

MAKE THE SWITCH FUJIFILM

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Make the Switch

Peter Degnan used to have a wide-ranging interest in different photo genres, but in recent years has funnelled that down to documentary and street with his Fujifilm cameras



PETER DEGNAN
Check out Peter's new blog on his website peterdeganphotography.com

MY PHOTOGRAPHY STARTED in the days of film and a Zenit-E. I shot black & white and was lucky enough to have my own darkroom, spending many hours around my home-town Glasgow, developing films and printing projects.

I had a break from photography when the kids came along, then digital arrived. I didn't rush into it and bought a Fujifilm FinePix to start. Later, I got a Nikon D80, then progressed to a Nikon D750, which was great.

At the time – like many photographers – I wanted to be a master of all trades, so I was doing

landscape, portraits and still-lives, but nothing was very successful. When I looked back at my photographs, it was clear that I was interested in documentary – what people now call street photography. It was probably because it was a subject I was most comfortable with.

To get my mojo back, I saw that StreetSnappers were holding a workshop in the East End. I didn't know London that well, although I liked going there for exhibitions, but tended to stick to the tourist trails. The workshop exposed me

to a side of the city I had never seen before and where I could get interesting pictures. This fired me up. I had been ticking along, but that really kicked me into action.

I quickly realised that the D750 with a zoom was really killing my wrists – and I was getting pain after a day of street shooting. Its size also didn't help me blend in.

So, I bought a Fujifilm X100F compact – a great little camera that I still use. This got me interested in the Fujifilm X Series, because it made me realise I didn't need a big camera

to take good pictures. It was time to say goodbye to the Nikon stuff and get down to what I wanted to do, which was street photography. I traded in all my Nikon gear for the X-T3, with the VPB-XT3 Vertical Power Booster Grip, and three lenses: the XF23mm f/2 R WR, XF50mm f/2 R WR and XF55-200mm f/3.5-4.8 R LM OIS.

I reckon 80% of the time I work with the XF23mm f/2 on the X-T3.

My camera set-up is quite straightforward. For street, I use zone focus. I switch the camera to manual focusing, set a distance of around 3m



GLASGOW BARRAS STREET SCENE Fujifilm X-T3, XF23mm f/2 R WR, manual, 1/250sec at f/8 and ISO 320



MANNEQUIN BODY PARTS, BATH Fujifilm X-T3, XF23mm f/2 R WR, manual, 1/150sec at f/8 and ISO 1250



BIRMINGHAM Fujifilm X100F, 23mm f/2.8, manual, 1/250sec at f/8 and ISO 400

on my XF23mm lens, and if I have an aperture of f/8, everything from 1.5m or so to infinity is sharp.

With zone focusing, this means I only need to tweak with closer subjects; and if I want to be more accurate, I use focus peaking, which I love on the Fujifilm cameras.

I rarely use the camera monitor to compose – and prefer the viewfinder. But I wear spectacles with varifocal lenses, so when I look through the EVF, things are not always as sharp as they should be, because my eye isn't always at the sweet spot. The focus assist with red focus peaking is absolutely brilliant.

I set the shutter speed manually to 1/250sec and let the ISO roam automatically up to the limit of 3200, which I've set. I'm not a pixel peeper, and several of the shots here are at ISO 1250 – you can't really tell and the quality is excellent.

The thing I love about Fujifilm is that it reminds me of my film camera days. I tell people that the Zenit was great to cut your teeth on, to learn the difference between f/stops, shutter speeds and all that.

When looking at Fujifilm, everything I need to know is there on the top-plate. I don't have to go searching in the menus to find out how my camera is set up.

Having the exposure compensation dial on the top, rather than in an electronic menu, is a godsend and has saved me many times. A quick flick of the thumb means you're back in the game when the lighting is tricky.

I may upgrade to the X-T4, and the next time I go to London I will visit the Fujifilm House of Photography. I quite fancy the new medium format GFX50S II that Fujifilm just brought out.

In the longer term, I want to keep on taking photographs, build my website and scan my archive. I've sat on my archive for over 40 years and no one has seen the pictures in it. I've produced zines and hardback books from it so far, and these are on sale on my website, but I have much more to work on.

I'm not shooting for the moon or anything, and just want to enjoy my photography – I like taking pictures.

THE KIT PETER OWNS



FUJIFILM X-T3

Packed with an extensive and impressive features list, the X-T3 is a class-leading camera that's designed to deliver high performance whatever the situation. Its heart is the world-renowned back-side illuminated 26.1-megapixel X-Trans CMOS 4 sensor. Its native ISO range is 160-12,800, and even at the top speeds image quality is clean, richly detailed and colours are lifelike.



FUJIFILM XF23MM F/2 R WR

Ideal as a walkaround lens, this compact wide-angle is great to use with silent AF, thanks to a stepping motor and the f/2 maximum aperture to help you tackle low-light conditions. It's also rugged, made from premium materials, and is weather- and dust-resistant.



FUJIFILM XF50MM F/2 R WR

If you are looking for a high-performing, fast aperture, short telephoto lens in a compact body form, the Fujifilm XF50mm f/2 R WR is the one for you. It's weather sealed, too.



FUJIFILM XF55-200MM F/3.5-4.8 R LM OIS

This is a remarkably powerful and useful zoom lens packed into a compact and portable form. In 35mm format terms, it gives an 84-305mm equivalent coverage, so this lens has potential for a wide range of subjects and delivers impressive optical performance.



BRISTOL LOCKS CLOSE-UP Fujifilm X-T3, manual, 1/250sec at f/8 and ISO 400



GLASGOW POSTER SCENE Fujifilm X-T3, XF23mm f/2 R WR, manual, 1/800sec at f/2 and ISO 1250

FREE 48-HOUR FUJIFILM LOANS

The Fujifilm Connect loan service means you can try specific Fujifilm cameras and lenses in your own home, free of charge, for up to two days (including delivery). Loans can be extended, and if you decide to purchase, Fujifilm will refund your loan fee. For full details of this special loan scheme, go to: fujifilm-loan.com

FUJIFILM