

Passengers 2012



Mobile and participative street photography project about public transport passengers.

Copyright

Passengers is a project by Marcelo Aurelio, Godo Chillida, Benjamín Julve and Fran Simó for Barcelona Photobloggers.

Some rights reserved: CC BY-NC-ND Attribution, Noncommercial, No Derivative Works.

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/es/>

© 2012 of all photographs and text of its authors.

Cover: Tatiana Efimova.

Back cover: Godo Chillida.

Original idea: Fran Simó.

Edition: Marcelo Aurelio, Godo Chillida, Benjamín Julve and Fran Simó.

Book layout: Fran Simó.

Translated by: Irina Volkova

Legal deposit: DL B. 27284-2013

Free download and other editions:

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



Associació Barcelona Photobloggers
NIF: G65185324

<http://barcelonaphotobloggers.org/>
editorial@barcelonaphotobloggers.org

Introduction

Passengers is a website as well as a series of street photography books about the passengers who use public transport. The project was developed as a web participatory concept. All of the images were captured with mobile devices and published on Instagram. The website gives a real time look at participation while the books are a visual contemplation about public transport passengers, mobile device aesthetics and street photography.

The books contain short essays about the “state of art” and its relationship to society, history, the individual, and the creative processes used in Passengers.

In December 2011, the first volume of Passengers came out. With just four authors and almost exclusively images of Barcelona, it was the first step of the adventure that today has converted into the second volume of the series: Passengers 2012.

This installment consists of 105 images by 36 authors from 25 cities. We have received photographs from Brazil, Russia, the United States, Japan, France, Spain, Turkey, Chile, Sweden, China, Venezuela, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, England, Czech Republic, Honduras, Hong Kong and Guatemala: 23 countries in total.

The project has to do with street photography in its most documentary sense. The objective of this series of books is to register our time and space through the very technologies of the beginning of this

century: technologies that not only apply to the process of capturing images but also to the process of editing and publishing them. This means that the capture and the post-processing are done with mobile devices that publish to social networks, which are connected to their own systems that create a website in real time, and then everything ends up in books printed on demand.

The growing connectivity and ubiquity of the image give to this time and place a certain shape as well as a characteristic distance. Our interest in documenting the street is based on the emotion we feel today when we see images from 1950 shot in New York, Barcelona or Chicago. Additionally, *Passengers* gives us a chance to portray the entire world in unison through the eyes of various authors from different places, at the same time, in a shared experience of the mundane.

The authors of *Passengers* don't go on public transport to take photos; we are there because we commute just like anyone else. Our nexus is the journey. Public transport is a stage of a play in which we are actors as well. How can one get closer to a story than being a part of it? What better way can there be to document? *Passengers* is written in first person but in plural.

Reading the classics of street photography such as *Many Are Called* by Walker Evans or *Robert Frank's The Americans*, not only do we meet the characters of that era but also see them surrounded by the attributes of that time: fashion, typography, the news in the newspapers, cars, advertisement with its messages. We'd like for someone in the future to find these first tablets to be of historical curiosity: the faces of the financial crisis, the last books? Who knows how the present will be interpreted in the future. What we do know is that we have to capture, organize, package, and save this moment in this time capsule that is a book. That's the purpose of this series.

Passengers is a project by Fran Simó for Barcelona Photobloggers. This volume has been directed and edited as a team effort by: Marcelo Aurelio, Godo Chillida, Benjamin Julve and Fran Simó. In the section "Participatory Process through the Web", you can find more information about the process that we've used in this book and our experiences.

Street Photography: Shared Experience of the Mundane

by Godo Chillida

Photography is less about document or evidence and more about community and experience... and that's not a bad thing.

Stephen Mayes, director of VII Photo Agency

At the moment, one of the characteristics of modern photography, acquired due to the dynamic aspect of social networks, is the ability to identify with the distant mundane. Thanks to this trait, the present captured by my device is integrated into your daily context as something recognizable and familiar. My daily life is yours, and yours becomes mine as well. The aforementioned process ensures that the image becomes delocalized, which allows to conceive it as ubiquitous.

We share the same point of reference through publishing the photograph on-site and instantly. We are part of the same experience, photographic and real life at once. The interactivity of the web allows us to share the photographic practice but also invites us to project ourselves onto the fragments of reality which, to begin with, should seem foreign to us due to being distant from our daily reality and surroundings. This effect makes it possible for those who participate in a network dedicated to photography to have a chance to perform two different roles: a mere witness of scenes and a selective

receiver of those images that suit his/her interests (aesthetics, morals, etc.).

Smartphones let us instantly travel to a place and action that aren't close when we launch an image into an open web. This given practice is entertaining since every street photographer uses different apps that can apply various filters and finishes to the initial shot.

The process of editing, digital developing and publication is very quick, adjusting itself to the emotional message we want to transmit. This way, that which attracted us to capturing the image, extends to all of the users of the app who are capable of reading the photograph thanks to the same shared aesthetic code.

It's no longer necessary to compose a series of photographs in a way that tells a story. The narrative isn't any more supported through the discursive coherence of a set of images linked together in some way. Now each photograph receives its meaning thanks to the exchange of experience of the group of photographers/viewers who shape the community.

How does this transmission of the emotional message contained in the capture of public scenes happen? It's essential to keep in mind that many of the filters used simulate analogic processes (b/w or toning), offering a result that most people preserve in their memory and associate with images of the past, but which seem familiar, close, mundane.

Other filters offer a realistic, or even a hyper-realistic, finish (using HDR), which helps standardize the peculiarity of each scene through the same representative system. These examples illustrate that the use of popularized digitalization of the image, through the apps, is actually a means that allows us to decipher a far-away reality, providing a connection between my experience as the receiver and the experience of the person who took the photograph.

