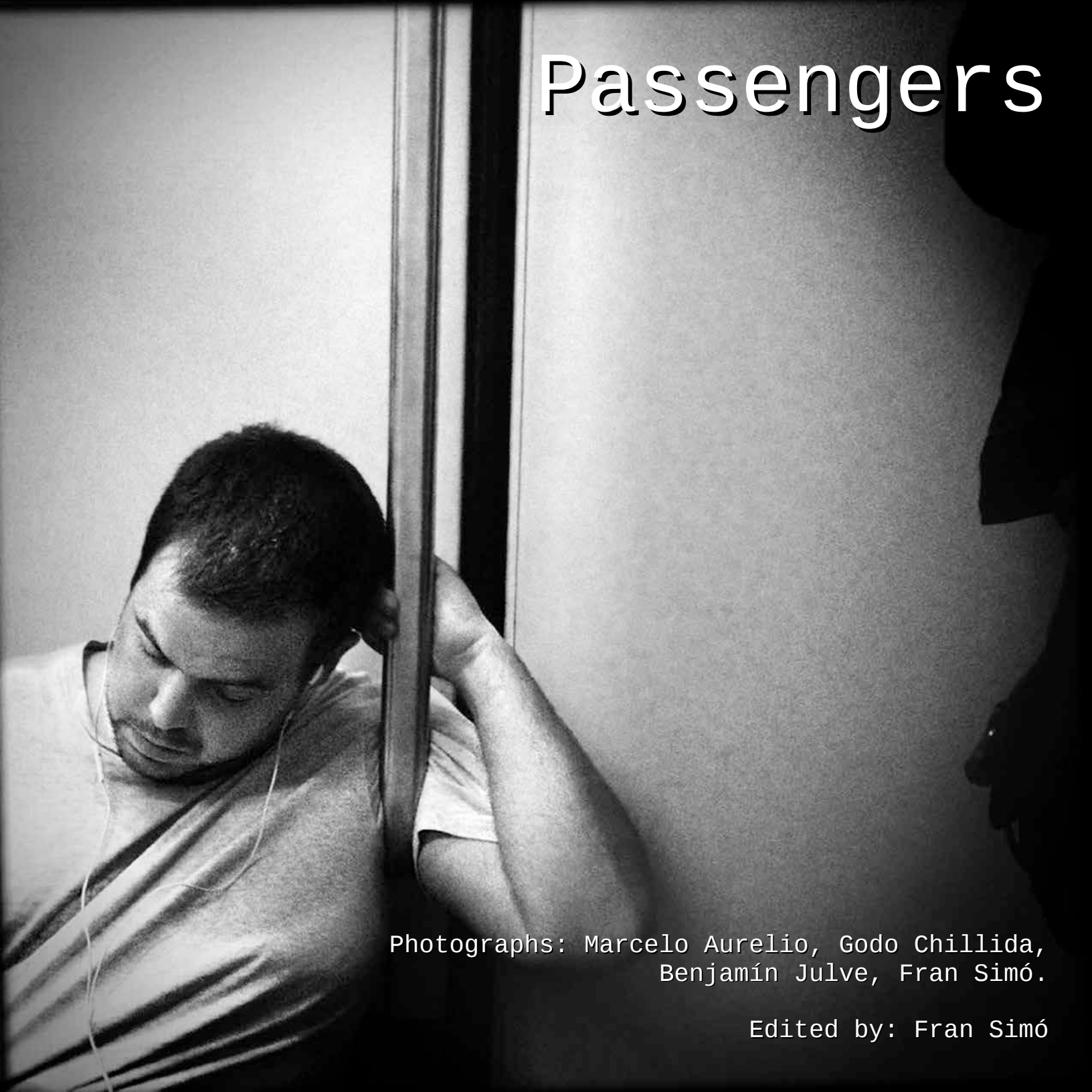


Passengers



Photographs: Marcelo Aurelio, Godo Chillida,
Benjamín Julve, Fran Simó.

Edited by: Fran Simó

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About Passengers

Street Photography and Public Transport

by Godo Chillida

Street photography is related to the space where this style of photography is done, although it is mainly a concept referring to a photographic attitude. A street photographer is urban and seeks encounters with daily activity, capturing scenes that are lost within the context of daily life and singling them out by emphasising some of their significant aspects. By doing this, the routine acquires an unrepeatable value and this is the paradox of street photography.

This photographic attitude possesses different fields of action and in this book we have decided to focus on such modes of public transport as buses, the subway and trains. These modes of collective travel mark the dynamics of days, while for us they have become mobile and improvised photographic sets. The content of these captured images goes beyond that of aesthetics and also exudes a profound charge of socio-anthropological information. The restricted spaces of public transport help to observe the spatial relationships between bodies and the reactions of certain people, discovering a shared code in the way they look and/or hear each other, but above all revealing the codes whereby passengers brush or maintain a distance from the other bodies surrounding them.

This theme of corporeality demonstrates what Richard Sennett claimed was a major contemporary problem, with sensory deprivation acting as a curse that reinforces the tactile sterility that ends up afflicting the urban environment. The cold feeling of alienation that we feel on boarding a railway car or bus seems to be rooted in this fear of brushing against the other. When we travel crushed between the bodies of strangers, we feel that we are in the midst of chaos and grumpily reject this. Our aim is to re-establish a code of order by seeking distance with other passengers and voluntary, desirable non-communication. This lack of contact provides comfort to travellers because it results in order and control over the environment, although it involves the high price of isolation.

In line with this discourse, images taken on public transport often show moods of ostracism and circumspection, a vivid expression of a language that represses through exclusion. Urban experience is documented through the synthesis of difference, complexity and strangeness. Thus, the scenes that we have captured on public transport prove to be reality bites that are difficult to digest, because they illustrate unkind truths, such as the fact of discerning that diversity, per

se, does not encourage human beings to interact. Straightforward individuation has led to urban individualism and the silence of a city. We therefore intensely experience this discursive absence on public transport, with the gaze having replaced the word. The public aspect of transport, that shared territory, is a purely visual space with only an exchange of looks, but no words of dialogue. Moreover, when someone does talk to another passenger, he or she is judged by the silent and silencing gazes of other passengers.

Roland Barthes already warned us of image-repertoires, in which people meet other people and categorise them as strange. We automatically associate any unusual scenes to generalised categories, limiting ourselves to pigeonholing them within social stereotypes and thus creating a sense of security by reducing any diversity to that of identicalness. If something escapes this homogeneous categorisation it creates disorder and is labelled as strange, chaotic and even dangerous. A protocol of security is activated in the face of the different and we usually resort to indifference, the reassuring distance of "I in my place and you in yours". The extreme practice of this activity ends up placing us within the passivity of not lifting a finger for anyone other than ourselves.

The street photographer battles with these disquisitions every day, attempting to discover difference between the apparent cloak of sameness, which is why our photographs on public transport try to break with this fear of touching, looking, and moving closer to the other. We want to experience the environment and are drawn to the unusual and tangential. We take a stand against speed, evasion and passivity, taking sides by visually documenting routine events. For us, the public is marked by an interweaving with others, so that our images can rescue the circumstantial interchange of chance against the conservative discourse of eternal sameness.

The photographs in this book are a way of problematising these aspects by making use of a shared aesthetic position, without this depriving us of expressing our particular poetic lines.

