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Nº 221

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WINGS OF VISION

STORIES OF FLIGHT, LIGHT AND PASSION



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OUR PUBLICATIONS

We're dedicated to promoting photog-
raphy worldwide through our diverse
publications. By showcasing a variety of
captivating imagery, we aim to inspire
photographers and enthusiasts alike.

Our platform celebrates the beauty and
creativity of photography, fostering a
global community of visual storytellers.



Dear photographers,

Welcome to this special edition
dedicated to aviation photogra-
phy "WINGS OF VISION".
In this issue, we present pho-
tographers and spotters who
capture aircraft, movement,
light, and the unique atmo-
sphere of the aviation world.

Through their photographs and
interviews, you will discover
personal stories, different ways
of seeing, and the passion be-
hind every image.

Each featured photographer
brings a unique perspective,
creating a diverse visual journey
through the beauty of flight.

I hope this edition inspires you
to look at aviation photography
not only as documentation, but
also as emotion, patience, and
visual storytelling. 📷

ANETTA G. HELLER
Executive Editor

A. G. Heller



Dear friends, readers,

This aviation photography
edition brings together powerful
images, personal interviews,
and stories from photographers
passionate about the world of
flight.

With this issue, we are intro-
ducing dedicated QR Cards for
each featured photographer. By
scanning the QR code, readers
can open the full interview in
several languages, including En-
glish, Polish, Spanish, German,
and French.

We also invite photographers to
explore DigiCardOne – our new
digital business cards designed
for first contact, portfolio
presentation, and professional
visibility.

Thank you for joining us. I hope
this issue brings you inspiration,
emotion, and a deeper apprecia-
tion of aviation photography. 📷

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**MAGAZINE
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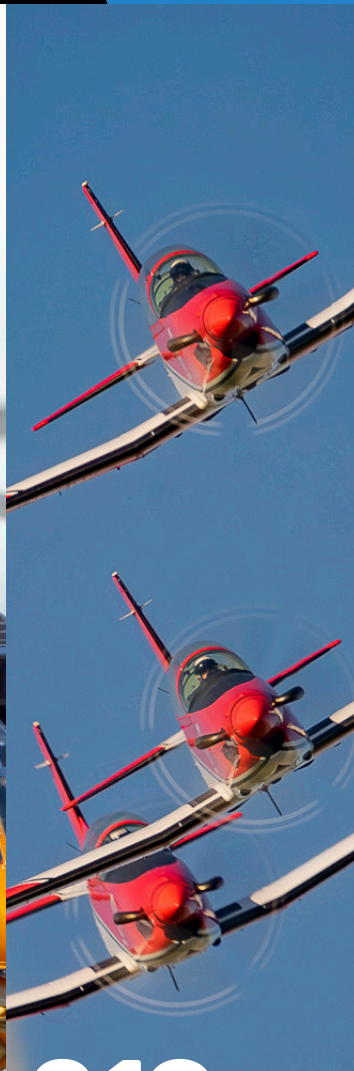


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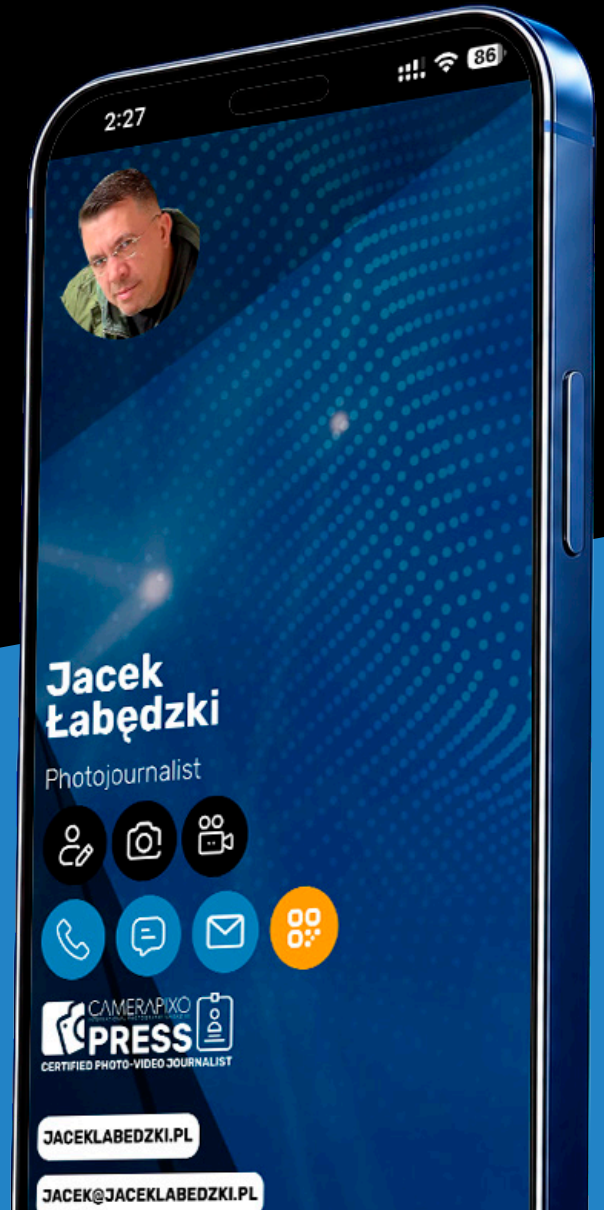
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BUSINESS
CARD**



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SCAN TO OPEN
THE MULTILINGUAL
INTERVIEW



01 WHERE DID YOUR PASSION FOR AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY COME FROM, AND WHAT MADE AVIATION SUCH AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK?

My passion for aviation photography grew naturally out of my love for military aviation. Ever since I was a child, military aircraft fascinated me. I attended countless airshows, and at some point I realized I wanted to hold onto those emotions a little longer. That's how aviation photography was born.

02 DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST AVIATION PHOTOGRAPH, OR THE MOMENT YOU KNEW YOU WANTED TO DEVELOP IN THIS DIRECTION?

I remember it perfectly. It was at one of the "Antidotum" airshows in Leszno. I had borrowed my fiancée's camera – a basic Sony DSLR with a lens that was absolutely unsuitable for aviation photography – and I desperately wanted to capture a low pass by an F-16 piloted by someone I greatly admired. Of course, at the critical moment the autofocus went haywire and I missed the shot entirely.

That was the moment I said out loud: *"I'm buying proper gear and I'm taking this seriously."*

03 WHAT GIVES YOU THE GREATEST SATISFACTION WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING AIRCRAFT – CAPTURING THE FRAME ITSELF, THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE EVENT, THE PEOPLE YOU MEET, OR THE WAY THE IMAGES ARE RECEIVED AFTERWARD?

Aviation photography is quite specific in that regard. Sometimes the aircraft itself is everything; other times it's an unusual angle or the surroundings that make the image. In general, I'm always chasing the right frame – the one that feels like more than just a record shot.



04
**HOW HAS YOUR
APPROACH
TO AVIATION
PHOTOGRAPHY
CHANGED FROM THE
BEGINNING OF YOUR
JOURNEY TO TODAY?**

Enormously. At the start, I wanted to make photographs like other photographers. Now I want to make photographs that are different from everyone else's.

05
**ARE YOU MORE
DRAWN TO DYNAMIC
MOMENTS –
TAKEOFFS, FLYBYS,
MANOEUVRES – OR
TO QUIETER FRAMES
THAT CAPTURE THE
ATMOSPHERE OF A
PLACE?**

I love photographing aircraft in their natural environment – in the air – but sometimes it's the surroundings or the people that give an image its soul.

06
**WHAT DO YOU THINK
MAKES AVIATION
PHOTOGRAPHY
CAPABLE OF
ENGAGING PEOPLE
WHO AREN'T
PASSIONATE ABOUT
AVIATION IN THEIR
EVERYDAY LIVES?**

In our photographs, aircraft are often shown in ways the average viewer could never experience directly. I think that's what tends to leave an impression even on people who aren't particularly interested in planes themselves.

07
**HOW IMPORTANT
IS THE STORY
BEHIND THE
AIRCRAFT, EVENT,
OR LOCATION YOU'RE
PHOTOGRAPHING?**

Enormously important – and it's often the deciding factor when I'm choosing where to travel for a shoot. When I'm photographing a British World War II bomber like the Avro Lancaster – only two of which remain airworthy in the entire world – I feel an immense internal pressure. The weight of history is very much present behind the lens.

08 WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING AVIATION, DO YOU RELY MORE ON PREPARATION AND PLANNING, OR ON INTUITION AND REACTING TO WHAT UNFOLDS IN FRONT OF YOU?

I always try to prepare thoroughly – studying the location, the cardinal directions, the light, the weather, the potential compositions. But the truth is, the vast majority of my best shots were completely unplanned.

09 ARE THERE SITUATIONS WHERE AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY BECOMES MORE EMOTIONAL THAN TECHNICAL FOR YOU?

Absolutely – as with the Lancaster I mentioned, or when photographing an aircraft on its final flight before being permanently retired from service, or when you know it may be your only chance in a lifetime to photograph that particular machine. In those moments, the technical side fades into the background. I still want the shots to be as good as possible, and often they fall short – but those are the images I treasure most, precisely because of everything they carry emotionally.

10 WHAT ROLE DO TRAVEL, AIRSHOWS, AND MEETINGS WITH FELLOW ENTHUSIASTS PLAY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY?

People – especially those you meet at the beginning of your journey – have an enormous influence on where that journey takes you. Over the years of travelling I've met wonderful photographers who are now close friends; we travel together, we meet outside of events. And in aviation photography, you sometimes spend several days waiting for a single aircraft to pass during exercises. You have to do something with that time – and the best thing you can do is build real connections with the people who share those same emotions.

11 IS THERE A PARTICULAR AIRSHOW, EVENT, LOCATION, OR AIRCRAFT THAT HAS SIGNIFICANTLY SHAPED YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC PATH?

Without a doubt – the Swiss Air Force exercises at Axalp are the most spectacular place I've ever visited for aviation photography. Despite the demanding hike high into the mountains with all your gear, and with absolutely no guarantee that anything will fly at all, it's a truly magical place.

12
WHAT DO YOU WANT VIEWERS TO TAKE AWAY FROM YOUR AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHS — WONDER AT THE TECHNOLOGY, A SENSE OF FREEDOM, POWER, THE BEAUTY OF MOTION, HISTORY, OR SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY?

I always want a photograph to say something — to invite some kind of emotional response — rather than being just another image of a plane in the sky.

13
WHAT AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY DREAM DO YOU STILL WANT TO FULFIL?

My unfulfilled dream is the B-2 Spirit bomber.

14
ARE THERE PHOTOGRAPHERS, CREATORS, OR PEOPLE CONNECTED TO AVIATION WHO PARTICULARLY INSPIRE YOU? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU VALUE IN THEIR WORK, AND HOW HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

Yes — and they are pilots and ground crew. It's because of them that I've come to see aviation photography as something more than just a flying machine. I've gained a deep appreciation for the enormous amount of work that goes into getting an aircraft airborne, and I've shifted my perspective from focusing exclusively on the planes to focusing on the people who stand behind them. They are often the invisible heroes of my photographs. 





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F-16 - Slovak Air Force - NATO Days - Ostrava - Czech Republic





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Panavia Tornado - Italian Air Force - Athens Flying Week - Tanagra - Greece



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J-20 - China People's Liberation Army Air Force - China Air Show - Zuhai - China





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F-16 - Hellenic Air Force - Iniochos Exercise - Greece



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Lim-2 + Sb Lim-2 - Polish Air Force (FUBAR Aviation) - SempAir Optimi - Krzesiny - Poland





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Alpha Jets - Red Bull - Antidotum Air Show - Leszno - Poland



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Aero L-39 Albatros "Baltic Bees" + Piper Cub - Odlotowe Suwalki - Suwalki - Poland





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F-16 - Polish Air Force - Nowotarski Piknik Lotniczy - Nowy Targ - Poland



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F-16 - Turkish Air Force "Solo Turk" - Odlotowe Suwalki - Suwalki - Poland





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F-5 - Swiss Air Force "Patrouille Suisse" - Sanicole Airshow - Leopoldsborg - Belgium



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CF/A-18 - Canadian Air Force - RIAT - United Kingdom





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Su-31 - Jurgis Kairys - Antidotum Leszno - Leszno - Poland



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T-50B - Republic of Korea Air Force "Black Eagles" - ADEX - Seoul - South Korea





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F-16 - Polish Air Force - Nowotarski Piknik Lotniczy - Nowy Targ - Poland



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Hawk T1 - Royal Air Force "Red Arrows" - NATO Days - Ostrava - Czech Republic





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F-16 - Royal Danish Air Force - RIAT - United Kingdom



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Saab SK-60 - Swedish Air Force - Antidotum Leszno - Leszno - Poland





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W-3WA "Sokol" - Czech Air Force - Antidotum Leszno - Leszno - Poland



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C-130 "Hercules" - Polish Air Force - Antidotum Leszno - Leszno - Poland





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F-22 "Raptor" - United States Air Force - SIAF - Malacky - Slovakia



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F-35 - United States Air Force - Sanicole Airshow - Leopoldsburg - Belgium





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Gripen - Hungarian Air Force - SIAF - Malacky - Slovakia



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F-35 - United States Air Force - Belgian Air Force Days - Kleine-Broegel - Belgium





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F-5 - Swiss Air Force "Patrouille Suisse" - AXALP - Switzerland



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F-16 - Polish Air Force - NATO Days - Ostrava - Czech Republic



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F/A-18 - Swiss Air Force - AXALP - Switzerland



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NH-90 - German Air Force - NATO Days - Ostrava - Czech Republic





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F-16 - Belgian Air Force - Mollis - Switzerland



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NF-5B + E3A - Turkish Air Force "Turkish Stars" - Exercise Anatolian Eagle - Konya - Turkey





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EF-2000A "Typhoon" - Italian Air Force - Airpower - Zeltweg - Austria





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Polish FireMoths - Sanicole Airshow - Leopoldsburg - Belgium





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Hawk T1 - Royal Air Force "Red Arrows" - Sanicole Airshow - Leopoldsburg - Belgium



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Audio Mini Courses from Camerapixo Press Academy are short, podcast-style training sessions created for photographers, visual creators, content creators, and freelance photojournalists who want to develop specific skills without going through a long course. Each mini course focuses on one practical topic – such as visual storytelling, assignment letters, project proposals, captions, client communication, marketing, mindset, credibility, or brand positioning.

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Why a Press ID Card Matters

For freelancers and independent photographers, a Press ID Card is a professional way to present your photographic or journalistic activity. During sports events, airshows, cultural events, and other organized assignments, it helps you introduce yourself quickly to organizers, security staff, and media representatives. While the card itself does not guarantee accreditation or special access, it can make communication easier and show that you are active as a photographer, reporter, or media contributor.

A Press ID Card can also be useful when photographing in public spaces, where a professional form of identification may help explain the purpose of your work. For many freelancers, it is not only a practical tool, but also part of building credibility and a professional image. Combined with a portfolio, publications, and media activity, it becomes an additional sign of your commitment to photography and visual storytelling. 



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INTERVIEW

01 HOW DID YOUR JOURNEY WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BEGIN?

I came to photography relatively late. At 27, I swapped a PlayStation 2 for a Nikon Coolpix 990, and in 2001 the ability to shoot 2048 x 1536 JPEGs felt like the future. Before long, I realised the fixed-lens system was limiting, so I upgraded to a Canon twin-lens kit. I threw myself into landscapes and macro work, spending hours experimenting with different techniques and effects.

I can't paint, dance or sing, but photography immediately made sense to me. The relationship between ISO, aperture and shutter speed clicked straight away, and being able to edit images on a computer gave me a real sense of creative freedom. As my skills improved, so did my ambition and naturally, I started yearning for better gear.

02 WHAT FIRST DREW YOU TOWARD AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY AND AIR SHOWS?

I first drifted towards aviation photography almost by accident. I was out shooting landscapes when I realised Avalon, Australia's biggest air show, was just up the road. I went along with my camera and was fascinated to see, up close, the aircraft I'd only ever read about growing up.

About ten years later, I moved near the Royal Australian Air Force Museum, where short aerobatic displays were flown several times a week. At first I went out of curiosity and to practice my technique, but it quickly became more than that. I became a regular at the museum, got to know people, and in many ways photography helped draw me out of my shell.

03 WHERE DOES YOUR FASCINATION WITH AVIATION COME FROM?

I grew up with Top Gun, and like a lot of people of my generation, it had a huge impact on me. It made aviation feel larger than life and undeniably cool. Although becoming a pilot myself never worked out, the fascination never left. I also spent plenty of time playing flight simulators, especially Wings and F/A-18 Interceptor on the Amiga 500. Between those games and the films I loved, a life-long obsession with flight was born.

04 WHAT ATTRACTS YOU THE MOST WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING AIRCRAFT – SPEED, PRECISION, EMOTION, OR PERHAPS THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE EVENTS THEMSELVES?

What attracts me most now is the opportunity to tell a visual story. Early on, it was all about the aircraft itself, but over time I've found images become much more engaging when they include the pilot, the ground crew, or even the reaction of the crowd. Those elements give the photograph life and context.

I'm always trying to create something distinctive - an image that feels unique rather than familiar. Aviation photography is also a serious technical challenge, both mentally and physically. You can spend hours on your feet, handling heavy gear and trying to keep a fast-moving aircraft perfectly framed. It takes a level of skill that people sometimes underestimate.

05 HOW DO YOU USUALLY PREPARE FOR PHOTOGRAPHING AN AIR SHOW?

I attend three or four major airshows each year, and I have an Excel spreadsheet of everything I need to pack. I clean my gear, synchronise my cameras, clear memory cards, charge batteries, arrange a sensor clean if needed, and double-check that everything is working properly before I leave.

In the days leading up to an event, I study the weather and use Google Maps to look at aerial views of the runway so that I arrive with a clear idea of where I want to position myself. I like to have a Plan A, B and C, because if something goes wrong, whether it is weather, access, or equipment failure, I still want to be able to deliver for the client. I also try to speak with the air boss, pilots and ground crew to find out if anything unusual is planned. A good night's sleep, comfortable clothing and the right footwear can make a huge difference as well.

06 AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY REQUIRES BOTH PATIENCE AND QUICK REACTIONS. WHAT HAS THIS GENRE TAUGHT YOU AS A PHOTOGRAPHER?

Above all, it has taught me not to give up and to be patient. Before photography, I was a shy and introverted person. Confidence and social ease never came naturally to me, but over the years photography has helped me come out of my shell through the recognition and connections it has brought into my life.