On the other hand, this capacity to share experiences isn't based on what we want to say with the photographs. For example: the images that comprise this book don't mean to describe everyday moments but to show that the interesting thing is to note the emotional plane that underlies the state of things presented. It's the showing (and not the telling) what allows to make from this streaming photography a medium based on everyday experience. Instead of worrying about showing reality through a handful of pictures, which we know won't encompass all of it, we decided to show a single image that allows for the game of shared iconography to happen. We are interested in the ludic value of the evocative and not in the normative of the descriptive.

All of the above gains much more emphasis when we refer to street photography. What use will an autistic image have in a reticulate environment, sustained by the exchange of impressions based on personal experience and made available thanks to a photograph shared on the web? It will have the same use as an empty glass of water in the middle of a desert.

While the capture of a fragment of reality is personal, its meaning is strengthened and renewed in the

face of each “like” or comment. The fun of instant critique of an image has to do with interpretative diversity, provided that it’s based on a shared experience, to the point that it’s easy to find collaborations between different members of the same network. Somebody in New York takes a photograph on the subway, and it’s processed by other members (for example, from South Africa, Iran, Spain, Australia or Argentina) thanks to technological resources that promote cooperation. This process, open to reinterpretation, is viable for establishing a similar concept of urban reality, a reference point created together, thanks to shared practice, based on which the detection of common traits in personal experience becomes possible.

We find something familiar in images that don’t correspond to our close environment but show us something that invites us to generate analogies with our own daily life.

We feel comfortable projecting our experience as part of this photographic framework, by default foreign to our environment, since it generates a recognizable echo associated with an event in which one way or another we see ourselves immersed. By projecting my way of conceiving the world onto this cutout of reality contained in the image, I manage to shorten the distance of experience between the person who took the photograph and myself, the observer. At this point it’s easy to recognize that I’ve used the act of sharing this experience as a tool for the interpretation of the scene.

The experienced empathy is the pavement on which we, those who believe that photography is more than just a static registry, move. The images are waiting to be read by someone foreign to their content while its hermeneutic value is irrefutable.

The images in *Passengers* don’t define themselves as the description of the events trapped by smartphones; they do not recount the obvious occurrences that might happen during a trip on public transport but try to show the emotional facets that go beyond the mere explicative discourse. That’s to say they mean to share the same experience, the experience of juxtaposing yourself into ubiquity that’s ludic and participative, where the rules of the game are adjusted according to interpretive modifications generated by collective intervention.

Participative Processes on the Web: Making of Passengers

by Fran Simó

We thought it would be interesting to explain how this book was developed. Barcelona Photobloggers have been producing participative web projects since 2006, some of them in collaboration with important cultural entities of Barcelona city. We've often noticed interest in our approach to work and organization.

In writings, two types of participative processes are distinguished. Some call them participatory art and some – participatory projects. We make the same distinction, but we call them participatory and collaborative processes.

In a participatory process, a group of participating artists produce or deliver their works in order to construct a new collective piece according to the criteria of the organizer. This piece rewrites the meaning of each individual work in a new discourse guided by the organizer.

In a collaborative process, the role of the participating artists is extended and includes discussion of the process, submitting works and discussing the outcome of the project. In these types of projects, the process in itself is part of the final outcome. As an example of this category we produced Arrinconado between eleven authors who got together to do “something” that ended up becoming a piece based on a short story, complete with a book, an exhibition and a video. None of that had been defined in the beginning. The only rule was that all of the participants would sign themselves up for collective

authorship. This project took a year and a half of work with weekly meetings.

Passengers is a participatory process through the web. The call for entries, work submission and the consequent exhibition is done mainly on the Internet. Many of the participatory art processes are used as a medium of social intervention in communities, not the way Passengers uses it.

For us, the web is a fundamental part of the concept, as Godo Chillida explains in "Street Photography: Shared Experience of the Mundane". The web is not only a vehicle but also an integral part of the work. The real-time component of participation is very important in this process. The web publishes the photographs within a maximum of five minutes after the author has uploaded them. The other key component is ubiquity: the photographs come from any part of the world and are consumed the same way.

In 2011, in order to explain the state of mobile photography, David Lladó created the concept of Ubiquography, based upon which Barcelona Photobloggers organized an exhibition that could be seen in real time in 35 centers in 7 countries. The photographs were shown on screens or projectors at the same moment that the authors published them on the social network Instagram. With that we wanted to differentiate mobile photography from the previous technologies and explore the elements of its own language: the immediacy, the ubiquity and the socialization of the process.

Printing photos taken with a mobile to put them up on a wall seemed the same to us as recording a video of a theater play with a fixed camera and calling it cinema. Cinema has a lot in common with theater but uses its own language. Explaining something new with old terms is a typical error that's committed in the face of a shift in paradigm. Mobile photography must be explained to the public without forgetting its distinguishing elements.

Photography taken with devices connected to the internet and social networks, with the capacity to edit the images, is something very different to a Leica loaded with a 135 mm film.

Although both machines are capable of capturing an image, the way of capturing, transmitting and exhibiting it has changed drastically. It's necessary to explore new capacities of the medium.

One of the characteristics of the new technology that stands out the most is that the devices are self-sufficient. You can achieve a complete cycle of communication with one gadget. You can capture, process and send the image to your public without the need for another device. The other characteristic is that your public is not geographically limited. And the last characteristic is that all of that can be done in seconds. For example: with Palaroid, we could have a positive image in a short time, but those cameras were not popular. And although we could have an instant copy, only those in geographical proximity could see it.

Passengers also explores these new elements that serve the same purpose: to document our time and place. Using the same system as Ubiquography, we can see participation in real time on the web. But

that's only half of the project. The other part is the "time capsule".

