

Growing up with nature photography

Bruno D'Amicis

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Correspondence: bruno.damicis@gmail.com

Extended author information available at the end of the article

I took up nature photography at a very young age. I embarked on this path first to satisfy the need to slow down and somehow stop the constant flow of emotions and experiences lived observing animals and exploring natural environments since my childhood. The images in the pictures I took then offered me the opportunity to store those emotions forever, to relive them from time to time and to be even able to share them with others. In addition, I began to like the slow pace required by the photographic technique, which imposed patience, attention, empathy. A discipline that, compared to mere contemplation, urged me to look at things more in depth, teaching me to appreciate the constant variations of light, to look animals in the eye and to identify form and patterns in the apparent chaos that surrounds us. On the other hand, in the fleeting moment when you take a photograph, what is framed in the viewfinder becomes the most important thing in the world. This forced slowness then turned into a kind of initiation to the secrets of the subjects at the center of my photographic research. A very personal cultural journey that greatly increased my knowledge of things in nature and gradually also the sense of belonging to something greater.

With this baggage of awareness, I quickly went from a purely documentary photography to a more representative and, in some way, introspective one. What began as a moment of aesthetic contemplation soon became an inner dialogue, between the self and the world, regardless of the object or location. In fact, even portraying a small insect you notice your own image reflected in its eyes.

Once I finished my university studies and with a degree in Biological Sciences in the bag, I chose to abandon a possible scientific career and instead undertake the profession of nature photographer. This is because, compared to the rigor and the greater depth required by scientific research, photography granted me instead the freedom to span different topics, get to know very different realities and enter into a deeper communication with the subjects of my work. It was then that, to overcome the apparent superficiality of the photographic approach and to be able to build up a more robust professional portfolio, I chose to work exclusively on projects and not to seek the sensationalism of a single shot. Since then, all my photographic work has been carried out solely in the context of thorough research and meticulous planning together with a long-term approach. This allowed me eventually to turn the photo shoot into research and the subsequent sharing of images into a process of dissemination and education. In this way, I discovered the fundamental role that photography can play in the dialogue on our relationship with nature and in supporting the battle for the conservation of species and natural habitats.

On the other hand, photography is a universal and very powerful language, that allows to overcome cultural, geographical and age barriers. Images can convey messages, arouse emotions and, therefore, become an effective communication tool to increase people's awareness toward certain issues. Despite the common perception, photography is not truth but can become "true" exclusively in the intentions of the photographer. It is at the end of the path taken by the photographer, in the honesty of this person, in the ethical sense and in the empathy with which she approaches her subjects that a photographic work can become truthful. Only a respectful and sincere photograph, both regarding the well-being of the subject and the correctness of the message, can become a mirror of reality.

I chose to share this personal experience of photography with fellow scientific researchers during the seminar "In Cammino al tempo dell'ecologia" organised by the LTER network at Feudozso in 2019, in order to possibly offer a different perspective on ecology and invite them to use photography as a tool for discovery and education.



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Author

Bruno D'Amicis

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Competing Interests

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