



JULIAN LENNON’S
Photographic Visions
*A Photographers Pastime Became
A Serious Pursuit*

BY **HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP**
PHOTOGRAPHY **JULIAN LENNON**

JULIAN LENNON, the highly regarded songwriter, musician, author, filmmaker, producer and philanthropist, now 58, is about to receive fresh attention for his art. His photographs are being featured by General Public, an art publishing venture launched by actor and philanthropist Portia de Rossi and exhibited at RH galleries.

For decades, while traveling in support of his various passions, Lennon took photographs as a way of keeping a visual diary. What began as casual snaps evolved to the point that a friend suggested he exhibit them. His 2010 debut at the Morrison Hotel gallery — previously the home of punk club CBGBs— was both frightening and exciting. “My stomach was turned inside out as much if not more than my first ever appearance on



stage,” he confessed. But the response was phenomenal, and I can’t thank people enough. It’s inspired me and urged me to not be afraid and to continue with what excites me about capturing moments in time.”

His photographs earned him the rank of ambassador for Leica with shows at their galleries around the world. His pastime has become a serious pursuit. The first 18 prints being offered at RH galleries include breathtaking landscapes and charmingly candid shots of people, all shot during his extensive travels.

General Public was created by de Rossi in 2017 to facilitate the reproduction of original paintings with exacting detail to color and brushwork. Her proprietary technology applies to photography by enabling an exceptionally high quality of printing. General Public is her attempt to evade the elitism of the art world. By

ABOVE Lennon’s view of *Malibu* captures the peace at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

OPPOSITE TOP Titled *Keep on Moving*, Lennon’s landscapes are often taken while on a drive.

OPPOSITE MIDDLE Artist Julian Lennon. Photograph by Deborah Anderson.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM Lennon takes a picture as he sees it in the moment, as in the girl in the mirror of *Focus*.

Artist Profile

phone, she explained, “I hate the scarcity model. If we can produce work... why shouldn’t we share it with as many people as possible. The whole idea of being an artist is that you want to connect with other people, the more people the better. Something should be valuable because it ’s good, not because it is rare.”

As an art collector, she already owned five of Lennon’s photographs before contacting him about the project through his representative Wendy Posner of Posner Fine Art.

Part of the appeal was the very fact that Lennon does not identify as a professional photographer. “He doesn’t stage his pictures. He actually has the intention of creating art every single time he steps out with a camera,”added de Rossi.

Lennon embraced her approach. Speaking on zoom from his Monaco office where the walls are crowded with personal notes and photographs, he said, “I consider myself a guerilla photographer. It’s there and then. If I get it, great. If not, cest la vie.” With a laugh, he added, “A lot of the landscape photographs were taken in the back of a car, at speed.”

His mobile version of Cartier Bresson’s decisive moment lends those pictures the ambience of movement that exists in passing clouds or surging waves. Lennon has used many digital cameras, currently the LeicaQ2 and a SonyA7R, and edits his pictures in post-production. Though some are in black and white, others have had their color drained, a technique called desaturation, which enhances a dreamy, seductive feel. Due to the technology, some images can be printed at a scale in keeping with the majesty of broad horizons and mountain ranges.

His landscapes reflect his deeply personal commitment to enviromental and humanitarian concerns. Partial

proceeds from the sales of his pictures will be donated to his White Feather Foundation created in 2007 to help support a wide range of charities devoted to the environment, clean water and aid for indigenous peoples.

A man of restless energies, Lennon continues to make music, as he has since his hit 1984 record Valotte, and is releasing new music next year. He has become involved in executive producing social impact documentary films including the 2020 Kiss The Ground that focuses on regeneration of soil as an answer to the climate crisis. A few months ago, he received the World Literacy Award for his humanitarian work and his *New York Times* best-selling children’s trilogy “Love The Earth” and his upcoming new graphic novel “The Morning Tribe”. I

always felt akin to helping and fixing problems,” he said. “It’s the way my mother raised me. Love and respect. Part of what I do is because of her.”

As the son of John and Cynthia Lennon, he has been the focus of other photographers since childhood. “I prefer being behind the camera, not in front. I appreciate the appreciation of my work in whatever medium but that is about it. I’m happy to stay back and plow on with whatever I can bring to fruition.”

“I can feel his spirit and intention behind every photograph that he takes,” said de Rossi. “He has a very special soul. ...You don’t see that kind of ego behind the photographs.... He wants you to see what he saw and feel what he felt. That’s why he can get those beautiful images.” **CH**



ABOVE Lennon never poses people but still finds a way to express a passing moment, as in *Casa Blanca*.

OPPOSITE TOP Ambience and light are his inspirations as in this skyscape *Purple Haze*.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM The random gathering of young people at a seawall, *Over the Edge*, has their energy of enthusiasm.

