

ales jungsmann

Born in Czechoslovakia in 1971, Ales studied photography at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts, Prague. He is a member of the Association of Professional Photographers Czech Republic (AF). Ales specializes in clean, sharp shots of architecture and interiors.



nationality
Czech

main working location
Czech Republic

website
www.alesjungsmann.com

◀ for this shot

camera and lens
Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III and
TS-E 24mm lens

aperture and shutter setting
f/10 and 30 sec

sensor/film speed
ISO 100

for the story behind this shot see over ...

in conversation...

What led you to specialize in architectural photography?

As a student I was given the task of photographing an outstanding building, Prague's Trade Fair Palace, built in 1928. I was overwhelmed by its architecture and realized that this type of photography might be a field I could explore for a long time and even make a living from.

Please describe your relationship with your favourite subject. Are you an expert on it?

My photography is a service for architects, so I must portray responsibly and with humility a picture of the place for a person who may never visit it. But it is up to me to interpret the picture. I choose the visual means to do this – I always try to express the nature of the building, whether in an overall picture or an abstract detail.

Do you feel you have succeeded in being innovative in your photography, or do you feel the shadows of past masters over you?

I don't know. I haven't thought of it this way. Of course, I have admired photographs made by other architectural photographers, such as Pavel Štecha and Ezra Stoller.

How important do you feel it is to specialize in one area or genre of photography?

There's no real reason why a photographer shouldn't become outstanding in all genres – but I can't recall anyone who has done it.

What distinguishes your work?

I feel this is up to others to decide. I just try to do my best.

As you have developed, how have you changed?

I have become more self-confident in my work and clear in my mind about what I don't want to do.

What has been the biggest influence on your development as a photographer?

My own mistakes and my tutors at college.

What would you like to be remembered for?

I would be pleased if people looking at my photographs see that the architecture is good and then say, "That's a good photograph. Who took it?" And I would like my clients to regard me as a reliable professional.

Did you attend a course of study in photography?

I majored in photography at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts, Prague. This education was essential for me. You can possibly become a successful commercial photographer even faster through self-study or working as an assistant. But thanks to this art school, I think I have developed a more complex personality than I would have done if I had started to work in the commercial field and specialized from the very beginning.

How do you feel about the tremendous changes in photographic practice in the past 10 years? Have you benefited or suffered from the changes?

The past 10 years have really been revolutionary. High-quality digital photography became available almost overnight, so everybody became a photographer, which must have been frustrating for the professionals. On the other hand, I am able to sell more photographs and I am better off. But I feel nostalgic about the old days when, working with a large format 4x5 camera and cloth over my head, I felt like a magician.

Can photography make the world a better place? Is this something you personally work towards?

Nowadays, when TV is so ubiquitous, perhaps not. Even the documentary photography after World War II did not bring about change, although photography as a medium had much more impact back then than it does now. However, a good photograph pleases people.

Describe your relationship with digital post-production.

I made friends with my first Mac in 1992. I can't imagine my work without it, though I try to do most of the work during the process of taking the picture.

Could you work with any kind of camera?

With architecture I need special equipment to correct converging parallels. I used the Sinar F 4x5 camera long after digital photography arrived. However, after I bought a new Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III and then Canon's new series of 24mm and 17mm tilt and shift lenses arrived I made the switch to digital.

Finally, to end on a not too serious note, could you tell us what non-photographic item you find essential?

I love driving, so I choose big playful cars with a large boot for my equipment. But equipment is getting smaller and smaller, so I am considering buying a Mini Cooper JCW!

behind the scenes

The BMW plant in Leipzig, Germany, is an amazing building by Zaha Hadid. As the shoot was in December when daylight hours are short, I decided to start in the afternoon and do the main shots I wanted at dusk.



10:30



10:38

10:45

10:30 I packed a basic set of equipment, though I did take along my Sinar F view camera as well as all the digital gear so that I could take one "old-fashioned" picture.

10:38 Checking the weather in Leipzig, I saw that a sunny afternoon was still promised.

10:45 I set off, allowing plenty of time to be sure of arriving while the sun was still up.

15:20 When I arrived I found the weather overcast, so I didn't get the sunlight I wanted to show up the plasticity of the building.

15:40 I set up my Canon 1Ds with the 24mm TS-E tilt and shift lens, set to maximum shift.



15:20



15:40



16:00



16:05

16:00 The hard case for my Sinar camera stands in for a stepladder when I need one – I was able to use a height of about 2.1m (7ft) on my Manfrotto tripod.

16:05 I concentrated on interior shots first as the light levels would fall more quickly inside than outside.

< in camera

16:15 I moved outside at the time I planned but, on checking a test shot (below right), I realized I needed the light levels to fall a little further for the intensity of the coloured light to strengthen.

