

Colourbox London

Linda Wisdom doesn't want to be noticed. As a street photographer who aims to capture undisturbed moments, stealth is her best weapon. 'Sometimes I'll see a really strong character, someone who has a presence about them,' she says. 'I wouldn't call it stalking, but I'll watch them for a bit if they're around, and see if I can get their character out in the photo. People change as soon as they know the camera is on them and whatever moment I saw is lost. So I don't

ask. I try to be discreet and I try not to be in their face.'

London-born, Wisdom has travelled around the world taking photos but has a large portfolio from her home city, where she knows the places most likely to suit her style and yield interesting characters. From there, the key to a really good shot lies in observation – identifying the moment when a human subject and the urban landscape combine to create a meaningful image. 'I always try to connect the human element with the landscape around them,' she explains.

Wisdom works a lot in black and white, but with colour images this often means identifying something in the person's clothing that matches the landscape, leading to images with a story-book quality – a sense that a person isn't where they are by chance. 'That's always been my passion – finding stories or capturing something mysterious or compelling in a photo. People can usually pick up what I was trying to do, or they make up their own stories, which can be more interesting because you get the viewer's perspective of a picture.' ●



Above: LW – 'This shot, taken in Brick Lane, Shoreditch, a popular hang out for "hipster"-type characters, caught my eye because of the way the yellow in the woman's bright tights, the pedestrian crossing box and the urban surroundings all work together.'
Right: LW – 'One night, during a photo walk, there was a sudden downpour of rain. This was the first time I had noticed just how amazingly reflective the nearby paving at Ed's Easy Diner was, turning the whole street corner into a mirror of rainbow colours.'



LW – 'Timing is everything when you want your subjects to connect with their surroundings. Chinatown is busy, so to have the red of the bollard, the signpost and the dress against the clean, grey background, with no-one else in the shot, was fortunate.'



ADVICE

■ **LW:** 'Do it as a passion and see what style suits. Street doesn't suit every person. I've taught workshops and some people are naturally in tune with what's around them and some people just can't see through the eyes of a street photographer.'

INSPIRE

■ **LW:** 'Someone told me early on that a photo I took reminded them of the French street photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson and that opened up a whole Pandora's box of ideas. There's also Chinese photographer Fan Ho and Saul Leiter, an American photographer whose colour work was fabulous.'

PURPOSE

■ **LW:** 'I see my photography as a documentary of my lifetime. I'm documenting life around me, changes in London, the fashions, the skyline. I've seen pictures from the '60s, '70s, '80s and thought, "Ah, that's what life was like then". Maybe people will look back at my images to see the world at this time.'