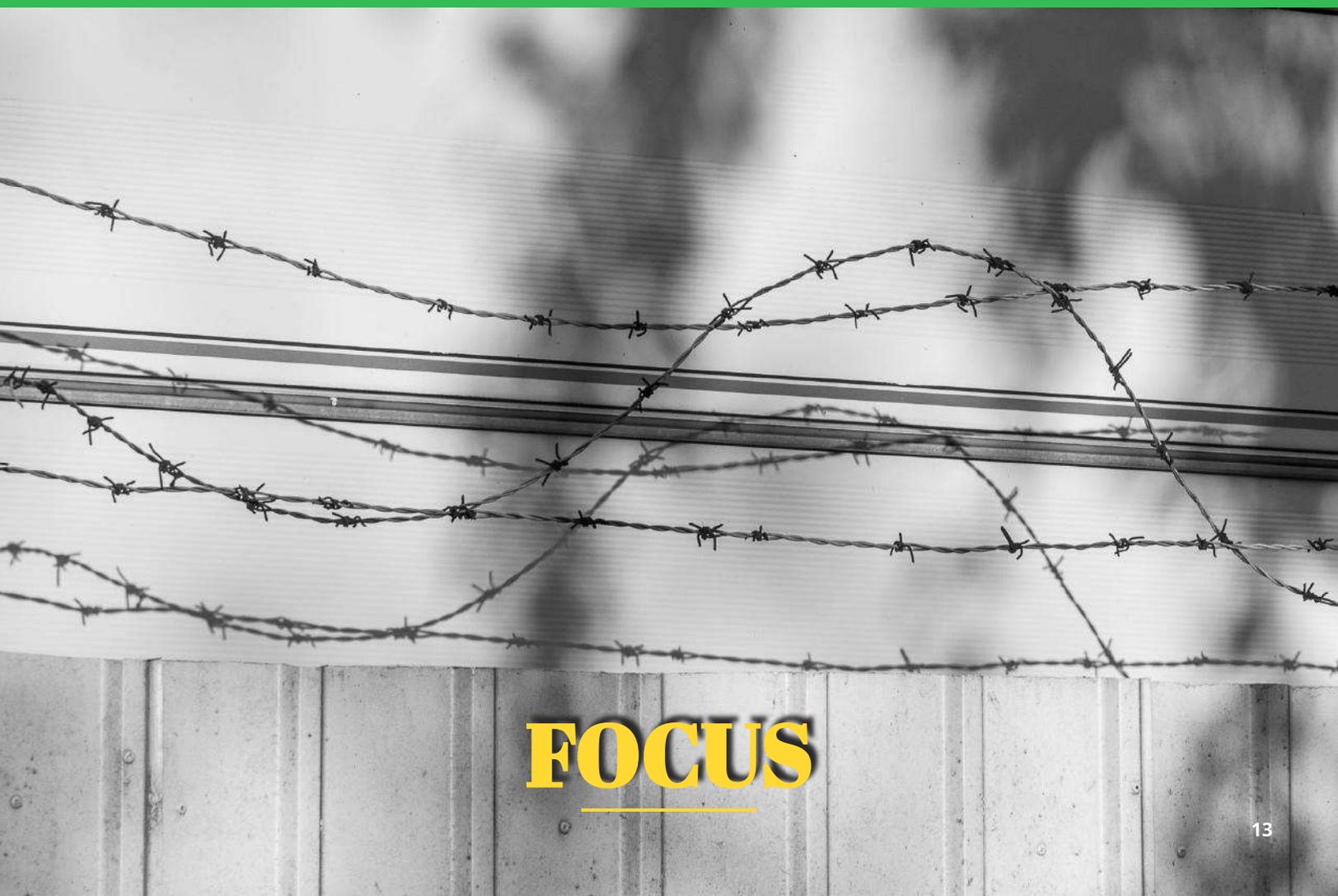
FOCUS



- *Post „Focus“ (also p. 13)*

In the post entitled "Focus," I wrote that I recommend that you direct your strength and power to something that will benefit you, your loved ones, your local community (not necessarily virtual), and the whole society. Start focusing on what's really important. The most important criterion you must meet to do this is that you are happy. How can this be done? We can certainly: play sports, develop, work, learn, read, write, take pictures or, in general, create something out of nothing. I encourage you, my Dear Friend, to focus on this type of activity. If possible, try to avoid passivity, e.g., useless scrolling on your smartphone, limit your TV viewing, or strongly restrict your alcohol consumption. My blog started in September 2017. I decided to run a website to add new responsibilities to my life, closely related to my passion. I photographed in the streets for a long time, not quite knowing how to publish my photos. I only knew that publishing on social networks is something that interests me little.

