

R&A

by Christian Elia

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RGB

Color psychology deals with how color hues affect human behavior. We see it every day in passing. Restaurants persuade us to eat their foods with the colors in their logo, directors attempt to strike certain emotional chords with film and editing techniques, and artists try to provoke thought.

This book chronicles more personal photos of mine that I didn't think had much of a place before. I take so many photos that never even make it to instagram, let alone any of my projects. They all have a story, though.

I've styled the book to tell some of my story and provide insight on how the colors in my photos affect me personally. The book follows a journey through red, then blue, then green. Passionate and fiery reds lead to lessons learned in the cool and contemplative blues, therefore paving the way for energetic changes and growth that green brings.

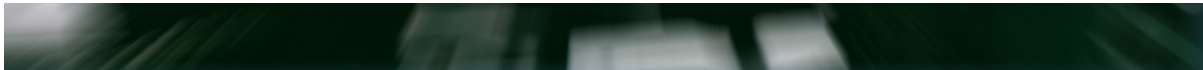
I hope you can look at the photos and apply your own feelings and experiences to them. Thanks so much for looking and reading.

- Elia

Red

passion, desire, warmth, love, anger, aggression,
excitement, danger, stimulation, attention, power





ruby



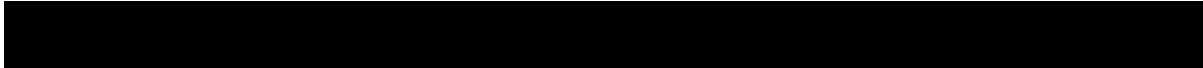
shot on minolta x-700

I had this gorgeous 1997 Jeep Wrangler as my first car. It was my favorite shade of red and we had put so much work into it. My parents originally bought it as their weekend car, and we called it Ruby.

I remember not even wanting it when my dad proposed that I should take it when it came time for me to drive. It was a stick shift and I wanted no part of it. He promised me I would love it in due time and if I didn't, he'd get me something else. Sure enough I fell in love and came around just as I always do when I try to defy my parents' better judgement. I still prefer a stick shift over an automatic any day of the week.

I drove the car for about five years before I hydroplaned and totaled it in December of 2017 on a rainy night. As someone who (thankfully) hasn't gone through much trauma, it was probably the most scared I've ever been in my life. After smashing into the guard rails on both sides of the road multiple times, my mangled dream car was stranded in the center of the road. I remember thinking I'd never have another car I'd love more than that one, until I get my next Jeep of course. Nothing will ever replace Ruby, though.

Red has always been my favorite color. Anything red is just.. better. A dress on a woman, the paint on my favorite car, lipstick, nails.. You get my point. Red is a color that turns heads. All eyes were on that car when it was nearby. Seeing Ruby on the back of this tow truck in the daylight broke my heart. The bold shade perfectly symbolizes my passion for this car intertwined with my deep anger and emotions when I watched it get towed away and knew I'd never see it again.



showing off



shot on nikon s9900

On August 21st of 2017, I got the experience of a lifetime. Social media was booming with news of a solar eclipse that would happen on that day, and an area of my state two hours away from me was in the path of totality. I made plans, packed up, and drove to a town in the middle of absolutely nowhere called McClellanville.

It was scorching hot out, and I was fully expecting that the plantation I was driving to would be packed to the brim with spectators. I was proven so wonderfully wrong when I arrived. The place had a small amount of people, and I was free to pick a spot anywhere. Me, being the always fearful of missing the moment person that I am, chose a spot in the middle of a field where the sun was beating down as hard as it could onto my poor choice of black jeans.

This picture was shot under special circumstances. By the time I had made plans to go to McClellanville, I had forgotten to order a special filter so I could aim my lens at the sun. In a clutch moment of poor millennial brilliance, I saw that the lenses on my eclipse glasses were large enough to cover the lens on my point and shoot camera that I use for smaller projects. That camera also happens to have a killer zoom on it. You see where I'm going with this?

