



My plant portraits.
Rafael Frontado Gómez

It was in my teenage years when I got into photography. In fact, it happened by chance in secondary school. I had to choose an optional subject for the second year of my studies. I preferred taking artistic drawing. I have felt very attracted to drawing and painting since my childhood, but disappointed by its impossibility I was left choosing photography. In the end it was related to images. Up to now I never regretted it, despite whatever ups and downs I have encountered regarding photography as a means of expression.

My relationship with it entails that in some way I still belong to the old school of photography or still photography, the one based on the silver grain, the wrongly so-called "analogue photography". Among many reasons, I would say that it is because of its apparent limitations which are truly an advantage to take photos. The limited number of shots a roll contains, for instance, obliges me to think more and to make sure of the photo I need to take. This means observing the scene carefully and properly, paying attention to light and contrast, and finding the appropriate moment before pressing the button. This means that I have to take the photo in my mind first rather than in the camera.

On the other hand, there is the visual "artistic" aspect that the silver grain photography possesses. It is just nothing but beautiful the way it composes an image, its look, contrast, volume, depth, figures... and the different ways you can work with it and create your own personal imprint, from the very first moment you select a certain film, the chemicals... It is developed and processed in the dark room... Basically, I usually say that It is like cooking. A dish can be different dishes depending on the cook and still be the same dish.

Another important aspect of this type of photography is its imperfection. Nothing is perfect, neither subject, scene, process, etc. nor the photo as a result. However, dealing with this whole process appropriately makes everything perfect. And that is the beauty of imperfection which makes everything perfect and unique. You may wonder why.

When I was proposed to be part of this work for the EOI, what came out of my mind as a first idea was to do the black and white portraits of some plants. I initially observed them, paying special attention to the different shapes each plant leaves have and what they could tell me of themselves to portrait them and their distinctiveness. Somehow creating a story told by themselves but written by me. Subsequently, it is the reader or spectator who add their inputs, thoughts and feelings, which are also part of photography.

In the end, I think that any photograph in general and portraits specifically are about having an open conversation with your subject to create a story together afterwards. I guess, apart from your mind, this is where your heart is involved in the entire process of photography.

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