SPECIES OF URBAN JUNGLE

———

VALDAS JENCIUS

2013-2018

PHOTOGRAPHY

ALBUM

EUROPE

COPENHAGEN

AMSTERDAM

PARIS

LION

ROME

MILAN

VENICE

FLORENCE

MALTA

MUNICH

LITHUANIA

SERBIA

HELSINKI

...

VALDAS JENCIUS .com

ABOUT

Valdas Jencius – multidisciplinary artist, with a high interest in photography, painting, video art, poetry and other forms of writing, also urban planning, and architecture. The main focus of his creative activities is concentrated on the contemporary global and local social, anthropological and cultural pictures. Since 2014 his works of art have been exhibited in galleries and other venues in Denmark, Oslo, Stockholm, Helsinki, Lithuania, and New York. Articles and photographies are being published in Lithuanian media. Born (1985) and raised (1985-2012) in Lithuanian port town Klaipėda. 2012-2017 lived in Copenhagen (Denmark) and from 2017 until now resides in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius and Klaipėda.

I use different disciplines to reflect my artistic ideas which make things tricky when I am asked to introduce myself and to tell who I am. Firstly I became educated in Town and Country Planning and Landscape architecture [Master's]. That was in 2008 and since then I remain in a still pretty close relations with urban planning. I believe that those professional experiences took a massive part of influence to my multidisciplinary approach in art. I am self-taught in all of them and I consider it as an advantage because of the unlimited freedom out of any academical impact – the freedom to experiment and to search for a personal and for the most sincere way of art in general. My first poems have shown up in 2007 and in a bit later I found that nothing can express the meanings and emotions of my texts better than my own voice. Those thoughts led my poetry to the sounded creations, some of which were even enriched by the video art language. Later in 2012, when I moved to Copenhagen, I found there

a very interesting so-called species – *species of the urban jungle* which cultural backgrounds were the subject of my very first articles in Lithuanian media, first paintings and of course photography of the human beings living there. My art's work is mainly about to understand better the humanity of our times and myself in eternity, so the focus of all arts' medias' I use is mostly concentrated on people and their living surroundings (without forgetting nature and stars). I am equally questioning myself and the inner of separate individuals which I believe can be easily reached by the observation of their outer. And by doing this I try to get the more complete picture of a whole society and our contemporary cultural backgrounds. The way of my tiny activities is most greatly inspired by the one man's name – Leonardo da Vinci with his universal approach in all arts, science and the synergy of those two.

Photography

One of the essential features of my photography is that it doesn't have any colours, just two – black and white. I rejected all others because I believe that in most cases colours distract attention from the essence of photographed human being. Up till now, the main series came from the streets of Paris, Amsterdam, Munich, Milan, Rome, Venice, Malta, Vilnius and other European cities including Copenhagen where everything started in 2012. I am exclusively interested in international environments because it gives a wider understanding of contexts which reveals a more clear vision of my own local surroundings and myself among bunch of similarities and

differences around this world. While my photo camera is targeting a man it is targeting the social and anthropological understanding. I am trying to get through to the opposite side of social masks and to take a closer look at what is inside. I believe that there lie many answers. Not only about separate individuals but about everything. Sometimes, if I am lucky, it reveals me what I really miss in the contemporary world: humanism, poetry and all the real and natural things in the times of commerce, rush, media, brandings, PR tricks and synthetics without a smell which makes the massive part of how the contemporary world works, so I definitely take those features into the focus of my photo lens. I try to maintain a constant awareness of qualitative dualism, which means that the photo must be marked not only with meaningful content but also to be artistic and "catchy" in order to ever qualify for documental or historical value. As a parallel to the main photographic stream, I am also working with a long exposure experimental artistic photography of cityscapes. Those pictures don't have any highlighted people, so I don't intend to steal colours from them.

