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Anton Corbijn  
phone photos

“I would like to thank anyone who either voluntarily or accidentally became part of this series of images.”



Self-portrait in hotel room, Hollywood 2016



I am notoriously slow in catching up with new technology. Wild horses couldn't drag me etc., as I am initially always finding an excuse not to use new inventions, or at the very least trying to postpone the inevitable.

In photography, that translated into sticking with my favourite b/w film (Kodak Tri-X) since I was 18, not giving in to the digital age, and just continuing to shoot on film. I swore that analogue was the only way to photograph – and I believe I had a point.

At the time I loved, and still do, the tension between the moment you take a photo and the moment you actually see a contact sheet, not knowing exactly what the photo will look like.

It is a pleasant kind of tension between these two moments.

I was also worried that striving for perfection when shooting with digital would take over, as I like the idea of imperfection – the natural imperfection of a handheld camera – as it often makes the work come across as more human. Imperfection comes naturally. Like breathing.

But then I got a new phone in 2011, and that phone was able to take photographs. And as you always carry it with you, suddenly there it was: me and my first digital camera! Initially I was careful taking photos with it, as if I were going to run out of film if I didn't. Then suddenly it became fun. I never liked carrying cameras on me much, but carrying a phone didn't feel like carrying anything. That was a bonus, I have to admit. People relax more when you have a phone in your hand than when you carry a proper camera. It feels less serious, it can lighten the mood. On the other hand though, globally, it produces so many images – because in our world everyone seems to be a photographer – that we are drowning in a lot of nothingness. Most of our experiences seem to have become visual ones, and secondary ones at that. I am now adding to that pile of images so why do I think this book is a good idea? I don't really know, and I just hope that it is a good idea to share some of the views I have had, the colours I have seen, the flowers I loved, my life with Nimi, some people I love, et cetera. Admittedly, I could not resist the odd selfie.

A significant difference is that shooting on film requires skill, some at least, like an old-fashioned kind of craftsmanship. Quite different to the 'point-and-shoot' mentality of a phone camera, though you still need a developed and curious eye to create something mildly interesting. What the book does do is show you what I look at on any given day, that there is so much beauty to see around us, and that you can see beauty in many things. Registering the profane and the profound. One other main advantage over an analogue stills camera is that it works well with very low light. The accumulation of light in the phone-camera is wonderful and there are quite a few images in the book I could not have taken by hand in an analogue way. The phone camera is very practical and quite poetic in that sense.

I still shoot some analogue when working, but more often than not I now shoot digital and blame the phone for it. It has certainly brought a lot of fun to the proceedings.

















< Leaf, Shela, Kenya 2021

Catch of the day, Shela, Kenya 2021







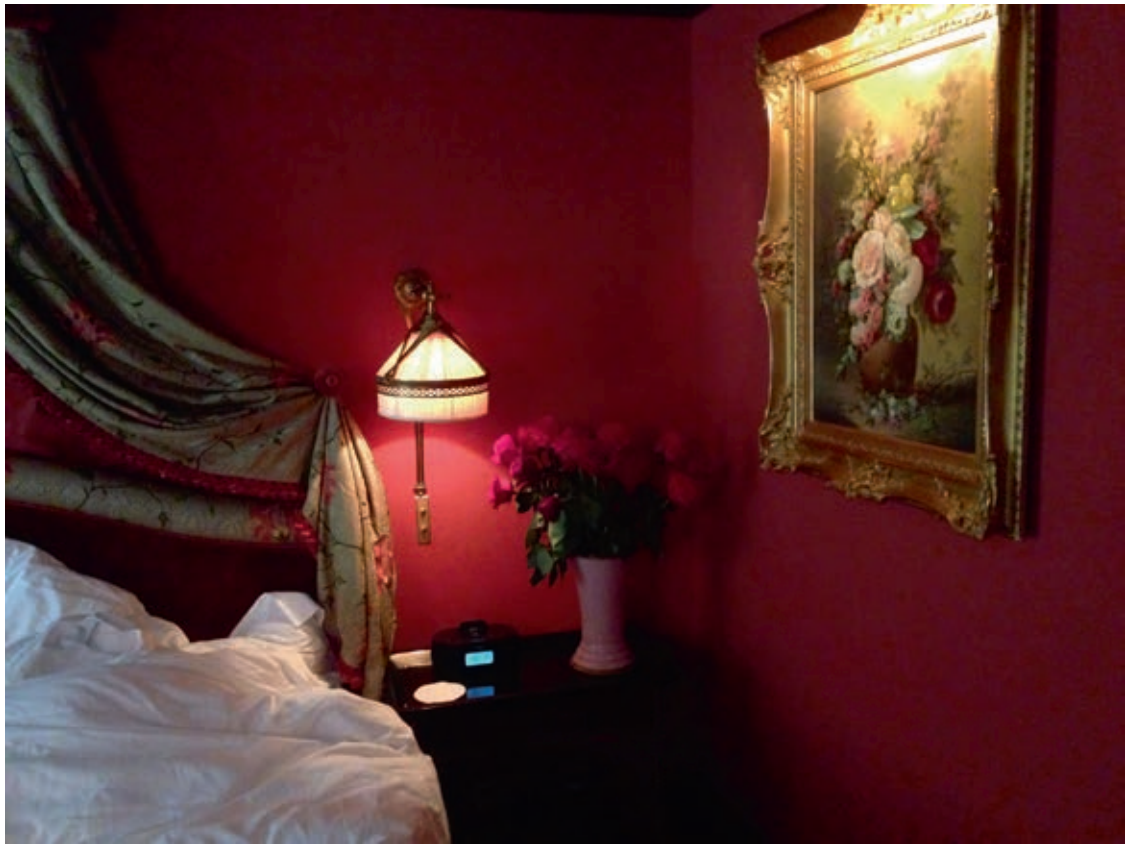










































## COLOPHON

PHOTOGRAPHS AND TEXT

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PROJECT COORDINATION HANNIBAL BOOKS

Hadewych Van den Bossche

PRINTING

die Keure, Bruges, Belgium

BINDING

IBW, Oostkamp, Belgium

ISBN 978 94 6436 676 1

D/2022/11922/56

NUR 653



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BOOKS

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