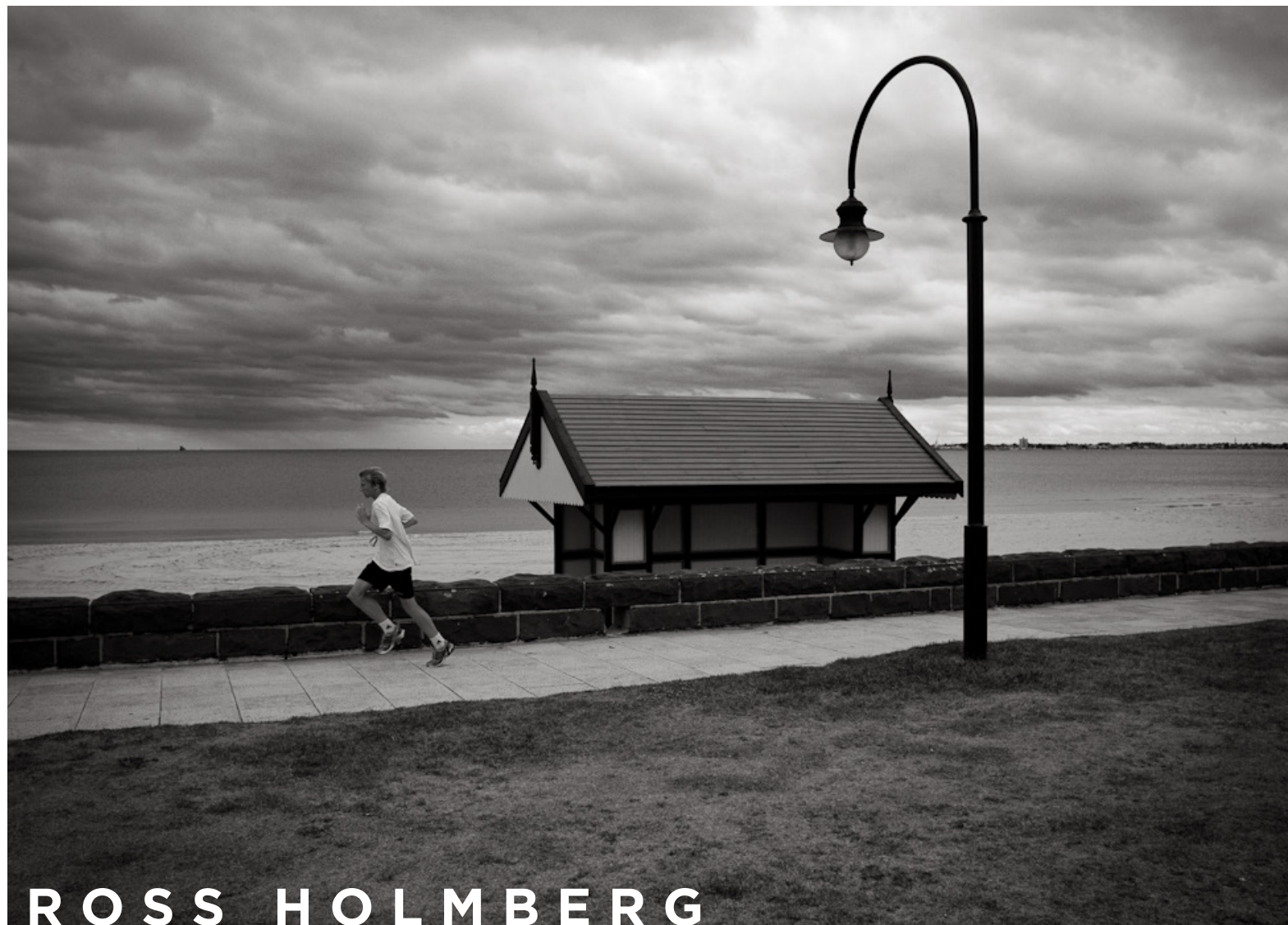


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# Feature Friday

E - M A G O N E

This is the first of a new series of Feature Friday Interviews, a way to get to know the Street Photographers who roam Melbourne a little better.



## ROSS HOLMBERG

I came across Ross's photography around a year ago after seeing this photo in a monthly competition held by the [Melbourne Flickr Group](#).

The composition and rich colour stood out, and the rich black figure melting into the corrugated wall topped it off. I asked Ross to share some of his thoughts about street photography with the Melbourne Street community.