Besides exploring the capacities of the new media, Passengers aims to be a time capsule, a recipient where documentation of a part of our reality is stored. The part we live through while traveling by public transport. As we've said in the introduction, one of the main reasons for producing this series of books is to recreate the magic we felt looking at the 1950 books about passengers.

The new technologies are constantly changing. A website requires a lot of maintenance and there's no guarantee I'll keep on with it. In order to leave a document that's accessible in 50 years, we thought it would be best to create a physical book to transmit a message over a long period of time. Surely the copies that are printed will last longer than the website.

In order for the contents of the capsule to be relevant, it's necessary to edit and structure them. This part of the job allows us a more relaxed read and some time to meditate on what we'd like to leave inside.

Editing Process

The editing process of the book was based on collaboration between four project managers. They had received 3651 photographs from 45 authors, taken during 2012. Open participation through the web always tends to bring in huge amounts of content.

In order to be able to edit it, we used a combination of recipes that are not quite a methodology but have been used in many projects successfully.

The editing of Passengers was done in four sessions. The first one, the immersion, took 12 hours of work with just one one-hour break for food. During this session, 3651 photos were reviewed. All throughout the year the editors saw the photos as they were being published in the context of leisurely Instagram use.

Before starting on editing stages, we did a visualization of all of the photographs at a relatively fast speed, a second per image.

In the first round, the editors had to respond based on their first impression. Each photo that received a favorable vote from any of the editors made it to the second round. From this review, we got 832 photos.

After the first review, we did a second one over the result of the first one. After having seen the images twice, the impact would change. At that stage there was already more awareness of the themes in general. This visualization was done under the premise "you have to tell us what photo can't be missing". Once again, if an editor selected a photo, it would pass to the second stage.

Now we had 200 photographs for the third round entitled "I don't like this photo". At this point some photos were left out. The editors could decide to include or exclude a photo and with just one of them making such decision, a photo could be left out or included. At this stage the dialogue between the editors was minimal because the number of the images was too high.

The third session left us with 110 photos. At the fourth phase, the voting process changed. Here each photo would receive a vote by each editor and the rule was "I want this photo in the book". Forty seven photos received 4 votes, 29 photos received 3, and 13 were left with 2 votes. Since we'd set the number of photos to approximately 80 for the final edition, the ones that received less than two votes were kicked out.

Left with 89 photos, we looked at the themes and the proportion of photographs per participant. Since the objective was 80, we subtracted photographs from the authors that already had the most representation. After that, we were left with 81 photographs by 35 authors. That's how the first session ended.

A funny thing happened during the first day: we found two people photographed by different authors. None of the four photos made it into the book but it was fun to discover it.

The second session took place after two weeks of not looking at the book at all. After the immersion, it was necessary to let our subconscious analyze what we had seen during the twelve hours. In the second session we identified and grouped themes. As part of that exercise, we added up photos and authors. From that shift we had a project made of 114 images by 36 authors. At that point dialogue between editors was essential. The interpretation of the photographs of each one had to be shared in order to identify the best themes.

The last two sessions were aimed at establishing the sequence of the book. The themes were grouped in order to create a photographic run through the trip: getting to the platform and moving through the corridors towards the train or the bus, the wait, the trip, and the exit. During this voyage we discovered friends, anecdotes, portraits, parts of the body that drew our attention, and the self-portraits. Since the printed book has special value in the project, during these sessions a lot of attention was paid to spreads and images that faced each other.

As a result, the book contains 105 photographs by 36 authors that portray 26 cities.