I am still that same person at heart, and I have learned to accept those traits rather than fight them. I am patient by nature, and I prefer not to be pushy. At an event, I would rather stay out of the way and let the work speak for itself. I am not the fastest, the most skilful or the most creative person in the field, but if you are passionate and lead with your heart, it becomes much easier to keep going.

07 IS THERE A PARTICULAR AIR SHOW OR MOMENT THAT HAS REMAINED ESPECIALLY MEMORABLE FOR YOU?

Last year at the Avalon Airshow, my friend Glenn Collins crashed during his display, and for a moment many in the crowd feared the worst. A profound sense of sadness came over me. We often watch pilots perform with the assumption that they make the extraordinary look effortless, but that moment was a stark reminder of the risks they and their families carry for our entertainment.

Glenn survived, but the experience left a lasting impression on me. It made me appreciate even more how fragile and significant these moments can be, and how privileged I am as a photographer to document them. Sometimes, in the years that follow, the photographs are what remain. I hope I never witness anything like that again.

08 WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING FAST-MOVING AIRCRAFT?

Stamina is one of the biggest challenges. The gear is heavy, especially if you are carrying three camera bodies all day. You can be on your feet for hours in heat, rain or wind, often in conditions that are simply uncomfortable. A camera body can weigh around 3 kilograms, or 7 pounds, and swinging that around all day definitely takes its toll.

Tracking a fast-moving target also takes a lot of practice. Your hand-to-eye coordination needs to be sharp, and you need to stay focused for long periods of time. It is physically demanding in a way many people do not immediately realise.

09 WHAT MAKES AN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPH TRULY SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR EYES?

For me, it comes down to uniqueness. A lot of aviation images are similar in composition, so the photographs that really stand out are the ones that do something different. That might come from framing, light, motion blur, a more unusual angle, or a technical decision that gives the image a distinct feel.

That said, restraint matters. You can push an image too far, especially in post-processing. We all have access to the same sliders, but once an image starts to look forced or overcooked, it loses its impact. Nothing ruins a strong photograph faster than obvious over-processing.

10 IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY, WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU — DOCUMENTING THE EVENT OR CREATING AN EMOTIONAL AND VISUALLY POWERFUL IMAGE?

For me, it has always been about creating something that resonates. I often think of myself as an artist in love with the passion of flight. I want to push boundaries and create images that people do not see everywhere else.

Of course, documentation has its place, but I am always aiming for something more than a record shot. I want to create images that end up on people's walls, on billboards, or anywhere they can stop someone in their tracks. More than anything, I would love them to inspire that five-year-old kid who dreams of becoming a pilot.

11 HOW DO YOU TRY TO CAPTURE THE ENERGY AND CHARACTER OF AVIATION THROUGH YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS?

For me, it is never just about the aircraft alone. I like to build a set of images that tells a broader story, the pilot, the ground crew, the take-off, the display, and the landing. All of those elements are connected, and when they are photographed well, they create something more meaningful than just a sequence of separate images.

Candid moments between pilots and crew, or between the public and the aircraft, can make the experience feel much more real. At the same time, tight crops and dynamic angles can emphasise just how dramatic aviation really is. In post-processing, I like to bring out colour and contrast in a way that adds impact, but without pushing things too far. Consistency matters to me as well, because that is part of building a recognisable style. I want people to be able to recognise my work without even seeing a watermark.

12 HAS YOUR APPROACH TO AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

In the beginning, it was simply about getting the aircraft in the frame. I would study the work of photographers I admired, build up a mental library of angles, and then try to apply those ideas in my own way. I have never really considered myself a naturally creative person, but over time I have become much more confident in understanding what works, what does not, and when it makes sense to follow the rules or break them.

If we all just sit on the same skills, we never improve. I am always looking for ways to push myself and get better. So while it may have started with the aircraft alone, over the years I have learned to tell a broader story through a sequence of images and to make that story more dramatic and engaging. If my work can inspire someone to come to an airshow or see aviation in a new way, then I have done something worthwhile.

Above all, though, it still has to be fun. The moment it stops being enjoyable, I will probably walk away and find a new hobby. I have also found that volunteering your time is one of the best ways to connect with people and share your passion. We are all at different stages in our journey, so I try to help others where I can and offer advice if it might improve their photography.

13

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN THEIR JOURNEY WITH AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

My biggest advice is simple: practise until you cannot get it wrong. Get to know your camera properly and experiment with it. Learn what each setting does and how it affects your images. If you have a local airfield, spend time there regularly, because turning up to a major event unprepared is a very easy way to come unstuck.

Personally, I keep my settings fairly simple. I shoot high-speed continuous, AI Servo mode, shutter priority, Auto ISO, and full sensor selection autofocus. For take-offs, I shoot at around 1/100 second to get a full prop disc. For aircraft in flight, I use around 1/320 second for props, 1/500 for turboprops, 1/1250 for jets, and around 1/30 for rotorcraft. If you are starting out, 1/500 second is a good place to begin, and then you can lower it as your technique improves.

The centre of the frame is usually the sharpest area of the lens and tends to show very little fringing, so that is something worth keeping in mind. I am not a fan of tripods for aviation because most aircraft are almost impossible to track effectively when you are moving around the legs of a tripod. Lenses are heavy, but over time your body adapts. Eventually, tracking and holding steady starts to feel much more natural.

◀ Light is another huge factor in image quality. Overcast conditions often produce flat, uninspiring images, while a bright blue sky with the sun behind you is usually ideal. Golden hour light, textured clouds, smoke, or backlit subjects can all produce something special. Composition matters too. Cropping to the rule of thirds is a good starting point, but do not be afraid to break the norm if the image calls for it. Even cutting off part of a wing can add impact, as long as the composition makes the choice feel intentional.

I always shoot in RAW because it gives me far more flexibility in post-production. Recovering detail in the shadows and highlights can turn a dull image into something much stronger. White balance and colour profiles are also important. I use Adobe Lightroom, and I rely on templates to edit large batches of images quickly and consistently. Masking has been a game changer, because it allows you to isolate the aircraft and the sky and work on them independently.

Finally, use platforms like Facebook and Instagram to get your work seen by more than just family and friends. Social media can be a very powerful networking tool, helping you broaden your industry contacts and grow your audience over time.



14

WHICH PHOTOGRAPHERS, EXPERIENCES, EVENTS, OR PASSIONS HAVE INFLUENCED AND INSPIRED YOUR CREATIVE VISION THE MOST?

My biggest visual inspiration has probably been IMAX films. That scale, clarity and sense of immersion really shaped how I see images, and it is something I still try to bring into my own work. I also love those cinematic Top Gear-style vignettes, even though I know they can divide opinion. In a way, I see myself as the director, producer and gearhead all rolled into one, choosing exactly what the audience sees and how they experience it.

I do not spend too much time looking at other people's work, but it is impossible not to notice photographers like Hesja, Kedar Karmarkar and Gavin Conroy. Their work has certainly been part of the wider visual landscape around me.

15

WHAT'S IN YOUR CAMERA BAG?

I carry a Canon R5 Mark I paired with a Canon EF 24–70mm and a circular polariser for wide-angle work, mostly static shots. I also use a Canon R5 Mark I with a Canon RF 100–500mm for take-offs and landings, because I find it especially easy to pan with and it is also useful for wider formations.

My main camera is a Canon R5 Mark II with a Canon 200–800mm and a 1.4x extender. That gives me an effective range of 280–1120mm on a 45-megapixel sensor, so there is plenty of reach and still more than enough resolution to crop if needed. I use a triple camera strap and carry a sling bag with water, lollies, sun-screen, batteries and memory cards. 





© DUNCAN FENN

RAAF F/A-18 Classic Hornet A21-33 blasts off at the Wings Over Illawarra Airshow in Wollongong, NSW, Australia on 6th June 2018.





 © **DUNCAN FENN**

RAAF F/A-18F Super Hornet A44-209 at the Australian International Airshow on March 3, 2013. The aircraft was flying through a pyro explosion and the smoke highlighted the extraordinary length of its afterburner.



© DUNCAN FENN

The Historical Aviation Restoration Society Super Constellation dazzles the crowd with a sunset takeoff at the Australian International Airshow on March 3, 2017.





 © DUNCAN FENN

The slow gear retraction on the Pays Aviation P-40 Kittyhawk makes for a great photo. Taken at Wings Over Illawarra in Wollongong, NSW, Australia on 12th November 2022.



© DUNCAN FENN

Owner Chris Mayr creates an ominous scene with his replica Fokke Wulf FW-190 at Wings Over Illawarra in Wollongong, NSW, Australia on 13th November 2022.





 © **DUNCAN FENN**

The golden late afternoon light provided a stunning colour palette of the RAAF 100 Squadron Hudson bomber. Taken at Wings Over Illawarra in Wollongong, NSW, Australia on 12th November 2022.



© DUNCAN FENN

RAAF F/A-18F Super Hornet A44-204 releases a flare at the Australian international Airshow on March 1, 2023.





 © DUNCAN FENN

Sweden's famous SKYCATS wingwalking team performed exciting daytime aerobatics and a spectacular night pyrotechnic show at the 2023 Australian International Airshow on 4th March 2023.



© DUNCAN FENN

Close-up view of USAF F-22 Raptors dual Pratt & Whitney F119-PW-100 augmented turbofans. Taken at Australian International Airshow on 4th March 2023.





 © DUNCAN FENN

Big is beautiful and so is the Japanese Self-Defense Force Kawasaki C-2 transport aircraft. Taken at Australian International Airshow on 4th March 2023.



© DUNCAN FENN

Warbird lineup at the Tocumwal Airshow on 17th September 2023, at Tocumwal NSW, Australia. From left to right, BT-13 Vultee, T-6 Harvard, Spitfire Mk IX, P-40N Kittyhawk, CAC Mustang, P-51D Mustang and CAC Mustang.

 © DUNCAN FENN

A 4 ship V-12 formation at Warbirds Downunder at Temora, NSW, Australia on 20th October 2024. Featuring a Spitfire Mk IX, P-40E & P-40N Kittyhawks and a P-51D Mustang.



© DUNCAN FENN

The Southern Knights are a 4 ship Harvard display team at Warbirds Downunder at Temora, NSW, Australia on 20th October 2024.





 © **DUNCAN FENN**

The Vietnam era Canberra Bomber of 100 Squadron makes for an epic pass at Warbirds Downunder at Temora, NSW, Australia on 20th October 2024. Sadly this aircraft has now been withdrawn from RAAF service.



© DUNCAN FENN

World War 1 throwback, the Transvia Pup displays the RAAF 8 Squadron's white emu markings. Photo taken at the RAAF Museum, Point Cook, Victoria, Australia on the 14th August 2025.



 © **DUNCAN FENN**

The ubiquitous Boeing Stearman had numbers built in excessive of 10,000 makes an impressive solo display at Scone Airshow, Scone NSW, Australia on March 28th 2026.



© DUNCAN FENN

Navy formation of a Vought F4U-1D Corsair and Grumman TBM-3E Avenger at the recent at Scone Airshow, Scone NSW, Australia on March 28th 2026.





 © DUNCAN FENN

Paul Bennet's SkyAces aerobatics team perform a knife edge pass at the recent Scone Airshow, Scone NSW, Australia on March 28th 2026.



© DUNCAN FENN

A slow shutter speed pan of a US Army Trojan at the recent Wings over Shellharbour in Wollongong, NSW, Australia on the 16th May 2026.





 © DUNCAN FENN

Lively display of a former German AF Transall C-160D, flown by long-time pilot of FW-190s and 109s, Klaus Plasa as seen at Scone Airshow, Scone NSW, Australia on March 28th 2026.



© DUNCAN FENN

Canopy up pass of BAC Strikemaster in Kuwati Air Force colours flown by the talented RAAF Group Captain Jason Easthope at Scone Airshow, Scone NSW, Australia on March 28th 2026.





 © **DUNCAN FENN**

L-39 Albatros pulls tight Gs in front of the Illawarra Range escarpment at Wings over Shellharbour in Wollongong, NSW, Australia on the 16th May 2026.



© DUNCAN FENN

Grumman Avenger tucks up his undercarriage at Wings over Shellharbour in Wollongong, NSW, Australia on the 16th May 2026.





 © DUNCAN FENN

Australia's newest Spitfire, the two seater Mk IX, is a glorious sight to behold in bright sunlight. Seen at Scone Airshow, Scone NSW, Australia on March 28th 2026.



© DUNCAN FENN

The Historical Aviation Restoration Society Royal Australian Navy Neptune at Wings over Shellharbour in Wollongong, NSW, Australia on the 16th May 2026.





 © **DUNCAN FENN**

RAAF 100 Squadron CAC Mustang tucks up the gear at Wings over Shellharbour in Wollongong, NSW, Australia on the 16th May 2026.



ONE SCAN ONE CHALLENGE MULTIPLE FRAMES OR ONE FRAME



**AUDIO
GUIDED**



**ALWAYS
UPDATED**



**SMARTPHONE
READY**



**INSTANT
ACCESS**

Our new **PHOTOGRAPHY CHALLENGES** are built around short, focused tasks that are easy to start and apply in real life. Instead of long lessons or complicated assignments, One Frame at a Time gives you a clear challenge, a simple structure, and a practical way to observe, decide, and create.

Each challenge is delivered through the Camerapixo Press QR Card System, making the experience smartphone-friendly and easy to access. You simply scan the QR code, open the challenge, and work with written guidance or guided audio — no installation or app download required.

This approach fits the way photographers actually work. You can practice during a short break, at home, while walking, traveling, or whenever you notice something worth exploring. Small, regular challenges help build stronger habits of observation without pressure.

Microlearning also supports deeper photographic awareness. When you read, listen, observe, and reflect, the process becomes more memorable and easier to use in real situations. It is not about doing less. It is about learning to see more clearly, one challenge at a time. 📱



**EVERY CHALLENGE
OPENS A NEW WAY TO SEE**



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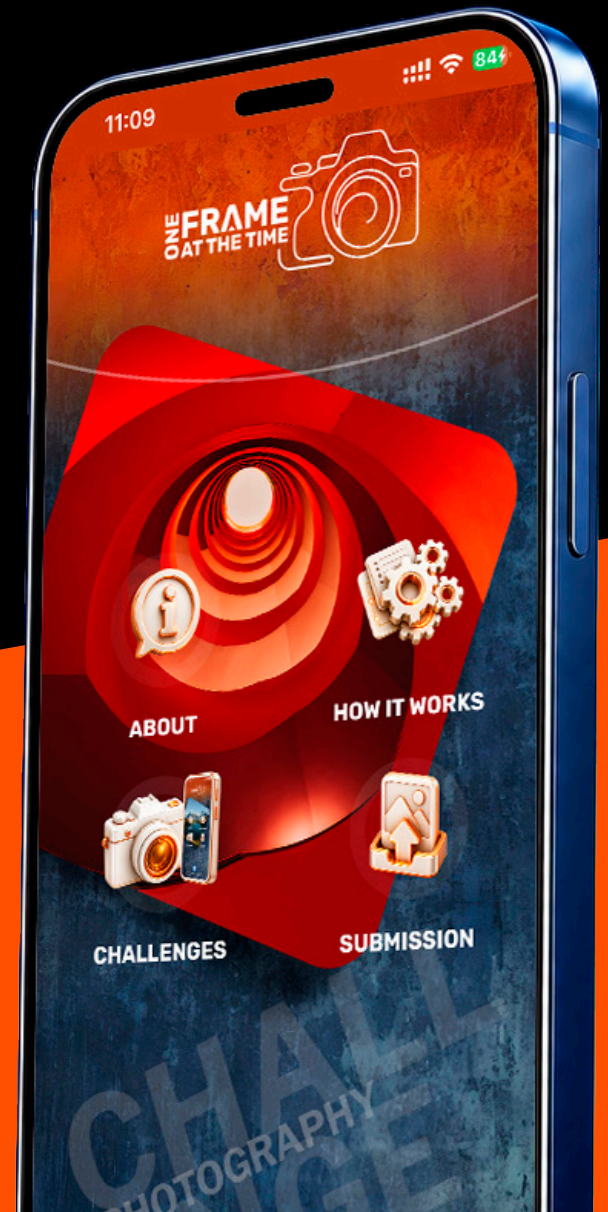


NEW

AVAILABILITY

Photography Challenges are available in two ways: as part of the Academy Pass or as a standalone web experience in our online store. Choose the option that fits your way of working and start practicing one frame at a time.

**PHOTOGRAPHY
CHALLENGES**



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Poland

AVIATION PHOTO**WEBSITE****FACEBOOK**

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**INSTAGRAM**SCAN TO OPEN
THE MULTILINGUAL
INTERVIEW**01****HOW DID YOUR JOURNEY INTO PHOTOGRAPHY BEGIN, AND WHEN DID AVIATION BECOME ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECTS IN YOUR WORK?**

Photography and aviation have always been present in my life in one way or another. From an early age, I was building model aircraft, attending small local air events, and visiting nearby flying clubs. To me, it all felt like a glimpse into a different, distant, and fascinating world.

Cameras were always somewhere around me as well, but never the kind that would allow me to pursue aviation photography seriously. For most people, the most accessible side of aviation comes through airshows, aviation festivals, and public flying events. I attended many of them as one of thousands of spectators, often without a camera in my hands. I simply watched, admired, and gradually fell in love with the world of flight. Those events are where many people first discover their fascination with aviation.



My real passion for aviation and aviation photography began when I started spending time at the Wrocław Aeroclub, helping with ground operations during glider flights. That was the moment when the invisible barrier disappeared – the one that had always made aviation seem out of reach. Suddenly, I realized it was accessible, and much closer than I had ever imagined. From that point, everything happened quickly. I invested in photography equipment, searched for inspiration, and studied the work of aviation photographers. I eventually joined the Nikon Academy and attended workshops led by Sławek “Hesja” Krajniewski at military air bases. All at once, I found myself standing just a few meters away from aircraft like the F-16 and MiG-29 with a camera in my hands. At that moment, I knew there was no turning back.

What followed were photography trips, visits to larger and larger aviation events, opportunities to get closer to military aviation, and growing dreams of photographing aircraft from the air itself through air-to-air sessions.



Today, I am a member of the Polish Aviation Photographers Association and have participated in numerous air-to-air projects. I've had the opportunity to photograph fighter aircraft at various air bases in Poland and abroad. Even now, the sound of an aircraft engine or the smell of aviation fuel is enough to make my heart race and my hand instinctively reach for a camera.

