

*Q: When did you realize that photography was the most suitable means for you to communicate?*

A: I consciously remember holding my first camera in my hand when I was 13 years old. My mother has given me this old Agfa camera. We were in Spain during that time on the island of Mallorca. I remember this beautiful island. I was fascinated by the fact that this little simple camera allowed me to hold on to something that was important to me then. My camera was enabling me to record a special time. But during that moment I had no idea that I would choose to become a photographer 5 years later. I just loved capturing what was surrounding me. Photographs allow you to remember and have the power to bring you back in time. Sometimes you even remember a certain smell or the music you were listening to during that time.

During my childhood years I grew up in an artist household, basically in the theater. My mother is an actress and my father is a theater director. I even remember being on tour with them. I guess somewhere during these moments I also developed my desire to travel and explore. Very young I had these "gypsy" genes inside me. Later on while I was a teenager, before I moved with 16 years to Paris, France, I spent many years in the movie and film archive that belonged to the partner of my mother. So in



many ways I was always surrounded by art and artists. During all these years of my upbringing I developed my passion for photography and the visual arts.





*Q: How much of the experiences you had in your life are consciously included in your photographs?*

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*A: For the most part I work on long term projects, that I develop during several years. In many ways my experiences and my emotions are integrated in my work. *Once, still and forever* and *six degrees of freedom* are two series that were influenced by my experiences, memories and biography.*

*Q: To which extent do you think your personal experience can condition your photographic work?*

*A: A lot of artists integrate various experiences of their life into their work. Most art works come from deep within from an artist. Every artist has a different approach but I believe that many personal experiences resonate in the work one creates.*

*Q: If, in front of one of your images, the viewer's interpretation is completely different from your intentions, what do you think?*

*A: I think that happens actually quite often. As an artist you have to live in general with critics and various impressions of people. Everybody is free to feel whatever they want when they look at a piece of art. and of course the reactions are always very personal and subjective.*

I don't mind when the viewer's interpretation is different from my intentions. But I also believe that you need to invest time while looking at art and not look only what is on the surface. An appearance can blind you.

Here I would like to quote Jean-Christoph Ammann who wrote one of the texts from my serie *Once, still and forever*:

*"Sometimes it takes time to grasp the work of an artist. How often does the attention-grabbing motif stand at the foreground. For Jessica Backhaus, the motif provides an occasion for contemplating the "way of the world," the "order of things" (which disorder makes necessary), for thinking about light and color as generators of life. And there is something else as well, a quiet melancholy that tells us that we cannot change the tides. In other words: that we should follow them instead."*

Anyhow for me as an artist the most important engine and motivation is to express emotions. And I am glad that my work has brought me into contact with people over the years who were deeply moved by my photographs.



*Q: When should one stop taking photos? When you think you no longer have anything to say or when you no longer draw personal pleasure from taking photos?*

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*A: It all depends on the individual. I hope that I will never stop taking photographs as I feel a strong necessity to express myself with this incredible beautiful medium.*

*Photography also paints new horizons and enables me to discover new worlds. I take pictures, among other things, because this medium offers me a field where I can express various emotions. This immersion into other worlds, to loose and find oneself, to follow uncertain paths, to dare, to try new attempts and to learn to see are some elements that are at the base for my longing to photograph.*

*Although I believe that there are moments that you can not take pictures of.*

Jessica Backhaus, June 2016