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PHOTOGRAPHER DOTAN SAGUY

Today the Venice Paparazzi "Pass the Spotlight" shines on local photographer Dotan Saguy

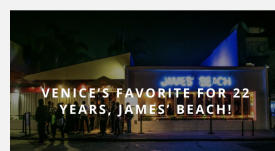
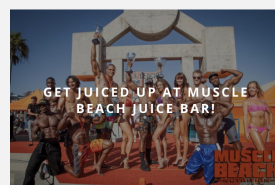
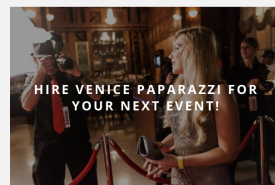
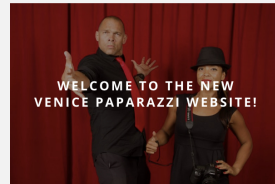
Tell us about your art or company. My photo book about what I call the "endangered culture of Venice Beach" is the first long form photo documentary published about Venice in decades. It captures the timeless free-spirited essence of the boardwalk while at the same time hinting on the looming threats overshadowing this unique culture. Now that the project is done, it's really exciting to see the work getting recognized: Some of the images have been featured by National Geographic and now a top tier German publisher just decided to publish it as a coffee table book that will come out next summer. In fact it is already available for preorder on Kickstarter right now at <http://tinyurl.com/venicebook> and all preorders will ship signed a month or two before the book becomes available in stores.



Check out the Venice Beach - The Last Days of a Bohemian Rhapsody video



How did you get into photography? Initially I started shooting in Venice as casual street photography. I was just curious about the "crazy Venice moments" happening there and was having fun hunting down candid scenes that made me laugh. A year or so later I started getting formally trained as a photojournalist and realized that I had a documentary on my hands with a full story to tell.



What projects are you currently working on? I am currently working with a couple of non-profits on documenting the journey of people coming out of homelessness. I am also looking into starting a project about artists getting evicted in the Downtown Art District.

What accomplishments are you most proud of? This book on Venice Beach will be my first monograph. It was a true labor of love. The greatest compliment I get is when long time Venice residents tell me that they see the Venice they know and love in my photographs. That's when I know I've succeeded in this work.



What advice would you give someone starting out in your field? I would give them very simple advice: find a subject you love, make sure you are realistically in a good position to document it (location, access, time, skill level, etc.) and then shoot it with passion for a long time. Only good things can come out of that.

Who or what inspires you? I admire and study the work of many photographers from whom I've learned a lot. Among them are Sebastião Salgado, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Alex Webb, Ed Kashi, Bruce Davidson, Matt Black and many others. But beyond that, Venice itself has such a creative vibe that sometimes it feels like just breathing the air provides all the inspiration one needs... or is it the marijuana in the air?



How would your friends or colleagues describe you? Probably as a nice guy who is passionate about his work but doesn't take it too seriously either. The most rewarding part of this project was to get to hang out with people from all walks of life and becoming friends with them: hippies, surfers, body builders, shopkeepers, artists, homeless people, ex-homeless, stoners, skateboarders, musicians. I felt like this is what wealth really feels like: being connected to all this diversity, all these life experiences packed in this little stretch of beach.

Favorite affirmation, mantra, or quote. The camera is an excuse to meet people and explore issues I otherwise wouldn't have access to. It is my passport to a world beyond my normal reach.

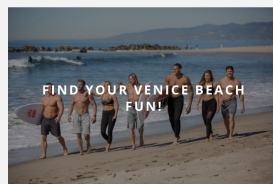
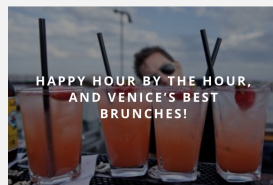
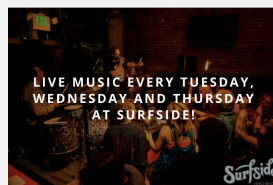
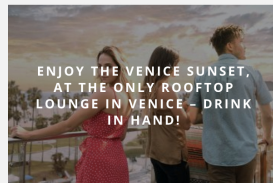
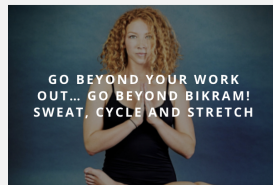
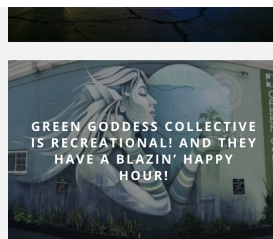
Favorite book, band or movie. Led Zeppelin, The Big Lebowski

What do you do on your days off? I spend time with my wife and kids, often walking or biking on the boardwalk.