I can't even begin to describe what the event was like. As the sun slowly disappeared, the temperature went down so quickly. The field was bizarrely lit, and the night life of the forests began to sing. Frogs croaked, crickets chirped, and the venue fell silent. I captured every phase on my camera except for the totality, which was unfortunately covered by clouds. I didn't even care though, I just sat back and soaked it in. All senses were stimulated to the fullest, and the glowing red sun was put to bed for a nap by the cool moon for just a moment. I'm still convinced that God does these things just to show off.



God first



shot on pentax ME super

I've always been big on realizing when I'm in the middle of the "times of my life." I just finished watching *The Office* recently, and Andy Bernard quotes during the last episode, "I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them." After I was done crying because *The Office* was ending, I was thankful that I document as much of my life on my camera as possible.

This was a routine session at my best friend David's house. He was either showing me a new song, playing a beat for me, reviewing footage or showing me something he was inspired by. David and I have had many too deep to measure conversations at that table and throughout that house. We're both dreamers and hustlers. We bounce ideas off of each other, provide a support system and an extension of family. Along with another brother of mine Boggs, our group has a good thing going that I didn't think I'd ever have in my life. I never thought I would have a set of friends like I currently do, and I'll never not be ridiculously thankful.

Circumstances, distances, and other factors have changed plenty since high school, but the dreams are as alive as ever. He'll promote this book when it comes out, and I'll repost his next song. I've always counted on him with keeping it brutally honest, keeping God in the center, and upholding a bond that will last forever. We end every phone conversation with "God first."

I don't even know how this picture took on the red tint that it has, but as I look at it I feel the ambition and brotherly love of that moment. We've both said to each other multiple times that we'll miss these days. I'm glad we know we're in them now and that we'll have plenty more.



to infinity!



shot on nikon d7100

My Granny used to say two things that will echo through my mind forever. She would say “I love you to the moon and beyond... to infinity!” and when I was younger and would ask where we were going, she would reply without a beat, “to the moon, raccoon!”

I would stay at her house so much as a kid, and we would play board games, make food, and watch Disney channel together, which was our favorite. She loved Disney channel and using her imagination with us. Granny always had more than enough love to give, and our cups would overflow.

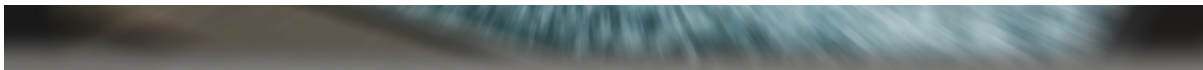
Out of nowhere, she went home to heaven on January 22nd of 2018. She had fought battles with heart disease as long as I’ve been alive. She powered through multiple surgeries, and I helped her up and down stairs, into her car, and over curbs more than I could ever count. I got my first tattoo as a representation of her battle as soon as I turned 18, and she cried when she saw it.

You can never prepare yourself for someone that close to you dying. She was taken from my family without warning, and a hole will forever remain in my heart. Taking photos at her funeral was one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to do. This gorgeous rose sat atop an arrangement on her casket, and it exudes the unmatched passionate energy she displayed every day, despite her aches and pains. I know she is in a better place and I’ve made my peace. I can’t wait to see her again in her perfect form. I miss her her wigs, crazy jewelry, and unbelievably strong heart so much. If you’re reading, Granny, I love you to the moon and beyond... to infinity!

Blue

peaceful, serene, calm, somber, clarifying,
thought provoking, secure, intellectual, reflecting





divine design



shot on sony a6500

The ocean is an interesting paradox in my life. I grew up near the ocean. I have no idea what it's like to live where there isn't an ocean. Places have rivers, lakes, and even great lakes that act as their "beaches," and they are special in their own way, but none compare to the ocean. I haven't always appreciated it, though. I'm not, and have never been, a fan of the beach. It's a sand thing, really. The ocean, however, I've always had a deep (no pun intended) respect for.

Any large body of water is a scary place to be. Forget sharks, forget stingrays, and forget jellyfish. I don't mind the aquatic life. The sheer size of an ocean alone is enough to freak my anxious brain out. I only freak when I concentrate on it too much. The little that we know about them, even though we know so much, is unnerving to say the least. I feel like there is almost a universal peace that is attached to the ocean, though. People lay out for hours and listen to it, people listen to it digitally to fall asleep, and people cruise out into the middle of it to relax. My first cruise is actually where this photo was taken.

