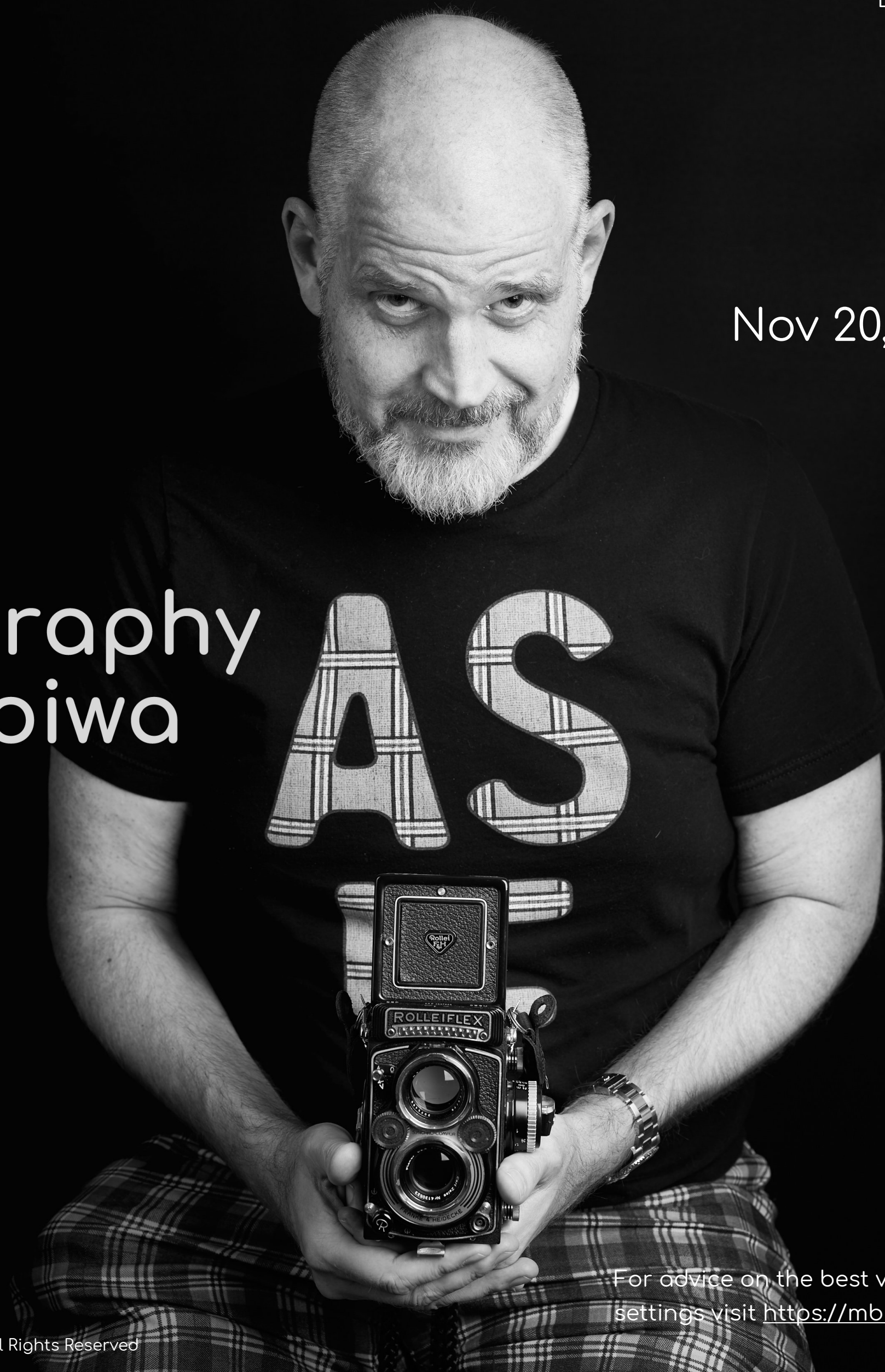


Nov 20, 2019

Urban Weird Photography with Brian Wood-Koiwa



For advice on the best viewing
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I'm really happy to be able to bring you an interview today with my friend Brian Wood-Koiwa, a Tokyo-based urban fine-art photographer. He has lived/worked and traveled around the world in places such as Qatar, Ecuador, Thailand, Australia, and as a Peace Corps Volunteer in central Africa, before settling down in Tokyo, where he has been living for over 17 years.

He calls his photographic style "Urban Weird", celebrating The City by emphasizing the beauty and "un-beauty" of the seemingly urban mundane and banal by incorporating the literary concept of New Weird (and its ancestor Decadence) in conjunction with the Japanese aesthetic philosophy of Wabi-sabi, centered on the acceptance of transience and the beauty in imperfection. The physicality of his focus encompasses anything urban (urban landscape, cityscape, street, urban abstract) inspired by the contrast of the ultra-modern and traditional aspects; at times existing harmoniously and others not so harmoniously – but interestingly.

I took the opportunity of having Brian in my studio to shoot a few portraits of him, of which this is my favorite. As you'll hear, Brian is relatively quiet and unassuming, yet his tartan pants and "As If" t-shirt are, in my mind, undeniably flamboyant, and I mean that in the most positive way. These things suit Brian's character, and his dry sense of humor are things that I appreciate as some of the wonderful reasons that I consider him a friend.

As our conversation was not scripted, I do not have text for the rest of this eBook, but

here are the questions that I posed to Brian forming a framework for our discussion.

Questions

- Tell us how you came to live in Japan?
- How did you get started in photography?
- What's your main photographic genre?
- You have a passion for film photography. Tell us more about that?
- We both have a pretty good appreciation for Wabi-Sabi, which is the Japanese concept of beauty in imperfection, and your thinking surrounding Decadence and Banality is fascinating and thought-provoking. Tell us a little more about that.
- Talk through your three images (below). Tell us what you were aiming to achieve etc.
- Can you give us three pieces of advice for anyone that wants to shoot compelling street photography like yours?
- I often recommend your private street photography tours to my guests that come to Japan for my winter tours, and I've heard nothing but good things about them. Tell us more about what you get up to when someone books you for say half a day or a day?

Please listen with the [audio player in the blog post](#) to hear how the conversation developed.

On the next three pages are the images that Brian referenced during our conversation.







Links

You can find Brian's work, publications, and services at:
<http://urbanweirdphotography.com>

Here is a direct link to one of my favorite photos of all time, on Brian's website:
<https://urbanweirdphotography.com/prints-street/clandestine>

This is also a favorite:
<https://urbanweirdphotography.com/prints-street/the-red-umbrella>

Brian's Instagram is here:
<https://www.instagram.com/urbanweirdphoto/>



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