

A philosopher's lens

He was a photographer before he became a philosopher but today, Pierre Poulain calls himself a philosopher who also photographs. Poulain is French and lives in Tel Aviv, Israel running the New Acropolis School of Philosophy. "I am in essence a philosopher, being a photographer is the way I choose to manifest and reflect it. I could say that the root of my inner self is based on philosophy, and the tool, the means I use to reflect it, is photography," he says about how his twin passions influence each other. And while he says that he doesn't have a 'philosophy of photography per se', Poulain's most recent work combines the two. "I have combined Philosophy and Photography in my recent work, titled 'PhotoSophy', which might be presented in India next year. It is a combination of image and text."

A street photographer, Poulain's images capture moments from the everyday lives of people around



him. "The whole world is my muse but the muse always appears in an unexpected way," he adds wryly. Describing his working method, he says, "When I walk the streets with my camera, I try to keep an open mind, free from emotions, and accept what presents itself to me. Often it is something which occurs in a fraction of a second, a decisive moment. A tension, a contrast, a perturbation in the relation between light and shadow, a fracture in the geometry of the forms. When something like this occurs, I first take a shot. Then, after I have captured it, I look at the camera to see what attracted my attention." Ask him what the role of an artist is in today's divisive times and he says, "As somebody sharing a drop of unity in an ocean of separation. Art unites human beings around and through beauty, Deep inside, humanity is one and we all share the same essential values. Today, more than ever, there is a need for each and every drop of unity."



Decisive Moment, black and white photograph by Pierre Poulain