I had a pastor once preach a sermon regarding God's love for us, and how far He is willing to go to forgive us. The verse Micah 7:19 states, "He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." The pastor highlighted the fact that the deepest depths of the sea would crack a battleship like an egg, and I never forgot that. While I don't intend to preach to you, the sermon is an interesting testament of God's forgiveness along with the power and perfect design of His creation. Pairing the color blue to a calm beast with such magnificent power was no accident.



staircase in charleston



shot on canonet 28

C^harleston has always been a sort of happy place to me and many others from my town. The old money Gatsby-esque lifestyle that exists there is addicting when you're in the middle of it. Rainbow Row, the cobblestone paths, the weathered architecture, and the mindset over there among with many more aspects is certainly something special.

I have often looked at Charleston as an escape during various stages of life and experiences that I have been through. Coming to the Holy City provides inspiration for photos, meetings with certain friends, and a vibe that I can't elaborate on. You just have to go there and be in it. Whenever I'm going through something, a trip there can help and has helped me discover important things about myself. With that, though, comes a love-hate relationship of sorts.

It was a cold day when I took this photo, and it looks the part. The picture itself doesn't have a special story attached to it, or even any kind of real sentiment. However, when I look at it and remember where my life was when I took it, the cool blue hues assume their more somber and sedative properties. It was a coming of age trip. It was a hard to swallow, but much needed life lesson that would lead to peace later.



eye of God



shot on nikon d7100

I've always been a fan of architecture. I'm a sucker for it, and I will always pause a portrait session to snap a picture of a well put together building when I see one. It's a fact of life. Human accomplishment is an amazing thing, and sometimes man made structures can be just as breathtaking as the organic relatives they're made of.

This photo was taken at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center, and you may have seen it before. This is most definitely a full fledged, shameless tourist photo. The Convention Center is a beautiful place, and being bathed in the warm light from the glass domes is something almost supernatural. Maybe I'm just a strange person.

Go ahead and strap in for another religious reference. When I looked up, the first thing I noticed was a massive eye looking down upon me. I felt small, but not insignificant. My religious upbringing and open minded personal endeavors have instilled within me a knowledge of the love the Creator has for all of us. I don't see the eye of God as a judging one with a magnifying glass, I see it as a loving one that pays marvelous attention to detail. That's pretty chill if you ask me.



almost heaven



shot on minolta x-700

Though I've never lived there, I've always looked at West Virginia as my second home. It is one of the few environments where I am my true, 100% comfortable self. My dad hails from a small town within the Rocky Mountain State and all of the Elias live over there. From them, I get my heart on my sleeve, my brown eyes, my thick Italian hair, and my deep love for family.

We don't go to West Virginia as often as I'd like, so I try to make the most out of it when we're there. I take out my camera more, I laugh more, I sleep better, and I just let go. Cell service is spotty, and there isn't much to do at all, but breathing in the warm mountain air on a summer night while watching the fireflies and laughing with my family is all I need.

I think I take a picture of the classic Elia license plate every time I go. A few of the men in the family have had the plate on their car throughout the years, and I currently have a South Carolina one on my car. I took the photo while hanging out in my uncle's garage with some of my favorite people. The rich, deep navy that borders the top of the plate is an excellent ode to the serene bliss I feel when I'm almost in Heaven.



saying goodbye



shot on minolta x-700

After we assessed the damage of the Jeep, we of course had to get it all cleaned out before it got towed away. My dad and I went to get it done and it was a ridiculously emotional experience for both of us. He loved that car just as much, if not more than I did. He fell in love with the car long before I had. He appreciated it in its original form, chipping paint, scars and all.