02**WHAT FASCINATES YOU MOST ABOUT THE WORLD OF AVIATION AS A PHOTOGRAPHER – THE AIRCRAFT THEMSELVES, THE PEOPLE, THE TECHNOLOGY, THE EMOTIONS, OR THE ATMOSPHERE OF PLACES CONNECTED WITH FLIGHT?**

Probably all of it. I don't think it is possible to love the technology of aviation and ignore the people behind it. For me, aviation is people, machines, atmosphere, emotions, sounds, smells – everything that allows the brain to connect all those different sensations.

Aviation has many sides, and each of them contains something fascinating. It is created by people; without them, there is no aviation. They are the ones who share countless incredible stories, pass on knowledge, and allow us to discover new things.

There have been many times when I was at an aeroclub or a military base and did not take any truly exceptional photographs, but still had an exceptional experience. For someone who is in love with aviation, every contact with that world is priceless. And if, along the way, we manage to create some good photographs, that is even better.



03 YOU PHOTOGRAPH BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT. DO YOU APPROACH THESE TWO WORLDS DIFFERENTLY, BOTH PHOTOGRAPHICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY?

Absolutely. These are two very different worlds, and they cannot be approached in exactly the same way.

Military aviation differs from civilian aviation in almost every aspect. For many people, it remains inaccessible, mysterious, and often difficult to understand. Every branch of aviation operates within its own set of rules, but military aviation frequently adds another layer of regulations that can seem completely illogical from a civilian perspective.

In many cases, those rules simply have to be accepted rather than questioned. You learn to adapt to them, respect them, and work within their boundaries. There is little point in fighting against a system that operates according to its own unique requirements.

The military world has always fascinated me in its own way, even though I never felt a strong desire to pursue a military career myself. Today, I can honestly say that photographing military aircraft has become my primary area of interest. That being said, it certainly does not mean that civilian aviation is any less interesting.

04 YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS OFTEN CONVEY MOVEMENT, ENERGY, AND A STRONG SENSE OF ACTION. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO CAPTURE THE PERFECT MOMENT IN A FRACTION OF A SECOND?

Aviation is inherently dynamic. Whenever we attend an airshow, we expect to witness something spectacular. We expect noise, speed, and excitement. That is exactly what I try to capture in my photographs.

As an aviation photographer, my goal is to show what I experience in a way that allows the viewer to feel as if they were actually there, experiencing the moment with all their senses rather than simply looking at a static image.

That said, capturing the perfect moment is not something unique to aviation photography—it is a common objective across all genres of photography. What makes aviation photography different is that there is usually no time to think, no opportunity to carefully plan every frame, and no chance to recreate a missed shot.

Everything happens incredibly fast. You have to react instantly, trust your instincts, and make decisions in a split second. If you hesitate, the moment is gone forever. That's one of the things that makes aviation photography both challenging and rewarding.

05 BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHING A SPECIFIC EVENT OR AIRCRAFT, DO YOU PREPARE IN ADVANCE BY LEARNING ITS HISTORY, REVIEWING THE FLIGHT PROGRAM, OR STUDYING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AIRCRAFT?

Preparation is always worthwhile. As a photographer, I am primarily interested in every factor that can directly influence the final image I am trying to create. It is important to understand how a particular aircraft behaves, how a pilot typically flies, what the display schedule looks like, or what specific tasks the pilots are expected to perform.

You could say that every location and every situation has its own unique characteristics, and understanding them significantly increases your chances of success and of capturing that one exceptional frame.

◀ There are dozens of factors to consider: the time of day, the position of the sun, cloud cover, temperature, humidity, aircraft speed and maneuverability, pyrotechnics, flares, afterburners, the visual environment surrounding the scene, and even the individual skills and flying style of a particular pilot. All of these elements can influence where you choose to position yourself and when you press the shutter.

▶ Most of this knowledge comes with experience. It is not something that can simply be taught. In reality, everything happens so quickly and dynamically that you are rarely thinking consciously about all these variables. Over time, they become instinctive. You react automatically, drawing on years of observation and experience without even realizing it.

06 WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO COMPOSITION IN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY? IS THE AIRCRAFT ITSELF THE MAIN FOCUS, OR DO THE SURROUNDINGS, LIGHT, AND ATMOSPHERE PLAY AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT ROLE?

This is a very complex topic and one that often sparks debate among photographers.

Photography is fundamentally about light, shadow, and color. Without them, there is no image. These elements define the mood, atmosphere, and character of a photograph. On the other hand, aviation photography is a genre where there is virtually no margin for error and almost never a second chance to capture the same moment.

It is a discipline with very few compromises. Either you get it right the first time, or the opportunity is gone.

Because of that, there is rarely enough time during a shoot to fine-tune composition or wait for what photographers often call the “perfect shot.” Instead, our task is to maximize every possible opportunity to capture high-quality material that will provide the greatest creative flexibility later in post-processing.

There is a saying among photographers that after one photo session comes another one—this time in front of the computer. Very often, it is only during the editing process that we truly see many of the images for the first time and begin refining the final composition.

The principle is simple: while shooting, we focus on capturing the highest-quality material possible and recording the most interesting moments and situations. We have to think several steps ahead in order to be in the right place at the right time and give ourselves the best chance of capturing something exceptional.

The final image is often created later, in the quiet of the editing room, during the process of selecting, processing, and bringing out the very best from the files stored on our memory cards.

07 WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT OF AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY THAT PEOPLE OUTSIDE THIS WORLD OFTEN DO NOT NOTICE?

I think the question is slightly misleading.

The goal of any photographer is to create an image that allows the viewer to see exactly what the photographer intended to show. In aviation photography, the greatest challenge is finding yourself in the right place, at the right time, under the best possible lighting and weather conditions, with a beautiful aircraft perfectly positioned in the frame—and having reliable equipment capable of capturing that decisive moment.

The reality is that such situations are incredibly rare.

As aviation photographers, we often do everything we can to make those moments happen. We plan, prepare, travel, wait, and sometimes simply hope that all the necessary elements will come together at the same time.

What many people do not realize is that behind every photograph that creates a real “wow” effect, there are often tens of thousands of unsuccessful frames that will never be seen by anyone.

Many people think, “If I were standing where he was and had the same equipment, I could take the same photograph.” In my opinion, nothing challenges that belief more effectively than the open ramp of an aircraft during an air-to-air photography session.

During those flights, a dozen photographers may be standing virtually side by side, photographing exactly the same aircraft, in the same conditions, often using very similar equipment. Yet when the session is over, every photographer comes away with different images.

That, perhaps more than anything else, demonstrates that photography is about far more than simply being in the right place with the right camera. It is about vision, anticipation, timing, and the ability to see a moment differently from everyone else.

08

WHAT ROLE DO PATIENCE AND OBSERVATION PLAY WHEN WORKING AROUND AIRPORTS, AIRSHOWS, OR OTHER AVIATION-RELATED EVENTS?

It depends on the situation.

In aviation photography, patience often means waiting for a long time for multiple factors to align and create the conditions needed for a truly exceptional photograph. You can spend weeks or even months planning a specific shot, only to have the weather change, an aircraft develop a technical issue, or the flight schedule suddenly be altered.

There are many factors beyond our control, and sometimes the only thing we can do is wait patiently until circumstances work in our favor.

Observation, however, is something we can control.

◀ Situational awareness is one of the most valuable skills an aviation photographer can develop because it allows us to increase our chances of success. For example, many photographers at airshows carry radio scanners and monitor aviation communications to better understand what is happening in the air.

During air-to-air photography sessions, listening to radio traffic is often essential. It allows you to anticipate when a particular maneuver will take place—one that may be visible for only a fraction of a second. Without that information, you are largely relying on luck.

▶ The more aware you are of your surroundings and what is about to happen, the better your chances of being ready when that decisive moment arrives.

09

WHAT EQUIPMENT DO YOU USE MOST OFTEN FOR AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY, AND WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU WHEN CHOOSING A CAMERA OR LENS?

I believe that if we want to do something well, we should never compromise on quality.

When it comes to equipment, I have always felt that aviation photography is one of the genres that most effectively exposes the weaknesses of a camera, a lens, and even the photographer behind it. The demands are extremely high, and there is very little room for error.

In my aviation photography, I use lenses ranging from 12mm all the way to 800mm. I work with cameras capable of shooting at up to 30 frames per second while delivering the highest possible resolution, giving me maximum flexibility during image selection and post-processing.

◀ I have always used Sony cameras, but I do not believe that a particular brand determines whether someone creates great photographs or not.

What people should understand is that aviation photography, much like wildlife photography, pushes equipment to its limits. If you want consistently high-quality results, you need tools that can perform reliably under demanding conditions.

▶ For me, the ideal camera is one I never have to think about while I am shooting. It should be completely transparent in the creative process—something you trust instinctively, an extension of your hand and your eye rather than a piece of equipment demanding your attention.

10 HAS AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY CHANGED THE WAY YOU SEE MOVEMENT, SPACE, AND TIMING IN PHOTOGRAPHY IN GENERAL?

I am not sure if it has changed the way I see them, but it has certainly taught me how to see, anticipate, and evaluate situations more effectively.

These are skills that prove valuable not only in aviation photography but in virtually every other genre as well. In many ways, they extend beyond photography altogether and become useful in everyday life.

People often say that photography is about freezing time and capturing moments. For me, it is often the exact opposite.

Photography is about showing movement, revealing the passage of time, and finding ways to convey motion within a completely static image. What fascinates me is the ability to make a viewer feel speed, energy, and action even though they are looking at a single frozen frame.

That ability to suggest motion and tell a story within a still image is one of the aspects of photography that I find most compelling, and aviation photography has certainly helped me develop a deeper appreciation for it.

11 WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO EDITING AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHS? DO YOU TRY TO PRESERVE THE NATURAL CHARACTER OF THE SCENE, OR DO YOU PREFER TO EMPHASIZE THE MOOD AND DYNAMICS OF THE IMAGE MORE STRONGLY?

For me, editing is an essential part of photography—not just aviation photography, but photography as a whole.

A camera does not see the world the way the human eye does. What we perceive is processed and interpreted by the brain. It is shaped by our emotions, experiences, and feelings at a particular moment. A camera simply records light; it does not capture any of those human elements.

That is why I consider a straight-out-of-camera image to be only a photographic starting point rather than a finished photograph.

For me, post-processing is the most important stage in creating the final image. Without it, photography as we know it would not exist. In fact, there has never been a time in the history of photography when images were not processed in some form. Whether in a traditional darkroom or through modern digital tools, editing has always been part of the creative process.

What makes editing especially fascinating is its ability to shape mood and emotion. More than once, I have returned to a photograph years after taking it and edited it again through the lens of my current experiences, emotions, and perspective. Each time, the result is different.

The image itself may remain the same, but the way we see it evolves over time. And with that evolution comes the opportunity to tell the story in a new way.

12 IS THERE A PARTICULAR PHOTOGRAPH, EVENT, OR AVIATION-RELATED ENCOUNTER THAT HAS STAYED WITH YOU OVER THE YEARS?

I suspect there are many.

Photography records images, but while we are creating those images, we are also recording emotions, feelings, and countless other impressions that become permanently connected to that moment in our memory. Our minds naturally associate those experiences with a particular photograph.

This is true regardless of the genre of photography.

Very often, a photograph becomes important to us not because it depicts something extraordinary or because it is technically our best image. Instead, it is the memory of the circumstances surrounding its creation that gives it meaning.

We remember the people we met, the conversations we had, the atmosphere, the weather, the anticipation, the excitement, and all the emotions that accompanied that moment. Those memories become inseparable from the photograph itself.

As a result, an image that may be deeply meaningful to the photographer can appear to someone else as just another picture among millions of others. What makes it special is often not what is visible in the frame, but everything that happened beyond it.

13

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE VIEWERS TO FEEL WHEN LOOKING AT YOUR AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHS—EMOTION, SPEED, FREEDOM, THE POWER OF THE AIRCRAFT, OR PERHAPS SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY?

I think the greatest satisfaction a photographer can experience comes when a viewer sees exactly what the photographer intended to show. When that happens, it means we have done our job well.

Above all, my goal is to share the beauty of aviation.

I understand that many people do not have direct access to this world, and some may never have the opportunity to experience it firsthand. That is why it brings me tremendous joy when I can use my photographs to give someone a glimpse into this extraordinary environment.

Whether they feel the speed, the power, the emotion, the freedom, or simply a sense of wonder, what matters most to me is that they connect with aviation in some meaningful way. If a photograph inspires curiosity, admiration, or even the desire to learn more about this remarkable world, then I consider it a success.

14

ARE THERE ANY PHOTOGRAPHERS, PILOTS, OR PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH AVIATION WHO PARTICULARLY INSPIRE YOU? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU ADMIRE ABOUT THEIR WORK, AND HOW HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR OWN PERSPECTIVE ON AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

Absolutely.

There is a reason why I have been a member of the Polish Aviation Photographers Association for many years. I firmly believe that there is always something new to learn, always another perspective to discover, and always a different way of approaching photography.

◀ I deliberately avoid using words such as “better” or “the best” when talking about other photographers. Photography is an incredibly subjective art form, and once you reach a certain level, it becomes very difficult to say that someone is objectively better than someone else.

• What one person considers extraordinary, another may see as nothing particularly special. Personal taste, emotions, experiences, and individual preferences all play a role in how we perceive an image.

• That is why I focus on inspiration rather than comparison.

• I enjoy studying the work of other photographers, observing how they see the world, how they approach composition, light, storytelling, and emotion. Every photographer brings something unique to the table, and there is always an opportunity to learn from that perspective.

• For me, inspiration is not about trying to copy someone else’s style. It is about remaining curious, open-minded, and willing to keep growing. The moment we believe there is nothing left to learn is usually the moment we stop developing as photographers.  ▶





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Yakovlev Yak-3M (Jak-3M), Marcin Kubrak, Air-to-Air Meeting.





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Lockheed Martin F-16 Fighting Falcon, Polish Air Force.





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TS-11 Iskra, Fundacja Biało-Czerwone Skrzydła, Air-to-Air Meeting.





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Edge 540T2, Łukasz Czepiela, Air-to-Air Meeting.



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SC.7 Skyvan, Daniel Kujawa i Wojtek Zieliński, Air-to-Air Meeting.





Midnight Hawks BAe Hawk Mk.51 Finnish Air Force, Air-to-Air Meeting.



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Mikoyan Gurevich MiG-29 Fulcrum, Polish Air Force, Air-to-Air Meeting.





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PZL TS-8 Bies, Air-to-Air Meeting.





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Lockheed Martin F-16 Fighting Falcon, Danish Air Force, Aviation-PhotoCrew.





Supermarine Spitfire Mk.IX, Silver Spitfire, Aviation-PhotoCrew.



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SAAB JAS-39C Gripen, Swedish Air Force, Aviation-PhotoCrew.





PZL-130TC-2 Turbo Orlik, ORLIK Polish Air Force Zespół Akrobacyjny, Air-to-Air Meeting.



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McDonnell Douglas EF-18M, Spanish Air Force, NATO Baltic Air Policing.





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Boeing 747-830, Lufthansa, Los Angeles Airport.



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Airbus Helicopters H215, Super Puma Display Team, ANTIDOTUM Airshow Leszno.





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Lockheed Martin F-16 Fighting Falcon, Polish Air Force, Air-to-Air Meeting.



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Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, USAF, Airpower.





McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornet, Finnish Air Force, Airpower.



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Airbus A400M, German Air Force, Airpower.



AVIATION



PC-9 Blue Air Training, Aviation-PhotoCrew.



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Mi-17, Polish Air Force, Air-to-Air Meeting.





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Lockheed Martin F-16 Fighting Falcon, Slovak Air Force, Aviation-PhotoCrew.





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Dassault Mirage 2000, French Air and Space Force, Iniochos.



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Panavia Tornado, Italian Air Force, Iniochos.





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Sukhoi Su-22 Fitter, Polish Air Force.





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Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, Danish Air Force, Aviation-PhotoCrew.





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Lockheed Martin F-16 Fighting Falcon, Danish Air Force, Aviation-PhotoCrew.





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Mi-2 HeliForce, ANTIDOTUM Airshow Leszno.





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Grumman G-164 Ag-Cat, ANTIDOTUM Airshow Leszno.





Lockheed Martin F-16 Fighting Falcon, Polish Air Force.



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Bücker Bü 131 Jungmann, Michał Ślizowski Śliwaextreme, Air-to-Air Meeting.





Pitts S-2B Special, Piotr Rogut, Air-to-Air Meeting.



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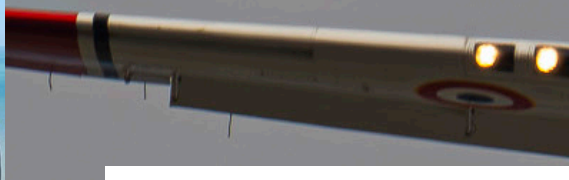
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INSTAGRAM



SCAN TO OPEN
THE MULTILINGUAL
INTERVIEW



01 HOW DID YOUR JOURNEY WITH AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY BEGIN, AND WHAT MADE AIRCRAFT AND THE WORLD OF AVIATION BECOME SUCH AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT FOR YOU?

It all started with my grandfather. He used to be in the Belgian Air Force. When I was little, I already saw photos from the early 1950s to the 1960s. That is why, at a very young age. Back in the 90's we had a television show in Belgium called Windkracht 10 that was just in the years that I started visiting airshows and other aviation-related events together with my parents. I received my first camera when I was 10, and from that moment on, I started combining my two passions.

02 WHAT ATTRACTS YOU MOST TO AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY – TECHNOLOGY, MOVEMENT, HISTORY, THE ATMOSPHERE OF AIRPORTS, OR THE EMOTIONS CONNECTED WITH FLYING?

What attracts me most to aviation photography are the memories and the freedom you have, also on a creative level. But also learning more about the aircraft, both their history and how they work. To my personal taste, I prefer the older aircraft to the more modern ones. Again, to learn their history, but also to see the evolution aviation has undergone. You can certainly capture all of this beautifully at airshows like La Ferté-Alais, because everything is really covered there. There is also a very special atmosphere there due to the reenactments you can find with many of the aircraft, which adds that little extra something to a photo, making it just a bit more special. Fortunately, not every airshow is the same, otherwise it would get boring. That is why I try to visit different types of airshows every year. Because, like every spotter or aircraft enthusiast, I also love to hear a good, loud afterburner or any unique sound an aircraft produces. What I also enjoy about aviation photography is taking a slightly bolder approach than other spotters—and by that I really mean in terms of photography: getting the most out of your camera, looking for beautiful angles, playing with your shutter speed... Sometimes this doesn't always go exactly as I envision, but that's precisely what makes it fun to try anyway.