Passengers 2012





































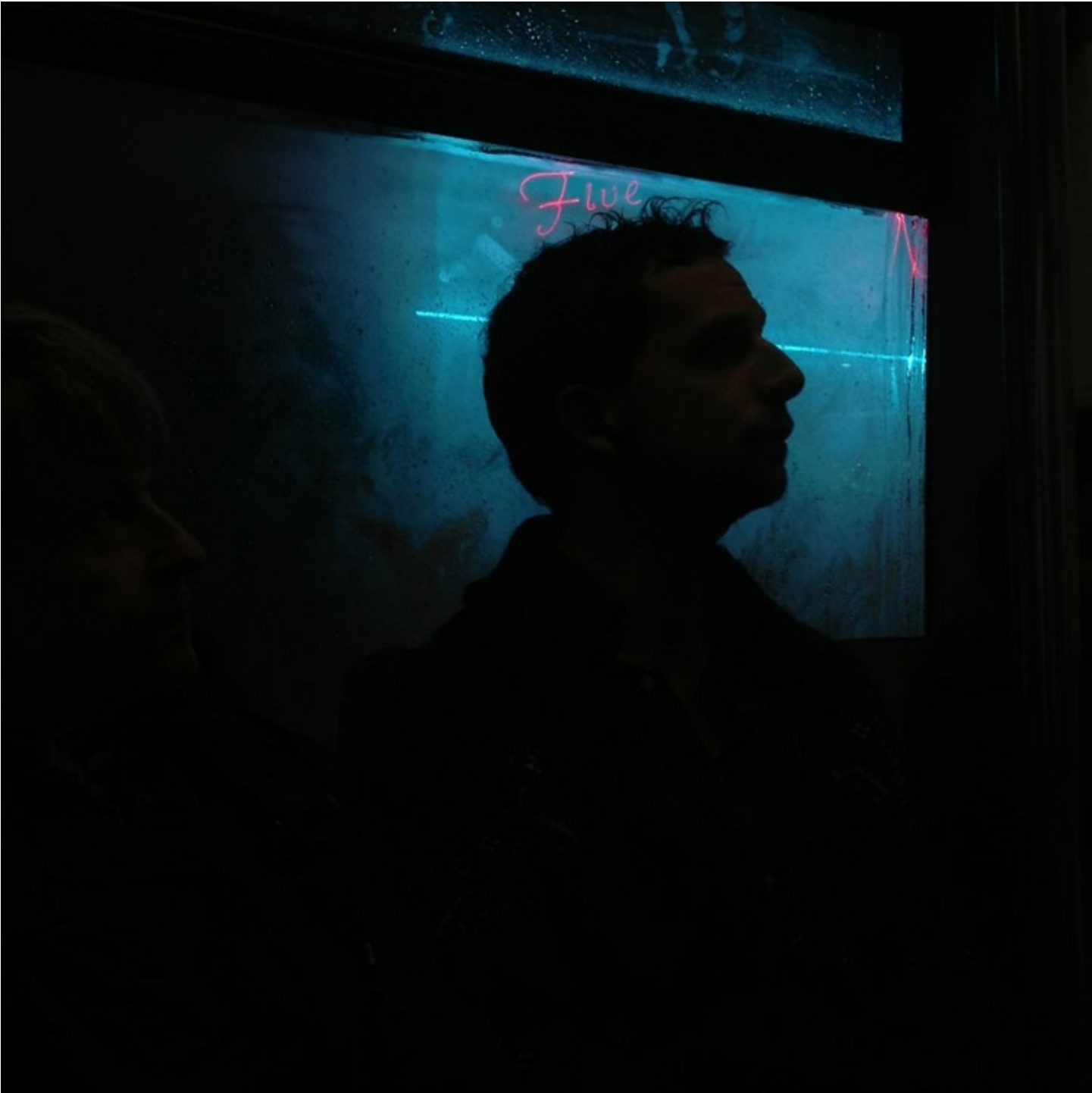


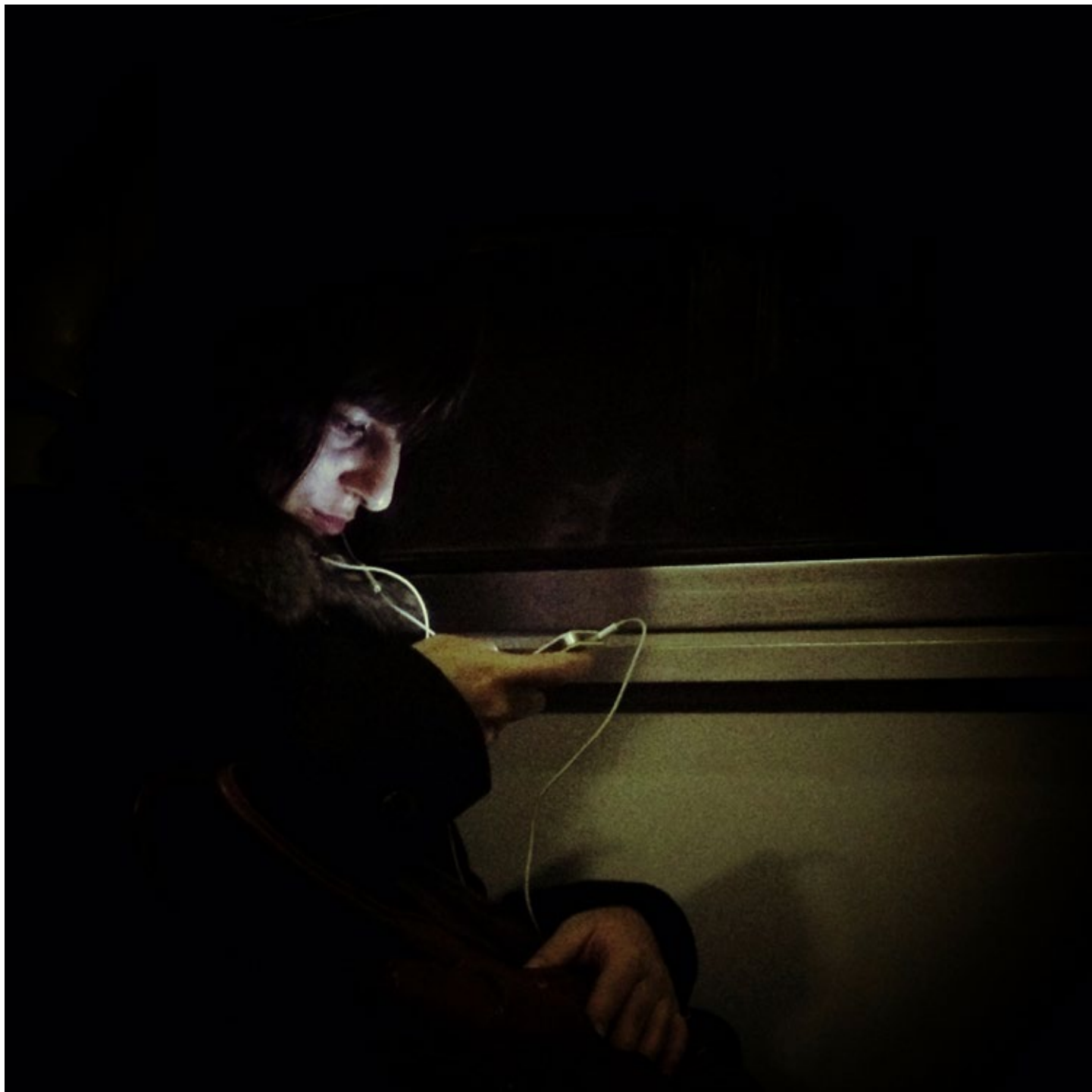














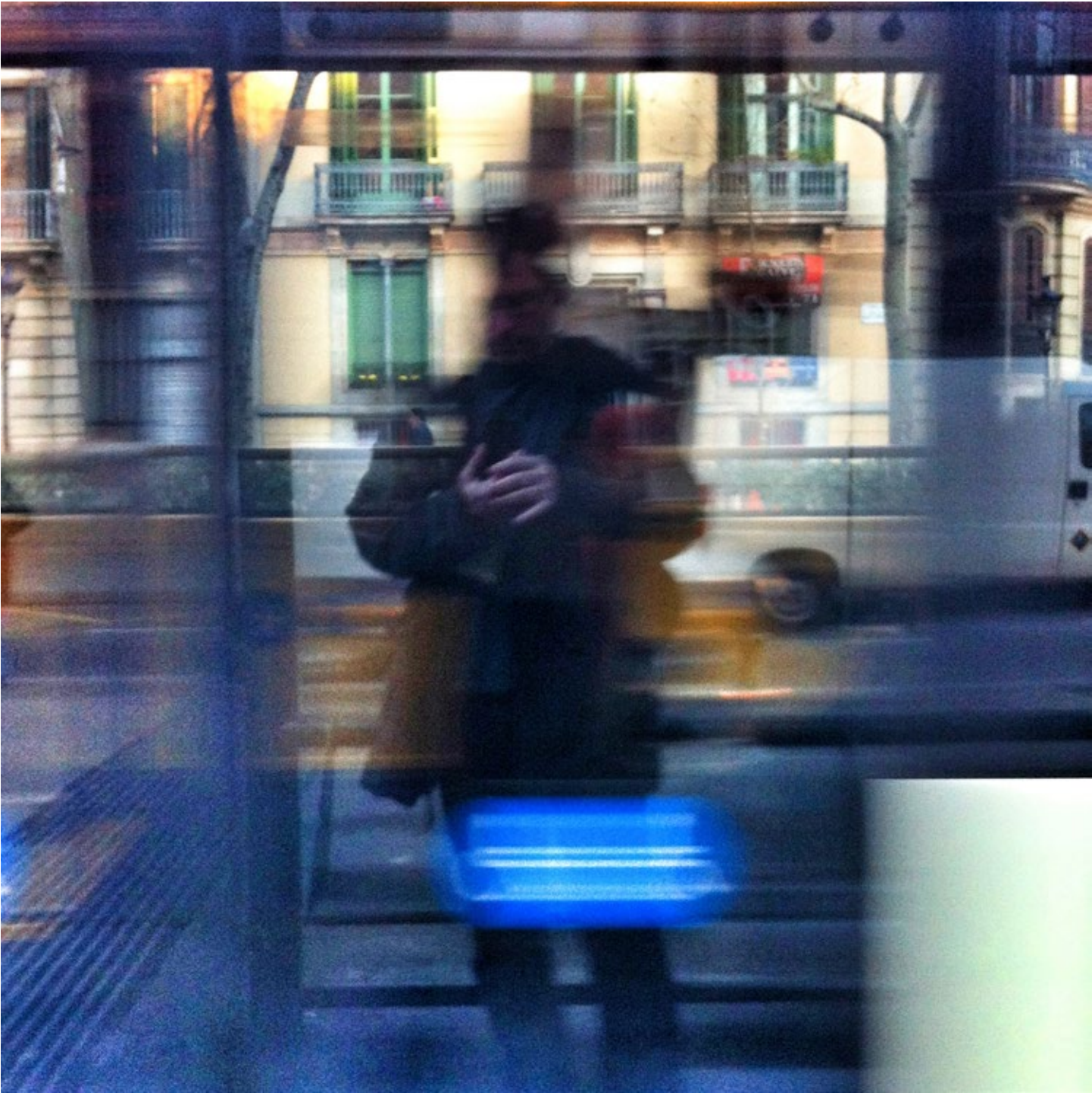










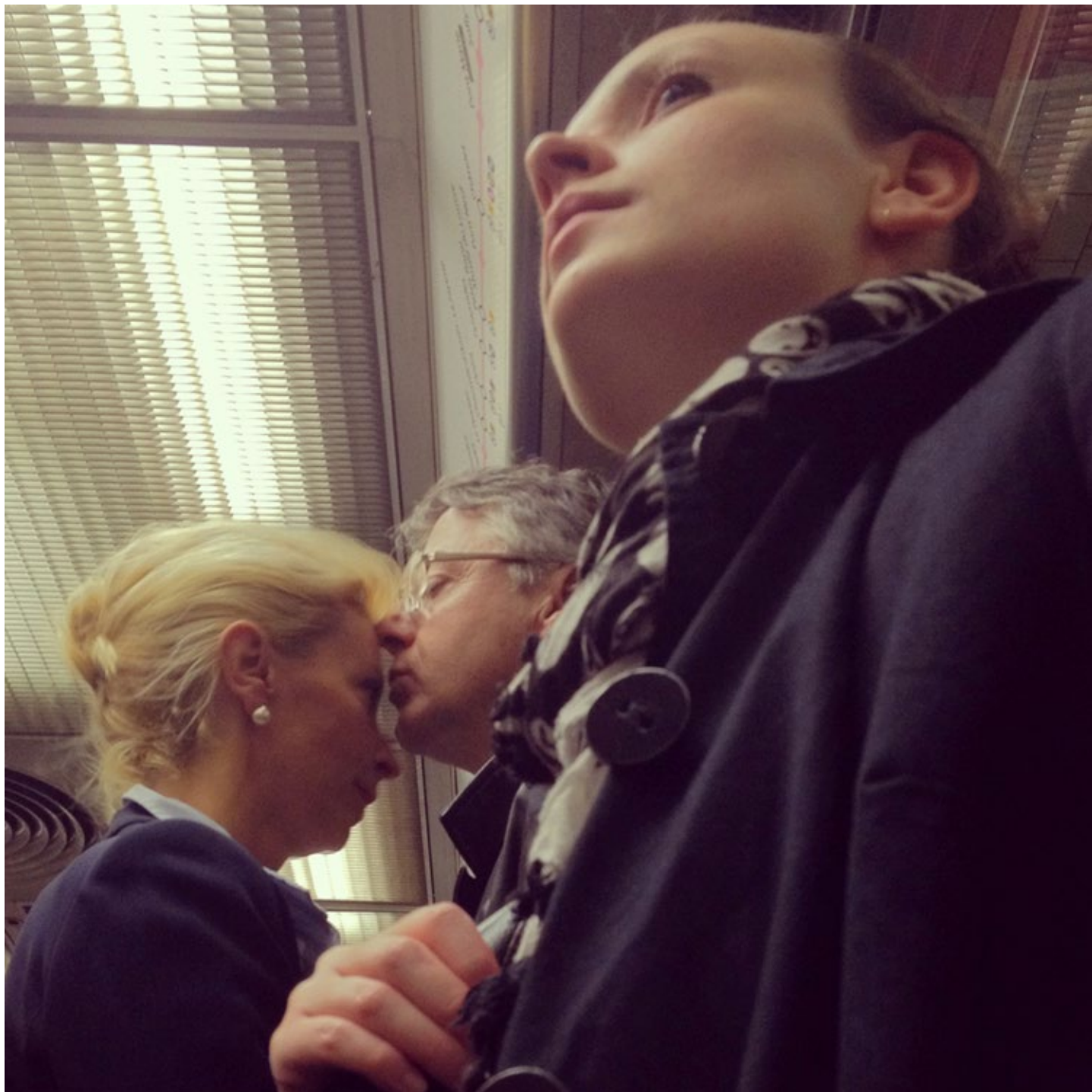








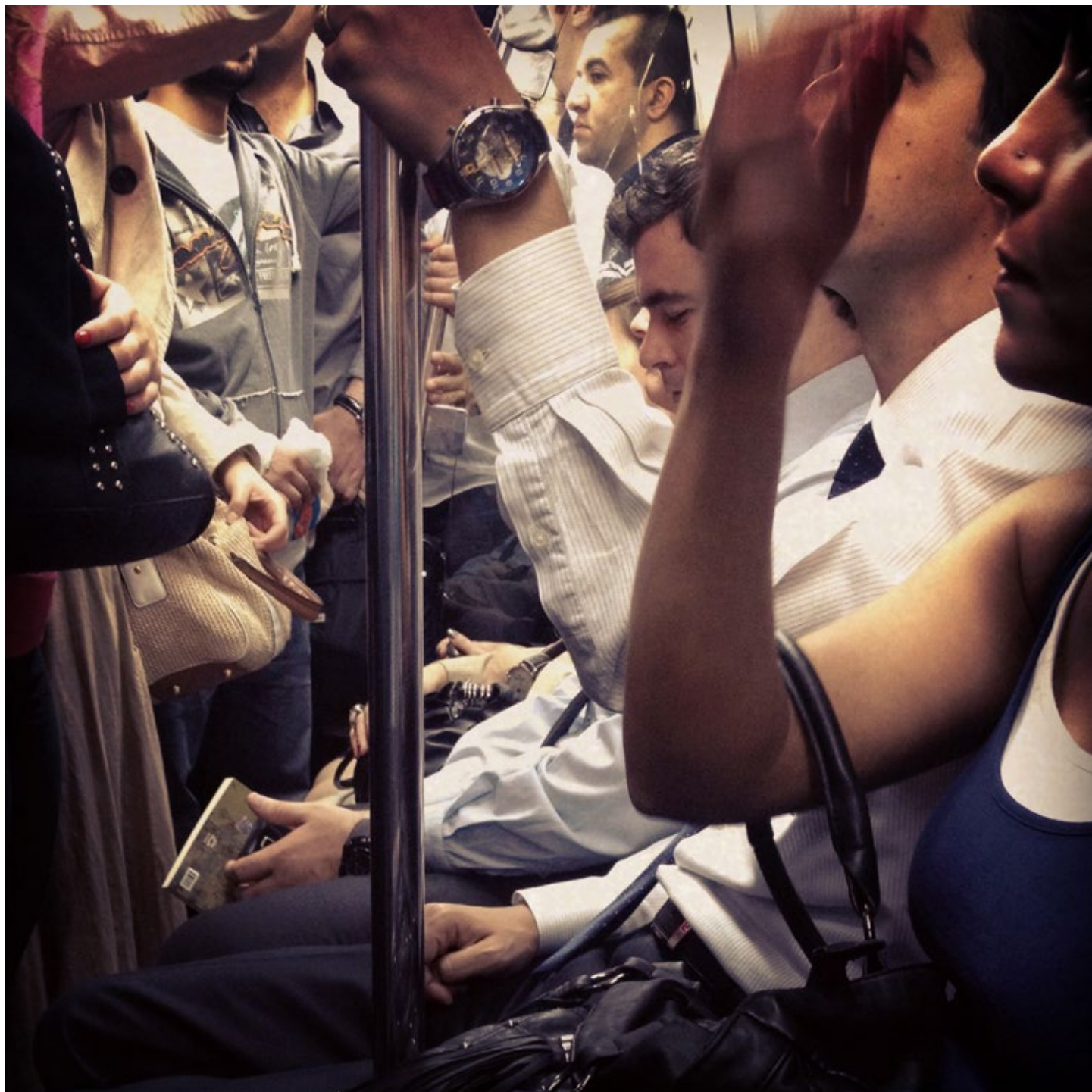










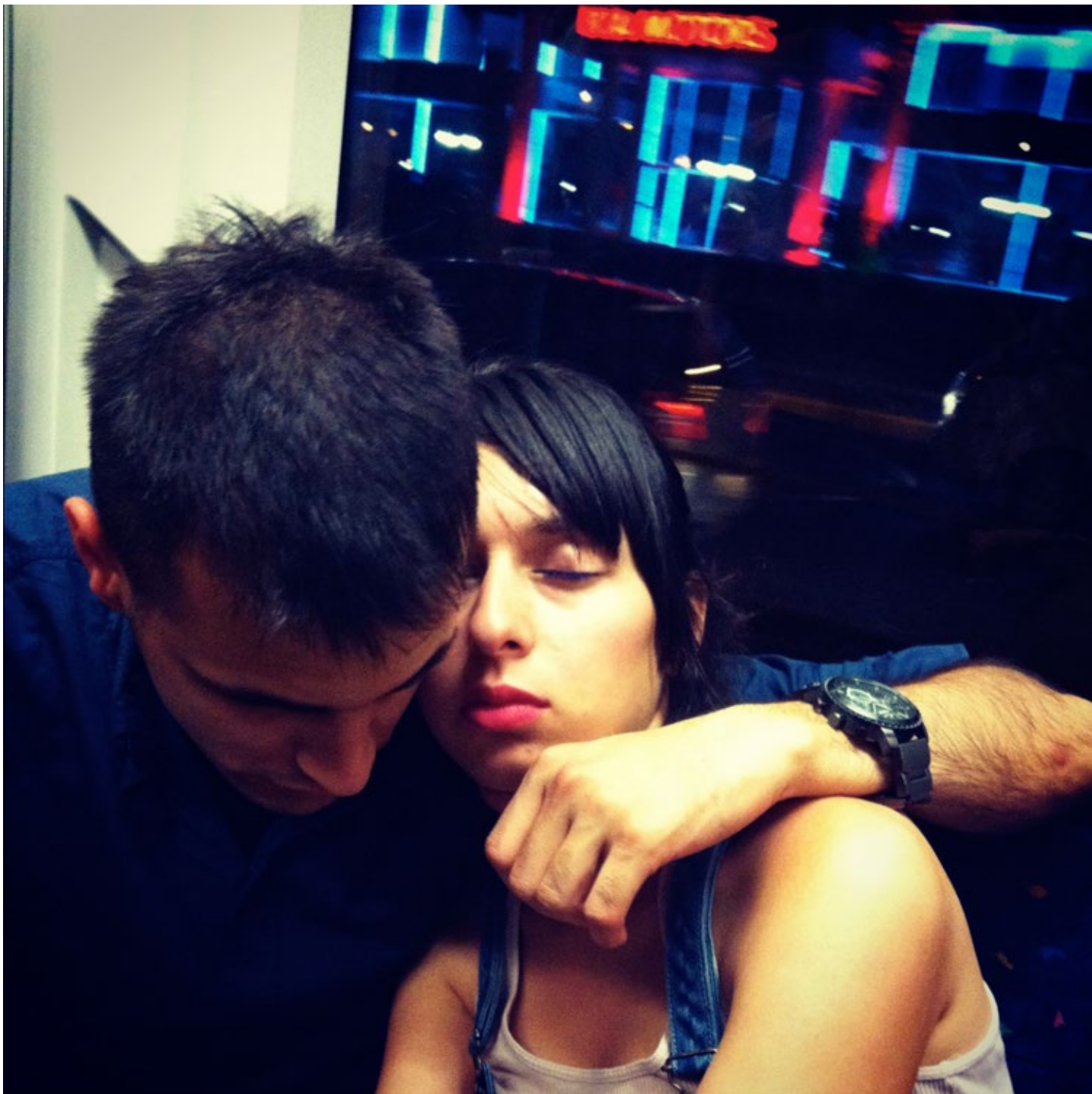




















































































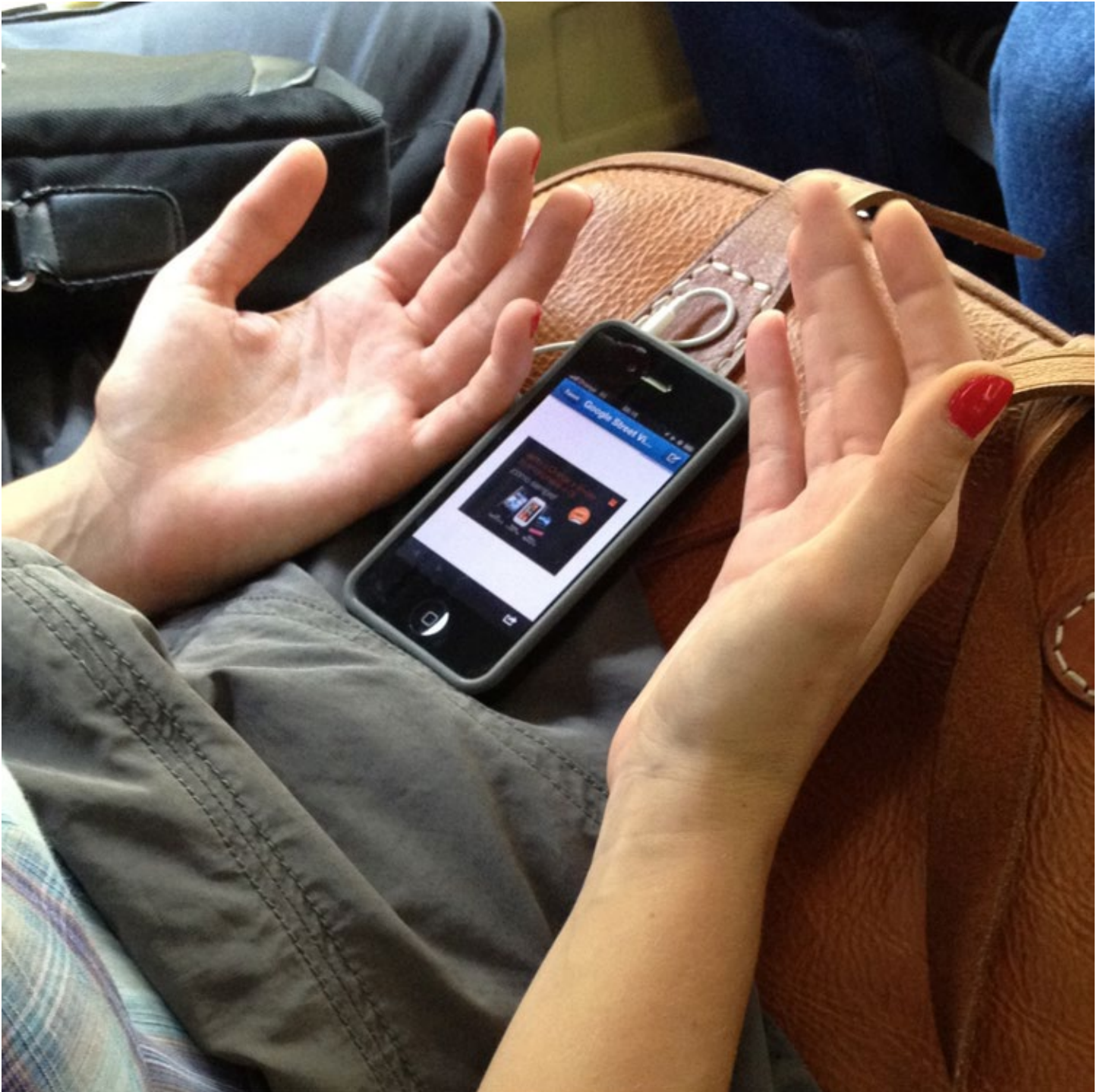














































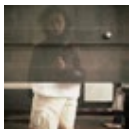
Authors



@asaphotography

Alejandro Aristeguieta

Photo at page: 23



@cecile_e

Cecile Edelist

Photos: 27, 40, 41, 46, 53, 59, 65, 91



@endmoderndayslavery

Mike Justin