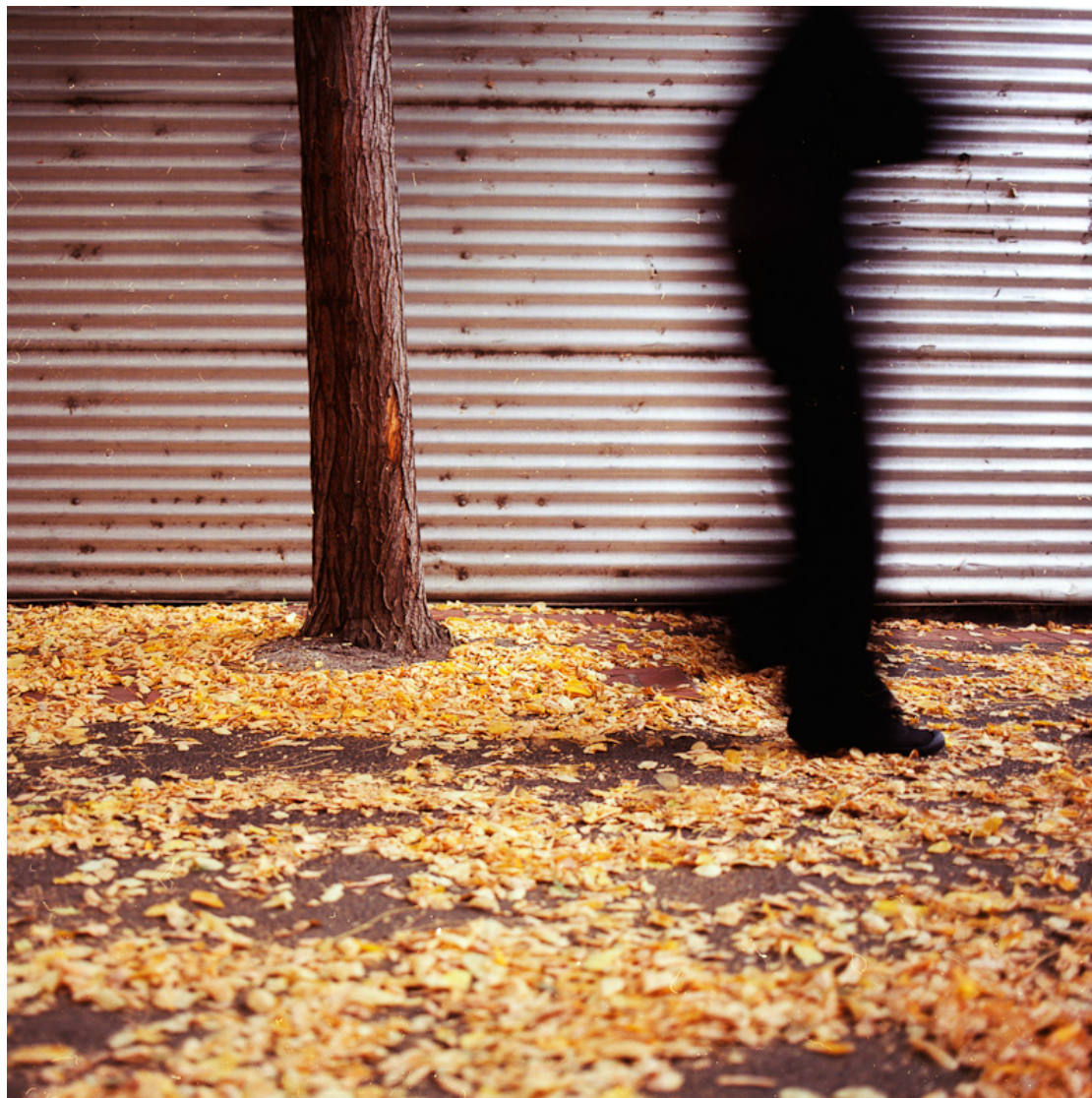
*MS: How long have you been shooting street?*

*RH:* I got inspired browsing flickr about 2 years ago, which sparked my first trips going out with the specific intention of shooting "street" photos, having some of my favourite shots by other photographers at the back of my mind.

Just recently though, I looked back through some of my older photos (from travel mostly), and realised I'd actually been shooting in a "street" style for a long time. I never thought of it that way at the time, but I guess people, cities, and the interactions between the two have always grabbed my attention, before I really thought about it as "street photography".

I think that happens to most people, and in most disciplines of photography: you start taking photos of people before you really think about "portraiture", and you start taking photos of buildings and cities before you even know the word "cityscape". For me, when I did start to actually think about the style, and focus on certain themes, I found I enjoyed it more, and the results got much better; that was definitely a good transition for me.

I'd say the biggest progression I've had as a photographer has been that switch from shooting anything I thought looked good, to actually trying to visualise a final image right from the start. For me, street photography was the catalyst for that.



