

The National

Photographer Frederic Lezni

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Frederic Lezni, 31, is a Lebanese-German photographer who spent four months driving from Vienna to Beirut to trace the cultural transition from Europe to the Middle East. His exhibition *Beyond Borders* will be held at the Empty Quarter gallery in Dubai.



Dirk Gebhardt / Imagetrust

Never stop being curious. It does not matter how much you have seen of the world and how much you know. Curiosity is the driving force behind my work. Curiosity is what gets me up every morning and makes me work hard to find visual answers to my various questions. Curiosity is also about being open to new experiences. It stimulates your mind and frees your creative emotions. Be curious, be daring, be alive. Go and discover something fresh.

It doesn't matter whether you go right or left at the next junction. The next good picture can be around any corner waiting for you. So whatever decision you take, there is no right or wrong way. And that is a very calming feeling when out wandering the streets.

If your pictures are not good enough, you're not close enough. That's a quote from the famous photojournalist Robert Capa, one of the founders of the Magnum Photos agency. Capa does not mean being physically close to the object you are photographing but mentally being close to your subject or theme.

Make mistakes, make better mistakes. Working as an artist, it is crucial to let things happen and sometimes lose control. What at first seems to be a mistake may be exactly what the picture needs to be interesting. This particular trait sharpens your individual artistic expression.

Do not take yourself too seriously. One lesson I learnt at art school was to take my work seriously. A lot of artists mistake this for taking themselves too seriously. Laugh about yourself sometimes and give others the chance to laugh about you.

Beyond Borders runs from May 18 to June 6

As told to Tahira Yaqoob

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