03 IS AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY FOR YOU MORE ABOUT DOCUMENTING AIRCRAFT, OR ABOUT TELLING STORIES CONNECTED WITH PASSION, PEOPLE, AND AVIATION CULTURE?

For me, aviation photography is more than just documenting all those aircraft. I try to combine everything as much as possible. Sometimes I really try to capture the atmosphere you can see there, and that is done, among other things, by specially editing my images in, for example, a vintage style. Although I do have a list of planes I have already seen myself. But of course, I also have a 'to see' list that I am trying to work through. So yes, actually it is partly documenting aircraft, but in a more photographically creative way than simply taking a documentary image.





04

HOW DOES YOUR APPROACH CHANGE WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING AIRCRAFT AT AIRSHOWS, AROUND AIRPORTS, DURING TRAINING SESSIONS, OR IN MORE EVERYDAY AVIATION SITUATIONS?

Everything also depends partly on the weather, lighting, and even the wind direction. I always try to figure that out a bit in advance so that I can look for a good spot myself and get the most out of a photo. I am a photographer myself who really enjoys taking panning shots. So I always try to be inside very early during an airshow to find just the best spot for a nice shot, so that I can still take a panning shot at, for example, 1/50.

05

WHAT MAKES AN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPH MEMORABLE FOR YOU, RATHER THAN SIMPLY BEING A TECHNICALLY CORRECT IMAGE OF AN AIRCRAFT?

For me, a photo doesn't always have to be textbook perfect. Of course, when movement can be captured, it must also be visible in the image, whether through a high or low shutter speed. You can capture airplanes in various ways. For me, it is rather the memory of the aircraft that can make a photo memorable. Such as a specific part during a display, or how good the display was, or, for example, how much noise or a special sound an airplane could make. Of course, you don't hear this in a photo.

06

HOW IMPORTANT IS PATIENCE IN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY, ESPECIALLY WHEN WAITING FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT, LIGHT, OR FLIGHT CONDITIONS?

As is generally the case in photography, patience is very important. Especially when spotting, you can sometimes wait a very long time to see that one camera, if it even shows up at all. Sometimes you stand there waiting in all kinds of weather for that one shot, and that makes it a real struggle to just keep going and be patient.

07

WHAT ROLE DOES THE BACKGROUND PLAY IN YOUR IMAGES – THE SKY, CLOUDS, LIGHTING, RUNWAY, LANDSCAPE, AIRPORT ARCHITECTURE, OR THE SURROUNDING ATMOSPHERE?

The background can play a very important role in a photo for me. Especially if I want to produce an old-school photo, I want to have as few modern objects in the background as possible, or people dressed in modern clothing. Of course, we can Photoshop most of it. For panning shots, too, I like to have something in the background so that you can really see the movement in the photo and the object stands out nicely from the background. But for jets in the sky, I prefer a frozen shot where you can still see the action, but so that I can create a beautiful, dramatic sky. Of course, I don't always have control over this, as a great deal depends on the weather that day. Sometimes the skies are dull gray, but sometimes they are steel-blue.

08 DO YOU PHOTOGRAPH MILITARY, CIVILIAN, VINTAGE, OR MODERN AIRCRAFT DIFFERENTLY? WHAT CHANGES IN THE WAY YOU APPROACH THESE SUBJECTS?

I usually photograph old airplanes or jets, as these are common at airshows. I rarely visit military exercises because they very often produce the same photos. Naturally, I approach modern jet photos differently than historic aircraft. With jets, I really like to show the texture of the aircraft, so that it comes across as really rugged in the photo. With vintage aircraft, I prefer a softer approach.

09 WHAT EQUIPMENT DO YOU MOST OFTEN USE IN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY, AND WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU WHEN WORKING WITH FAST-MOVING SUBJECTS?

I work with a Nikon Z8 and Z6II with the lenses: the Nikkor Z105mm F2.8 for portraits, and I also make extensive use of the fixed Nikkor 800mm F6.3 and the good old Sigma 150-600mm Sport lens. I use the zoom lens mainly for panning shots or for larger display teams such as the Red Arrows or Patrouille de France.

10 DOES KNOWLEDGE OF AVIATION ITSELF — AIRCRAFT TYPES, MANEUVERS, PROCEDURES, OR AVIATION HISTORY — HELP YOU CREATE STRONGER PHOTOGRAPHS?

Yes, absolutely. It is sometimes important to get to know a team's display so that you know which figure they are going to fly and when, as well as when there are great photo opportunities. It is also always nice to know what the aircraft is capable of, and even whether it can produce a nice vapor, which often depends on the weather and humidity in the air. All of this ensures that you will get fewer surprises or "*what if I had taken that photo*" moments.

11 HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE PHOTOGRAPHS WORTH PUBLISHING AFTER RETURNING FROM AN EVENT OR SESSION? WHAT MAKES ONE IMAGE STAND OUT FROM THE REST?

They have to be sharp no matter what, otherwise it's a no-go. Of course, a photo needs to have a nice composition, be a strong image, and in aviation, also have a wow factor. This can be achieved through smoke trails, beautiful skies, or a spectacular high-speed pass with lots of condensation on the wings. A photo shouldn't just be informative but should also be able to tell a bit of a story. If not through the speed, then through the power an aircraft possesses. Sometimes it is small details that are a no-go for me.

12 IS THERE ONE PHOTOGRAPH, AIRPORT, AIRCRAFT, OR AVIATION EXPERIENCE THAT REMAINS ESPECIALLY MEANINGFUL TO YOU PERSONALLY?

There are 2 images that really stick with me, also due to different circumstances. In 2024, during the airshow in La Ferté-Alais, there was a tornado that yielded some unique images that I will probably never capture again.

My second image was during the airshow in Albert (FR), the final demo of the Polish pilot SLAB before his fatal practice demo in Radom. I was able to capture images of Albert during his demo at sunset, but also some shots of the pilot himself sitting in the aircraft. I was able to meet him that day, which naturally added extra emotion to the photos the following week.

13 WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE READERS TO FEEL OR UNDERSTAND WHEN LOOKING AT YOUR AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY — FREEDOM, PRECISION, EMOTION, POWER, BEAUTY OF MOVEMENT, OR SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY?

I would like to convey to the readers that there is more to aviation photography than most people think, because nothing is self-evident and you depend on a great many circumstances. But also that you have enormous freedom to do your own thing and to develop your own style as a photographer. You can really go in any direction with aviation when you photograph it. Of course, tastes always differ, but that is the case everywhere in the photography world, and fortunately so. But the friendships that form during this show are also priceless. It is not just photography, but also a social event.

14 ARE THERE PHOTOGRAPHERS, PILOTS, ARTISTS, OR PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH AVIATION WHO ESPECIALLY INSPIRE YOU? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU VALUE IN THEIR WORK, AND HOW HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR OWN APPROACH TO AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

Hesja Air-Art Photography is one of my favorite photographers. Also, his perspective on aviation photography, especially his own beautiful style. Additionally, Peng Chen is one of my favorite aviation photographers. Their photos have inspired me to experiment more with things like shutter speed... But again, to create your own style. They each tell the aviation story on the web and in magazines in their own way. I have infinite respect for these two photographers, certainly for their careers and everything they have already been able to achieve. I can only dream of this. Of course, dreams are meant to be chased. Technically, these are very strong photographers; once again, both have their own distinct style, but they deliver beautiful work and show that anything is possible if you are willing to work for it and dare to push boundaries. For both of them take air-to-air photos, and it is my big dream to be able to do this someday. 







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PHOTOGRAPHY
AIRSHOWS - SPORTS - SHOOTS





































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01 HOW DID YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY BEGIN, AND WHEN DID AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY BECOME MORE THAN JUST AN INTEREST AND TURN INTO AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR WORK?

Since my childhood I have always been fascinated by photography, following my father's hobby. Thanks to traveling to exotic places between 2001 and 2008, I realized that I wanted to do more with photography than making the traditional 'holiday pictures'. So I began teaching myself photography at a higher level in 2009, mainly from reading magazines, books and afterwards putting my knowledge into practice techniques. From 2011 till the end of 2014 I've been following several photographic training courses. Here I obtained the diploma Digital Photography and Digital Photo Editing. Although I was still learning all kind of styles and technics I discovered that my main interests were landscape, black & white and aviation photography. Because I've always had a keen interest in airplane spotting, aviation photography eventually became my specialty. As I visited airshows, air bases and aviation events in 2015 and 2016, I started to specialize myself in military aviation photography. Thanks to the Belgian Air Force I regularly got the opportunity to attend military exercises or military aviation events as a social media photographer. In 2021, I became an official photographer for the Belgian Ministry of Defense and also became one of the photographers for the Belgian military magazine.



SCAN TO OPEN
THE MULTILINGUAL
INTERVIEW



02 IN YOUR STORY, YOU MENTION THE INFLUENCE OF YOUR FATHER'S INTEREST IN PHOTOGRAPHY AND PHOTO EDITING. WHAT FROM THAT EARLY PERIOD HAS STAYED WITH YOU UNTIL TODAY?

Ever since I can remember, I've always seen my father with a camera. He worked in the analog era back then and developed his own photos. This taught me that editing photos—whether analog or digital—deserves just as much attention as taking the photo itself.

03 BEFORE FOCUSING STRONGLY ON MILITARY AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY, YOU WERE ALSO INTERESTED IN LANDSCAPE AND BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY. DO THOSE EARLIER EXPERIENCES STILL INFLUENCE THE WAY YOU COMPOSE AVIATION IMAGES TODAY?

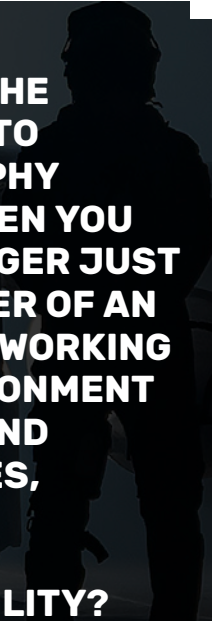
Yes, I still feel that very strongly. I'm still deeply passionate about landscape and black-and-white photography, and I often try to incorporate those influences into my photos. For example, I often try to capture images with a wide-angle lens, since that often tells a lot more than a close-up. When I have to take photos in bad weather, I often try to edit them in black and white and add a lot of drama to them, because that simply conveys more than a typical photo with a gray sky.





04 WHAT WAS THE TURNING POINT THAT MOVED YOU FROM PHOTOGRAPHING AIRSHOWS AS AN ENTHUSIAST TO WORKING CLOSER TO MILITARY STRUCTURES AND OFFICIAL AVIATION PROJECTS?

The turning point came when I was given opportunities by the Belgian Air Force and others to take photos for them, and when my photos and articles were published in magazines and books. This made me realize that I was good at what I did and that there was much more to be achieved. I also realized that there is still a lot to be done in the field of aviation photography when I organized my first photo shoot with reenactors.



05 HOW DOES THE APPROACH TO PHOTOGRAPHY CHANGE WHEN YOU ARE NO LONGER JUST AN OBSERVER OF AN EVENT, BUT WORKING IN AN ENVIRONMENT BUILT AROUND PROCEDURES, HIERARCHY, TRUST, AND RESPONSIBILITY?

When I take photos on behalf of an organization, publisher, or client, it always brings a healthy dose of stress, since results are expected. I'm mainly focused on taking photos and often find that I sometimes miss things because I'm too busy with photography itself. When I'm taking photos for an aviation event, it's not always about the planes—it's often about the audience, the staff, the preparations, or the infrastructure. This is also different from when I take photos just for myself.

06 CAN SOCIAL MEDIA REPLACE A PHOTOGRAPHER'S WEBSITE, AND WHAT ROLE DO THEY PLAY IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY TODAY?

I believe having your own website is very important because, as a photographer, it allows you to share all your work with the world in the way you want. Social media is, of course, also very important, but I use it more to network or to promote my work or events. On average, people only look at a photo on social media for a few seconds, whereas they tend to look at photos on a dedicated website with more interest. As a photographer, having your own website is just as important as having a good camera. Social media is also constantly evolving. Right now, there's a lot of focus on creating short videos, whereas a few years ago, photography was much more important on these platforms. That's why I'd much rather see my work published in a magazine or on a specific website.



07 DOES PHOTOGRAPHING MILITARY AVIATION REQUIRE A DIFFERENT KIND OF VISUAL DISCIPLINE COMPARED TO OTHER FORMS OF AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

It all depends on what you want to achieve as a photographer. A photo of a commercial airliner can look exactly the same as a photo of a fighter jet, but if you want to capture it from a military perspective, it does require a different approach. For example, you could take close-up shots of a military pilot, the aircraft's armament, or his briefing. Fighter jets often fly at very high speeds, and as a photographer, you can try to capture that in your photos by using techniques like panning.

08 HOW DO YOU BUILD AN IMAGE THAT SHOWS NOT ONLY THE AIRCRAFT ITSELF, BUT ALSO THE PERSONALITY OF A UNIT, THE PILOTS, OR THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE EVENT?

Every situation and every project is different. I, too, have had to learn that aviation photography is much more than just taking pictures of airplanes. For example, when I'm asked to photograph a display team or a pilot during an airshow, I try to capture as much as possible: the preparations for the flight, the pre-flight checks, the pilot in the cockpit, and the display itself. It's often very difficult to capture all of this in a single photo, which is why I like to create a shorter photo series of 6 to 8 photos, where each photo tells a different story about the display or the flight. Even today, I'm still learning that every project is different, and that photography is all about constantly learning and adapting. No two situations are ever the same!

09 YOUR WORK ALSO INCLUDES VINTAGE AIRCRAFT AND REENACTORS. WHAT INTERESTS YOU MOST ABOUT COMBINING AVIATION HISTORY WITH STAGED OR CAREFULLY PREPARED IMAGERY?

When I did my first photo shoot with COAP and reenactors in England, editing the photos felt like I was traveling back in time, and that was what inspired me to specialize in this field. By using the right setting in combination with the right reenactors and props, the history of an aircraft is brought back to life. Ultimately, you can recreate the atmosphere of that era by using the right techniques in digital post-production. This type of photography breathes new life into the history of an old airplane and also teaches people how the aircraft was used back then. This type of photography also has great educational and informational value, which really appeals to me about it. I often receive very positive feedback after a shoot with reenactors from pilots or owners of vintage aircraft, as they didn't realize this was possible with their aircraft. Photography is, after all, a form of time travel, and reenactment photography highlights this even more.

10 SINCE 2023, YOU HAVE BEEN ORGANIZING AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY SESSIONS. WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF RUNNING SUCH EVENTS?

Organizing a photo shoot involving one or more aircraft is quite a challenge, and this is often underestimated. If you want to take photos at an operational airfield, you're up against a bunch of rules and procedures, and if an airplane needs to be flown to a special location, that costs a lot of money. I often look for locations that aren't too modern, and these shoots are done at the airports where the planes in question are based because that saves money. When I plan a photo shoot with reenactors, I work with people—reenactors—whom I know well personally and who I am 100% certain will deliver the quality I expect. We often do a lot of research together first so we can learn about the history of the aircraft and its crew, and we create scenarios together. Historical accuracy is particularly important to me personally; you don't want a World War II reenactor pilot wearing an Apple Watch in all your photos. I almost always work with natural light because so many of these shoots take place outdoors, but this also means that I'm completely reliant on the weather.

11 YOU ALSO GIVE LECTURES ABOUT AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY. WHAT MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT THIS FIELD DO YOU MOST OFTEN SEE AMONG PEOPLE WHO ARE JUST STARTING?

What often strikes me during lectures or workshops is the way people look at an airplane and the way photos are taken. People often forget that there are countless ways to capture an airplane on camera, just as there are with a female model. Composition in aviation photography is just as important as it is in architectural or nature photography. Aviation photography involves much more than just taking pictures of an airplane. For example, you can capture stunning images of a pilot getting ready, a technician performing a final check, or the details of a propeller engine of a Spitfire warbird. This is exactly what I want to explain and demonstrate in detail during my lectures. The same goes for post-processing. There's so much you can do with digital post-processing, and a lot of people forget that. The combination of a unique composition and beautiful post-processing often results in a stunning photo.

12
YOUR WORK HAS RECEIVED RECOGNITION IN AVIATION AND MILITARY PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITIONS. DO AWARDS MOTIVATE YOU MORE, OR DO THEY CREATE ADDITIONAL PRESSURE FOR FUTURE PROJECTS?

Unfortunately, there aren't many contests that aviation photographers can enter, so I personally find it a good motivation to participate in these kinds of contests. You often get to see a lot of images from other photographers, and I also learn a lot from them. Every photographer feels good when its work gets some extra attention. When you've worked hard on a project and the results are great, it's always worth highlighting!

13
IF YOU COULD SHOW READERS ONE LESS OBVIOUS SIDE OF MILITARY AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT THEM TO UNDERSTAND?

Military photography isn't always easy, and as a photographer, you can't always do what you want. You're bound by a lot of rules and procedures, and safety always comes first. For example, pilots always have the final decision, since safety is essential in all forms of aviation. In addition, as a military photographer, you can't just photograph anything you want. There are often strict rules regarding whether you're allowed to clearly photograph buildings, facilities, and/or people, and you must always follow these rules strictly. Taking photos of military aircraft or helicopters during a military operation is completely different from taking photos at an airshow. The way of flying is entirely different, and these flight operations are often very quick. This means that, as a photographer, it's best to know in advance what to expect, because you often only get one chance to take the photos. That's why briefings and having a good understanding with the crew are so important.

14
ARE THERE PHOTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS, OR PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH AVIATION WHO ESPECIALLY INSPIRE YOU? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU VALUE IN THEIR WORK, AND HOW HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR OWN APPROACH TO AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

Every day, I see lots of stunning photos on social media from incredibly talented photographers. Two people I greatly admire and have learned a great deal from are Steven Comber and Rich Cooper of the Centre of Aviation Photography (COAP). They organize numerous aviation-themed photo shoots around the world and are among the elite in the field of aviation photography. Thanks to them, I learned how to take photos with reenactors, and since then I've had the opportunity to collaborate with them on various projects several times. 





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Photo shoot in May 2026 with reenactors and the iconic Halifax bomber at RAF Rorkshire.





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Photo shoot with a Supermarine Spitfire warbird and reenactors.





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Photo shoot with reenactors and a 1930s build Lockheed Electra aircraft.





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Photo shoot with reenactors at the cockpit of a Halifax World War Two bomber aircraft.





