

A journey into Aksel's world

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Polaroid is not dead. In Istanbul, a mysterious character named aksel travels around the city to shoot beautiful instant images. Every day, a new polaroid is posted on [aksel's blog](#), a side project of the atmospheric jazz-pop band [123](#) founded in 2004 in Istanbul.

Rather than an anecdotal hobby, aksel's blog symbolizes the creativity of a band not limited to songs and melodies. 123 has given life to a whole new artistic universe, moving between fiction and reality. This last December, they released their second album called arve, following the debut aksel from November 2009, with anja expected to be the next one. These are three albums for three characters, all part of the same story which is depicted in the lyrics and each album's attached book with photographs and illustrations. Among the four members of 123, it is drummer Berk Can Özcan that's the eye behind the camera. He agreed to share aksel's love for colorful pictures with Mashallah and give a few comments on some of the photos.

[300 days of aksel's polaroids](#) from [aisha records](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Aksel is not only the name of your blog, but also the name of your first album. Is there a strong connection between your music and photography ?

Well, aksel was not just an ordinary record name from our album trilogy. It was a character. That's why I decided to give him a life on the web, so that he could be tracked by anyone. To us, music and polaroids are connected because music is made out of colors, and so are pictures.

One year has passed since the creation of the blog. How did it start ?

One year ago I was living in Stockholm, and our first album aksel had been released two months earlier. For years, I had been thinking of creating a photo blog ; something like a photo diary but with less words and just one photo for each day. I wanted the photo to speak for itself and capture anything, even something as simple as water. Then, I realized that I wanted aksel himself to shoot and publish the pictures, not me. aksel could speak for me, for us, for 123. This was in January, and it was snowing like hell in Stockholm by then. That's when I decided to start the blog.

What inspired you to create the character Aksel ?

I was reading a Ketil Bjørnstad novel at the time, and the names aksel and anja came directly from that book. But that was only the names : aksel's character was created long before I found a name for him.

How would you define his world and personality ?

He's a silent boy, preferring small letters. He wears scarves of different colors every day : he chooses the color to express his mood. He likes to travel and he likes to be alone. He's a thinker, he has his own world. And he can walk for days.

Which type of camera do you use ?

I have a Polaroid One600 Classic. Years ago, I owned a real classic one but I lost it. This last one is a gift

from my sister. However, most of the time I shoot digitally and mould the pictures into polaroid shape. This is something related to money of course : a pack of 10 instant polaroid 600 films costs between €20 and €40 on internet. I'd love polaroid cameras to be produced forever, they're so unique !

Do you take a picture every day ?

I do shoot every single day, but sometimes I also upload a photo that I've shot earlier. Nevertheless, nothing is older than 10 days. The blog is a photo diary where photos have to be recent and reflect a kind of order in the life flow of aksel or myself.

Istanbul is a city that's been shot billions of times, but these polaroids give a fresh and poetic outlook by focusing on small details. Is that how you see Istanbul ?

For me it's not just about Istanbul, but that's where I happen to be right now. Recently I've also been to Sweden and South Africa. Yes, I live in Istanbul so most shots are from Istanbul. But, as you mentioned, the photos are more of urban details than the city itself. I'm not after portraying Istanbul : my intention is to share aksel's inner world. That's why the photos are mostly close-ups.

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[*The article on Mashallah News*](#)

Sources

Source : Mashallah News