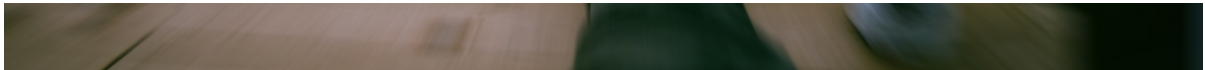
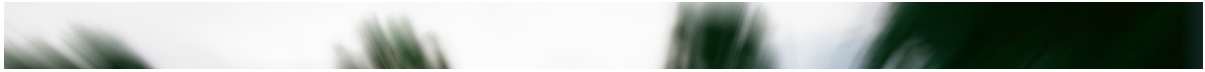
My dad has always been one of my heroes. I'm beyond thankful and blessed to have had such a close relationship with him, and the entire rest of my family for that matter. I've always sought my parents out in times of stress and peril. From running into their room when I was scared of thunderstorms as a child, to calling them when I've had a bad day at my grown up job. When I was young I'd beg my dad to go "monster hunting" with me, and we would turn every light in the house off and explore with a flashlight. I'd get terrified and hide behind him every time, knowing he'd keep me safe. It's quite funny how different my monsters look now, but his protection has always remained.

I wanted to capture the process of cleaning out my Jeep on film, and I'm so happy I did. I'm a firm believer in the highs and lows of life, and in God's sense of humor. I'll never understand certain aspects of the divine plan, but I don't have to. This will always be one of my favorite photos of my dad, the calm in the storm, the constant in my time of need, and the blue within the red.

Green

harmony, balance, growth, awareness,
realization, energy, nature, renewal, healing, fertility





chasing sunsets

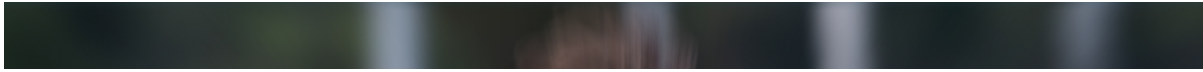


shot on pentax ME super

Whenever the guys and I film near David's house, I always love going to the next neighborhood over to see the lighthouse on the waterway. It has this boardwalk of sorts with a small lighthouse and it has always been a super peaceful spot for me.

Once when we were filming, a very old lady approached us and we were fully expecting the worst. We knew we probably shouldn't have been filming over there, and we thought she was going to give us a slap on the wrist for it. She did the complete opposite, though, and asked David and Chris to sing her a song. They played one of their heartbreaking ballads about divorce and alcoholism for her and she thought it was the best thing.

David and I have filmed so much, we've developed this phrase where we "chase sunsets." Like everyone, we both love the golden hour, and we've had to do some serious speeding to get in the right place at the right time on multiple occasions. After we wrap a shoot, we will typically hang around and shoot the breeze, maybe have a drink. This photo calms me down so much because it represents a hard day's work being done in one of my favorite spots. Productivity and energy is huge within my circle, and we often work harder than we play. However, when you love the work you do, it all blends in beautifully.



human spirit



shot on nikon d7100

My brother and I have an interesting relationship. We aren't inseparable like some siblings, we're polar opposites with many views and opinions, and we walk different paths, but very much love is there. Despite our differences, we find common ground in our stubborn natures. I'm a Taurus, so at least I have an excuse.

Caleb was everything I couldn't be in high school. He got along with pretty much everyone, he was an athlete, and he was great when it came to hitting the books. He's a much more academically capable person than I am, and I'm proud of him for it.

He was always very involved with the cross country team and the drama department of Conway High. He always gave 100% to every race his team would run and every play his cast would perform. This particular cross country moment is significant because Caleb had the flu and second degree burns on his thigh. He has been accident prone his whole life, and was unfortunately hit with harsh circumstances before this race. He had every reason to complain and sit out, but he kept going for his team.

Caleb, from the outside looking in at least, has always been unapologetically comfortable with himself. He was proud to wear the Conway green. I remember him looking extremely sick when he finished the meet, and I was worried when I was looking at the pictures I took. This photo reminds me what quiet and focused energy looks like coming from an individual that is comfortable, confident, and determined. A Michael Jordan in his own right, dominating his flu game.



sage



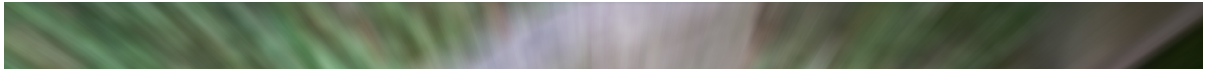
shot on nikon d7100

This is actually an extra from the shoot I did for my first book, Melanin. South Carolina was an infamous member of the confederacy, and there are still graves from civil war soldiers in many cemeteries around Conway. Marissa and I had this idea of saging the graveyard as a sign of acceptance and forgiveness.

