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# ICM Photography Magazine

Reimagining the World Through Intentional Camera Movement

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Photographer Spotlight  
**Mats Andersson**

# Mats Andersson

## *Photographer Spotlight*

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I am a Swedish photographer who studied photography at the Industrial Art School in Gothenburg during the 1980s. This was followed by a job as Art Director and Photographer in the advertising industry. Since 1989, I have worked as an Art Director and Photographer at Concret Advertising in Jönköping, Sweden. I have also been connected with the photo agency Mascot in Stockholm since 2009, and I was elected to the prestigious Nature Photographers in 2011. Over the years, I have published 12 books and have won numerous awards, including Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2016 (Winner of the Black & White category), Nordic Nature Photographer of the Year 2016, and Nature Photographer of the Year 2016.



# A Mistake Turned into Art

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I got my first camera as a nine-year-old. Right then and there something happened, and my interest in photography spurred. As a child, I often travelled with my parents around the world and visited art museums. I was fascinated by how great masters such as Picasso, Chagall, Matisse, and Monet so skillfully created something completely different than a pure depiction of reality. Many times, we also went to the homes of different artists working in Sweden. I will never forget when we visited the Swedish artist Lindorm Liljefors, who had a live lynx behind a fence right by his house. From our seat at the kitchen table, we could watch the magnificent cat. I was about 10 years old at the time, and the memory of the lynx, the eccentric artist, and his paintings is something I will never forget.

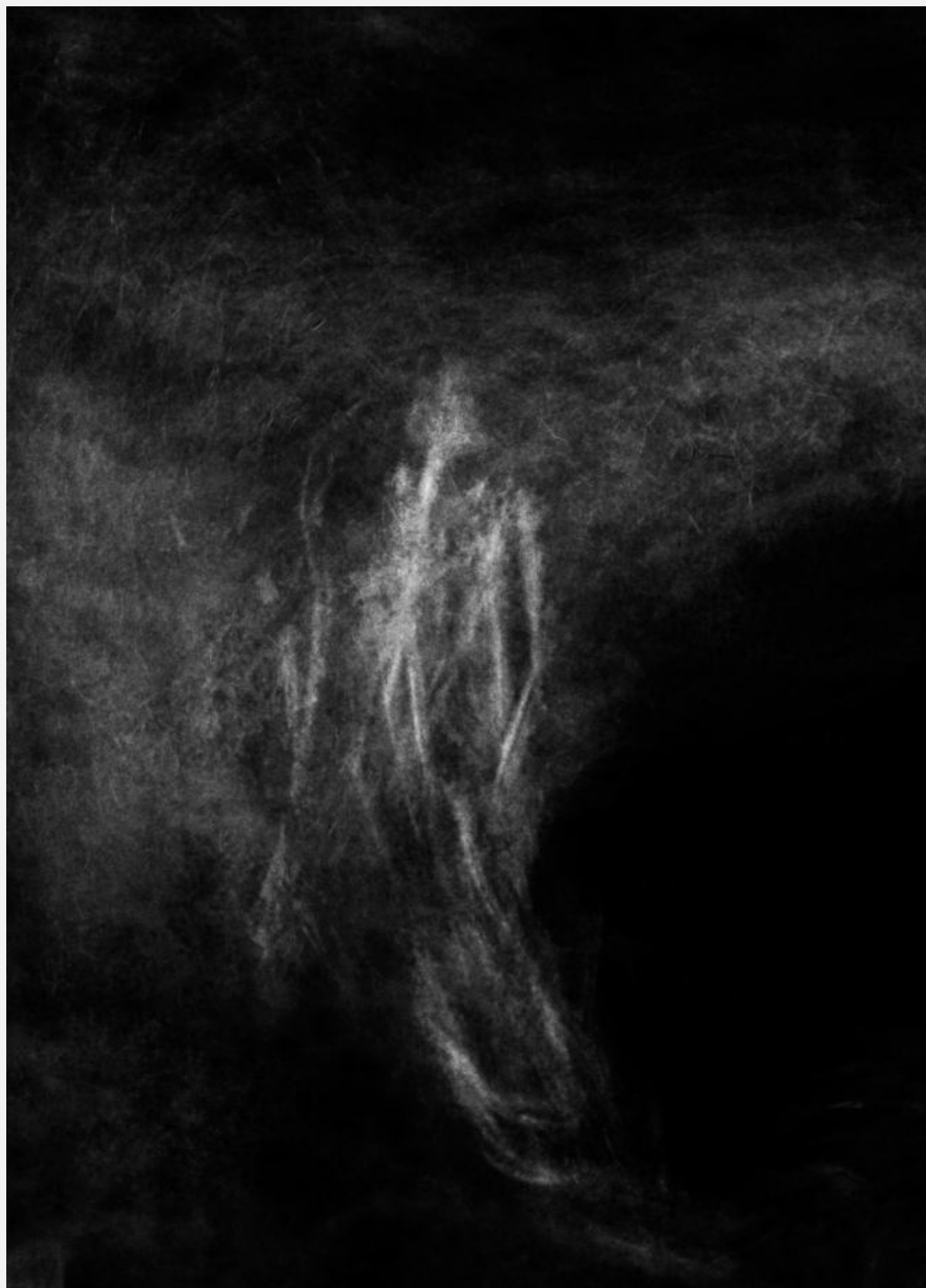
With my small analog compact camera, I made my first attempts at photography. Among other things, I took pictures of my water turtle through the aquarium's glass pane. Strangely enough, I never got tired. I was fascinated by cameras and images. A few years later, my parents gave me a yellow compact camera that could be used under water. What a joy! With water up to my elbows, I could now photograph the water turtle without a disturbing glass pane in front.