If I am asked about my favourite photographers I would exclude two Frenchmen: Robert Doisneau, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and four Lithuanians: Antanas Sutkus, Vitas Luckus, Romualdas Rakauskas, Algimantas Kunčius. I understand that those men are not contemporary, but at the same time, I believe that like impressionists who depicted the streets of Paris and the social image of their time they will always remain relevant because of their subject which is – us, in our times. I am not talking about the style (even though it was a lovely). I love them because of their subject.

INTRO

We are all living beings just like animals are. We have eyes, ears, nose, head, brain, heart, blood, skin, muscle, bones, dreams, love, aggression, we are fighting for our lives, well-being and position among others. Animals have it all and do the same. In comparison with some species, our DNA has 99% in common. The essence of our biology is very much the same and moreover, sometimes I even hesitate whether the contemporary society still remains in a closer and a tighter relationship with poetry, empathy and so what we call the real humanism than animals are? We have much more in common with animals than we usually dare to imagine. We even live in the jungle like they do. Of course our jungle is a little bit different - it is urban, which is not as green and natural as animals' jungle, but still it is possible to get lost among tall buildings or to be bitten, not by a dangerous snake, hiding in the palm tree, but by a slippery systems, rules, traditions and ways of communication by which those buildings and mysterious technologies are inhabited. If you are a human being it is a must to know the system and the ways of how our jungle is driven and how you must drive yourself in order to survive. There are certain rules of life and death, success and the direct path to victimisation or marginalisation which can actually be equal to social death. It is pretty clear how you must act yourself in order to dominate like a lion and what not to do if you don't wish to become a rabbit. People are just another species. We have built our private jungle and we believe that it is a creation of our high culture. Ants also build their private cities but how would we call their creations - culture or nature? I believe it would be logic to say that what is created by a creature of nature (ant or

human) using the materials taken from nature is natural, which would mean that all our culture including past, present and future civilisations belongs to nature. When I am among people, with my photo hunting tool, I consider myself as a biologist or explorer who goes to remote urban islands with a mission to find, capture, register and understand the most common and exclusive features of our times; to compare different types of contemporary individuals, societies and the whole humanity as a species (in the context of animals).

It is a fact that every kind of visual media can be considered as a piece for possible different interpretations. And I do really believe that it is nothing wrong for the spectator to find his own different inner reflections and essences of artwork than those of an artist who created it. The variety of approaches makes possible interaction between the artwork, spectator and other spectators, which gives an alive and dynamic social dialogue and becomes kinda platform for an exchange of unique ideas. So am I, not intending to any solid statement and I leave the content of this photography book totally open for any way of understanding and interpretation but at the same time I would like to be open myself and to share what it means (or at least I believe that it means) to me and how I understand it personally. The name of this book is a major idea which I kept in mind while working with my photography archives and faced the decisions of how to arrange the sequences. So here are the definitions and a small analysis of just three words:

Species is defined as "a group of living organisms consisting of similar individuals capable of exchanging genes or interbreeding. The species is the principal natural taxonomic unit, ranking below a genus and denoted by a Latin binomial, e.g. Homo sapiens." In the context of this book, the dominant species is obviously the human being.

Urban - "in, relating to, or characteristic of a town or city." This term defines the cultural type of environment (which is urban or city type) where this dominant species lives.
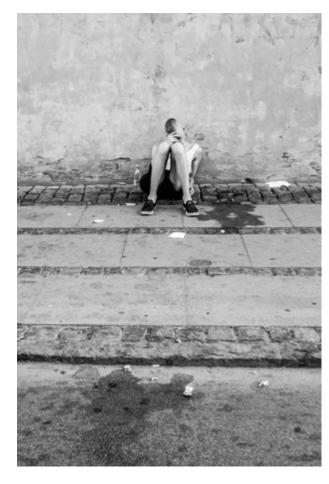
Jungle - "an area of land overgrown with dense forest and tangled vegetation, typically in the tropics." I suggest paraphrasing the official definition to the one which explains the metaphor: an area of land overgrown with dense material features of the urban environment (buildings, streets, public and recreational spaces), and the cultural rules of prevailing lifestyle (work, leisure, the ways and types of interaction, orientation and survival).

