ALEXANDER SCHÖNBERG



Autumn Mood I - 01 · © Alexander Schönberg

Stillness in the bustle

Where others see only bustle, Alexander Schönberg finds stillness. His pictures are made in the seconds when the city briefly pauses: when light and shadow take a façade apart and everyday life becomes, for a moment, an abstract composition.

“Essentially, it’s always the background of a picture that decides whether it works or not – that’s the basis,” he says. What makes him stop is “usually a moment of stillness or an unexpected geometry in the middle of the urban bustle”.

“Essentially, it’s always the background of a picture that decides whether it works or not – that’s the basis.”

For Schönberg, weather and light are not incidental circumstances but “the directors of the mood”. He loves fog, the hard, sculptural light of late afternoon and the muted grey of a rainy day in Hamburg – because they reduce colour and lay bare forms.

Architecture provides the stage: clear lines, massive walls, geometric structures. Where the light meets these volumes, he finds “depth, drama and an architectural poetry”.

Photography: Alexander Schönberg · Text: YETA editorial team · Translated from German

PHOTO ESSAY / ALEXANDER SCHÖNBERG

LIGHT AND FOG

For him, weather and light are “the directors of the mood”.



Twilight II - 01 Edition blue · © Alexander Schönberg

All images © Alexander Schönberg

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HUMAN OR VOID

A person enters his pictures only when needed.



All images © Alexander Schönberg

Space between things

A person enters his pictures only when needed – as a measure of scale or as a narrative, emotional layer. The small figure in overpowering architecture breaks the severity and creates loneliness, longing or tension.

Just as deliberately, he leaves pictures empty when architecture or landscape should speak for themselves: “Emptiness often conveys a much greater calm and timelessness.”

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Whether to work in colour or not, Schönberg usually decides intuitively, often already in the viewfinder; he frequently shoots directly in black and white. Colour stays when it has a narrative power of its own, guides the eye or carries warmth and coolness. If the chaos of tones disturbs the clear formal language, he takes it out. “Black and white is, for me, the reduction to the essential.”

And right now? Schönberg is allowing himself an artistic break – a little distance to gather new ideas. An attitude that suits his pictures: they, too, live from the space between things.

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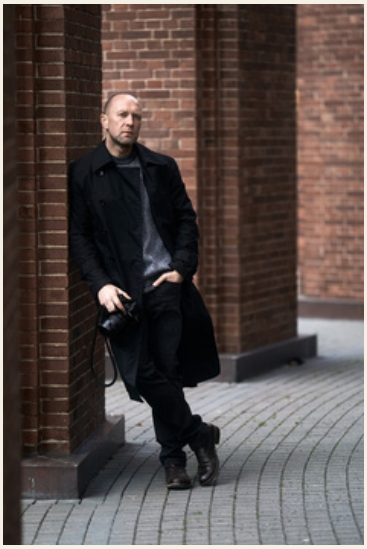
WHEN THE CITY PAUSES



Petrol Station Brandsdorf - 01, 2019 · © Alexander Schönberg

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“Black and white is, for me, the reduction to the essential.”



Alexander Schönberg lives and works in Hamburg. Before turning to photography, he spent 15 years producing music and writing song lyrics; in October 2015 he bought his first camera. His work is exhibited internationally and has received several awards. He works mainly in projects; fog and people in the city and in nature run through his series as recurring motifs. He sells his photographs as prints and is currently working on photo books about Hamburg in black and white and in colour, planned for 2027.

Portrait photo: Julius Evers

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