From the Kodak Brownie to the iPhone

by Fran Simó

Although iPhoneography might seem to be about a group of addicted fans and technobuffs who cannot stop using their mobile phone, it is in reality the continuation of a trend that began with the advent of the Kodak Brownie in February 1900 and has been developing since then.

The Kodak Brownie is recognised as the beginning of photography for the masses and with it was born the term "snapshot": a photograph taken quickly without thinking, without any artistic or documentary intent, usually blurry, badly framed and in which the subject is usually a scene from everyday life, such as birthdays, sunsets, pets or travel.

But snapshots evolved in several ways and have become the reserve of visual memory, especially in America, where many research projects, publications and exhibitions have been based on these anonymous snapshots.

In the mid-1960s, John Szarkowski, director of MoMA's photography department, came up with the term "snapshot aesthetic" to refer to a style he had identified in the photos of Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander and Garry Winogrand. With these photos, which appeared random, casual and with seemingly unimportant subject matter, he organised an exhibition entitled "New Documents" at the museum in 1967. Many consider this exhibition as the formal recognition of street photography, although Szarkowski's aim went beyond this.

Thus, careless and seemingly careless shots were united to achieve relevance in historical documentation and culture, consolidating a more complex aesthetic than that of the traditional perfectionist image of precise focus, mathematical composition and transcendental subject matter.

In the 1990s, snapshot photography was renamed "Lomography" and converted into a trademark. While the sector was trying to create increasingly more perfect cameras, Lomographers became addicted to plastic Soviet lenses and wrote 10 golden rules that strengthened the ubiquitous, instant, truthful and repeatable spirit of photography. But their rules and market strategy also happened to rescue the pleasure of taking photographs.

Interestingly, Lomography defending analogical image capturing and processing became popularised by digital media, especially through Flickr, at the same time that digital cameras started to be mass-marketed.

But these new digital cameras did not possess the attractive looks of Lomography. They were slow or very expensive and involved a certain technical knowledge and work order and were very heavy. These features deprived them of an ubiquitous, instant and casual spirit.

Mobile phone cameras appeared between these two worlds, but the mobile photography revolution had to wait until phones had an Internet connection and software to transform a bad shot into a "Lomo" image. The key to this new category was not the aesthetics it adopted from Lomography, or digital shot taking, but the in-situ result of what was being captured in two clicks.

Although many people are bothered by the use of the term "iPhoneography", we must admit that the mass popularisation of social network usage on mobile devices occurred because of the iPhone. It was not until Apple had completely redesigned the user experience with touchscreens, simple software, an application store and true integration with computers and its iPods that the "masses" would begin to use the Internet on a daily basis on their "telephones". In addition, both Lomography and iPhoneography are useful as labels for defining different stages of the historical process.

Almost all of the photo applications for iPhone are able to share images. They are born social. It is part of the iPhone's genetic code. In the early days, Polarize and Hipstamatic left socialisation to third party networks such as Flickr.

Instagram chose to create its own "exclusive Instagramers" social network, in which you could only publish from an iPhone and could only initially be seen through an iPhone. This "very restricted" idea attracted 10 million users in its first year. Why? It is all about the name. Instagram is not only the aesthetic continuation of Lomography, it has also enhanced its 10 golden rules. We always carry our mobile phones with us. We do not care about the significance of shooting with them because "they are mobiles" and their shots cost no money. There are no complex options to deal with and neither do we care about how the shots will turn out. This means that they do not interfere in our lives: simply activate the camera and shoot. What's more, you have the shot instantly and can share it on Instagram, Tumblr, Posteurous, Twitter, Facebook, Mail, etc.

The moment, shooting without thinking, the sixth rule, is the key to the success of Lomography. Instagram destroys the only moment of thinking that could be left to the analogue process, because it eliminates the possibility of seeing the photo with different eyes by receiving it already "developed".

There are no greater changes other than colour from the Brownie to the LC-A. The iPhone, its applications and the social networks behind them infinitely enhance the scenic aspects of snapshot. Instagram is the database of snapshots today.

Passengers is not an unthinking photography book. We would like to believe that we are continuing in the tradition of the snapshot aesthetic of Szarkowski, Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand and Robert Frank – but live.

It is impossible to regard Passengers as unthinking: it is a book. It has had a process of editing, text preparation, translation, production and publication. We chose the subjects, themes and situations with a prior aim in mind: to seek a specific aesthetic that is nourished by our entire previous experience as photographers and fans of street photography.

Passengers is not only a book about street photography. It also has a distinctive feature: the entire process of capturing, editing, post-processing and publishing our photos is done from the street, from the same place as our subjects, who are often only a metre away. In addition to “stealing” photos from them, we also publish them on the Internet in their presence.

This is why Passengers continues here...

<http://passengers-streetphotography.com/live/>

...live, now, what we are seeing, capturing and publishing right now, and as a participative process that we hope to be able to broaden to include more authors soon.



Photography is technology and market so that a photographer can make it emotion, document, message, struggle...

Passengers

*"...keep you doped with religion and sex and tv
and you think you're so clever and classless and free
but.."*

John Lennon, Working Class Hero

*"...Seven-hundred tons of metal a day
Now sir you tell me the world's changed
Once I made you rich enough
Rich enough to forget my name..."*

