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Adam Marelli Biography

### **Biography**

After completing a degree in sculpture and photography at NYU, Adam Marelli spent ten years apprenticing with both a master builder working on high-end residential projects and as a student of a Zen monk. He spent seven years studying in a monastery teaching the younger students how to maintain the building in exchange for his education. This afforded him an unparalleled understanding of both the *“way in which things are made”* and *“how beliefs are put into practice.”*

As such, Marelli takes a noticeably different approach to photography, putting the experience first and the camera second. Armed with only a pencil and a camera he is taking art outside of the studio and re-examining the roles of the artist and explorer. Unlike other photographers, he is not an observer behind the lens. He is an artist who participates, understands, and works along side of the cultures he photographs.

### **Cultural Photography**

Cultural photography looks at the relationships between a culture’s beliefs, traditions, practices, population, history, location, and the ways in which those influences are visually expressed.

The subject matter of cultural photography is the visual expression of culture and can include: people, architecture, objects, tools, and ceremonies of both daily life and high practices. It looks at each culture and its visual expression individually, without making a comparative study.

### **The Methodology**

The methodology applied to cultural photography is a combination of field work (both observational and experiential), off site research, and shared practice between the photographer and the culture being photographed. In order for cultural photography to function, it requires that the individual photographer has a working knowledge gained through hands on experience, apprenticeship, or professional practice in the arena they are covering.

Observational knowledge gained by “side by side” witnessing is more easily classified as documentary photography, which places emphasis on objectivity, a search for truth, and candid photography of a particular subject. Cultural photography is interested in the personal view points of the culture and the photographers who create images within the culture.

### **The Aim**

The aim of cultural photography is to understand how the visible and invisible influences that affect a culture express themselves through visual events, people, and shared traditions.