Finish off the statement "Life is..." Life is short. Do what you love while you still can.



What causes do you support? I donate a lot of my time to non-profits fighting homelessness in LA and I give money to many local and national organizations. I think it's important to not get discouraged by the current



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DID YOU KNOW THAT JULY 4TH IS ALSO VENICE, CALIFORNIA'S BIRTHDAY?

money to many local and national organizations. I think it's important to not get discouraged by the current political environment and keep fighting to make this town, this country and this world a better place. These days it's so tempting to just drop the towel, curl up in a ball and cry when you hear the latest White House drama of the day.



What's one thing we can do to make the world a better place? Talk to each other. Try to understand others and what their lives are like. But I'm preaching to the choir here. That's what Venetians already practice everyday.

Describe Venice. The antithesis of LA.

Describe your perfect day in Venice: Shooting all day of course! Oh... that and drum at the drum circle.

What are some interesting destinations/activities in Venice that even locals might not be aware of?

The lit-up bike parade on Sunday night is amazing. Everyone should take part in it. Few people know that you can bring your bike and that there are people at the meeting point who will get your own bike all lit-up for a reasonable fee.

List any of your favorite Venice businesses, event(s) or activities? I won't shock anyone by saying that the Wee Chippy makes fries that are beyond anything I had ever tasted. I also love **Poke Poke**. I absolutely love the Neptune Parade. I've shot it several times and it is well covered in the book. Such crazy scenes! The Muscle Beach body building contests are a hoot. Not everyone knows they hold 3 different ones every year. Personally I don't care much for the stage at these competitions: it's backstage that the most interesting moments happen.

What is your craziest or fondest Venice experience? Shooting for about an hour in a van full of hippies parked at the dog park. It's actually one of the images in the book and one of my personal favorites.

Any shoutouts or thank you's? I want to thank all the people from the Venice community who have opened their arms and their hearts to me and my project and let me photograph their lives with such candor and generosity.

Anything else about Venice that you would like to say? I really hope they keep Venice weird. It's looking like it's going to be challenging but it's a resilient place with a lot of good people who try hard to keep it weird. May the weird triumph in the end!

Who should Venice Paparazzi cast the spotlight on next?

A dog or something. Enough about humans. We ruin everything.



Pre-order your Venice Beach book now! Dotan is offering this "Locals Only" Special which would reserve a signed book, a free original signed print, and give them an invite to a secret pre-launch party at a Venice joint where I could have some drinks and appetizers served, meet with people and inscribe the book with a nice custom message for them. For more info, visit tinyurl.com/venicebook

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ALEX AND EDIZEN

Owned and operated by Alex and Edizen Stowell, Venice Paparazzi started as a photo booth on the Venice boardwalk in 2003 and has grown into Venice's #1 site for events, information and community. As well, we have an event photography/ photo booth division that travels the nation. Having an event and need photographers or a fun photo booth? Hire Venice Paparazzi!



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VENICE NEWS

- Check out this list of local 4th July Happenings!
- Did you know that July 4th is also Venice, California's birthday?
- Celebrate 4th of July with a spectacular fireworks display over the water in Marina del Rey!
- We all love our dogs! So, here are a few summer safety tips to help to keep our four legged children out of harms way.
- Calling all kids ages 2-7 years! Have the best time ever at Ecole Claire Fontaine's Fun French Summer Camp!
- Help Legalize Dancing in Venice! Show Up on June 25th to Support The Canal Club!

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- Did you know that it is illegal to dance inside certain venues in Venice?
- Join in on the Main Street Summer Soulstice Fun this Sun. June 24th! Live Music, 100+ Vendors, Beer and Wine Gardens, BBQ, and more.
- Soccer anyone? Here is where to watch the FIFA World Cup in Venice and Marina del Rey.
- June 21st is Go Skateboarding Day!
- Get Juiced Up at Muscle Beach Juice Bar!
- 50+ Venice Beach Fun things to do and see!

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