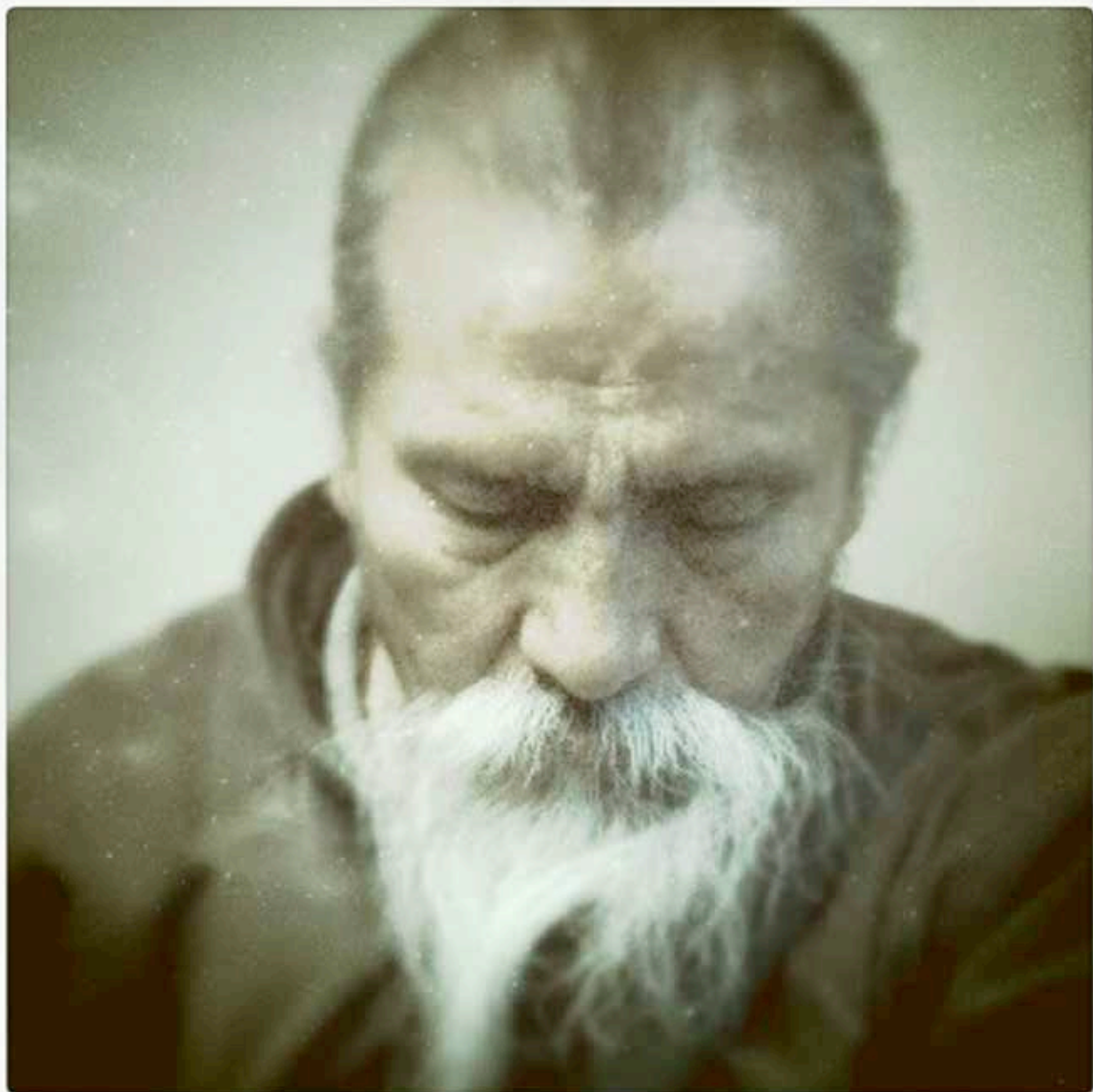
Bruce Springsteen, Youngstown

*"...Pare
demà del cel plourà sang.
El vent ho canta plorant..."*

Joan Manel Serrat, Pare

*"...So tell me that you love me again
Tell me that you care
So tell me that you love me again..."*