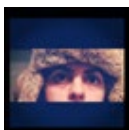
Photos at pages: 84, 85, 89, 96, 97



@fonsimo

Fon Simó

Photos at pages: 19, 105



@freistaat2009

Marta Pacheco

Photo at page: 113



@guillamat

Joan Guillamat

Photo at page: 20



@javiermartinphoto

Javier Martín

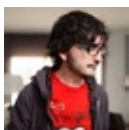
Photos at pages: 30, 31, 94, 112



@kikoo99

Federico Giusti

Photos at pages: 29, 82



@lignasi

Ignasi Mieza

Photo at page: 51

@bjulve

Benjamín Julve

Photos at pages: 18, 39, 48, 87, 114



@colemanroman

Nicholas Moran

Photos at pages: 42, 72, 78, 101, 115



@fernandoprats

Fernando Prats

Photo at page: 26



@fransimo

Fran Simó

Photos: 43, 47, 57, 64, 74, 77, 79, 104, 110, 118



@godo_

Godo Chillida

Photos: 36, 38, 50, 83, 92, 93, 120, 121



@inocuo

Alfonso Para

Photo at page: 37



@joantorrens

Joan Torrens

Photo at page: 58



@kypexin

Vladimir Mikhnovich

Photos at pages: 25, 67, 86



@lyrebos

Vicente Jurado

Photo at page: 80





@marceloaurelio

Marcelo Aurelio

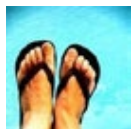
Photos:33, 49, 56, 66, 68, 71, 102, 103, 107, 111, 119



@metromad

Ana Álvarez Diestro

Photos at pages: 76, 108



@Omitsulssey

Omitsu Issey

Photo at page: 117



@Paulo_05

Paulo Wang

Photos at pages: 22, 24, 70, 81



@rgomezc

Rodrigo Gómez

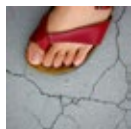
Photos at pages: 44, 60, 73



@smeseguer

Sergi Meseguer

Photo at page: 17



@soy_bubu

Núria Rodríguez

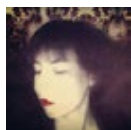
