

1. Mary Elton Mark

I loved photography from the moment I first picked up a camera and knew my life would be devoted to it. I don't think you can develop or learn a "way of seeing or a 'point of view'. It's something that's inside you. It's how you look at the world. I want my photographs not only to be real but to portray the essence of my subjects, too. To do that, you have to be patient — it can't be rushed. I prefer doing portraiture on location. On a subject's home ground you pick up certain hints that tell you personal things and they come up with ideas.

2. Tina Barney

I don't know how my brain works, but I do know that I work really fast. My shoots don't vary: an hour to set up, an hour to take the shots. And the minute I walk into a room I know what I'm going to shoot, although what that is only becomes clear to me after seeing the result. So it's a subconscious (*подсознательный*) process. I started taking pictures in the 1970s for all the beautiful reasons photography was known for. Then all of a sudden digital technology booms and darkrooms get disappeared from photography schools. But I really believe in the classical way. It all comes down to looking at a piece of art and dissecting it and understanding how it's put together. I think the most important thing is to go out in the world and see.

3. Rankin

I think if you aren't fascinated by people, you'll never succeed as a portrait photographer, because your pictures will look cold. You don't have to know anything about the people in advance of the session, you just tap into them — it's a skill. Every shoot is different and you have to alter your approach accordingly. You have to try to get into people's heads, so that they can open up to you and give you something. Sometimes we chat first, but sometimes it's good for everyone to be fresh and tense when you start out. I use the technique of being casual and informal and rude or asking my subjects to do ridiculous things, but I don't set out to upset anyone. I hope the viewer sees what I see. I think two words that would describe my work well are: humour and honesty.

4. Sebastião Salgado

It's difficult to explain why we're more attracted to certain images than others. For me, black and white photography has a certain kind of power. I'm talking about instantaneous photography, the kind that happens in a fraction of a second. A great picture is one that transmits a lot of emotion and where you can see who took it; who that person is. I come from a Latin American world, where you believe in things and you form a relationship with your surroundings. I also grew up with a sense of mysticism and belonging. The cynicism that exists in certain kinds of photography, and that pleasure of seeing oneself as a deep individualist, that's not for me. We're a gregarious species made to live together. That's the point of view of my photography and the starting point of all my work.

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Which photographer welcomes suggestions for shots from the subjects themselves?

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