The Cure, Going Nowhere

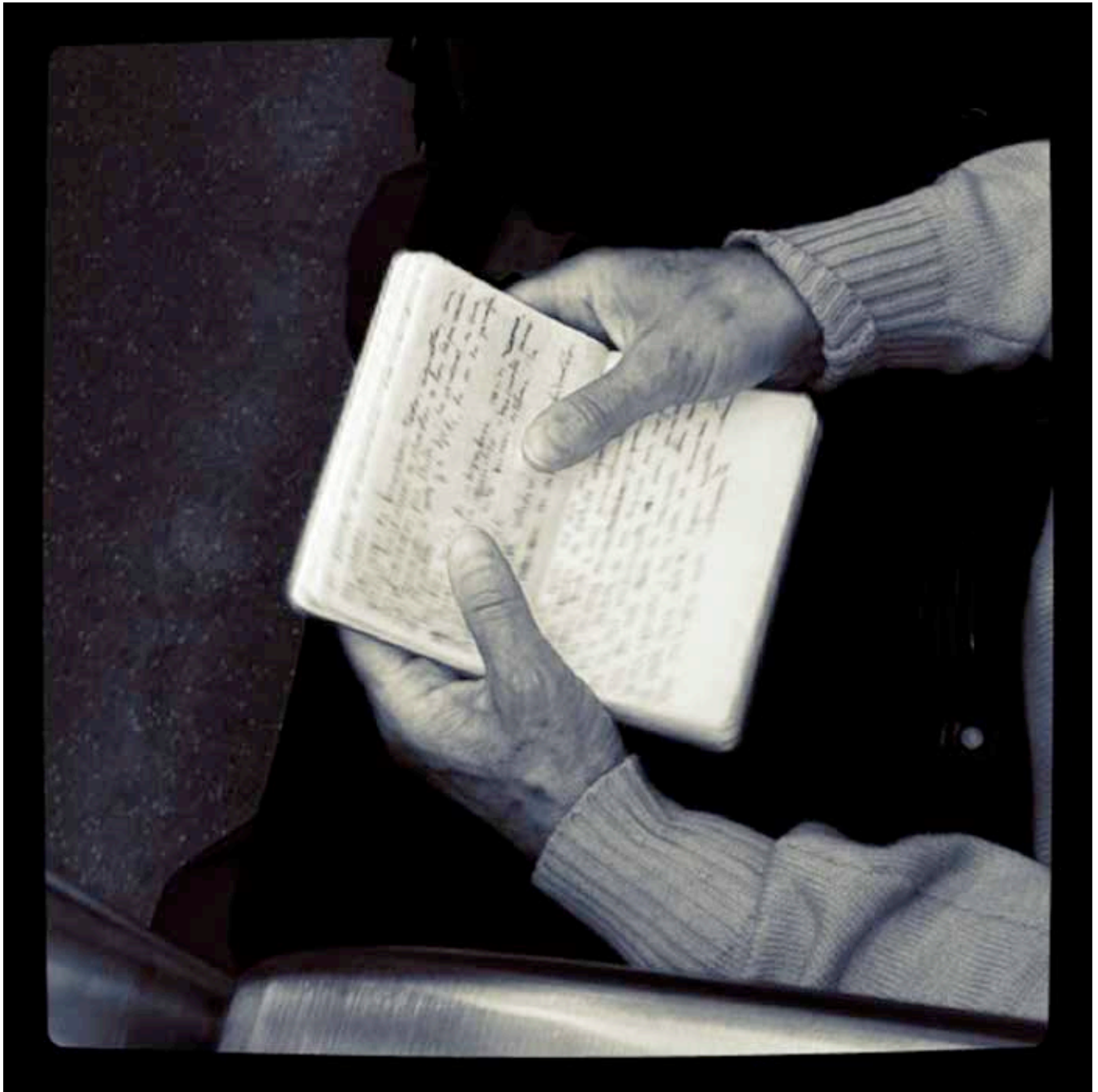
















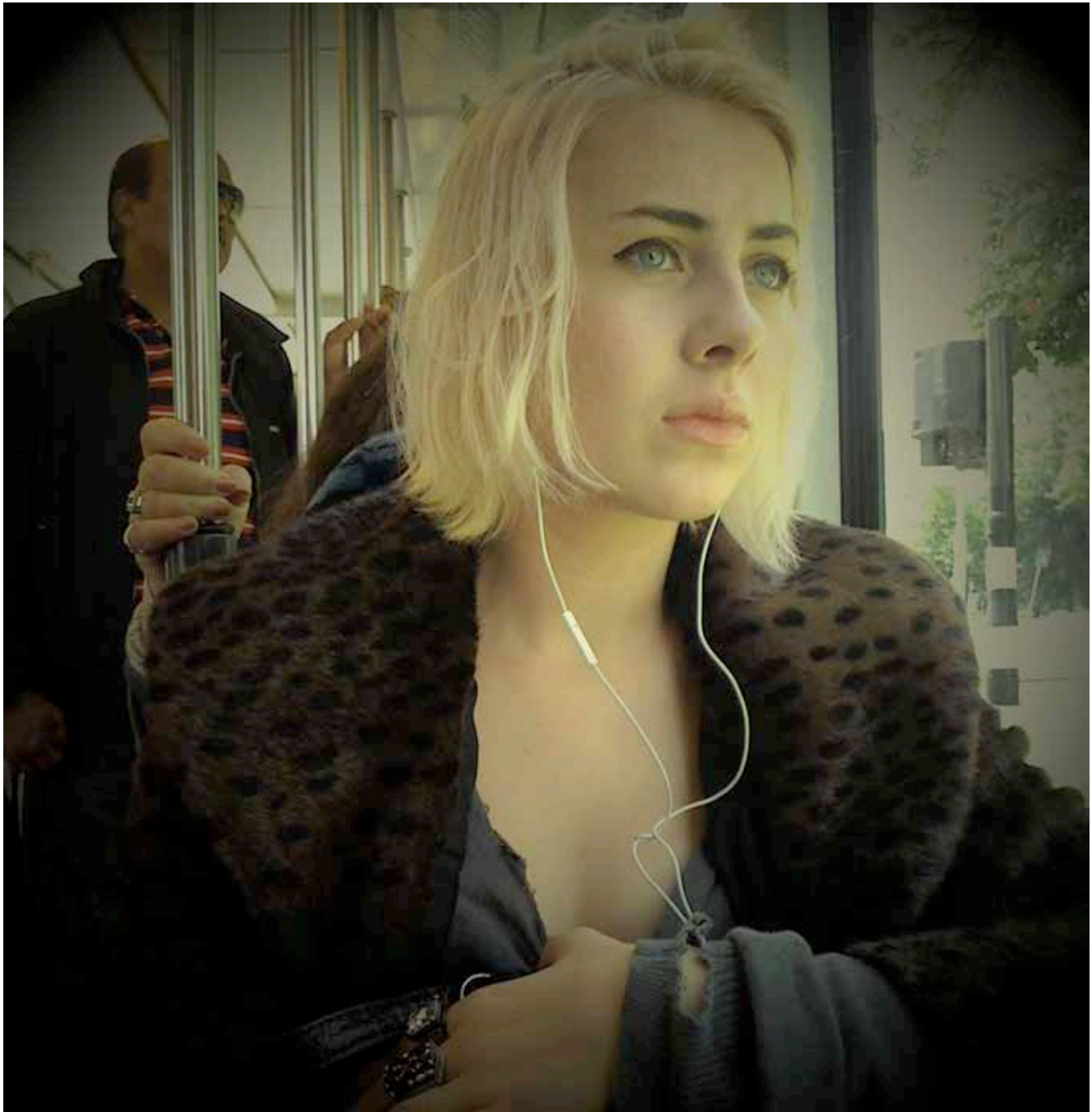