Photo at page: 109



@sushidetortilla

Carolina de Britos

Photo at page: 32



@ViriFlorentti

Viri Florentti

Photo at page: 21

@martapictures

Marta Vall

Photos at pages: 55, 69, 88, 90, 95



@Miguelsanfoto

Miguel Sánchez

Photo at page: 63



@papapol

Manel Bello

Photo at page: 116



@rafaperez

Rafa Pérez

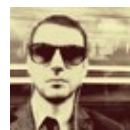
Photos at pages: 34, 62, 75



@shakechan

Denis Salmon

Photo at page: 54



@southcoasting

Jon Southcoasting

Photos at pages: 99, 100



@sterestherster

Esther van Nes

Photo at page: 28



@tapioka

Tatiana Efimova

Photos at pages: 35, 52, 61, 98



@wamba

Esther Navalón Wamba

Photos at pages: 45, 106



References

Many Are Called

Walker Evans

ISBN: 978-0300106176

L'autre

Luc Delahaye

ISBN: 978-0714838427

Life Below: The New York City Subway

Christophe Agou

ISBN: 978-1593720087

Bruce Davidson: Subway

Bruce Davidson

ISBN: 978-1597111942

New York Subway, 1960

Enrico Natali

ISBN: 978-1590053492

Passengers

John Schabel

ISBN: 978-1931885973

Passengers

Chris Marker

ISBN: 978-0935875270

Tokyo Compression Three

Michael Wolf

ISBN: 978-3941825413

Contents

Copyright	2
Introduction	5
Street Photography: Shared Experience of the Mundane	7
Participative Processes on the Web: Making of Passengers	11
Passengers 2012	15
Authors	123
References	127

Edited by
Marcelo Aurelio, Godo Chillida, Benjamín Julve and Fran Simó
for Barcelona Photobloggers



BARCELONA
PHOTO BLOGGERS