

TAKE

It's a favorite line from an oft-quoted Australian author. The final sentence in Tim Winton's, *Breath*, describing how his protagonist wishes to be remembered by his children – as someone '...who does something completely pointless and beautiful... in this at least he should need no explanation'.

Wouldn't it be peachy if photographers and indeed all artists had the privilege of living and working under such spontaneous, uninhibited terms?

Doubtless there are many visual artists who have at some point, upon completing a piece of work for which they feel vindicated for having produced but not knowing exactly *why*, who have subsequently been asked the question, '... but what does it mean'?

Off the record - and this is by no means denigrating any artist that may have dabbled in the practice - myriad artists when speaking candidly will roll their eyes and recoil at the prospect of yielding to the never-ending need for some sort of verbose, over-intellectualised, philosophical, art-fart diatribe that seems prerequisite in order to be seriously considered as art, as if all art has to be conceptual - immodestly, overtly conceptual. Why can't art speak for itself? Why does it have to portray some flimsy, esoteric notion rather than something that actually *is*, something that needs no explanation, something that can be judged by instinct rather than reason? Who hasn't loved a song without knowing what's being sung about? Is this not legitimate affection?

Whether or not you consider photography an artform, facing such impediments and queries regarding concept is, for photographers of all genres, a constant concern. While some are born story-tellers who choose a visual medium as a vehicle for their narrative, others, aesthetes for whom story-telling is of *less* importance are more likely to be exiled despite imagery that might be - based primarily on visual aesthetics and what *they* offer - of equal or even greater worth.

Street photography might be of particular disdain to the notionally driven viewer or those news people for whom fact and information is *de rigueur*. 'But what does it mean and why?' I hear it ring in my ears like tinnitus! 'What's the story behind it?' Like a recorded message... Great proponents of street photography - Joel Meyerowitz, Robert Frank, William Eggleston and Richard Kalvar to name a few - are magicians for whom one precise moment in time, devoid of preconceived concept or intentional meaning can, without prompt, provide metaphor, social comment, testimony or even, very simply, a moment of considered observation frozen in time – self-interpretive, to be explored and enjoyed without explanation and for which reason may well be superfluous.

So photographers, like other visual artists so often find themselves, having created work, trying to construe 'meaning' in their work in retrospect in order to give credence to it and indeed themselves. I dare say that in some cases it isn't necessary.

Not once can I recall being asked to submit work for a publication of any kind based purely on the quality of the work without the need for an explanation or justification but rather, quite unpretentiously for the work itself. Photography and photography alone. Art for art's sake. Make of it what you will. This negative space is no more. Welcome to TAKE.