

Q&A with Zeno Petersen, winner of the Sunshine Co. Instagram Award

By  Juanita Pienaar

9 May 2017

Local cinematographer, Zeno Petersen walked away with R17,000 worth of prizes after he won photographic equipment sales and rental house, Sunshine Co.'s first Instagram pop-up competition, beating around 250 entries with his photograph, which perfectly encapsulated the #EmoteJozi theme.



Sunshine co's digital sales manager, Willem Foster, Zeno Petersen (winner) and Karlien Murray from AtPhoto © [Marc Dryden-Schofield](#)

Adrian Nakic, professional photographer and MD of Sunshine Co., Roelof van Wyk, creative director of Keyes Art Mile (a collection of art galleries, restaurants and shops on Keyes Avenue in Rosebank) and Karlien Murray, client experience officer at AtPhoto, a professional image lab, had the pleasure of judging the submissions. "We took use of colour, composition and interpretation of the theme #EmoteJozi into consideration, and while all top ten selected images are outstanding, Zeno's black and white street portrait really made an impact," said Nakic.

I chatted to Zeno and asked him about his winning photograph, what makes him tick and how Instagram has influenced the way he approaches photography.

■ Congratulations on winning Sunshine Co.'s first Instagram pop-up competition! How does it feel knowing your photograph encapsulated the #EmoteJozi theme the best?

It really feels great and was such a surprise. I never believe that my work is good enough or strong enough but I'm always super excited when people feel a connection with my work and when my work translates and communicates a certain theme. I'm so grateful to Sunshine Co. for allowing local photographers to shine. This was an opportunity of a lifetime!

■ Tell us about the winning photograph. Who was the model, where and how did you shoot it and what was the inspiration behind it?

The model in the picture is actually one of the crew members I work with on set. He is part of the sound department and is called a boom swinger in the film industry. I took the picture while we were shooting at Wits university. I took the picture using my iPhone 7 Plus. What inspired the picture? Well I'm always looking for interesting faces and spaces that capture a certain mood. I'm drawn to dark images that speak to my inner emotions and make people connect with my work on an emotional level.

■ Tell us about yourself. Where are you from, what do you do, what makes you tick?

I'm from a small town called, Standerton, grew up in Pretoria and started working and living in Johannesburg as a cinematographer. My day job is cinematography and I shoot local TV dramas like, *Isibaya* and *Isithembiso*. My hobby is photography and ultimately my dream job. What makes me tick is telling stories... human stories... and inspiring others.

■ What do you love most about working and living in Johannesburg?

The people.

■ When did you realise you wanted to become a cinematographer?

I always loved movies, I grew up in a house that loved watching movies and I loved telling my own stories. It's only after I finished high school and spent a year in Israel that I decided to study film and cinematography.

■ How would you describe your photographs?

Dark, moody, inspirational and emotive.

■ What type of imagery inspires you?

Images that captures a sense of a person or tells a story. Images that make me want to feel it and make me think of my life and work.

■ Whose work (photography) do you admire most and why?

It's difficult to say. I feel inspired by others that feel inspired by my work. Every day I find new inspiration on Instagram and it never stops. It's something that I can't ever cut down to one or two people.

■ In what way, if at all, has Instagram influenced the way you approach photography?

I started to take photography seriously because of Instagram. So I owe it a lot in a way. It made me connect with like-minded people but the biggest thing or the biggest gift it gave me was the ability to inspire younger kids that want to pick up a camera.

■ What advice would you give to aspiring photographers?

Don't worry about what camera you have or what people tell you, you should have. Use your phone, go out every weekend and take photos. Share your ideas and don't be scared to ask questions. Find your voice and eye, even if it takes years. Don't be scared to start over. Don't do it for followers, do it for yourself.

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.
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