

ART I MAKE SERIES vol. 3

# INTERACTIONS

CONTEMPORARY DANCE PHOTOGRAPHY  
HELSINKI LONDON NEWYORK SHANGHAI

VESA LOIKAS



# INTERACTIONS ⊥ VUOROVAIKUTUKSIA









*ART I MAKE SERIES vol. 3*  
*VESA LOIKAS PHOTOGRAPHY*

# I N T E R A C T I O N S + V U O R O V A I K U T U K S I A

CONTEMPORARY DANCE PHOTOGRAPHY  
*LONDON SHANGHAI NEW YORK HELSINKI*

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Dancing is a form of expression and for some people dance becomes their own language and vocabulary. This dance vocabulary is a serious study of the art of dance and also a study of themselves in relation to the environment and people around them. This photo book is about those wonderful and energetic dance artists as I have captured their dance vocabulary in their chosen environments in four cities around the world.

In addition to photographs, I was honored to be able to include essays about dancing itself, the visual aspects about dance, and the environment around us that shapes our movement in our every day lives by four different contributors.

This contemporary dance photography series was started when I received an artist residency in New York City in March of 2013 by the *Finnish Art Council* and *The Dance Centre of Western Finland*.

*ART I MAKE* book series consists of collections of my photographs which are chosen and curated around a subject matter or a location of my interest. This series was born from my desire to present to a larger audience my joy of photography and also something that could inspire people in their own creative journeys.



Vesa Loikas  
March 2020 - Turku, Finland













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## CITY INTERACTIONS

A picture tells a thousand words, but that is still not enough to describe an entire city. We can distill a famous bridge, church or a skyscraper into a postcard, but does it tell about the reality of the city – the reality of night shift worker, school children, refugee or even a story of a tourist? There are as many different realities as there are people walking along the streets.

City is a stage for millions of interactions. In this book the photos merge moving bodies with city spaces. The dancers utilize the space, which in addition being a stage, is also an active participant of the performance. The performance is tightly part of the physical surroundings; and it is never the same again as the surroundings change.

The power of the photograph is in the moment. This book is about those moments in these cities.

### Regularity and chance

You don't get lost in a grid street plan. The rectangles create an unmistakable order, which can be followed to the destination even in a foreign city. But the irregularity brings in the fascination. The alleys and squares which break the rules invite the traveler in.

There are also other types of cities: old cities, where the street plans have evolved and adapted over time without a holistic plan in mind. These narrow winding streets are adored and yearned. They invite us to aimlessly wander and we experience the momentary bliss of getting lost.

This book gives these chance encounters an opportunity to shine. The photo sessions are not planned rigorously, but the dancers have moved their stages fluidly from one place to another. The book itself has a structure and order, but missteps are permitted.

### The limited reality of a photo

The defining character of a photograph is its objectivity. Especially a documentary photograph represents the subjects as they are, without a painting like stylistic filters or the chronological story of a movie.

Documentary photography is assumed to represent the reality truthfully. When the camera is set to capture the scene, focus is set and the trigger is pressed, the camera often does capture the scene in front usually as it is. But not always.

It is assumed that a photograph is an objective document, but it is always subjective. Firstly the

photographer decides what is being photographed. Secondly the photographer decides and chooses the time. Is it a while sun is rising or during the busy time at noon or in the darkness at night. The end result is also shaped by the chosen camera angle and other technical equipment used.

In fine art photography creative choices are allowed, even expected. The end result can be corrected, toned, combined or manipulated in many ways. On the other hand, some photographers avoid any post editing. The line between documentary and fine art photography is fluid and can be hard to define.

The crop is an inherent characteristic of a photograph. Most photographs in this book are cropped close to the dancer, but there are a few exceptions. The surrounding environment is shown only as context, but it is still present - you cannot crop it out.

### Movement and the beauty of the moment

A famous movie director once said "Photography is truth. And the cinema is truth 24 frames-per-second". A photograph can record the moment and be very accurate and exact, and there's a saying that something looks just like a photograph. But the accuracy is not always necessary and sometimes an addition of out of focus areas make the presentation more interesting.


Movement can be highlighted by using a long exposure, so that the moving object becomes blurry. In this way the photograph has captured many short moments - or one longer moment. We have learnt to see these fluid colors as movement, but in reality your eyes don't see it like this. So in this particular technique, the photograph is far removed from the truth and reality.

The power in the photograph is in the beauty of the frozen moment. It is a paradox to photograph dance, because dance is movement. The photograph does not tell how fast the dancer is moving and how the movement continues. In the photograph we just see a very small fraction of the moment, almost nothing. And still the photograph captures more than the eye, which is not able to record the individual moments as well. Then again the eye sees the entire chain of movements and actions. Which is more true and closer to reality?

**Päivi Leinonen**

*Communicator and researcher of the  
built environment based in Turku, Finland  
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"I explore the interactions, relationships and juxtapositions formed when landscape, architecture and people come together"

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