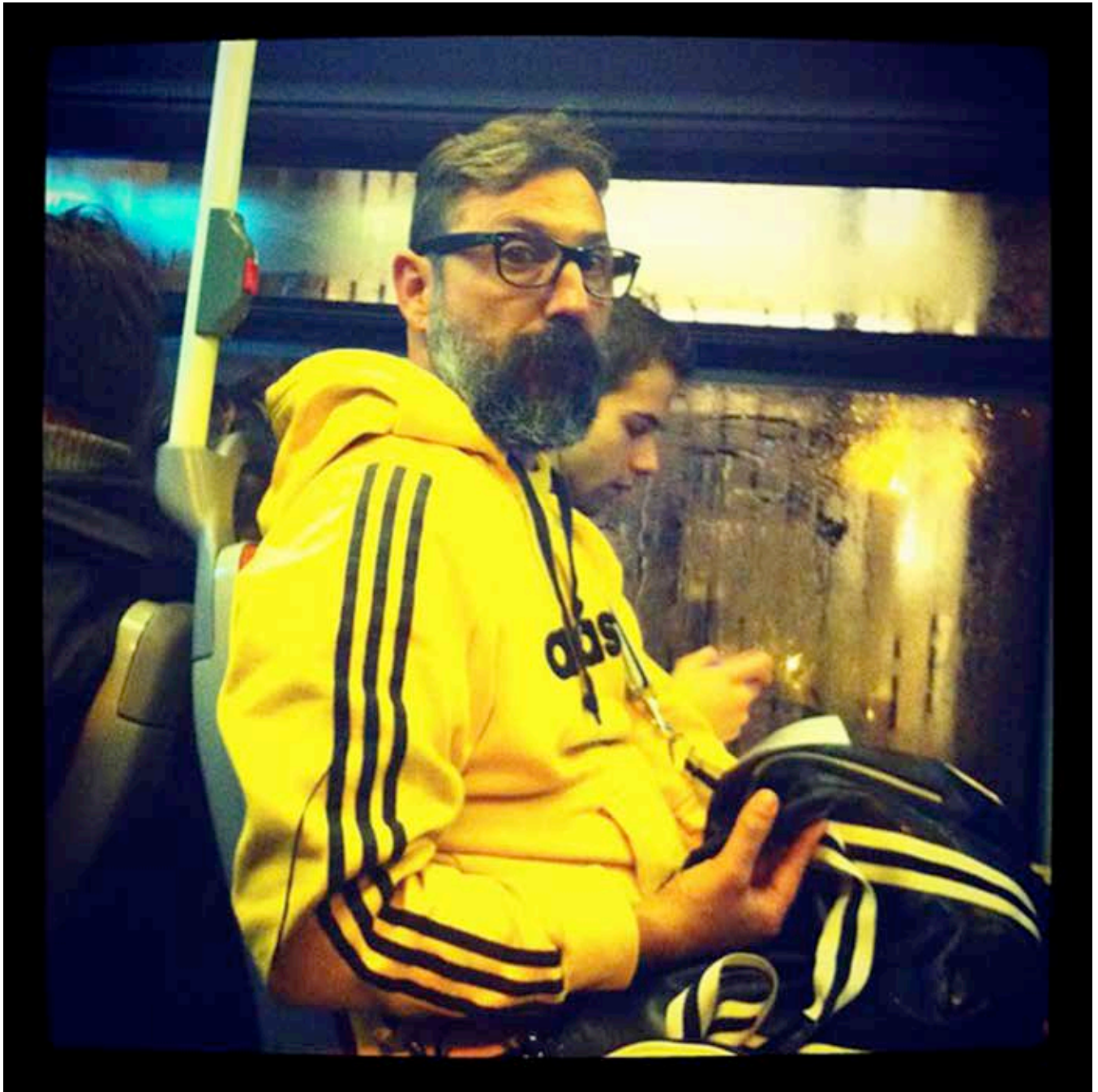


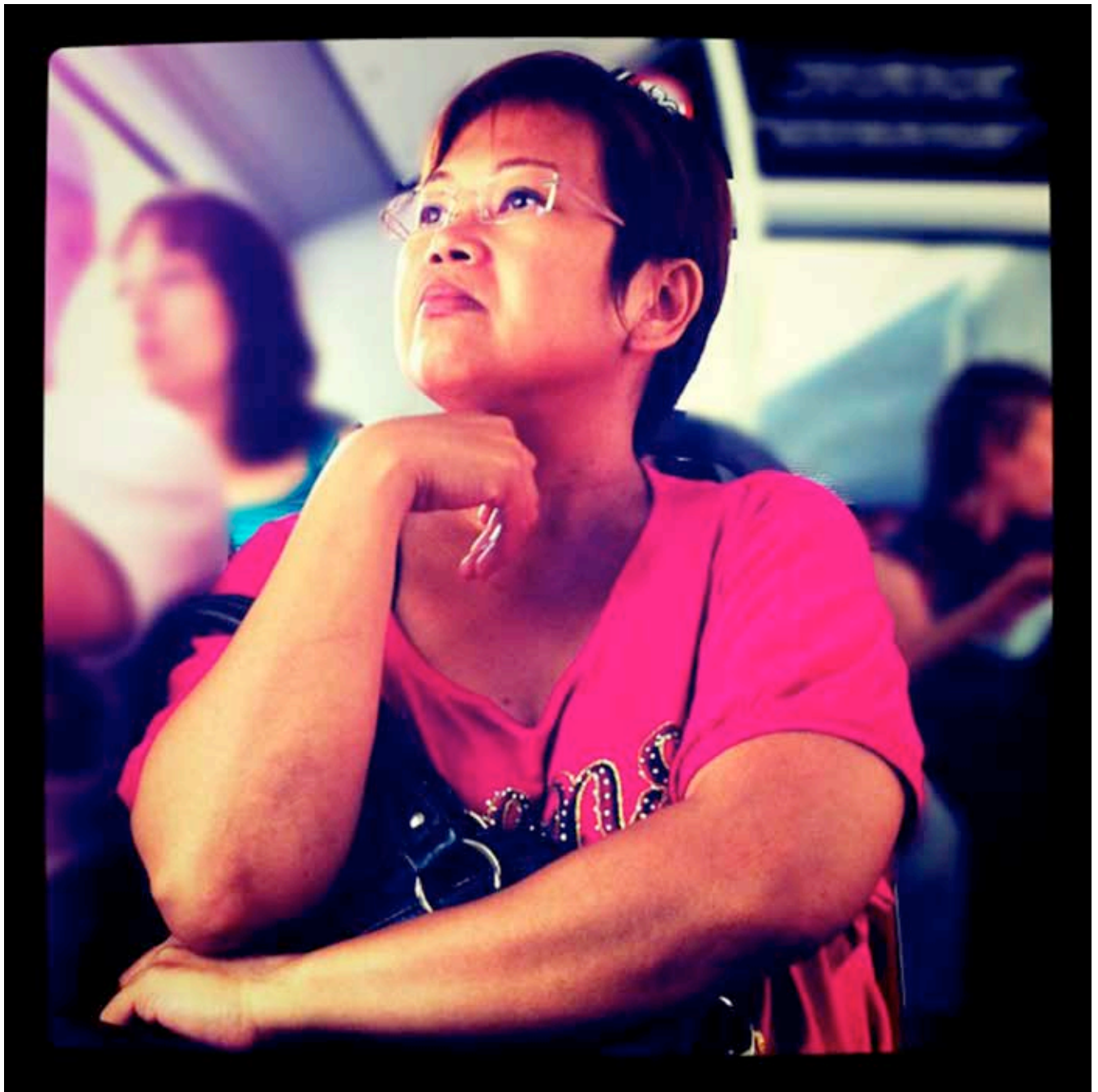








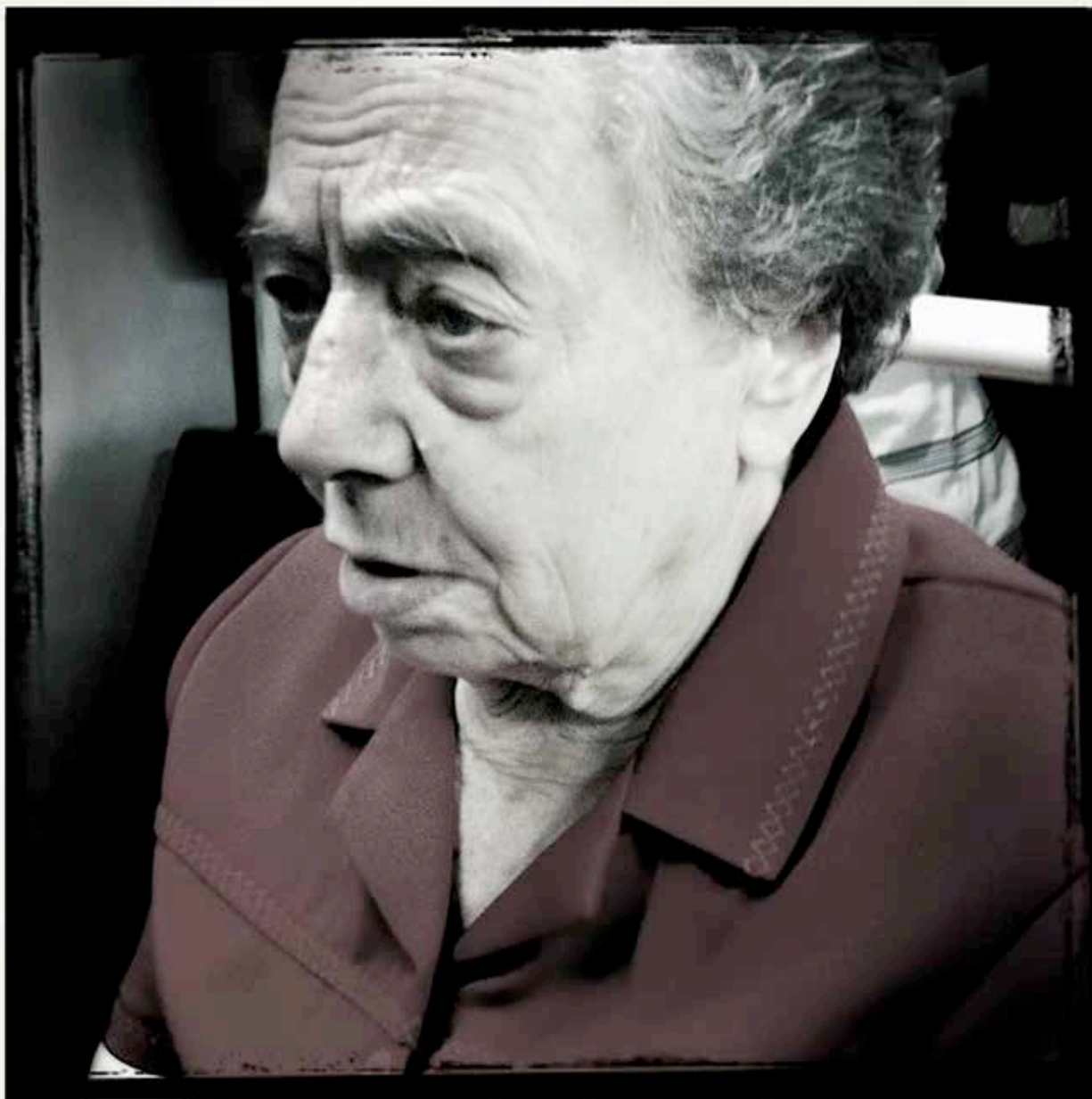












