


IN MOTION IT ALL STOPS | Nicholas Astanei

This world is fast. A breath ago, you were the child hanging from the hills hoist with a wagging blue tongue, jeering at the photographer. Before camera rolls and ostensibly endless reels littered our consciousness – the summers were endless. Our memories were marked by plunging into bodies of water, and punctuated by the thump of the yellow pages hitting the doorstep. Time expanded toward the eternal. Nicholas Astanei's solo exhibition *In Motion It All Stops* is a meditation on movement, stillness and the tension between them. Through his lens, in a world that mocks us, he explores the collective longings that have emerged from this inexorable epoch. His images urge us to slow down, to let anxiety dissipate, to linger in the moment, to pine for the past and to pause in wonderment.

In Motion It All Stops is the result of a meticulous decade long practice of photography and documentation. Nicholas Astanei began shooting film as a high-schooler, collecting a course or two before cutting his teeth in community driven urban exploration, a stepping stone into commercial photography. Deliberately process driven, Astanei shoots on 35-120mm film and scans at the highest possible resolution, seeking out professionals who share his joy for the medium and insistence upon quality.

Drawing inspiration from street photography and shooting hip-hop and hardcore bands – his images capture the unguarded, the exhilaration of youth, the intimacy of impermanence, and the metronomic relationship between chaos and stillness in urban life. His images, raw and unfiltered, are lifted from the blur of motion and fixed in place. The silhouettes lean and toy with proxemics, the light spills unpredictably, and the grain glimmers in the liminal spaces between each moment. These are not portraits in the traditional sense; there is no invitation to be known. But rather, through graceful distance and a touch of voyeurism; an invitation to know the unknowable.



A purposeful collection of images has the power to earmark the profound and pull us from the mundane circus of ceaseless images. On our screens, buried in clogged camera rolls, an image is ephemeral. It's weight is diminished by a swipe, a scroll, a split second of attention. But on white gallery walls, an image proffers something different. It demands presence. It is granted significance by it's stillness, by it's framing, by the space around it. Here, the photograph is no longer simply documentation; it has been transmogrified into an artefact of time, a question posed, a gesture toward meaning.

In Motion It All Stops repels the quotidian, constantly in flux. It invites us to slow down, to reconsider the transient, to marvel at the poetry in the periphery. Through these images, we are asked to see – really see – the beauty in the concealed rhythms of life, the rough edges of the world in motion and the strange stillness that exists within it. Through these images, we are reminded that this world may be fast, but it is what we have created.

Words by *Marianne Astrid Close*