

# Xiomáro: Mastering Photography Through Storytelling

By Ramon B. Nuez Jr.

Posted: 5/30/2014

Meet Xiomáro, a photographer whose winding path to success took him through many artistic endeavors.

Xiomáro has had a number of defining moments in his life. For me, what defines Xiomáro is his ability to embrace failure and be comfortable with it. Xiomáro refuses to allow failure to adversely define his photography, instead he chooses to overcome.

I have always been interested in both music and the visual arts.

Over the course of his life, one would become dominant over the other. He took music and art classes in college, but after graduation, Xiomáro concentrated on music for many years. He wrote, recorded and performed original songs in the northeast region and even made it to the Top 40 of American Idol Underground, an online forum for unsigned artists.

Xiomáro remembers, "During that time, I was working as an entertainment attorney and managed an artist on EMI Records. Because I had input on imaging and design, I became interested in the work of certain photographers who were often featured in Rolling Stone magazine like Mark Seliger, Anton Corbijn and Sebastião Salgado."

Eventually, Xiomáro got to observe many photo shoots, including one with Ellen von Unwerth who is well known for her Guess? Jeans advertising campaign with models Claudia Schiffer and Anna Nicole Smith. That inspired Xiomáro to dig up his father's old Canon AV-1 to document those experiences.

But today, Xiomáro's work is informed more by painters like Vermeer, Rembrandt or Goya than it is by the styles of other photographers. "And many times, I avoid over-thinking the technical stuff and try focusing on the emotion and energy of the moment," Xiomáro explains.

Growing up I was surrounded by artists and music.

"Before retiring, my father made antique chair reproductions, which often involved sculptural carvings and other artful details," Xiomáro explains. "My uncle was an oil painter and very influenced by Van Gogh." He grew up in an era when rock n' roll, not the Internet, was the communicative medium of choice for youth. So, growing up, that was his context.

And as we continued to talk, Xiomáro explained that there were two personal milestones that influenced his photography.





"About 10 years ago I underwent surgery for cancer. During my recovery, it was relaxing to take photographs again. This time, I took them out in the National Parks and exhibited them at my coffee house concerts," states Xiomáro.

The photographs sold very well and eventually allowed Xiomáro to upgrade from a digital point-and-shoot to a DSLR. For the next few years, he photographed seriously, but somewhat randomly as far as subject matter.

The next milestone was being accepted to Weir Farm National Historic Site's prestigious Artist-in-Residence program. For one month, he lived on what used to be the farm of Julian Alden Weir, one of the founders of American Impressionist painting.

Xiomáro fondly reminisces, "For one month, I had the freedom to think hard about what I wanted to do in photography and to create my first photographic series. That changed my path into an express lane as it led to getting commissioned by Weir Farm and other National Parks to create collections that are now actively exhibited around the country."

## I don't fear failure, because we are old friends.

Xiomáro had many aspirations that did not always pan out the way he would have liked, so he's no stranger to failure. He explains, "Weirdly, a positive byproduct of overcoming cancer is that it energized me. After overcoming the possibility of an early death, I am less afraid of things. Now I feel like I have a second chance at life. And I don't want to waste any of it. So, if I'm petrified about anything, it's about not trying to succeed at achieving a goal or aspiration."

## About Xiomáro

It's always wonderful to speak with Xiomáro. I try to speak with him at least twice a month. To simply catch up, talk shop or ask for advice.

Additionally, I am rather excited on our new venture. We are in the process of creating a photography mastermind group with fellow photographer [Dave Ortiz of Steadyhand Imagery](#). This group will not only allow us to pool our knowledge, but hold each other accountable for the various projects we work on, as well.

Professional photographers will tell you that in order to connect with your viewer you must be able to tell incredible stories. And that is something that Xiomáro is very good at. Allowing his life's journey to influence his perspective so the images Xiomáro makes reflect his unique stories.

## What Drives You?

How do you tell your story through photography? Leave a comment below.