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Two reenactors with a North American P-51 Mustang warbird during an airshow in France in 2024.

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Photo shoot with a Mirage 5 of the Belgian Air Force and reenactors.



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Panning shot of a Boeing Stearman warbird during the La Ferté-Alais airshow in France.





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Air-to-air sunset photo shoot in 2022 with a SV-4 biplane.





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Air-to-air photoshoot with two SV-4RS biplanes.





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Departure of a commercial airliner from Brussels airport during a beautiful sunset.





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Flares coming from a NH90 helicopter of the German Army at the Antidotum airshow in Leszno, Poland.





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Take-off of the B-1 Lancer bomber of the USAF at RAF Fairford with four powerful afterburners.





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Special organized photoshoot by COAP with the iconic Phantom interceptor/bomber and reenactors at RAF Wattisham.





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Photographing night operations of F-35 fighter aircraft at the Leeuwarden Air Base in The Netherlands.





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As a military photographer I got the opportunity to photograph the action from up close.



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WINGS OF VISION
STORIES OF FLIGHT, LIGHT AND PASSION



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Cold War night operations photo shoot organized by COAP with a SEPECAT Jaguar attack aircraft.





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Airshow photography can be very spectacular. An Apache attack helicopter in front of a wall of fire at the RIAT 2019 airshow.



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Photo shoot organized by COAP with an English Electric Lightning Cold War interceptor aircraft and reenactors.





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Low-level flying in Greece with a Sukhoi fighter jet of the Indian Air Force.





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Air-to-air photo shoot in 2022 with two F-16 fighter jets of the Belgian Air Force with special anniversary tail paints.



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A typical airshow shot, the Red Arrows of the British Royal Air Force at an airshow in The Netherlands in 2019.





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Air-to-air photo shoot with SIAI-Marchetti SF.260 trainer aircraft of the Belgian Air Force.





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Air-to-air photoshoot in 2017 with two F-18 fighter jets of the Swiss Air Force.



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Lot's of activity at the flight deck of the Spanish aircraft carrier Juan Carlos I.





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A visit to an aviation museum can always deliver creative black & white photos.





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Old airplanes are perfect for photographing details.





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01 HOW DID YOUR JOURNEY WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BEGIN, AND WHERE DID YOUR INTEREST IN AVIATION COME FROM?

When I was a kid, during summer holidays, my parents always took me to the yearly 'Koksijde Airshow', a very well-known international aviation event near the Belgian coast. I was always fascinated by the thundering military jets!

Later as a teenager I graduated in 'Art' at high school, where I discovered the art of photography, which was still analog by that time. When this became digital, I started to discover the almost endless possibilities to unleash my creativity, hence my choice to combine the both into the Aviation Photography passion I still admire today.

02 WHAT MADE AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY BECOME SOMETHING MORE THAN SIMPLY AN INTEREST FOR YOU?

The first and still most impressive display that left me speechless as a kid was the demo of a Mirage 5 of the Belgium Air Force.. later on followed by the iconic F-14 'Top Gun' Tomcat, the Mig-29 and passage of the mysterious F-117 Night-hawk. The power and especially deep trembling of the afterburners through my body, made me sort of 'addicted' to it, resulting in forgetting the world around me when I hear this sound at a military airbase.

The technical aspect and evolution was also fascinating to follow, resulting in more agility and spectacular maneuvers in the following years. Later, this expanded to an interest in helicopters, and the 'big boys' with breathtaking demos of gigantic transport aircraft.

I also discovered later on that both give very impressive photographic results when photographed in certain, and that is where it is all about: conveying and translating that powerful emotion on the spot into a breathtaking image, to experience that same feeling later when looking at that photo.

03 AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY REQUIRES NOT ONLY QUICK REACTIONS, BUT ALSO THE ABILITY TO ANTICIPATE MOMENTS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN. HOW DID YOU LEARN TO READ THOSE SITUATIONS?

Preparation is key! 20 years ago, before videos of displays could be found everywhere on the internet, one had to study a demo at the beginning of the Airshow season, to get to know which maneuver was coming.

Regarding the speed, your brain and body need to get used to it. After a while comes experience, and as an aviation photographer you know or feel what is coming.. you automatically check your camera settings and adjust your posture to be able to take that unique shot you had in mind. Not always easy with heavy lenses and sometimes challenging or changing weather conditions.

04 WHAT ATTRACTS YOU THE MOST WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING AIRCRAFT – THE MACHINES THEMSELVES, MOVEMENT, THE ATMOSPHERE OF EVENTS, OR PERHAPS THE PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH AVIATION?

Personally, the powerful appearance, the ever changing technology of these machines piloted by very skilled pilots are the most impressive factors to me. When I can capture this power into a single image, and afterwards strengthen it with some editing... that's why I do it.

05 HOW DO YOU USUALLY PREPARE FOR AN IMPORTANT AIR SHOW OR PHOTOGRAPHY TRIP?

I always start by checking the nature of the event or exercise, the announced aircraft, is or are they unique or nice to see (again)?

Next I check the location of the airfield, primarily the appointed place or crowd-line according to the position of the sun. Does it offer good or feasible photographic possibilities, if so is the backlight manageable?

How to get there? Flights, drive, stay, the total price... in other words, is it worth the trip?

A few days before the show, prepare and check your gear. When your equipment is ready, batteries are charged, memory cards are emptied (and back-ups are made), cameras and lenses are clean, make sure not to forget accessories such as chargers, card readers, cables... your passport?

If possible, make a back-up plan (lost luggage, changing weather conditions).

06 WE ALSO SAW YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN ABOARD AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER. WHAT IS IT LIKE WORKING AS A PHOTOGRAPHER IN SUCH A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT – CLOSED, MILITARY, HIGHLY PROCEDURAL, AND LIMITED IN SPACE, YET FULL OF A VERY DISTINCTIVE ATMOSPHERE?

Both the experience and environment are extremely unique and at the same time very challenging. So many things can go wrong. Again, preparation is key, make sure you get the right contacts, approvals and the official documents signed, printed, carry them on you at all times.

When you board the ship, listen carefully and follow the instructions, adapt when necessary, get the most out of it.. and last but not least, enjoy and earn it.

07 AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY OFTEN INVOLVES CHANGING WEATHER CONDITIONS, LIMITED SPACE, AND EXTREMELY FAST- MOVING SITUATIONS. WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR YOU DURING THIS KIND OF WORK?

It's a big ship with a lot of people, materials, and it involves several types of aircraft such as jets and helicopters, so indeed a lot of challenges!

For me the biggest test was the fast changing of subjects and environments inside or outside the ship, and the adjacent correct material and settings of my cameras.

An example: We had to make pictures of the ships Chapel (flash needed). A few minutes later we photographed amphibious landing craft in the dark launch docks in the lowest part of the ship with sudden counter light when the sea locks opened.. but as the Seaking helicopters approached faster than expected we had to get to the upper deck quickly, and whilst adjusting settings the ship turned suddenly and the strong southern sun in our back became sun in our face. So, adapt and perform photographer!

08 HOW IMPORTANT ARE EMOTIONS AND ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING AVIATION EVENTS IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY?

As an aviation enthusiast the atmosphere and sudden meet with friends or like-minded people is also an important part. The special environment, a chat with other enthusiast, the exchange of information, updates or (fun) facts in the world of aviation contribute to the experience and overall relaxing moment of leisure and entertainment.

09 IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT MAKES AN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPH TRULY EXCEPTIONAL?

Every subject in photography is exceptional for the one who gets an overwhelming feeling when pushing the shutter button. The feeling that combines these factors: This is the moment, this view through my finder is perfect as it is now in this split second, the composition and atmosphere are spot-on, CLICK!

It is similar for aviation photography, but mostly everything happens ten times faster.

10 HOW HAS YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESS ITSELF EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

In my 'early years' - about 20 years ago - still many iconic cold war jets appeared on airshows, the so called 'golden time', also for the so number-crunching spot-ers. I never looked at that part of the hobby, for me capturing the atmosphere and dynamic motion of that iconic jet was key.

My aviation photography process however has shifted from an early digital staged exercise to a precise and detailed accessible art form, which was my goal since the beginning.

Not only the digital possibilities, but also new editing tools offered more possibilities, it became more extensive and fostered my creativity.

11 WHAT ROLE DOES TECHNICAL PREPARATION AND AVIATION KNOWLEDGE PLAY IN THE WORK OF AN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHER?

I can add one specific part of aviation photography that requires a very specific preparation: Air2Air photography. A lot of preparation gets into this co-operation and coordination between pilots, ops flight planning, safety, load masters, ATC.. carefully choosing the location and keeping flight restrictions in mind, weather, you name it. But then again, when that hatch in the photo ship opens up and you see the subject aircraft approaching, nothing can beat that view and experience.

12 HAS AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY TAKEN YOU TO PLACES OR SITUATIONS YOU PROBABLY WOULD NEVER HAVE EXPERIENCED OTHERWISE?

Yes, when you are invited into restricted areas for a military shoot, or capturing an exercise on a training ground, you know you are one of the few.

Some examples? Exercise with EU special forces at the Elsenborn training grounds (BEL), Chinook helicopter operations at the training Bramley area near Odiham (UK) which led to the cover of a magazine. The aircraft carrier Juan Carlos 1 which also led to publishing a book for Duke Hawkins.

Several Air2Air flights in a C-130 or A-400 photo ship chased by F-16's or Alpha jets took me to cloud nine!

13 WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN THEIR OWN JOURNEY WITH AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

Get a good basic camera and a good lens, do some research on settings, start searching for an airshow calendar on the web, interact with (aviation) photographers to learn and share experiences.. and above all: practice a lot, learn, practice some more and have loads of fun. Give yourself the time to grow and experience. And... also take a look at the skies with your eyes instead of the viewfinder of your camera, capture the atmosphere. Enjoy it.

14 WHICH PHOTOGRAPHERS, EXPERIENCES, TRAVELS, OR EVENTS HAVE HAD THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON YOUR INSPIRATION AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT?

There are some well known names in the aviation world, some creative photographers that worked their way up to the top: Rich and Steve from COAP, Hesja, Aviation Photocrew, Amit Agronov, or some real seniors such as Peter Steehouwer or Henk Tito, you name it.. but I will not continue as I might forget some names!

When it comes to experiences, places or events I must say that shows in Koksijde (BEL), Kleine Brogel (BEL), Sanicole International Airshow (BEL), assignments for the Belgian Air Force, airshows in Kecskemet (HUN), the Mach loop (Wales), Axalp (Swiss), Nellis AFB (USA) and MAKS trade show at Zhukosky (RUS) made the biggest impression on me and brought me to places I would otherwise have never visited.

I hope when the geopolitical situation worldwide calms down, me and my girlfriend will be able to visit these or other fantastic places in the future to witness more beautiful aircraft, and being able to capture them with the same great emotion which I have been pursuing them for more than 20 years, so I can share my passion with everyone who wants to check out my photography passion. 





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F-16 anniversary jet above the Ardennes.



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F-16 Stingers close to the A-400M photoship ramp.





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Belgian AF demo team 'Vrieske' above the Belgian coast.





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F16 from Belgian AF demo team 'Vrieske' above the Belgian coast.





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F16 from Belgian AF demo team 'Vador' above the North Sea.





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F16 from Belgian AF demo team 'Vador' above Belgium.





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Chinook helicopter and troops at the UK Bramley training grounds.





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Chinook helicopter lands at the UK Bramley training grounds.





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Germany Navy Sea King in farewell colors at the Valence Aerotor show in France.





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The A400-M display team from the French Air Force.





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Aerosparx demo at a sunset show in the North of France.



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Departing B1B bomber from RAF Fairford UK.





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Sukhoi-30 from the Russian navy displaying at MAKS, Russia.





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Sukhoi-57 from the Russian Air Force displaying at MAKS, Russia.





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F4 Phantom during a COAP nightshoot in the UK.



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Incoming F-18 Hornets from the Swiss Air Force throwing flares at the Axalp exercise in Switzerland.





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Puma demo Helicopter from the Swiss Air Force throwing flares at the Axalp exercise in Switzerland.





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French Dassault Rafale close-up during a fly-by.



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US F-35 demo team performing a fly by at Sanicole International Airshow in Belgium.





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Air to Air with a pair of Belgian F-16's from the 1st and 350 squadrons.



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Russian Beriev 200 firefighter _ waterbomber at MAKs in Russia.





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Sea Harrier jet inbound the Juan Carlos 1 Aircraft carrier near Rota Naval base in Spain.





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Sea Harrier jet resting on deck after arrival on the Juan Carlos 1 Aircraft carrier near Rota Naval base in Spain.





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Sea Harrier jets resting on deck on the Juan Carlos 1 Aircraft carrier near Rota Naval base.



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Sea King helicopter departing the Juan Carlos 1 Aircraft carrier near Rota Naval base in Spain.



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01 HOW DID YOUR JOURNEY INTO AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY BEGIN, AND WHAT MADE THIS SUBJECT BECOME SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC PASSION?

It seems I've always had some kind of affection towards aviation. When I was a small boy, I was collecting posters of airplanes. But my journey through photography had begun with snapping nature and wildlife, later developing into a serious passion and devotion. After about 20 years of dedication to nature photography, I suddenly felt a need to change something, to take a step forward.

And that's when a happy coincidence occurred. I met a long-time friend whom I hadn't seen in a while. He showed me some photos from Axalp military demonstration and other aviation events, and something inside of me said - "this is what you are looking for, this is the way". That's how it all began. Now, every year, I make plans to participate in various airshows and military exercises in advance. It has become one of the most important parts of my life.

02 WERE YOU INTERESTED IN AVIATION BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHY ENTERED YOUR LIFE, OR DID PHOTOGRAPHY OPEN THE DOOR FOR YOU INTO THE WORLD OF AIRCRAFT AND FLYING?

I was interested in aviation as a small child, but somehow later my head got occupied with other matters and things. I took my very first steps in photography, taking pictures of everything I could find around me, but moments later, it developed into a dedication to nature and wildlife. Aviation came back to me much later, when I was already an experienced photographer. However, I want to tell you about my feelings during the first steps in capturing aviation. As I said, I was already experienced in being successful in nature photography. Aviation was something totally new. I've spent a lot of time browsing through works of renowned photographers and knew that I have a long way ahead of me to reach their level. But to my surprise, I wasn't impatient or uptight. Every time I went to airshows I was calm, I never felt that I have to prove something. This feeling was really surprising for me, but thanks to that, I could develop skills at my own pace.

03 WHAT FASCINATES YOU MOST WHEN OBSERVING AIRCRAFT THROUGH THE LENS – THEIR FORM, SPEED, SOUND, HISTORY, PILOTS, OR THE ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING AVIATION EVENTS?

Well, it is really difficult to say. I think their form indeed is beautiful (most of the aircraft at least). It might sound odd, but while looking through the lens, I can somehow feel a fraction of the emotions associated with flying. I can feel the speed, and the sound is filling my ears. History is also an important factor for me as my uncle fought as a pilot of a Hawker Hurricane during the Battle of Britain (WWII). Maybe the love of aviation is coded in my genes.



04 WHAT DOES YOUR PREPARATION PROCESS LOOK LIKE WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING A SPECIFIC EVENT, AIRPORT, OR AIRCRAFT?

At first, I thought you just needed to get tickets, get to the site of the event, and that's about all. Now I know there is far more to it. First, check the lineup and prepare some specific gear like ND filters. Every airport is situated in space regarding cardinal directions, so you need to check how the sun is going to travel across the sky during the event. With this in mind, you can plan your position in the airfield (or outside of it) that would provide you with the desired points of view. This usually can be done when the map of the event site is available. Knowing which aircraft are performing what act exactly is also a very valuable piece of knowledge, as it helps the photographer to move to the right spot to be as close as possible and to get the POV they want. When taking pictures of helicopters, you usually need to be as close to the center of the show as possible. The same rule applies to aerobatic groups. However, if you want to capture vapors on jets, being on the side or even outside of the airfield seems a better option, because jets do their turns at a distance from the audience. This is the kind of knowledge you acquire in time.

05 IN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY, WHAT MATTERS MORE TO YOU: ANTICIPATION, QUICK REFLEXES, OR THE ABILITY TO PATIENTLY WAIT FOR THE PERFECT MOMENT?

To me both anticipation and quick reflexes are on equal. In order to take good photos, you need to react quickly and adapt to the situation. However, if you don't have a general idea of what will happen next and where you should be at that moment, you will not take the pictures you want (if any). Patience is essential in wildlife photography, as in aviation, you mostly go according to plan. However, it is also highly desired when going to military exercise spots like Machloop ar Iniochos. Sometimes you get to spend the whole day in the hills just to get 30 seconds of action. This can be disappointing, but you need to keep pushing yourself. It is the same with wildlife photography - sometimes the models don't come at all, and other times you get lucky. It is much easier if you go to such spots with your friends.

06 HOW DO YOU DEVELOP YOUR OWN VISUAL STYLE IN A FIELD THAT IS PHOTOGRAPHED BY SO MANY AVIATION ENTHUSIASTS AROUND THE WORLD?

This is a really tough question, because I think your own visual style depends on so many factors. One is to follow the best photographers, talk with them, and take from them what suits your own taste. I really like to use the panning technique to make the photos feel more dynamic. What's more, I sometimes rotate my shots a bit more than usual for the same reason. I also worked out my own Lightroom preset to get a consistent visual outcome. And that's about it, I think.

07 WHAT DO YOU PERSONALLY FIND MORE CHALLENGING — CAPTURING THE DYNAMICS OF FLIGHT OR SHOWING THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE PLACE AND THE PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH AVIATION?

To me, capturing the dynamics is far more difficult because it requires incredible posture stability, smooth arm movement, and at the same time lightning reflexes. All this is necessary in addition to a professional camera that you know how to work with. The right gear in aviation photography is a must.

08 ARE THERE SPECIFIC AIRCRAFT DETAILS, MARKINGS, REFLECTIONS, LIGHTING CONDITIONS, OR TECHNICAL MOMENTS THAT YOU ESPECIALLY ENJOY PHOTOGRAPHING?

Well, I've been thinking recently about what makes a good photo. It seems to me that an image presenting an object we see normally with our eyes in a surprising way is the key. This could be a different point of view, unusual detail, or blurred background. These are the factors that a photographer can control, but there are others, too. I really enjoy photos that show vapor and vortices; they look really magical, especially when shot in backlight. This, however, requires a fair amount of moisture in the air and sunlight. Such conditions are rare, which makes such photos even more valuable. I also enjoy these moments when an aircraft casts flares, the more impressive the more flares there are. Another magical moment to enjoy is when you manage to capture an aircraft together with the sun or the moon in one frame. To sum it up, a photograph should be unique in a way that it is remembered.