GHOST BY ROSS HOLMBERG





*Do you have a favoured location?*

Around Melbourne, I really love wandering through the Queen Victoria Markets, especially the meat section. You need some fast film because the light's pretty low, but there's a real buzz when it's busy, and a kind of scary vibe when the workers are packing up and cleaning. The workers can be real characters, and are more often than not happy to have their picture taken. There's always plenty of background interest with shopping crowds and hanging meat, so there's a lot to take in.

*What kind of subjects do you look for while on the street?*

In street photography, my favourite photos tend to be all about interactions between people, especially when it's one of those momentary interactions with a random passer-by: squeezing past each other on a narrow path, trying in vain to maintain personal space waiting at a bus-stop, that awkward eye-contact you sometimes have with a stranger as you pass each other. They're really difficult to catch because they're fleeting moments by nature, but I think you gradually start to see them before they happen (I'm not there yet, but I do know some photographers who have a real sense for it).

Some of my absolute favourite street photos manage to capture 3 or 4 of those interactions in a single image, and suddenly the photo becomes like a book of short-stories; all interwoven with some common thread, but also complete stories in their own right. You can really lose yourself in a photo like that, and doing so is one of my favourite things.



*Are there any street photographers you particularly admire or gain inspiration from?*

I've always loved the work of devoted photojournalists; Robert Capa makes me swoon, and I find some of Peter Turnley's work just amazing.

As far as street photographers specifically, I've loved watching the gradual unveiling of photos by Vivian Maier, she's been a big inspiration for street photography for me for a while now.

I also have plenty of flickr friends who I find inspiration from a lot. You certainly don't need to look for famous names to find brilliant street photography, and being closer to the source (in that I know and talk to the people) definitely helps me to take that inspiration and do something with it. I won't mention them all here, but many are members of the Melbourne Silver Mine flickr group.

*What is your motivation for going out on a shoot?*

Definitely the process. I'm out there hoping to make a nice photo or two sure, but my love of it comes from all the parts that lead up to that. I love looking for lines and form, light and shade, and those moments where things fall together, and trying to create something with all that. I love getting home and finding out which ideas worked, and which didn't (be that on the computer or seeing the film hanging to dry) and thinking of different things to try next time. The final images, and the pleasure of creating something I'm proud of comes second to the process for me.

That might be one reason I enjoy Vivian Maier's work. She seems to have never had any intention of doing anything at all with her photos; most were never printed as far as I know, and many were never even developed. She was doing it for nothing more than the love of going out and taking pictures, and that's the way I hope I always feel.







*Do you ever struggle to go out for a session? Are there any techniques you use to get out of a shooting slump?*

I don't struggle to go out, but I do struggle for inspiration at times. If I feel that way, I usually spend some time developing film, or browsing flickr for inspiration (never a shortage). Doing either will usually get me out of a rut.

I'm also lucky enough to have a few different cameras to shoot with, which can be an easy way to mix things up and get you thinking a different way; switching from a rangefinder to a TLR can change the way you see, and going out shooting with a view camera always gives me a kick in the arse, so to speak.

*As photography becomes more and more ubiquitous, with a camera on every corner, do you think street photography can still stand on its own as an artform?*

Absolutely, in fact I think even more so. Photography as a service industry has definitely been hurt by the "I could do that myself" attitude of potential clients, but I don't think the same is true for photography as art. If anything, I think that going out and taking photos for yourself gives people more and more appreciation for the skills and vision of photographers as artists.

Personally I don't have a good appreciation for painting (although that's slowly changing), mainly because I don't appreciate or understand the intricacies of the art form. I do however have a huge appreciation for great photography, because it reaches me on so many more levels, and I think more and more people are feeling that way thanks to the proliferation of photography in every-day life. Bring it on.

### *Film or digital?*

I hate to sit on the fence, but both. I like results from both film and digital, and I also enjoy shooting them both, so I wouldn't be without either.

I do find shooting digital can detract from the process of photography at times for me, but I can't blame that on the camera, it's the insatiable urge to use all those stupid features and look at every photo straight away that's at fault there.

### *What kind of camera/lens combo do you usually use?*

My favourite camera at the moment is a Rolleicord V passed down to me by my uncle. There's a lot of reasons why I love the camera: it's simple, quiet, light, has a waist-level finder, shoots square format, and the look from the lens is kinda cool. One day I'll get a Rolleiflex, but for now my 'cord serves me very well.

I've read in a few places that every photographer should own a TLR at some point, and I have to agree with that sentiment. There's something very different and very special about the way you work with them, and they're also retro-cool these days which doesn't hurt.

See more of Ross's work at  
[holmbergphotography.com.au](http://holmbergphotography.com.au) &  
[flickr.com/photos/rosscova/](http://flickr.com/photos/rosscova/)

### **Ross mentioned:**

Vivan Maier  
Peter Turnley  
Melbourne Silver Mine