This book consists of the photographies captured in European cities which are separated by hundreds and thousands of miles and by the distance of years. It is easy to see cultural differences, but we also find plenty of well notable and fundamental similarities which offer a variety of opposing thoughts, also the one, that all of those different subcultures can be seen as the details of one inseparable culture matching two essential terms: same biology, same urban type of living environment and habits related to living there. All photographies in this book are displayed and sequenced by the theme, content and emotion, not by geography or time, so neighbouring pages can equally show expressive contrast of the same city or be talking about the same and common ways of life but in the separate parts of Europe. I pay a massive part of attention to the city fests because I consider them as a perfect soil for the most natural human instincts to be realised, which at the same time gives the researcher a great field for his observation. Another essential category here is what I call "the daily life" which reflects the diversity of colourful cultural and psychological features of the contemporary human being. It can show up as insignificant details, but actually, those details are the main constructional material of the whole picture. So as you see my point of view is mostly from the social and anthropological perspectives but as I mentioned before you are most welcome and free to make your personal way of look and your own conclusions. Peace.

Distortion 73. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

"Distortion" is an annual street music festival occuring in Copenhagen

Distortion 71. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

Octoberfest 18. Munich, Germany. 2018

Octoberfest 37. Munich, Germany. 2018

Gay Pride 32. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

City life 47. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

Distortion 104. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

JUST A KISS (2018)

You can call it Love.
You can call it Passion.
You can call it Provocation.
No one cares how you call it.

It's just a kiss.
And probably it is everything,
What everyone thinks.
Depends on who is the one who thinks.

And you are also free to go fuck yourself.
Like they do.
Because, thank God, it is a free world that we live in.
And democracy is our ruling system.

So, do what you like.
Just don't hurt others.

Distortion 65. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

Distortion 105. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

City life 43. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015   Distortion 44. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

Gay Pride 1. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

City life 8. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

Distortion 24. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

Distortion 23. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

City life 70. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2013

City life 36. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

City life 41. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 2. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 8. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

City life 108. Malta. 2018

City life 11. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

City life 13. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

Distortion 29. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

Distortion 57. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

Distortion 98. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

Distortion 27. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

City life 55. Paris, France. 2015

City life 57. Paris, France. 2015

City life 56. Paris, France. 2015

Distortion 39. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

Demonstration: "Welcome refugees"

City life 3. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

City life (untitled). Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

<-- Gay Pride 5. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

--> Gay Pride 2. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

Gay Pride 26. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

City life 37. Paris, France. 2015

City life 48. Paris, France. 2015

National celebration 28. Vasario 16. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2018

National celebration 7. Kovo 11. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2017

National celebration 3. Kovo 11. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2017

National celebration 11. Kovo 11. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2017

<-- Antifa protest 1. Munich, Germany. 2018
--> Antifa protest 6. Munich, Germany. 2018

Antifa protest 15. Munich, Germany. 2018

Distortion 92. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

Distortion 91. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

Distortion 90. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

Distortion 37. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

<-- Distortion 21. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

--> Distortion 54. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

<-- Distortion 28. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

--> Distortion 53. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

City life 59. Rome, Italy. 2016

<-- Distortion 58. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016
--> Distortion 74. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

Distortion 16. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

Distortion 18. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

64   City life (untitled). Paris, France. 2016

65

Gay Pride 27. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

City life 66. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2013

Distortion 42. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

City life 16. Paris, France. 2014

Distortion 51. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

Distortion 4. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2014

Distortion 101. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

City life 12. Rome, Italy. 2016

Distortion 46. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

City life 11. Paris, France. 2014

City life 22. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

City life 2. Malta. 2013

City life 73. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2013

Distortion 30. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

City life 6. Paris, France. 2014

City life 28. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 45. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 20. Malta. 2013

Distortion 106. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

City life 19. Paris, France. 2014

City life 60. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 81. Paris, France. 2016