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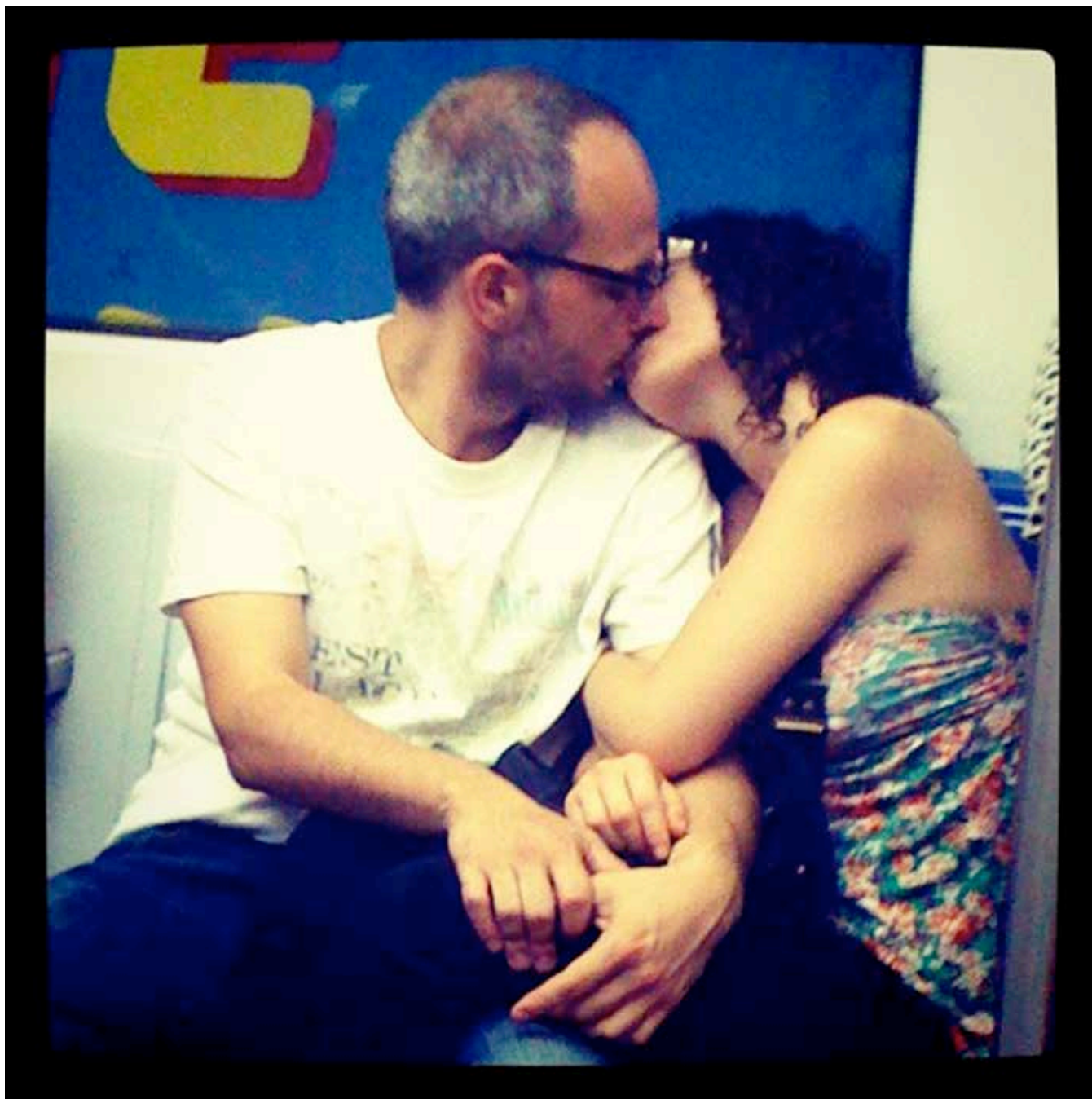


