

**On contemporary (street) photography. Interview to Alfredo Cramerotti  
by Livia Lazar, University of Central Lancashire, UK  
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**LL In your opinion, can street photography be considered a documentary of the present? The current issues and debates concerning the right of privacy in the public space, the laws and regulation of photographing in the public space and the recent accounts of photographers being arrested for photographing on the street influence this documentary function? To what extent?**

AC I'm very skeptical about the idea of documentary being a truthful approach to reality, in whatever form (photography, video, film, journalistic report, etc.). I do urge for a contamination of facts and fictions, of staged and real, of poetics and politics. Only in this way we 'coach' ourselves, in time, to be equally trustful and dubious about what is brought and presented to us, and so develop a sane attitude to pose questions by ourselves, rather than either rejecting or accepting external views. Photography doesn't escape this.

**LL Do you think it is a condition for street photographs to be taken only in big cities / metropolis?**

AC No, why should it? It's more about a psychological approach, not a physical one.

**LL Recent festivals, talks and debates make street photography more present than ever; the online media plays an important part in the dissemination of street photographs and in creating the platform for vivid and dynamic forums focused on street photography. With more and more people having a camera, and going outside to 'record' what is happening in their surroundings, do you consider street photography will find new ways and perspectives for visually express its basic aesthetics or, on the contrary, do you consider it a 'threat' to the art of making a good street photograph?**

AC None of the above. First, I don't think honestly that street photography 'resurrected' in the last years or so – it simply changed medium and place; previously only camera-based now also phones and Google View; previously only printed magazines now also Facebook and art galleries.

Secondly, I'm really less interested in photographic genres in general, and much more about photography as a visual language; being that in the street or online.

Thirdly, I believe artists, curators, organizers and producers should stop for good of being precious about what they do, and try to connect their art and cultural practice to whatever other 'system' of life they live with: economics, science, law, urban planning, or whatever. I'm not in the league of those treating an art piece as a sacred item – nor the work of an artist for that matter. I think these are essential, fundamental, to understand better what we do and why, especially if they are 'used' with a practical approach. (btw, I considered myself

an artist; whatever I do – talks, essays, videos, exhibitions or books – is part of my artistic path and add a brick in my life/knowledge architecture)

**LL Is it necessary to work on a long-term project or rather following 'flaneuristic' methodologies, spending just a few days in a city, capturing its 'vibe' and moving to another city - or another part of the city?**

AC That's something that depends on the approach of the artist/photographer/videomaker. I'm quite skeptical of those – to say it in the words of foster – that enter a place, do some work and then leave to the next place. I think this can be highly problematic if not irresponsible, because the stuff they do is not hold enough, and delivered (so to speak) to the community they work with, to weight it, to reflect on, to respond to. It's simply spread out in front of them (and others) without much effects or consequences neither for the artist (except for a career move) nor for the community (except for a momentary exposure, which vanishes very quickly with the new crisis or event).

Having said that, I also know that sometime a 'third eye', and external point of view can be useful and cast a fresh glance on things, beyond what the locals may have imagined. So this is a precious resource to take into the equation.

But again, the main fact here is an assumption of responsibility from the point of view of the artist, photographer, filmmaker, writer; it's important, in my view, that he or she take a clear position, and declare it, without pretending to be invisible and neutral. It's of the utmost importance for the author to include him or herself into the picture, into the work, using different methodologies and strategies (it's not only about being 'visible' of course; it can be through the use of text, angles of views or about telling, with humor, or abstraction – just to mention a few strategies. In the last part of the book 'Aesthetic Journalism' I sketch some possible ways to do this – a few amongst many...).

**LL Being aware of some of the famous street photographs being staged, do you think that 'posed' street portraits should not be considered street photography?**

AC I'm not interested to discuss this; not from my point of view. See my first point.