Now I know that: taking photos, writing a post, and blogging all make sense. In the long run, focusing on an artistic activity will bring benefits (both material and non-material) to me and my relatives and society. That is why I strongly encourage you, my Dear Friend, to start a prolific artistic activity and focus on it. You will help not only yourself but also other people. As I wrote earlier, broadly understood action does not have to be related to art. It could be something related to sports, science, and so on. If you start focusing on activities that make you happy, that keep you moving forward, and that requires some effort from you, that effort will surely be rewarded. Stay calm, focus on your passion, be patient, and, most of all, enjoy what you do. Nevertheless, while realizing your potential, do not forget about your loved ones. Do not neglect your relationship with them by having fun with your hobby.



FOCUS



AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE

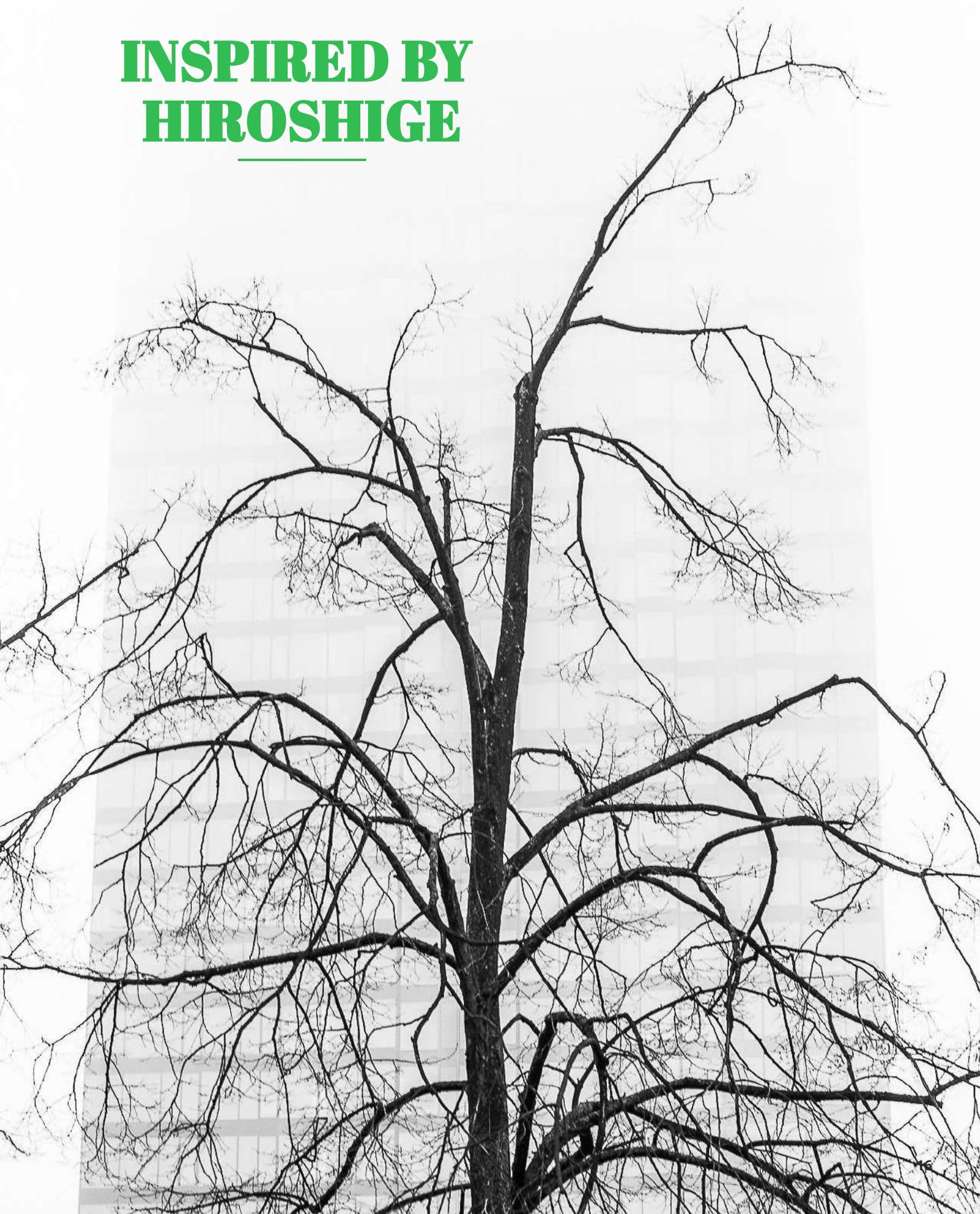
I was wrong for a lot of my art activities. I thought the audience was not an essential part of the play (post: "Audience"). It happened in the initial phase of my activity. For a long time, I photographed in the streets of Warsaw without publishing photos. This situation lasted for over a year. I didn't think about the recipients of my photos. I felt that I was taking pictures for myself and that maybe I would never publish them. Thanks to the first photo exhibition, which took place in June 2018, I am aware that art does not exist without an audience. When I saw people arriving at a particular place to see my paintings at a specific time, I realized that viewers are a key, indispensable part of the entire artistic process. Then, at one point, I found out that people really like what I do and want to talk about it. Does this mean that I have not received such signals before? Of course not, but in this case, just a lot of the positive aspects were combined at one point. The photo exhibition was a real breakthrough in the way I began to perceive the public. Thanks to this experience, I know that my photos have received a completely new life in viewers' minds. The truth is, I have no influence on this life. I would call this phenomenon that I am trying to transfer experiences to an audience. My thoughts are encoded in my photos. It is up to the viewers how they interpret and decode my images. The viewer sees the work, translates, and transforms what he sees through his personal, intimate point of view. Undoubtedly, this is the moment when a work of art is reborn. I believe that this process takes place when I watch paintings by Salvador Dali, for example. Or when I'm reading a book by Stanisław Lem or listening to David Bowie's music. I transform their masterpieces into my own coded, mysterious language. This process takes place in my imagination. I'm sure all of the listed geniuses also knew that their artistic activity would be nothing without the audience, readers, listeners, fans, or viewers. Finally, I would like to thank all the people who helped me in organizing my exhibitions (both in the Przystawki restaurant and in the office of my employer at that time), all those who helped me prepare my diploma thesis, and, finally, all the viewers who came to see my photos.