I was ultimately too nervous to include the flag oriented photos into Melanin because I was worried it would be seen as disrespectful. Marissa and I kept a healthy distance from the graves, though, and it was ultimately an act of respect and closure.

I see racism and bigotry alive and well every day of my life in my neck of the woods. I obviously don't condone it, but I don't speak against it either, which can be equally damaging in some cases. Nobody ever made a difference from staying silent in times of change. Melanin was my way of contributing to the Black Lives Matter movement in an artistic way that would hopefully move people.

I love this photo because it shows solidarity and growth. We should never forget what happened in those times, or what is still happening now, but we must continue ahead. The rich plant life of the graveyard is a bittersweet story of growth in hard times, and the burning sage is a wonderful tale of giving a piece of yourself to help someone else. Growth and is how we move forward. Hate never wins.



death stare



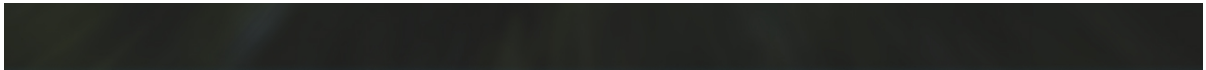
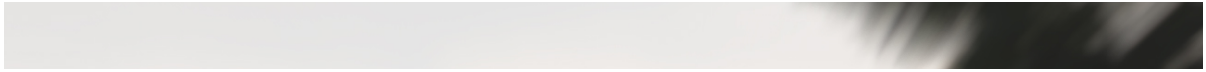
shot on pentax ME super

Ever since I was young, I can always remember having a strong fear of growing old and dying. I constantly worry about the people around me dying, and I'm always wondering how much time everyone has left. Morbid, I know, but my anxiety has always been right on time when it comes to contemplating death.

I've definitely read several places that cats have a weird sense of predicting death. Many nursing homes have cats, and I've heard of cats spending extra time in the rooms of people that were next to meet their maker. It makes my skin crawl just to think about. You can imagine how I felt when I saw this fella sneak up during a shoot I was doing in a graveyard.

I was shooting with an old friend, and this cat came out of absolutely nowhere. It was rubbing itself all over this headstone and internally I went into full panic mode. Naturally, I take a picture of the grim reaper itself staring me down. I only saw it one other time, but never since.

Over the years as I've talked to my parents and other elders in my life, my fear has slowly melted away. As I grow more comfortable in my faith, I learn that death is nothing to fear. The afterlife is a whole other story for a whole other day, but I will say that time on Earth is but a fraction of the whole picture. I like to believe I'll age happily. As my skin sags and wrinkles form, new adventures will be had and stories will be formed to tell. Man was created from the earth, and to the earth he will return. The graveyard always has the most stunning greens in Conway.



by myself



shot on nikon d7100

From the driveway of my uncle's place in West Virginia, you can see this lonely house on a hill. As a kid I thought it was the coolest house ever. We shared jokes of it being haunted, possibly a castle, and how hard it probably was to get to. I looked at it every time I would come up the driveway.

All of my life, I've been comfortable being alone. I don't necessarily desire to be alone, but if I am, I make the most of it. I'm a firm believer in the "love yourself before you love others" mantra. I know I'm beating a dead horse with that one, but it always rings true in my experience. It's a dangerous thing to have to depend on others for absolutely everything. I learned to rely on myself first during the beginning of my high school career that was hell on earth.

My most recent trip to West Virginia, I learned that the house was vacant. It was my first adventure as an adult in the state. I had my 55-200mm lens on and got a look at it up close in high definition for the time and was blown away. The modest house on a hill becomes the bold castle on a mountain, standing alone and firm through harsh winters and brutal summers. Sitting among the luscious greens of Williamson, it finds harmony in itself and becomes a spectacle for others.



Boe