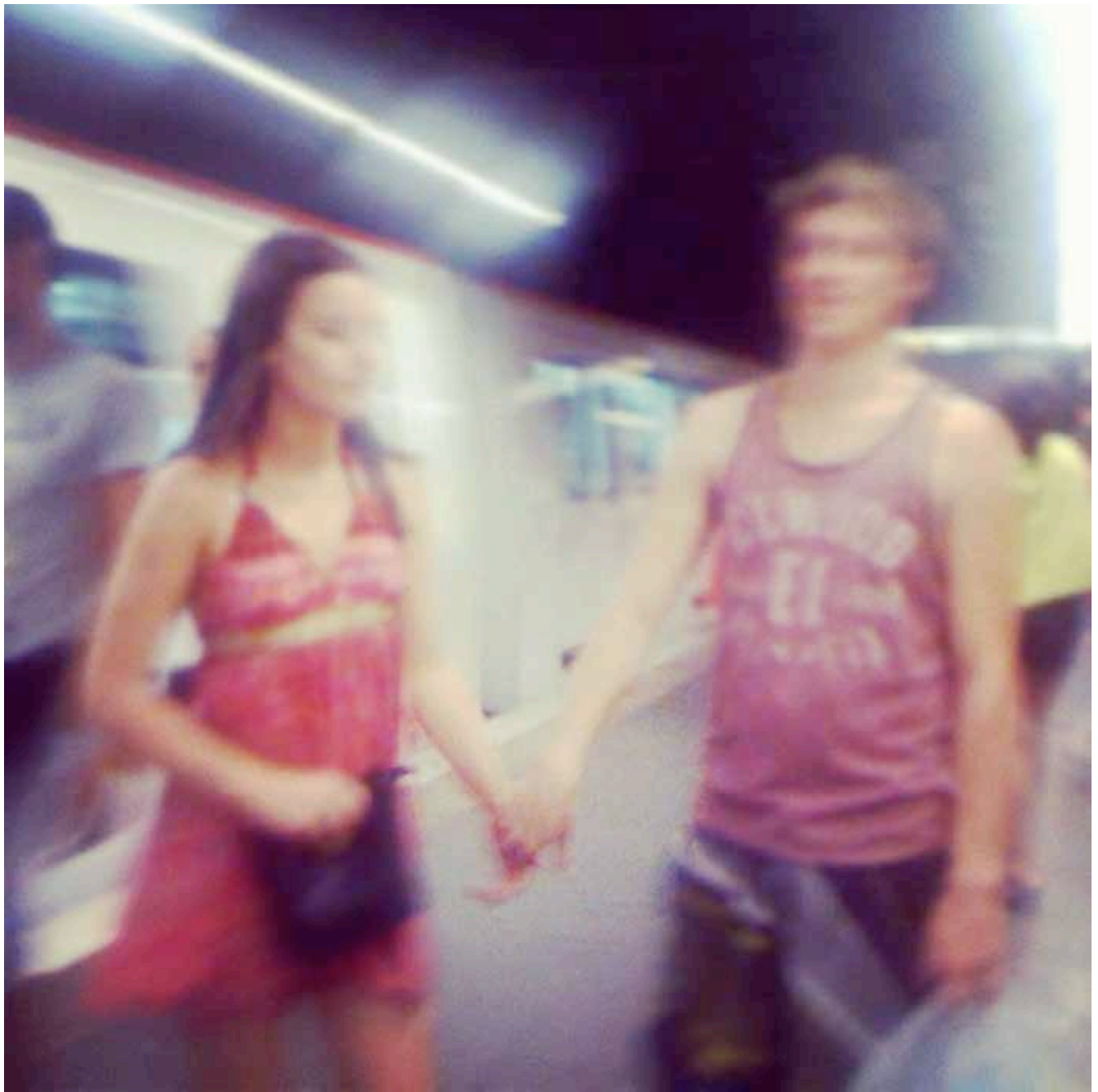




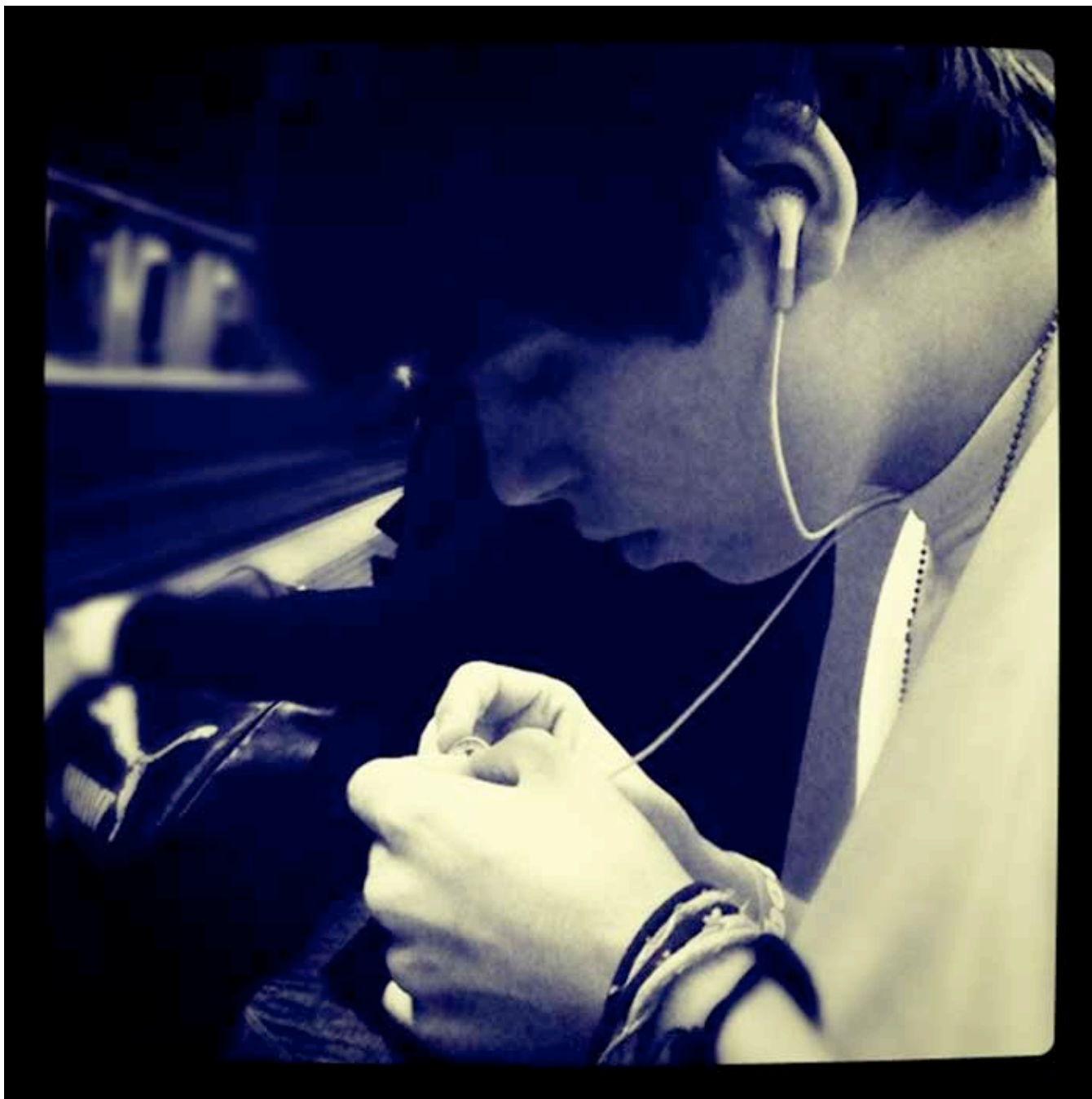






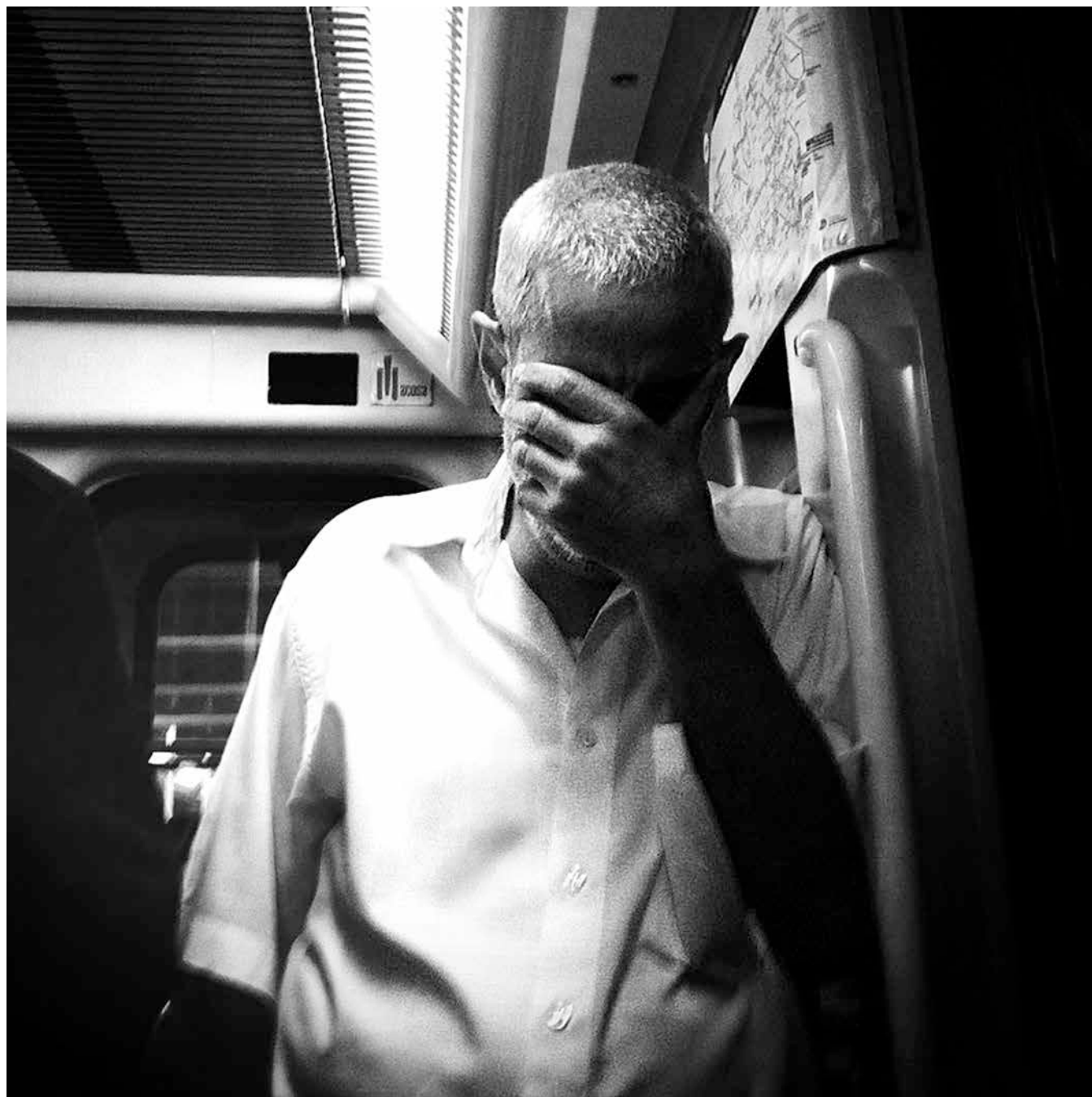
















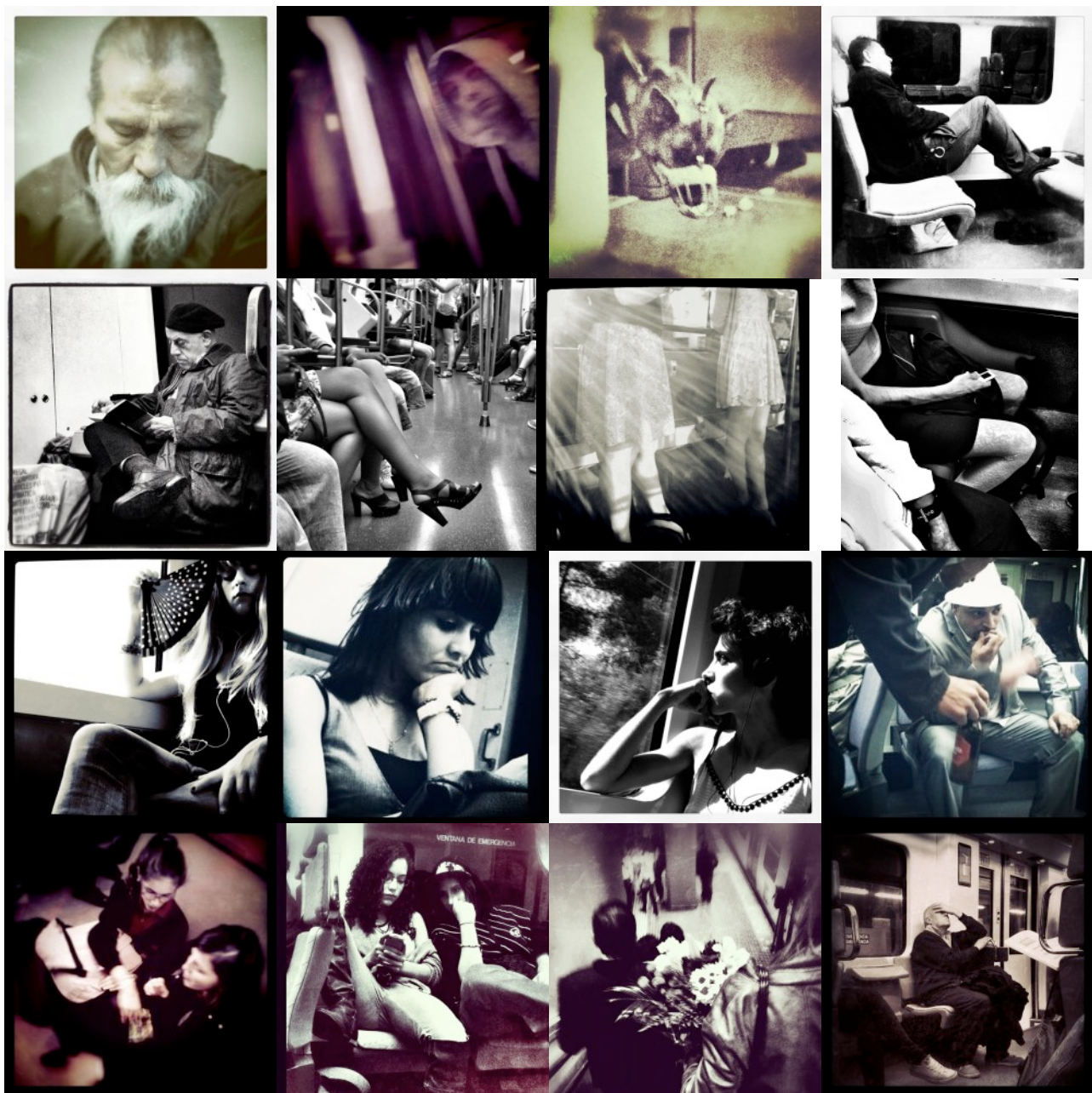


Photographers

Marcelo Aurelio

<http://www.marceloaurelio.com/>

I spend two or three hours of my daily life on trains, subways and buses. Many things, worlds, people and situations happen there that mobilise me, currents of wind that wake me from the daily routine of which I am also part. Always alert, I keep my distance and take photos. These pictures are my diary, my thoughts, my identifications, my compendium. Then there is also the music that accompanies me on every trip, giving my life the experience of being the star of a film and often leading me to seek situations that I visualise while listening to it. I travel, I look and I shoot. When I do so, I feel very good; when I don't, I feel really bad and it pains the centre of my day's heart. I look, I shoot. If I don't, I lose sight.



Godo Chillida

<http://godochillida.posterous.com/>

I am interested in the daily events and dynamics to be found in a city. To observe how the everyday settles into our attitudes, how routine affects our moods and personal relationships. Public transport is unquestionably an excellent photographic space to capture these types of manifestations. I make the most of my trips to capture scenes and characters that reflect the monotony of routine and the non-existent communication with others.

I take photographs all the time and I like to approach the scene without my presence interrupting whatever these passengers are doing. I take photographs from the anonymity that being a passenger also offers me.

I usually keep in mind three references to help me provide conceptual and aesthetic content to the images that I take: the silence of passengers on the Tokyo subway, the aridity of the New York megalopolis at rush hour and the B/W poetics of the French New Wave.



Benjamín Julve

<http://mundosombras.es/>

Public transport is a perfect microhabitat that reproduces a city's solitude and vitality. Everything seen in close-up, everything changing, happening around you, beside you, in the short interval of time of a trip's duration.