09 WHAT ROLE DOES EQUIPMENT PLAY IN YOUR WORK, AND WHERE DO EXPERIENCE, INTUITION, AND KNOWLEDGE OF AVIATION BEGIN TO MATTER EVEN MORE?

Two years ago, I came to the conclusion that if I wanted to improve my photos, I needed a better camera. Today, I can say this approach proved right. Gear is essential; there is no arguing about that. A camera with fast and accurate autofocus, at least 20 fps burst, and a lot of memory cards is a must paired with a good and fast telephoto lens. But equipment, in my opinion, is responsible for about 50% of success. The rest is in the photographer's head - knowing where to be, at what time, foreseeing what would happen next, etc. So, success depends on both gear and knowledge equally.

10 WE KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALSO INVOLVED IN NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY AND CREATE BEAUTIFUL IMAGES OF WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPES. DOES THE EXPERIENCE GAINED THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHING NATURE - PATIENCE, OBSERVATION, WORKING WITH LIGHT - ALSO INFLUENCE YOUR APPROACH TO AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

Definitely, previous experience was very important and useful for me. It made my entry into the new area much easier. Come to think of it, aviation and wildlife photography are not that different. The equipment is almost the same; airplanes and helicopters are just like birds, only airships are more predictable in their actions than animals. Aviation involves more use of panning for me, and this has been the technique I am still working on. You mentioned working with light, which, in my opinion, is essential in all genres of photography.

11 HOW DO YOU APPROACH EDITING AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHS - DO YOU PREFER TO KEEP THE SCENE NATURAL, OR DO YOU LIKE EMPHASIZING MOOD, ATMOSPHERE, AND THE VISUAL POWER OF THE IMAGE?

In my nature photographs, I always try to edit as little as possible. In the flood of AI-generated, hyper realistic, and oversaturated images, real photography needs to stay credible. However, with aviation, it is a little different. Since I am taking pictures of man-made machines, I let myself develop a little more. This usually concentrates on increasing contrast, making clouds a bit more dramatic to emphasize the mood and make the image more striking. However, I try not to exaggerate to keep the image visibly credible.

12
IS THERE AN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPH THAT WAS ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT TO CAPTURE, BUT GAVE YOU A GREAT SENSE OF SATISFACTION ONCE YOU ACHIEVED IT?

There is a kind of Holy Grail of photography in the group I am in, which is photographing a helicopter so that its rotor looks like a full disk while the rest stays sharp. I managed to do this only a couple of times, but I am really proud of it. Capturing helicopters in this manner is not a necessity, but more of a challenge I like to take. Also, the photograph of the Swiss F/A-18 with visible shockwaves gave me a great sense of satisfaction. It is unique, and I managed to capture it.

13
IS THERE A PARTICULAR LOCATION, EVENT, AIRCRAFT, OR AVIATION PROJECT THAT STILL REMAINS ON YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC WISH LIST?

I have a very distant dream to see some flying in the US. However, for logistical reasons, it will probably remain on my wishlist a little longer. But there is also a wish that might soon be fulfilled, the return to Axalp in the Swiss Alps. There are rumors that the demonstration will return next year, so I'm keeping my fingers crossed. Axalp was the first airshow I attended, and to me and others, it is simply mythical. Climbing into darkness, fighting the cold while waiting for the sun, just to see the Hornets zooming in the valley in front of the audience, while popping flares. I have been there three times already, but got addicted right from the first time. I am more of a guy who lives here and now, without too many wishes, just not to get disappointed.

14
ARE THERE PHOTOGRAPHERS, PILOTS, ARTISTS, OR PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH AVIATION WHO ESPECIALLY INSPIRE YOU? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU VALUE IN THEIR WORK, AND HOW HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR OWN APPROACH TO AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

Surely there are! I follow the accounts of many talented photographers from all over the world. I am inspired and impressed by the skill of Lee Blakeborough, Mark Lynham, David Lister, and Rich Cooper. I also admire the works of my friends from Poland: Maciej Szamałek, Sławek "Hesja" Krajniewski, Mateusz Jakubowski, and many others. I wouldn't be fair if I didn't give a special mention about my long-time friend, who was my first aviation photography inspiration and teacher, Leon Plugawy. 



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One of the most unique and memorable moments in Antidotum Airshow Leszno (Poland). Swiss AirForce Super Puma Display Team drops flares during the sunset part of the show. I have seen this act several times but only once the clouds looked so good.



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US AirForce Osprey taken during my one and only trip to the famous Mach Loop low flying area in the UK. It was in 2022 when I've spent 4 days before RIAT in the hills waiting for something magical to happen. And so it did. During the first three days all we saw was a lonely Texan, but on the fourth we did get the reward we deserved.





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Taken during RIAT 2022. The weather was really dry so there was little chance of vapors appearing on airframes. This Italian Eurofighter Typhoon pilot did a gear job and managed to create this nice fluffy cloud.





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The most important requisite of this kind of shots is luck. Taken while observing rehearsals before Belgian AirForce Days from outside the base. Sometimes the aircraft doesn't have to fill the whole frame.





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F-35 is not considered the most beautiful aircraft in the world, but one thing needs to be said – a skilled pilot can make it create its' own clouds event in moderate conditions. To me this photo taken during "dedication pass" is special for the shape vapors created just above one of the engine intakes – it reminds me of a skull.





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This has been the most spectacular moment of all editions of Antidotum Airshow Leszno (Poland) - Polish AirForce C-130 Hercules popping 320 flares, the act called "the angel of death". One of these jaw-dropping and long awaited moments of the airshow.





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Pitts is an airplane built for aerobatics. This here is tweaked up a bit and has small additional jet engines installed on the sides. It was quite a surprise when a prop plane all of a sudden started making noise like a jet. Richard Goddwin at the controls is a guarantee of some impressive flying.



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Swiss PC-7 Team during Antidotum Airshow Leszno (Poland).
Seeing incoming airplanes head-on always gives me goosebumps.





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F-35 photographed during high speed pass on a wet day of AirPower Zeltweg (Austria).





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Once in a while weather during an airshow is just right to witness magic happen. So it was on one of the days of AirPower 2024 during Greek Zeus Demo Team.



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One more magical moment of AirPower 2024 with the Finnish Hornet shot into the sun and clouds.



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FOTOGRAFIA

Airbus A400 Atlas is an impressive aircraft for its size and German Luftwaffe pilots sure know how to fly it. AirPower Zeltweg is a great place to take unique pictures due to the mountains as the background and weather conditions.





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Maciej Kulaszewski - one of the best Polish aerobatics pilots in his Extra during an Air2Air meeting. Check out his smile, flying is an awesome experience.



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Lim-2 (licensed version of russian MiG-15) of Fubar Aviation during an Air2Air meeting. A kind of photos you consider "once in a lifetime" for the combination of magical light, dark clouds in the back and an aircraft incoming fast.



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German Luftwaffe has always sent its representatives to Antidotum Airshow Leszno, but in 2025 it was Eurocopter Tiger for the first time. This is one of just a few shots I managed to capture at 1/25 sec.





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Seeing older military aircraft is really rare these days. This Dassault Mirage 2000 was one of a four ship pass in the Vouraikos Gorge a few days before Iniochos 2026 military exercise. This particular one came really close to the photographers with afterburner on causing a state of euphoria.

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Turkish Stars captured during Ostrava NATO Days 2025 from outside the airfield.
This kind of shots require a lot luck and observation how the airplanes fly and what spot would be the best to capture the maximum effect.





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French Air and Space Force Rafale Solo Display showed an impressive skill and airframe abilities during Ostrava NATO Days 2025. Here is a photo of the plane against the clouds so that you can see the exhaust gases.



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PRESS
EDITORS'
CHOICE
AWARDMichał Ludwiczak
FOTOGRAFIA

The most awaited, near mythical, aircraft announced for AirPower 2022 in Zeltweg was the B-52 bomber. For obvious reasons it did only a few flybys, but the most impressive one was high above the clouds with shadow casted upon the clouds below.





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FOTOGRAFIA

The Red Arrows are known for very precise flying. They put on one of the best formation flying shows I've seen on Malta in 2025.





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Axalp is a name real aviation lovers recognize as the mythical place. That is where you can see the Swiss F/A-18 Hornets, Pilatuses and Super Pumas fly in the Alps. Place I visited 3 times and still can't get enough. Here is a moment showing a Hornet do a sneak pass to surprise the audience.



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I really prefer places where the photographer can be above the aircraft for taking pictures. This is not possible during standard air-shows, but there are also other events like military exercises when one can take pictures. This Greek AirForce F-16 was one of many aircraft flying in the Vouraikos Gorge in central Greece.





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Belgian F-16 Demo with Vador at the controls during Sanicole International Airshow sunset show (Belgium).



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Axalp Demonstration is the source of many unforgettable moments such as this one - four F/A-18 Hornets together with Hawker Hunter in the salamander livery. All this spiced up with a touch of flares.



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Scandinavian Airshow Catwalk in a wider view to show the beauty of colorful smoke they create while flying. Photo taken during Fly Fest 2024 in Piotrków Trybunalski (Poland).



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The Scandinavian Airshow Catwalk is always a pleasant sight. The skill of the pilot and the cat-ladies combined with all the colorful smoke always impresses me.





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Axalp (Switzerland) is mostly spoken of regarding F/A-18 Hornets. Let us not forget that before accessing jets Swiss pilots train on Pilatus turboprops. One of the attractions of 2023 demonstration was PC-21 showing the pilot's extraordinary skills.





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Vari Gyula presenting his incredible skills in inverted flight during one of Air2Air meetings.





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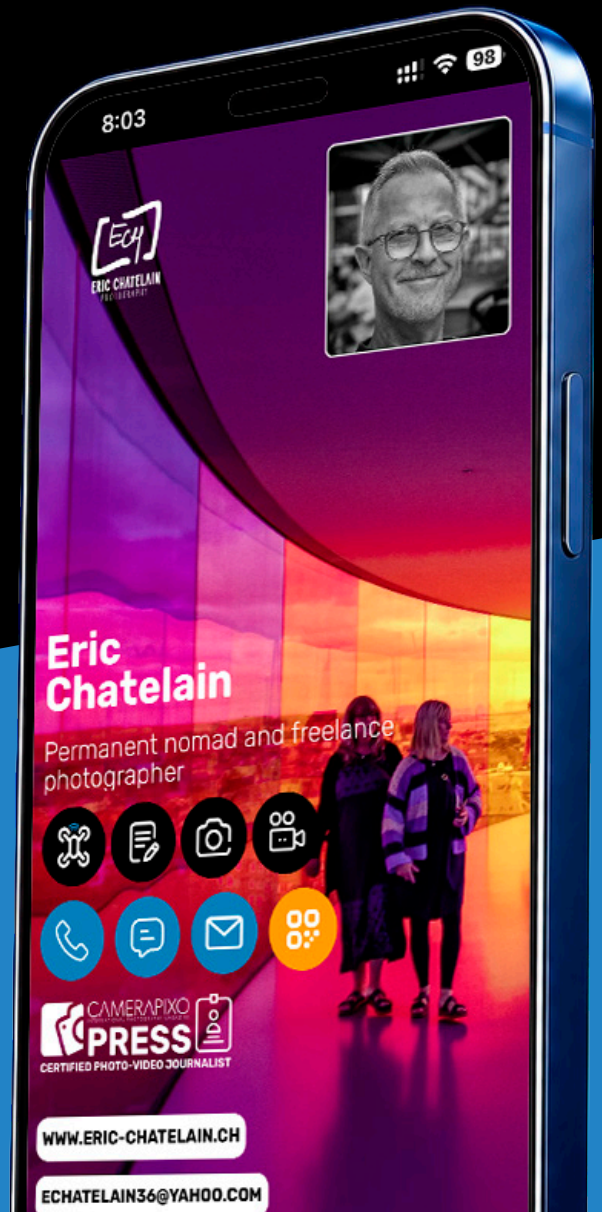


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01 WHERE DID YOUR INTEREST IN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY COME FROM, AND WHAT MADE THIS SUBJECT BECOME PART OF YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY?

I had been interested in photography since elementary school. I loved taking a camera with me on outdoor trips and, with a Russian camera hanging around my neck and 24 frames at my disposal, I captured the beauty of nature.

Not much from that period has survived, and in my case the real development came with the era of digital photography. First, I used simple compact cameras, then I decided to buy a DSLR, and that was when the fun began seriously.

As a self-taught photographer, I decided to support my knowledge with photography courses. Together with two other photographers, we rented a place and adapted it into a photography studio.

In the studio, I was improving my portrait photography, but out of the corner of my eye I was constantly watching the work of my friends – aviation photographers. It was they who started a passion to which I soon devoted myself completely.

02 WAS AVIATION ALREADY PRESENT IN YOUR LIFE BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHY, OR WAS IT PHOTOGRAPHY THAT BROUGHT YOU CLOSER TO THAT WORLD?

Before that, I had very little contact with aviation.

My love for flying machines was sparked by my friends, who had been photographing aircraft for years and introduced me to this beautiful world. My journey began with a trip to the Radom Air Show in 2009, so from their perspective, I can safely be called a newcomer.

After my very first airshow, I knew this was it.

The adrenaline, the excitement, the goosebumps—all of it captured within the small window of a viewfinder, where precision, anticipation, and quick reactions mattered most.

The same emotions have stayed with me ever since. They are there when I watch aircraft in the sky, and they are there whenever I pick up a camera. For me, these two elements are inseparable, and together they bring me the greatest satisfaction.

03 WHAT MOVES YOU MOST WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING AIRCRAFT—THEIR DESIGN, HISTORY, SOUND, SPEED, SCALE, OR THE ATMOSPHERE OF AVIATION EVENTS?

Photographing aircraft has many dimensions for me.

On one hand, it is a wonderful opportunity to meet new people and spend enjoyable time at airshows among a large community of fellow enthusiasts. On the other hand, it is also something I describe as a “*nothing box*.”

Photography is often my way of calming down and finding inner peace. Thanks to it, everyday worries fade into the background. I close myself inside a bubble where there is only me, the camera, and the aircraft.

Every flying object has its own beauty. Every aircraft is interesting in its own way. Every one of them can be photographed beautifully. That being said, supersonic fighter jets always evoke the strongest emotions in me.



04

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE PEOPLE BEHIND AVIATION TO YOU—PILOTS, MECHANICS, ORGANIZERS, SPECTATORS, AND FELLOW ENTHUSIASTS?

Aviation photography truly spreads its wings thanks to people of goodwill.

Because of the people I have met along the way, it has become possible for me to photograph aircraft not only from behind a fence, but also inside military bases and civilian airports. Every such visit is an absolutely unique experience.

The people who work with aircraft are a reflection of passion and dedication.

I am also extremely happy that aviation enthusiasts in Poland organize airshows of a truly world-class standard. In search of unique aircraft and photographs, I travel all over the world, but my heart is always happiest when it comes to our local initiatives.

05

IS THERE A PARTICULAR AIRCRAFT, AIRSHOW, OR AVIATION EVENT THAT HAS STAYED WITH YOU AND THAT YOU OFTEN FIND YOURSELF THINKING ABOUT?

The Su-22 and its various appearances at the air base in Świdwin hold a special place in my heart. Together with my friends, we have some wonderful photographic memories that can never be recreated, as these aircraft have now been retired from service.

As for a place, my heart definitely beats fastest in Wales, among the valleys of the Mach Loop. The climb itself is rewarded with the opportunity to photograph aircraft against a stunning backdrop, flying at eye level. It is the kind of view every aviation photographer dreams of.

06

HOW DO YOU VIEW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHOTOGRAPHING MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AVIATION? DOES EACH TELL A DIFFERENT STORY?

Military aviation is definitely closer to my heart. Through my photographs, I try to convey the power, speed, and strength of military aircraft. At the same time, I also greatly appreciate photographs of civilian aircraft presented in unexpected ways, showing the beauty of the elements around them.

I respect people who use photography to document and collect aircraft registrations, but that is not my world. I am not creating a catalogue of aircraft—I want to create images that evoke emotions.

07

IN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY, DO YOU LOOK MORE FOR SPECTACULAR MOMENTS, OR FOR IMAGES THAT CAPTURE SILENCE, CONCENTRATION, AND ANTICIPATION?

Beautiful photography has many faces, and people's tastes can vary greatly.

Personally, I like dynamics. I like photographs that feel alive. I enjoy images that make you imagine what happened a moment before and what happened a moment after the frame was captured.

Chasing exceptional moments is always the icing on the cake at any airshow, and it brings a great deal of excitement. Very often, those moments appear completely unexpectedly, which only adds to the thrill.

At the same time, photographing the scenes behind the action is just as interesting. I always enjoy looking at—and creating—photographs that reveal genuine human emotions.

08

WHAT ROLE DOES THE LOCATION ITSELF PLAY IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY—WHETHER IT'S AN AIRPORT, AIR BASE, AIRSHOW, HANGAR, RUNWAY, OR THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE?

Every location offers different possibilities, and each of them is special in its own way.

It is natural that anyone who has been photographing aircraft for a longer period of time starts developing a game plan before even arriving on location—choosing the best positions and trying to predict where particular shots can be captured.

Very often, we also adjust our shooting positions after becoming familiar with the terrain or learning the flight paths of the aircraft.

Whenever possible, we try to use the character of the landscape or the weather conditions to add something extra to the photograph.

But sometimes the aircraft itself does all the work.

09

DO YOU SOMETIMES SEE AIRCRAFT NOT ONLY AS MACHINES, BUT ALSO AS SYMBOLS OF FREEDOM, TECHNOLOGY, HISTORY, OR HUMANITY'S DREAM OF FLIGHT?

Above all, I see history and human stories in them. When I photograph older military aircraft, I always think about the people who once sat in their cockpits. The smell of jet fuel is also the smell of history.

Every rivet in the airframe, every trace of wear and tear tells a story of fear, triumph, the hard work of mechanics, and the courage of pilots. When I photograph these aircraft, I try to pay tribute to the generations who built and defended our world before us.

10

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY INTERESTING EVEN TO PEOPLE WHO DO NOT KNOW AIRCRAFT TYPES OR FOLLOW AVIATION EVENTS?

For most people, an aircraft in a photograph becomes part of a beautiful landscape.

After all, good aviation photography is a combination of light, shadow, and background, and the average person does not have access to such scenes in everyday life.