Many years later, I started working for an advertising agency. I had a Nikon F3, and to own such a camera in the early 1990s was not for everyone. Through the company, I was also able to get a very nice lens, an 85mm, f/1.4 lens, which was very expensive at the time. This camera was my faithful servant for many years, and I was so proud when I carried it around on my shoulder. My pictures at that time, however, were quite expressionless, if I may say so myself. Not bad by any means, but the pictures were mostly pure depictions of reality.

At the advertising agency where I worked, most of the nature pictures were bought from outside. Hundreds of pictures from famous Swedish nature photographers passed my eyes, as we produced calendars for various forestry companies and only traditional high-class nature photography made the cut. Certainly, these years affected my own image making, but strangely enough, it never became what my images would look like—that is, like many of the famous Swedish nature photographers.







## The Start of Photographing Digitally

Sometime in the late 1990s, I started photographing digitally. The quality of the cameras was lousy, but the digital technology was important for my development as an image creator. Now I could experiment and see the results directly, which created opportunities for new creative solutions and expressions, but it would take many years before the digital cameras were so good that they could measure up to the analog technology. My first digital camera, which was good, I bought in 2006—a Nikon D200. From that day on, my photography took completely different paths. I started to find a style that felt a bit more like my own.

The year 2009 was the year I felt I finally found home. I took two photography courses of creative nature photography, and then I attended a workshop with the famous Swedish photographer Anders Petersen. He greatly contributed to my development and urged me to photograph even more. Finally, I began to see that my pictures reflected me. My pictures held my fingerprints. The year 2009 was also the year I published my first photo book, *Årstiderna* (*The Seasons*). I was inspired by photographers who made everything but traditional nature photography. Instead, I turned to art photographers such as Michael Ackerman, Sally Mann, Arno Rafael Minkinen, Anders Petersen, and others.

## A Mistake Turned into Art

Creating my 'painted' pictures started as a mistake. I had been out in the woods for several hours on a dark winter day and could not really find the inspiration to create images. I did not have many pictures on the memory card that I was happy with. Slowly, I started walking back to where I had parked my car, the camera hanging in front of my chest. I was bored, and while I was walking, I pressed the shutter from time to time without lifting the camera to my eye. The camera was apparently set to a long shutter speed, but I did not reflect on it then. When I got to the car, I looked through the pictures on the display, and to my surprise, there were a couple of images that looked almost like impressionist paintings. Astonished, I looked at how the camera had been set up and tried to repeat what I had done.

So in that way, I had already started in 2009 to create more and more so-called ICM images—a concept that was little known then. Honestly, I do not know if anyone at that time had made similar pictures. What I had seen before were 'painted' pictures by Ernst Haas, who, with long shutter speeds, photographed running horses and bullfighting in the 1950s, but those images seemed more like a combination of panning and camera movement (although undoubtedly fantastic pictures!).

From 2009 until 2012, I continued to develop my technique and then released the book *Fotografi* (*Photography*) where most of the images were single exposures with camera movement. Also, the pictures in this book were in color. The title *Fotografi* came natural as, of course, the word means "to paint with light."

**Experimenting and Developing My Technique**

My first ICM photographs were made by using single exposures and moving the camera on the same subject. I often used my telephoto 70-200mm, f/2.8 lens. I would set the camera to the smallest aperture (f/22) and lowered the ISO as much as possible to get slower shutter speeds. My first pictures were usually exposed for between 0.5 second to 1 second. I then developed my technique to include in-camera double exposures. The first exposure is typically a classic landscape image made with a tripod. Then I lift the camera off the tripod and switch to a slower shutter speed as I move the camera to another subject where I expose and move the camera. My third technique is in fact the same as the double exposure technique I just described, but here I only do a single exposure with a much slower shutter speed of about 10-30 seconds. With such a long exposure, you must use a gray filter so that the image is not overexposed. I hold the camera completely still for about 2-3 seconds, then I move the camera to another subject where I move the camera for the remaining exposure time. If you want to know more exactly how I do this and get practical tips, you can book one of my workshops.



**Finding Motifs is More Important than Camera Technology**

Personally, I do not like to call myself a nature photographer. I'm an image creator. Art photography is close to my heart. My parents' interest in art obviously also rubbed off on me. I do not accept that you should limit yourself in making art. I'd rather call myself an art photographer who often finds motifs and subject matter in nature. I see pictures everywhere. For me, photography is less and less about technology. If you cannot find and see the motifs, it does not matter if you master all the different kinds of techniques fully.



The most difficult images to create are classic exposures without any ICM effects. I use ICM effects when I want to create images that are something between dream and reality. To me, the most important thing is that an image conveys a feeling—preferably the mood I was in when I created the image. During all my years as an art and nature photographer, I have used both joy and sorrow to create images. Most of the time, I have created my strongest images during periods when I had a hard time.

For many years now, I have been choosing to take my photographs in black and white. It has become my brand. I think black and white images are timeless, and they also let the viewer think of and imagine their own colors. And for me, who usually creates melancholic images, black and white fits perfectly.