Thank you very much!

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Image on p. 14: post „Audience”

INSPIRED BY HIROSHIGE



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The last post published in 2018 was called "Inspired by Hiroshige." According to the book by Lorenzo Bichler entitled "Hiroshige" (published by Taschen), the eponymous painter was one of the last great artists of the ukiyo-e tradition. Ukiyo-e, a kind of painting and woodcut, means "pictures of the passing world." It was a unique genre of Japanese art. It flourished between the 17th and 19th centuries. Ukiyo-e has shaped the visual image of Japan in the Western world. Hiroshige inspired painters such as Vincent van Gogh: "Blossoming Plum (by Hiroshige)" and "Bridge in the Rain (by Hiroshige)" or James Abbott McNeill Whistler ("Nocturne in Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge"). The ukiyo-e scenes often depicted the attractions of big cities. For the Japanese painter, the city in which he worked was Edo - today's Tokyo.

Beautiful women, actors, city life, and spectacular scenery are the focus of Hiroshige's work. My favorite theme in the work of the Japanese genius is painting trees, with particular emphasis on wavy branches. It was with great joy that I photographed the branches of the trees before getting to know the woodcuts painted by Hiroshige. When I saw his works, I realized once again in my life how artists draw inspiration from their surroundings. The painter's paintings inspired me to search for wavy tree branches in Warsaw. Hiroshige was best known for portraying landscapes. His most famous series of masterpieces was called "One Hundred Famous Views of Edo." A Japanese artist created them in the years 1856-1858. Edo is presented in all seasons.

Here I see another trait in common between Hiroshige and me. The truth is that I photograph Warsaw in any weather. I try to present Warsaw the way it looks, without any coloring. Regardless of whether it is a hot, sunny day or a bitter frost outside - I take pictures. Even extreme weather cannot stop me. I realize that I can still get a lot of inspiration from Hiroshige. His works look as if they were frozen in time. Walking through the streets of Warsaw, I often try to do the same - to keep a part of the Polish capital for posterity. The Japanese painter will remain an unparalleled role model for me to capture Warsaw for future generations. The post "Inspired by Hiroshige" was the 200th post that appeared on the website www.adammazek.com.

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Images on p. 16-18: post „Inspired by Hiroshige“

INSPIRED BY HIROSHIGE



THE END