An aircraft pushing through towering storm clouds, the silhouette of a jet illuminated against the darkness of night, or the perfect geometry of several aircraft flying in formation—this is visual art.

People look at such an image and see beauty, harmony, and the magic of the world above us, rather than a specific aircraft model or its year of production.

11

HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE PHOTOGRAPHS THAT BEST CAPTURE NOT ONLY THE AIRCRAFT ITSELF, BUT ALSO THE EMOTIONS AND ATMOSPHERE OF A PARTICULAR MOMENT?

The secret lies in capturing micro-moments. When reviewing dozens of images from a sequence, I look for that one specific fraction of a second that makes all the difference.

It might be the moment when a pilot briefly turns their head toward the camera. It could be the flash of flares released at the perfect point during a maneuver, or the smoke rising from the wheels at the moment of a hard landing.

I choose photographs that capture tension—the second before an aircraft leaves the ground or the moment of maximum G-force during a maneuver.

If I can see that energy and human presence in the image, then I know I have found the right photograph.

12 WHAS AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY CHANGED THE WAY YOU LOOK AT THE SKY, TRAVEL, SPACE, OR MOVEMENT?

Definitely. Aviation photography has made me stop seeing the sky as a static background. For me, it has become a dynamic stage—a theatre where the scenery and the light are constantly changing.

Wherever I am, I subconsciously assess the clarity of the air. When I watch a maneuvering fighter jet, I automatically trace its flight path in my mind and look for the points where the G-forces are at their peak.

It has also made me realize just how vast the space above us really is, and how much precision is required to master it.

Movement has ceased to be simply a way of getting from one place to another. Instead, it has become a form of energy—something I try to capture and preserve within a single frame.

13 IS THERE AN AVIATION LOCATION, EVENT, OR SUBJECT YOU WOULD STILL LIKE TO PHOTOGRAPH IN THE FUTURE?

I would love to visit Rainbow Canyon in California. Although, because of the 2019 accident and the restrictions introduced afterward, it is no longer possible to expect the most spectacular photographic opportunities there.

Even so, it remains near the top of my list.

Another lifelong dream is not only to photograph an aircraft carrier, but to experience being on one.

Anyone who enjoys Top Gun will know exactly the kind of atmosphere I mean.

I think it would be an experience unlike any other.

14 ARE THERE ANY PHOTOGRAPHERS, CREATORS, OR PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH AVIATION WHO PARTICULARLY INSPIRE YOU? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU VALUE IN THEIR WORK, AND HOW HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR OWN APPROACH TO AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

From the very beginning, my greatest mentor has been my friend Marcin Nowaczyk. For many years, we have been learning from each other.

I admire Marcin for his outstanding photographic technique, his meticulous approach to post-processing, and I will always be grateful to him for introducing me to the world of aviation photography.

I also draw inspiration from the entire team behind the AviationPictures.pl project. Special thanks to Damian and Hubert—I truly appreciate the journey we have shared together. 





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An-225, Schonefeld.





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Vans RV-4, Leszno.





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Su-22, Mirosławiec.



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Belgium Air Force, Augusta A109, Sanicole.





Belgium Air Force, Augusta A109, Sanicole.



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Belgium Air Force, Augusta A109, Sanicole.





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Belgium Air Force, F-16 AM, Ostrawa.





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C-130 Hercules, Leszno.



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Denmark Air Force, General Dynamics F-16AM, Sanicole.



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Douglas DC-3, Mazury.



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Eurofighter Ostrawa.



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F-16 Lask.





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F-16C, Łask.

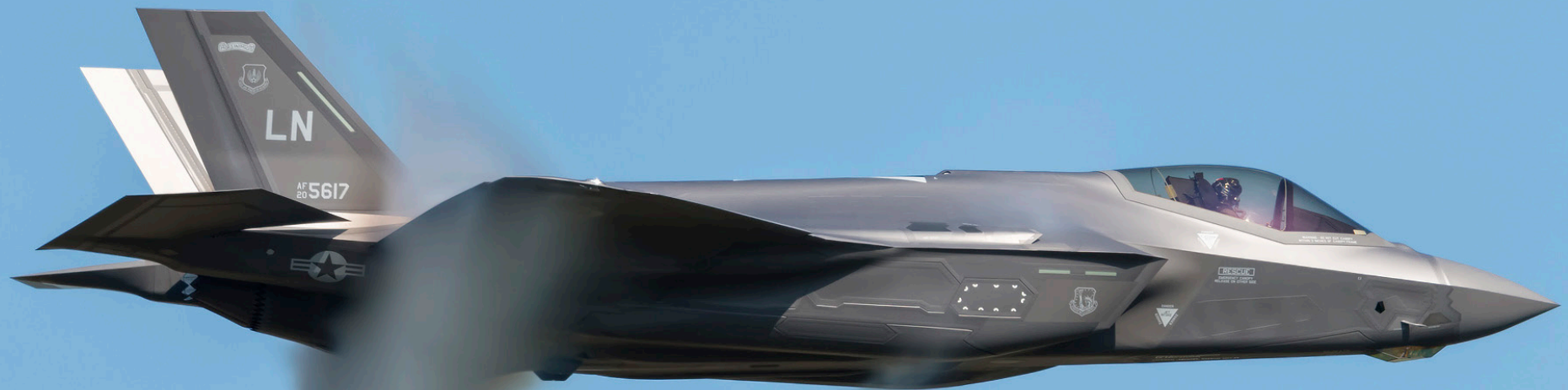




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F-35 Ostrava.



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A400, Mach Loop.





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France Air Force, Rafale, Ostrawa.





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Germany Air Force, Eurofighter, Schönefeld.



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Italy Air Force, Leonardo M-346 Master, Ostrawa.





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MiG-29GT, Malbork. Night training exercises.



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Patrouille Swiss, Sanicole.





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Polish Air Force MiG-29 GT, Świdwin.





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Polish Air Force, F-16C, Leszno.



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USAF, Lockheed Martin F-35 A Lightning II, Mach Loop.



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Polish Air Force, F-16C, Radom.



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Polish Air Force, F-16C, Leszno.





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Polish Air Force, MiG-29G, Malbork.



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Polish Air Force, Świdwin.



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Red Arrows, Ostrawa.



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Switzerland Air Force, Eurocopter AS 532, Leszno.






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The Flying Bulls, Leszno.



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Ukraine Air Force Su-27 Radom.



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USAF, Boeing F-15E Strike Eagle, Łask.





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01 TODAY, AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR LIFE. WHAT MAKES YOU KEEP RETURNING TO THE AIRPORT WITH THE SAME ENTHUSIASM, EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?

Photographing aircraft is my way of relieving stress. Because of my job and professional responsibilities, I am not able to devote as much time to it as I would like, but I can always find a moment to head out to the airport.

Katowice Airport is my home airport. I know every section of the fence there. I know when, where, and what kind of photographs to take.

Apart from these usually spontaneous visits, there are also airshows. That is where I meet people from all over the country who share the same passion. Thanks to airshows, I also get to see different parts of the world.

I recently returned from the United States, where I came back with a huge amount of great photographic material.

02 WHEN YOU LOOK AT AN AIRCRAFT, WHAT ATTRACTS YOU MOST AS A PHOTOGRAPHER— THE AIRCRAFT ITSELF, THE LIGHT, THE MOVEMENT, THE EMOTIONS, OR THE STORY BEHIND A PARTICULAR FLIGHT?

In truth, all of the things mentioned in the question. Sometimes I go to the airport because I expect favorable weather conditions. When that happens, I try to capture everything that takes off or lands at that particular moment. Later, I select the photographs that appeal to me the most.

The moments after rainfall are especially interesting. That is when a visible “blanket” forms over the aircraft as airflow separates from its surface.

The time of day is also important. Snow and frost can create interesting opportunities as well. During such conditions, aircraft often undergo de-icing procedures.

The time of day matters too. I avoid photographing aircraft on runways or taxiways during the middle of the day, especially in summer, because heat distortion causes the air to shimmer and softens the image.

03 YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS OFTEN CAPTURE NOT ONLY THE AIRCRAFT, BUT ALSO THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE LOCATION. HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE SURROUNDINGS AND CONDITIONS IN WHICH YOU PHOTOGRAPH?

Sometimes I have to fight to make my image different from all the others. It is not easy, and I do not always succeed, but I keep trying. Very often, I arrive at a location with a specific image already in my mind. Sometimes it takes multiple visits because I am unable to capture exactly what I had planned.

There are also photographs that can never be repeated. In those situations, a great deal of effort is required to avoid ruining the shot. It does not always work out, and when it does not, the photograph ends up in the proverbial drawer. If there is an opportunity, I try again.

The surroundings are extremely important.

Apart from the main subject—the aircraft—there is also the background. The background matters a great deal. It should not distract the viewer from the main subject. It should not be cluttered.

If there is too much happening around the aircraft, I crop the image more tightly so that a particular detail becomes the focus.



04 DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE TIME OF DAY FOR PHOTOGRAPHING AIRCRAFT? WHAT MAKES PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN AT THAT TIME FEEL SO SPECIAL?

Sunrise! Yes, that is my favorite time for photography. Many times, I have gone to the airport before work and before sunrise so that I could be ready at exactly the right moment.

Thanks to various apps, I know precisely where the sun will rise. I then check whether any aircraft are scheduled to take off or land during that time.

Photographs taken with the rising sun are still a challenge for me. The reason is simple—the sun rises very quickly. There is only a short window of opportunity, often no more than a dozen minutes, to capture something truly interesting. During that time, an aircraft also has to appear, and as we all know, that part is never guaranteed.

Sunset is not quite as appealing to me, although it is beautiful as well.

Sunrise requires a little more effort because you have to get up very early. Besides, at my favorite airport in Kato-owice, a large number of aircraft depart at that time of day, which gives me a better chance of success.

05 HOW HAS YOUR VIEW OF AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY CHANGED OVER THE YEARS? DO YOU LOOK FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT IN YOUR IMAGES TODAY THAN YOU DID WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED?

I have learned a great deal from my fellow spotters over the years. I can clearly see a huge improvement in my own skills, but the way I look at photographs remains the same—to create an image that makes people say, “wow.”

Sometimes it is simply a matter of taking one step to the side. Sometimes I find myself walking through bushes in search of that one particular frame.

Aircraft photography is very specific because there is no studio environment. Finding a strong composition is, in many ways, the very essence of what I do.

06 DO YOU EVER RETURN TO THE SAME LOCATION REPEATEDLY JUST TO CAPTURE IT UNDER DIFFERENT CONDITIONS OR IN DIFFERENT LIGHT?

Yes, and quite often. Photographing aircraft is a bit like hunting. The aircraft will not adapt to me—I have to adapt to it.

Sometimes things simply do not come together the way they should, and you have to try again.

There is one particular image I once saw that stayed in my mind. I liked it so much that I decided to recreate something similar myself. It requires very specific weather conditions, a rising sun, and an aircraft in motion. Capturing all of those elements at the same time will be very difficult, but I keep trying.

07 WHAT ROLE DOES PATIENCE PLAY IN PLANE SPOTTING? HAVE THERE BEEN OCCASIONS WHEN YOU WAITED FAR LONGER FOR A PHOTOGRAPH THAN ANYONE WOULD EXPECT?

Absolutely. Patience is essential. Besides passenger aircraft, there are also military aircraft. And those are the real test of patience.

They may fly—or they may not.

Even when such flights appear on a schedule, what actually happens on a given day ultimately depends on the military. You can travel to a location, spend an entire day by the fence, and nothing takes off at all.

As for the conditions I mentioned in the previous question, I have already been waiting for them for two years.

I have set the bar high for myself, but fortune favors the bold.

08 SPOTTERS OFTEN FORM A CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY. WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER AVIATION ENTHUSIASTS?

The fact that everyone is different, yet we are all connected by the same passion.

People are willing to help each other. If your battery dies, someone will lend you one. If you run out of memory card space, someone will help with that too.

One of the things I value most is the constant exchange of knowledge, experiences, and observations, as well as the opportunity to meet new people all the time.

Conversations start very quickly when someone else shows up by the fence with a camera. Sometimes those conversations become so engaging that I end up missing the very aircraft I was waiting for.

Thanks to those interactions, I am constantly learning something new. And whenever someone asks for help, I am always happy to share what I know.

I am a member of the EPKT Spotters Association. The president of our association always says that photographs are not the most important thing.

What matters most is spending time with people who are just as passionate about aircraft as I am.

09 ARE THERE ANY AIRCRAFT OR AIRLINES THAT STILL MAKE YOUR HEART BEAT A LITTLE FASTER WHEN THEY APPEAR ON THE HORIZON?

Of course. Any rare aircraft appearing on the horizon can make my heart beat faster. It might be a particular aircraft type that is rarely seen, or an aircraft that has only recently been restored.

Every warbird also brings excitement. We are always eager for the chance to see an aircraft that may have served during World War II or the Vietnam War.

A great deal of credit goes to the people who dedicate their time, energy, and resources to preserving these aircraft and keeping them flying. Spotters often express their appreciation through photographs.

Sometimes it is not the aircraft itself, but a particular livery that captures attention. The more distinctive the paint scheme, the better.

And occasionally, all it takes is a small detail that sets an aircraft apart from the standard colors of a particular airline.

10 AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY IS OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH MEN. AS A WOMAN IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU BRING A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE TO THIS PASSION OR TO THE WAY YOU PHOTOGRAPH?

It is true that there are fewer women in this community, although our numbers continue to grow.

Do I see things differently? Probably not.

I think people still tend to look differently at a woman standing on a ladder by an airport fence. When I first took my mother spotting with me, she was surprised to discover that there were more girls just as crazy about aircraft as I am.

People who share the same passion understand each other, regardless of gender.

11 WHAT EQUIPMENT DO YOU CURRENTLY USE, AND WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING FAST-MOVING AIRCRAFT?

I currently use a Canon mirrorless camera. I like these cameras very much.

I used to shoot with a DSLR, but those are gradually becoming a thing of the past. For me, the most important features are fast autofocus and the ability to shoot continuous bursts.

Mirrorless cameras perform much better in the conditions that spotters often encounter. Sometimes everything happens very quickly and dynamically.

Another major advantage is my 100–500mm lens. This combination works exceptionally well for me.

Before that, I only had a 70–200mm lens, and even with that lens I managed to capture many great photographs.

Add a fast memory card capable of handling long bursts, and that's all you need.

That being said, it is not true that you need this kind of equipment to take good photographs. You absolutely can create great images without it. All you need is enthusiasm and a trip to the airport fence.

There will almost certainly be someone willing to help or offer advice. I met people like that along the way, and that is one of the things I really appreciate about this community.

12 IS THERE AN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPH THAT YOU ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF—ONE THAT BEST REFLECTS THE WAY YOU SEE AVIATION?

For me, every photograph is special because each one has a story behind it.

Some stories are more spectacular than others, but every image is connected to a particular moment or experience.

I am very selective when it comes to choosing which photographs to share. Sometimes I will post an image that is not technically perfect, but it has something special about it.

Fortunately, in many cases it turns out that my followers feel the same way.

13 WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE PEOPLE WITH NO CONNECTION TO AVIATION TO NOTICE IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS WHEN THEY SEE THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME?

That depends on what is shown in the photograph.

If it is a jet aircraft, I try to make the viewer see its power, energy, and dynamism. There are several ways to achieve that. One is to focus on the aircraft's afterburner, while another is to photograph it using the panning technique.

It is not easy. Usually, out of an entire sequence of images, only one or two photographs turn out sharp.

If the photograph is taken in particularly interesting natural surroundings, I want the viewer to notice those surroundings in the same way I saw them.

And if the aircraft is especially large, I try to photograph it in a way that allows the viewer to appreciate its size. I usually include an additional element in the frame to provide a sense of scale.

14 ARE THERE ANY PHOTOGRAPHERS, PILOTS, OR PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH AVIATION WHO PARTICULARLY INSPIRE YOU? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU VALUE IN THEIR WORK, AND HOW HAVE THEY INFLUENCED THE WAY YOU SEE AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

There is no single person who has inspired me more than anyone else.

Over the years, my greatest inspiration has come from individual photographs rather than from the people who created them.

Many times, I have tried to recreate a photograph after seeing someone else's image. After all, imitation is the highest form of flattery.

The many hours spent talking with other spotters by the airport fence have also been a source of inspiration. That is how I learned—step by step.

Along the way, I also spent time reading about photographic techniques that work well in this type of photography.

Composition is fundamental, but when you start with strong raw material, it gives you much more freedom to work with later. 





© JUSTYNA SZLEDAK

Thanks to the hospitality of the 31st Tactical Air Base, I had the opportunity to observe a day of operations. The photograph features a USAF Lockheed C-130H Hercules transport aircraft.

 © JUSTYNA SZLENDAK

A rare visit of a Boeing 747, better known as the Jumbo Jet, to Katowice. While waiting for the aircraft, I climbed into a ditch to get a better angle. It ended with a few ant bites, but I believe it was worth it.



© JUSTYNA SZLENDAK

A beautiful sunrise in Frankfurt. In the background, the city skyline and the increasingly rare Airbus A340. It is one of the few airliners still flying with four engines.

JustSpotting

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Sunrise at Katowice Airport. An Airbus A320 is preparing for departure. It has entered the runway and will begin its takeoff roll shortly.

JustSpotting



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A Swiss Eurocopter Super Puma performing at the Antidotum Airshow in Leszno. Its appearance became an almost annual tradition and was always impressive. Photographers eagerly waited for this flare deployment with their fingers on the shutter button.



An aircraft landing late in the afternoon in Kraków on Runway 25. The illuminated approach lights add a special touch to the image. The location where this photograph was taken is well known among local residents and aviation photographers alike—a spot known simply as “the hill.”

JustSpotting



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De-icing operations at Katowice Airport. The aircraft is sprayed with glycol to remove ice from critical surfaces before departure. In this photograph, I also managed to capture the effect of vapor being drawn into the running engine.

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JustSpotting

A panoramic view of Katowice Airport from the control tower. Moments earlier, a storm with rain and small hail passed over the airport, creating a rainbow nearby. One aircraft is waiting for clearance to enter the runway while another lands safely.

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Another sunrise. The airflow causes the remaining glycol from the de-icing process to separate from the aircraft's surface.

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An Airbus pushed back from its stand and preparing to taxi for departure. The photograph was taken at dusk, with the taxiway lighting adding extra atmosphere to the scene.



JustSpotting

A glider aerobatic team performing with pyrotechnic effects during the Antidotum Airshow in Leszno. Capturing a photograph like this requires many attempts and a steady hand.