With the anonymity and immediacy provided by the cameras of new mobile phones, with the possibility they offer in capturing the small moments and stories that take place amid the sea of travellers and with the ease they provide to go unnoticed. I can do no more than try to capture these moments and situations, collect them, photograph them.



Fran Simó

<http://fransimo.info/>

Most of my work has no rational motivation; I simply felt it had to be made. Street photography was also driven by this inexplicable need, but time has added a conviction: “our time and place should be portrayed”.

This certainty was born in front of Joan Colom’s photos. There was a contrast between his photos and my eyes, that of transcendence. He photographed El Raval a great deal then. The link “my place” versus “another time” is the key to understanding the importance of street photography.

I understood that the systematic practice of the genre is a legacy that transcends the author and the character. The author is only useful as a messenger. Street photography is often scorned because it seems to be “only street photos that any of us can take on our mobile phones”. And yes, it is true, anyone can take a street photo, and after a few years that same photo will have some documentary value. But where will those photos that anyone can take end up in twenty years time?

The first level provided by people who are consciously dedicated to street photography is the care they will take into preserving and classifying their work. Visual history is built upon documents that survive in time. The second level is interest, the factors that make them view something as a subject, whether it is a person, situation or space. They are indirectly speaking about their time because of their own motivations. The third is expression. The now artistic ability to convey an emotion within all the previous content. If the messenger is able to create, maintain and produce a work to endure over time, he or she will have managed to break the barrier of time. If, moreover, they are able to convey an emotion, they will be sending a message to the future.



This book is also available

This book is available in eBook, paperback, hardcover and a box special edition in English and Spanish.

All electronic versions are free. You can find all the information here:

<http://passengers-streetphotography.com/eds/>



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