City life (untitled). Paris, France. 2016

City life 1. Paris, France. 2014

City life 20. Paris, France. 2014

City life 3. Paris, France. 2014

City life 38. Lion, France. 2014

City life 42. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 33. Venice, Italy. 2015

City life 22. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 81. Rome, Italy. 2016

<-- City life 52. Rome, Italy. 2016
--> City life 25. Rome, Italy. 2016

<-- City life 63. Rome, Italy. 2016
--> City life 37. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 13. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 23, 13. Venice, Italy. 2015

City life in Vilnius (untitled). Lithuania. 2018

Kalvarijų market 36. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2018

City life 2. Milan, Italy. 2015

City life 3. Milan, Italy. 2015

City life 5. Florence, Italy. 2015

City life 58. Paris, France. 2015

Gay Pride 4. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

City life 21. Rome, Italy. 2016

Gay Pride 12, 17. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

Gay Pride 10, 9. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

Distortion 110. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

Distortion 41. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

Children 6. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2017

Children 5. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2017

Pompeii 8. Italy. 2016

Pompeii 4, 6. Italy. 2016

City life 8. Paris, France. 2014

City life 9. Venice, Italy. 2015

Young photographer with a girl. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2017

City life in Vilnius 18. Lithuania. 2018

City life 60. Malta. 2015

Pope in Lithuania 17. Kaunas, Lithuania. 2018

City life 7. Malta. 2013

Just got engaged

City life in Vilnius 11. Lithuania. 2018

City life in Vilnius 1. Lithuania. 2018

City life in Vilnius 10. Lithuania. 2018

Distortion 32. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

Distortion 19. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

<-- Helsinki 1. Finland. 2017

--> City life 49. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 19. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2017

City life 17. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2017

Distortion 78, 79. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2016

City life 52. Malta. 2015

City life 92. Malta. 2018

City life 30. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 130. Malta. 2018

City life 134. Malta. 2018

City life 47. Malta. 2015

<-- City life 109. Malta. 2018
--> City life 113. Paris, France. 2014

4 dogs. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2018

Orka 1. Šlapšilė, Lithuania. 2018

Belgrad 1. Serbia. 2017

Pozarevac 13. Serbia. 2017

City life (untitled). Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 31. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 70. Paris, France. 2016

Distortion 40. Copenhagen, Denmark. 2015

City life 9. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 46. Rome, Italy. 2016

<-- City life 11. Milan, Italy. 2015

--> City life 43. Paris, France. 2015

City life 4. Paris, France. 2014

City life 67. Malta. 2015

<-- City life 10. Paris, France. 2014
--> Gay Pride 6. Amsterdam, Holland. 2018

City life 41. Malta. 2015

City life 68. Malta. 2015

Teachers protest. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2018

Kaziuko mugė 1. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2017

City life 38. Paris, France. 2015

City life 33. Paris, France. 2015

City life 17. Paris, France. 2014

City life 32. Paris, France. 2015

City life 101, 102. Paris, France. 2015

City life 22. Paris, France. 2014

City life (untitled). Paris, France. 2016

City life 45. Paris, France. 2015

City life 41. Paris, France. 2015

City life 53. Rome, Italy. 2016

City life 24. Lion, France. 2014

Pozarevac 34. Serbia. 2017

Pozarevac 8. Serbia. 2017

Spurginė 6. Kaunas, Lithuania. 2018

Spurginė 13. Kaunas, Lithuania. 2018

Spurginė 10. Kaunas, Lithuania. 2018

City life 46. Malta. 2015

Pozarevac 20. Serbia. 2017

City life 53. Paris, France. 2015

Kalvarijų market 34. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2018

Staircase. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2013

City fest 5. Kaziuko mugė. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2018

Kaziuko mugė 6. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2017

National celebration 13. Kovo 11. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2017

Divers 10. Šventoji, Lithuania. 2018

Divers 2. Šventoji, Lithuania. 2018

Bee master 1. Vilnius, Lithuania. 2018

Landscape architect. Heidelberg, Germany. 2018