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A Boeing 787 Dreamliner undergoing technical inspection before a long-haul flight. The photograph was taken from a public parking area. A member of the ground crew briefly illuminated the aircraft with a flashlight, creating an interesting effect together with the lighting on the nose landing gear.



© JUSTYNA SZLENDAK

An ATR 72 taxiing to its stand while being guided by a marshaller. The image was intentionally captured this way to show both the movement of the aircraft and the motion of the marshaller's signaling wands. This photograph was made possible thanks to Katowice Airport, which regularly invites spotters onto the apron, providing opportunities for photographs from the better side of the fence.

 © JUSTYNA SZLENDAK

JustSpotting



Kraków sunsets are truly special. There is one particular time of year when, whenever I can, I make the trip to Kraków. The sun sets perfectly in line with the runway, creating beautiful photographic opportunities. The photograph shows an Airbus slowing down after landing.



© JUSTYNA SZLENDAK

The Flying Dragons powered paraglider team performing during an airshow at Ogródzieniec Castle.



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The Flying Dragons powered paraglider team performing during an airshow at Ogródzieniec Castle.

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Dramatic airflow separation visible along the fuselage of an F-35 Lightning II.

JustSpotting

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Another photograph made possible thanks to the hospitality of the 31st Tactical Air Base in Poznań-Krzesiny. The image shows an F-16 fighter jet undergoing inspection shortly before flight operations.

JustSpotting



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Sunrise at Katowice Airport and an Airbus A320neo. This aircraft can easily be identified by its large engines.





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A Mi-24 Hind attack helicopter during engine start-up at the 56th Air Base in Inowrocław. This photograph was possible thanks to the cooperation of the base.

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An F-35 Lightning II B during a demonstration at the Hyundai Air & Sea Show. The aircraft's afterburner clearly indicates the tremendous speed at which it was flying.



JustSpotting

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The same aircraft with visible airflow separation over the fuselage.



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An F-22 Raptor displaying visible airflow separation. This fifth-generation fighter is capable of remarkable maneuvers thanks to its thrust-vectoring technology.



JustSpotting



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The same aircraft photographed from the rear, with the afterburners visible and airflow separation clearly apparent along the fuselage.

AVIAION





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The USAF Arsenal of Freedom Flyby during an airshow in the United States. The photograph features the largest bomber in the formation—the eight-engine B-52 Stratofortress—accompanied by an A-10 Thunderbolt, an F/A-18 Hornet, and an F-16.

JustSpotting

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An F-22 Raptor deploying flares during an airshow demonstration. These thermal countermeasures form part of the aircraft's defensive systems.

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The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds aerobatic team flying F-16 Fighting Falcons during an airshow in Florida, performing the famous Calypso Pass. The aircraft are numbered sequentially, with the numbers painted upside down on one side. During this maneuver, aircraft number 5 appears correctly oriented even though it is flying inverted.

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One of the Thunderbirds' most spectacular maneuvers. The aircraft fly in extremely close formation, demonstrating extraordinary precision and teamwork.





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THE MULTILINGUAL
INTERVIEW



01 WHAT DOES AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY MEAN TO YOU — DOCUMENTING AIRCRAFT, OR TELLING STORIES ABOUT SPACE, MOVEMENT, AND PEOPLE?

At first, it was primarily a fascination with aircraft. I wanted to photograph them, document them, and learn more about them.

Over time, however, I realized that the aircraft is often only the main character in a much larger story. I became interested in the light, the emotions of the people who work with these machines, maintain them, and fly them.

Today, I would say that aviation photography is, above all, a form of storytelling, with the aircraft serving as one of its most important elements.

02 DO YOU REMEMBER THE MOMENT WHEN YOU FIRST SAW AN AIRCRAFT AS A PHOTOGRAPHIC SUBJECT RATHER THAN SIMPLY A TECHNICAL OBJECT?

Yes, I do.

It was many years ago at an airshow. At some point, I stopped paying attention to specifications, performance figures, and aircraft types, and started noticing the light, the silhouette, and the emotions created by an aircraft passing overhead.

That was when I realized that the same aircraft could look completely different depending on the conditions, the moment, and the way it was presented in a photograph.

That was the moment when technology gave way to photography.

03 WHAT IS MORE DIFFICULT: CAPTURING AN AIRCRAFT AT THE PERFECT MOMENT, OR CONVEYING THE ATMOSPHERE OF AN ENTIRE AVIATION EVENT?

A perfect aircraft shot requires knowledge, experience, and a bit of luck.

Capturing the atmosphere of an event, however, is more difficult. An aircraft may be visible for only a few seconds, but the atmosphere is created by the people, the weather, the emotions, and hundreds of small moments unfolding around it.

Sometimes a single photograph of a technician watching an aircraft depart says more than a perfect flyby captured from the ideal angle.



04**HOW DO YOU BUILD A NARRATIVE IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS WHEN THE AIRCRAFT YOU ARE PHOTOGRAPHING MAY APPEAR IN THE SKY FOR ONLY A FEW SECONDS?**

The narrative begins long before I press the shutter button.

I try to understand the location, the light, the character of the event, and anticipate what might happen. Those few seconds in the air are the culmination of something much larger.

That is why I photograph not only the flight itself, but also the preparations, the people, and the surroundings. In this way, a single photograph becomes part of a larger story.

Increasingly, these are also stories that I create from the ground up myself. Over the past few years, I have moved from photographing reality as it unfolds to creating my own original projects that I conceive, plan, and organize.

This gives me the opportunity to tell stories about aviation not only through the documentation of events, but also through images that first existed in my imagination.

05**IN AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY, ARE YOU MORE INTERESTED IN POWER AND DYNAMICS, OR IN THE SILENCE, ANTICIPATION, AND TENSION BEFORE A FLYBY?**

The most interesting thing is the combination of both worlds.

I love the energy of a MiG-29 climbing vertically into the sky with its after-burners engaged, but I can be equally captivated by a moment of silence before takeoff, when the pilot is already in the cockpit and everything around is focused and calm.

Dynamics create a strong impression, but tension often builds emotion far more effectively.

06**WHAT ROLE DO PEOPLE PLAY IN YOUR AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHS—PILOTS, MECHANICS, SPECTATORS, FLIGHT CREWS, AND AIRPORT PERSONNEL?**

A tremendous one.

The longer I work in aviation photography, the more clearly I see that every aircraft is supported by an entire team of people.

A pilot may perform an impressive display for a few minutes, but before that moment arrives, many people have worked for hours, days, and sometimes even years to make it possible.

I try to show aviation not only through the machines themselves, but also through the people and the passion behind them.

07**DO YOU THINK A GOOD AVIATION PHOTOGRAPH SHOULD ALSO BE UNDERSTANDABLE TO SOMEONE WHO KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT AIRCRAFT?**

Absolutely.

If a photograph works only because someone recognizes a specific aircraft type, its appeal is limited.

The best photographs can engage even a person who cannot tell a MiG-29 from an F-16. Emotions, light, composition, and storytelling are universal.

Since 2016, I have also been using drones as a tool in aviation photography. I was the first photographer in Poland to photograph MiG-29 aircraft using drones, and I continue to do so today, developing this form of photography and incorporating it into many of my own creative projects.

This allows me to present aviation from perspectives that are inaccessible to most viewers, while still remaining understandable and visually appealing even to people who are not interested in aviation on a daily basis.

08 HOW DO YOU FIND EMOTION IN A SUBJECT THAT MANY PEOPLE MIGHT CONSIDER HIGHLY TECHNICAL?

Aviation is not purely technical at all.

Emotions are everywhere—in the look of a pilot before a mission, in the concentration of a technician preparing an aircraft for flight, or in the atmosphere of anticipation just before takeoff.

I often find them in places where, at first glance, few people would think to look for them: in the golden light of a setting sun reflected on a fuselage, in the silhouette of an aircraft mirrored in a puddle, or in the play of light and shadow across an airfield.

In search of such unconventional images, I also use drones. For me, they have become not only a technical tool, but also a way of realizing my own photographic ideas and showing aviation from perspectives unavailable to an observer standing on the ground.

Even the aircraft itself can evoke emotion through its shape, movement, and the way it cuts through the sky.

You simply have to learn how to see it.

09 HAS PHOTOGRAPHING AVIATION CHANGED THE WAY YOU LOOK AT THE SKY, SPACE, AND DISTANCE?

Definitely.

Today, I look at the sky very differently from most people. I pay attention to the light, weather conditions, cloud formations, and the position of the sun.

Quite often, while others are simply admiring a beautiful sunset, I automatically begin imagining how an aircraft would look in that scene and what kind of photograph could be created from it.

Aviation photography has taught me to see the sky not merely as a background, but as a full-fledged element of a photograph—one that often determines the character of the entire image.

I suppose that is an occupational hazard.

10 HOW IMPORTANT ARE DETAILS TO YOU—MARKINGS, SIGNS OF WEAR, CONSTRUCTION FEATURES, OR LIGHT REFLECTED FROM THE FUSELAGE?

Details are extremely important because they often make the difference between a good photograph and a very good one.

Signs of wear, reflections of light, or distinctive markings add authenticity to an image.

I like it when a photograph allows the viewer to stay with a moment a little longer and discover details that are not immediately visible at first glance.

11 ARE THERE SITUATIONS IN WHICH YOU DELIBERATELY GIVE UP PERFECT SHARPNESS OR TECHNICAL PERFECTION IN FAVOR OF THE MOOD OF A PHOTOGRAPH?

Of course.

Photography is not a competition to create the sharpest image. If a slight blur, motion, or unusual lighting helps tell a story or convey the emotions of a moment, then those elements are more important to me than technical perfection.

A perfectly sharp photograph can be forgettable, while an image that is technically imperfect may remain in someone's memory for years.

12 WHEN YOU LOOK THROUGH YOUR ARCHIVE, WHICH PHOTOGRAPHS STAY WITH YOU THE LONGEST—THE MOST SPECTACULAR ONES OR THE MOST PERSONAL ONES?

Most often, the most personal ones.

Spectacular photographs are rewarding and often attract the greatest attention from my audience, but for me, the images that carry the most value are those connected to specific memories, people, or events.

Sometimes a photograph that appears ordinary to others

13 IF THERE IS ONE STORY ABOUT AVIATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL THROUGH YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS ONE DAY, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I would like to tell the complete story of the journey from a dream to flight.

A story about people who dedicate years of work, learning, and sacrifice for the chance to spend a brief moment above the ground.

Aviation is often associated with the spectacular finale, but I am fascinated by everything that happens behind the scenes.

That is the story I would like to tell.

14 ARE THERE ANY PHOTOGRAPHERS, CREATORS, OR PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH AVIATION WHO PARTICULARLY INSPIRE YOU? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU VALUE IN THEIR WORK, AND HOW HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON AVIATION PHOTOGRAPHY?

I draw inspiration from both well-known photographers and people directly involved in aviation.

I particularly admire creators who go beyond simply documenting aircraft and are able to convey emotion, scale, and the human element behind the machine.

My years of working alongside pilots and ground crews have also had a significant influence on me. Through them, I learned to see aviation from the inside and to understand stories that remain invisible to most observers.

They taught me that the best aviation photographs begin with understanding people, and only then with pressing the shutter button. 





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A MiG-29 taking off with afterburners engaged, photographed from a drone.



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WINGS OF VISION
STORIES OF FLIGHT, LIGHT AND PASSION



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A MiG-29 taxiing in the foreground with a Su-22 following behind, photographed at sunset.





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A MiG-29 during pre-flight checks on a freezing winter evening near sunset.



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A MiG-29 parked on the apron, captured through its reflection in water.





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A pair of MiG-29s parked on the apron during sunset.



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STORIES OF FLIGHT, LIGHT AND PASSION

AVIATION PHOTO



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A Su-22 photographed
from a drone in 2016
ahead of the air base
anniversary celebrations.

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A MiG-29 performing a dynamic maneuver. Shot directly into the sun, creating a dramatic and moody atmosphere.



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My 1:72 scale MiG-29 model
photographed inside the
exhaust nozzle of a real
MiG-29.





A Ukrainian Air Force Su-27UB photographed during AirShow Radom 2018.



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A Solo Türk F-16 performing a dynamic maneuver during AirShow Radom 2018.





A MiG-29 on the apron
photographed from a
drone.

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Photograph created for Military Aviation Works No. 2 during the "Tetris Challenge."



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A MiG-29 taxiing, photographed from a drone using a panning technique.



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MiG-29s parked on the apron, reflected in a massive puddle.





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A pair of Turkish F-16s photographed during an air-to-air session over the Baltic Sea.



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A MiG-29 photographed during an air-to-air session.





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A pair of MiG-29s photographed during an air-to-air session





A formation of F-4 Phantom aircraft photographed during an air-to-air session marking 50 years of Phantom operations in the Turkish Air Force.



A Royal Netherlands Air Force F-35A deploying flares over the Baltic Sea during an air-to-air session.



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A pair of Polish F-15s performing a dynamic break maneuver while deploying flares during a sunset air-to-air session.





A heavily armed Polish F-16 photographed from a drone in a top-down perspective.



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A pair of Polish F-15s performing a dynamic break maneuver while deploying flares during a post-sunset air-to-air session.



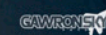


An Italian Eurofighter photographed from a drone on the runway after sunset.



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Photographed during the "Elephant Walk" photo session celebrating 18 years of F-16 operations in the Polish Air Force.



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An F-4 Phantom flying through a canyon during the Turkish Air Force's 50th anniversary Phantom celebrations.



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STORIES OF FLIGHT, LIGHT AND PASSION



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An F-4 Phantom flying through a canyon during the Turkish Air Force's 50th anniversary Phantom celebrations.





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A Polish F-16 and a Norwegian F-35A performing a dynamic maneuver during an air-to-air session.



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A pair of Polish Su-22s photographed during an air-to-air farewell session marking the end of Su-22 service in the Polish Air Force.





A formation of Polish Su-22s photographed during an air-to-air farewell session marking the end of Su-22 service in the Polish Air Force.



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A pair of Swedish JAS 39 Gripens performing a dynamic maneuver during an air-to-air session.





A MiG-29 performing a dramatic break with afterburners engaged during an air-to-air session.



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A MiG-29 taking off with afterburners engaged.



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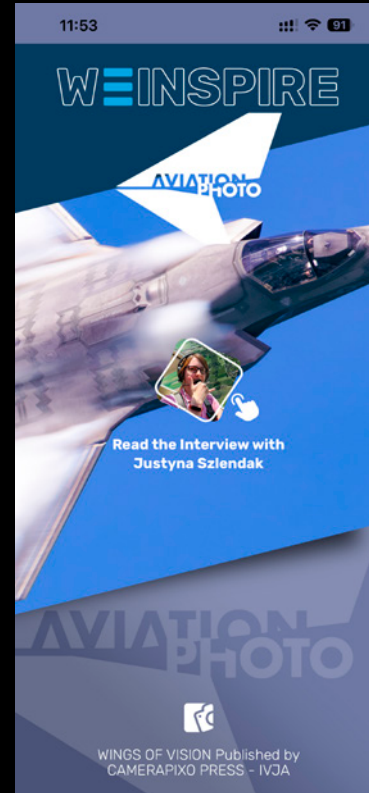
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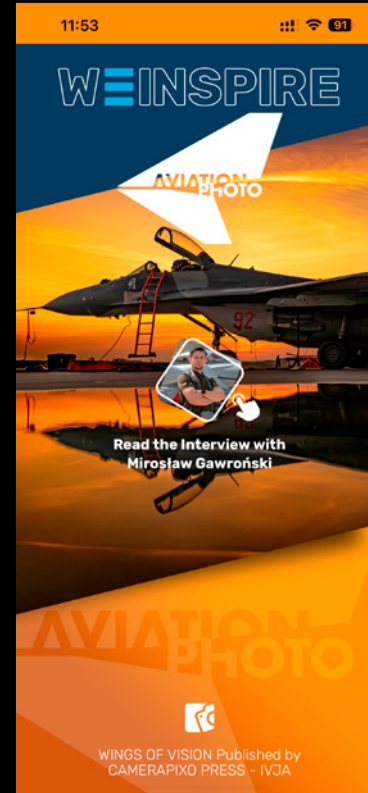
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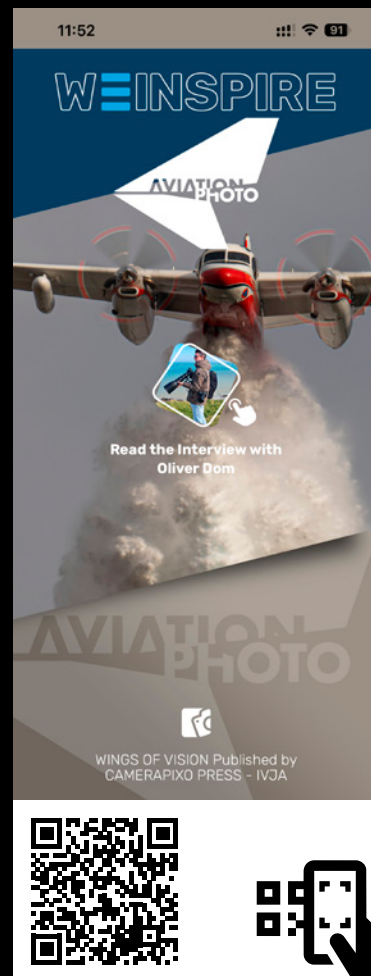
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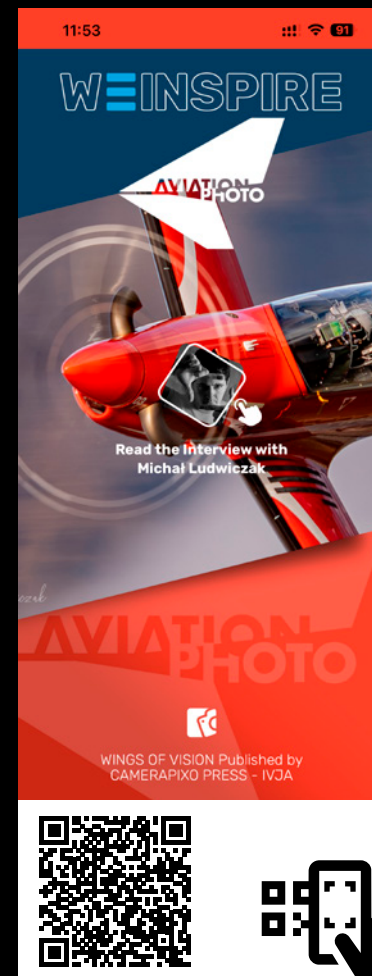
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