

FUJILOVE  
INTERVIEW

# *Hara Sklika*

In the first of this month's interviews, Stephanie Baxter is chatting to Hara Sklika, a Greek Fujifilm X-Photographer living in Athens.

She's currently the Production Director of the Antiparos International Photo Festival, operated by the International Association of Photography & Art of Antiparos, of which she's been the President for the past year. Hara works mainly as an architectural photographer but also runs her own side projects, with an emphasis on human aspects.

**HARA SKLIKA PORTRAIT**

*X-T2 + XF56mmF1.2 at f/1.6, 1/250 sec, ISO 200*





**Hara, welcome to FujiLove! Can you tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do?**

Hi! Thank you for this opportunity to present myself. I specialise in architectural photography; however, I do run some personal projects where the human aspect is observed. The planning of Antiparos International Photo Festival, on the small island of Antiparos in Greece, has been keeping me busy since 2018, when I accepted the position of the Production Director.

I started practising photography about a decade ago. Since then I have studied and attended workshops by some of

the most inspiring photographers both in Greece and abroad, done a lot of research and conducted a series of projects. Voluntary work at non-profit organisations and solidarity actions defined my visual voice at the beginning of my career as a photographer, aiming to understand social behaviours and diversity through imagery.

I'm also the proud mother of two and a dog. When I'm not busy shooting architecture, spaces and people, I love to travel and explore new places. Although, it is not one or the other, some of what I think as my best work has come from my travels.

**ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY |  
CYCLADES, GREECE**

*X-T2 + XF10-24mmF4 at f/11, 25 sec,  
ISO 320*

**ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY | CYCLADES, GREECE**

*X-T2 + XF10-24mmF4 at f/8, 1/125 sec, ISO 200*



**Given your varied subjects on your Instagram feed and website, how would you describe yourself as a photographer? Is there anything specific that connects your work across all the genres that you shoot or a similar approach that you take?**

Either it's a personal project or commissioned work, and storytelling is

the basic component that connects it all. I'm intrigued to see beyond the obvious and create pictures with attention to geometry. Even in architectural photography, there is a story behind every human creation, as well as part of an urban environment. As an artist, I feel that I want to visually portray those stories in my photographs.

*X-T2 + XT23mmF2 at f/7.1, 1/8 sec, ISO 200*





**'DAYS AT THE CHANNEL' SERIES**

*X-T2 + XF18-55mmF2.8-4 at f/8, 1/125 sec, ISO 320*

### **What fuels you creatively?**

So many things! Exploring cultures and customs around the world, direct communication with locals in small societies and finding the special within the quotidian. Seeing past the visible, redefining the term 'photogenic' and having the honour to be allowed by people to enter their world for a certain period of time. To experiment. To fail. To try again. To succeed.

### **What has your journey with Fujifilm gear looked like and what is in your camera bag these days?**

I entered the Fujifilm X world some years ago with an X-E1 camera and the XF18-55mmF2.8-4 lens, in search of lightweight travelling gear. Throughout this time, I was generally satisfied with the image quality, especially when printing in large format. I then switched to the X-T2 and enriched my gear with the XF10-24mmF4, XF23mmF2 and XF56mmF1.2.

### **From your website, I know that you have various personal projects that you have undertaken. Why do you think it's important to embark on these as a photographer and could you share with us a bit about one of your favourite projects?**

Many projects are sort of autobiographical. They are linked with parts of my life. I feel the need to showcase feelings and memories through images. One of my favourite

projects is called 'Faranji' (meaning "foreigner" in Amharic). This series is a body of work about my journey in Ethiopia. Social issues are infused with culture, personal experience as a foreigner and colour. It was the only time in my photography career where I could not resist capturing vivid colours.

The introductory text of my book, also entitled 'Faranji', which is to be published soon, reads:

*"I had no intention of travelling for the sake of it, nor to be a tourist. I wanted to go where time stands still. I wanted to see up close if the smiles I saw on glossy magazines are real in conditions of extreme poverty. I wanted to test my limits.*

*My wandering starts way before my arrival in Ethiopia. I endlessly study everything I can about the tribes that seem forsaken by time. I imagine the endless dirt roads that lie ahead.*

*I know the term for 'foreigner' already. Faranji is Amharic for stranger but is mostly used to describe westerners. This is how everyone addressed me during my time in Ethiopia, although this word carries no hostile ring as it is mostly accompanied by smiles and gentle tones. I wanted to find a way to express this feeling in my photographs.*

*In Ethiopia, formerly known by the exonym Abyssinia, I weave my story with people, seemingly barren landscapes and objects. It's always a feeling from my contact with people that propels me to visually portray my reality in photographs."*



**'FARANJI' SERIES**

*X-T2 + XF23mmF2 at f/4, 1/4000 sec, ISO 200*

**I've been really enjoying your self-portrait series that you've been posting to Instagram whilst quarantining because of Covid-19. How did that idea come about and what has the experience of doing a daily project been like?**

In difficult times of lockdown globally, photography worked as a lifeline. As government guidelines became strict rules for confinement, I photographed whatever I cooked, the walls around me. Having missed my daily activities, I wore

a swimming suit and cap, and stood before my lens, although self-portraits always made me uncomfortable.

Between an almond blossom and an olive tree, in the garden, I started a daily dialogue with my followers on social media. I communicated thoughts and feelings through images that are current, allegorical and sarcastic. While being asked to stay at home, I was thinking of next day's picture. This process eased the monotony of the quarantine. Of

course, there were days of sadness, with limited motivation or imagination for almost anything.

Soon, a title came up. "The grass is greener on the other side" is a saying, used to express someone's desire over someone else's possessions or situation they are in, thinking it is better than their own, even if not the case. In a period of a pandemic, where almost everyone on Earth faces the same threat equally, any form of vanity seems to fade.



**'THE GRASS IS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE' SERIES**

X-T2 + XF10-24mmF4 at f/9, 1/60 sec, ISO 500



**'THE GRASS IS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE' SERIES**

*X-T2 + XF10-24mmF4 at f/6.4, 1/60 sec, ISO 500*

Do come and connect with me over  
on my website or through my Instagram  
account: @harasklika.

**HARA SKLIKA**  

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www.harasklika.com