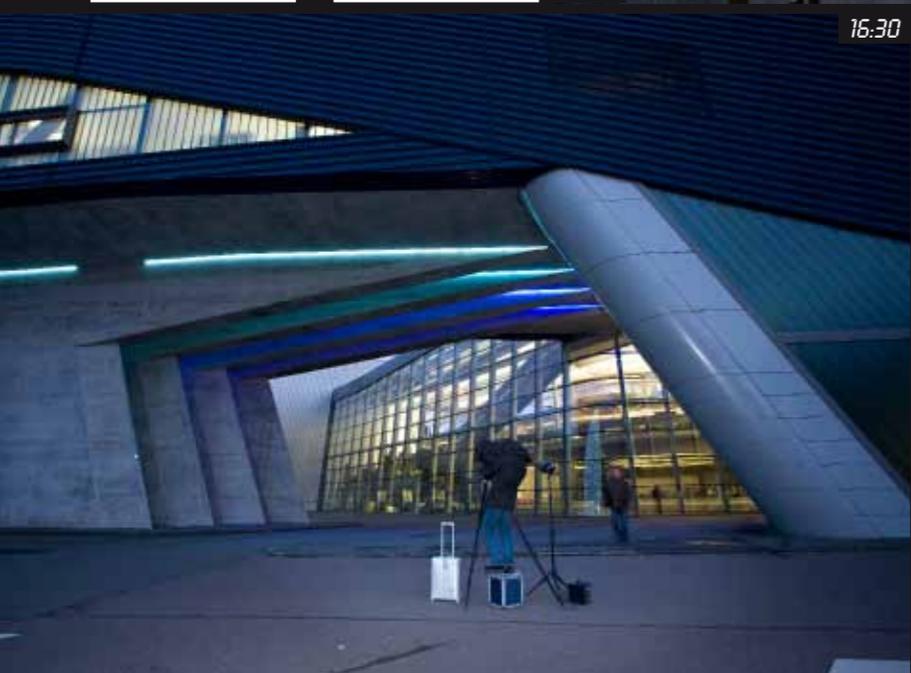
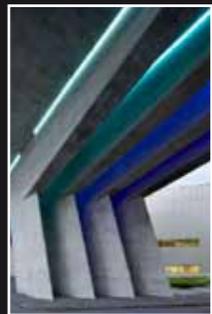
16:30 I took a shot with the Sinar view camera first as it takes a while to set up. I used a single 1200w lamp to show details in the shadows.

16:50 Changing back to the Canon, I took a digital photograph, again using the lamp and flashing about four times during the 25-second exposure.

▽ in camera



▷ in camera



◀ in camera



17:05 Perched on an uneven surface, I used a self-timer to reduce the vibrations.

17:10 The colours were now strong, but I had to be quick as the sky was getting dark.

17:45 I quickly reviewed the shots I had taken on the camera screen.

18:15 It was now too late to repeat anything, but I checked my shots carefully on the laptop to give me peace of mind on the way home.



portfolio

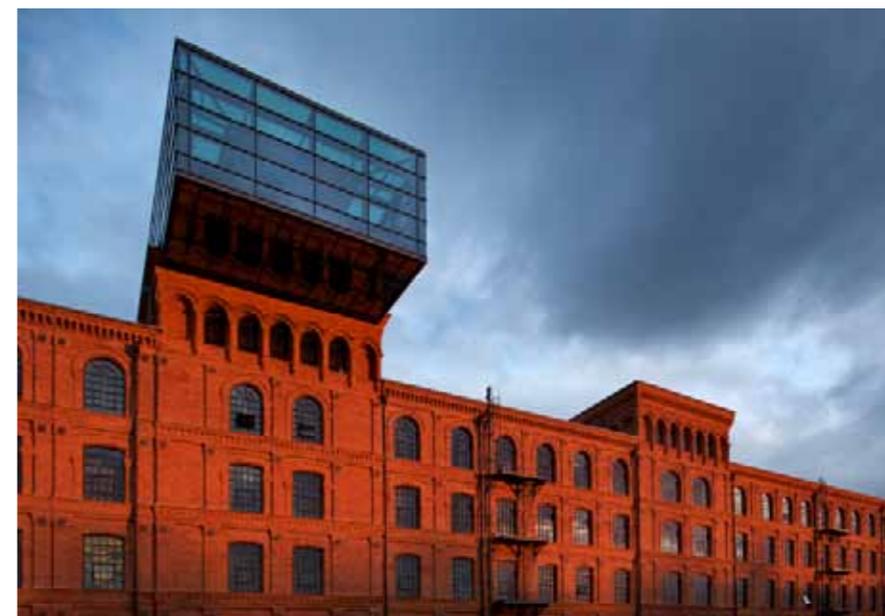
▽ **detail of a ceiling at Village Cinemas, Prague, Czech Republic**

This was the very first picture I took of a cinema, but I have since photographed more than 20 new multiplexes. I used no additional lighting.



△ **interior of the PVR Cinema, Juhu Mumbai, India**

I have photographed cinemas in cities all over India, including Delhi, Indore, and Hyderabad. When I'm on a shoot, I like to catch a film at the cinema too, so when I was working in India I became a big fan of Indian films! I used a 2500w Hedler tungsten light with a softbox.



◁ **Andel's Hotel, Lodz, Poland**

When I was on this shoot I had bad luck with the light – it was either overcast or raining heavily. This picture was the last shot taken on the last day. Just as I was loading my equipment into the car, there was a moment of bright sunlight. I quickly grabbed the camera without the tripod and pressed the button.