

# Close to home

You might not think you live in a beautiful place, but wait for the right light, and the right angle, and the mundane becomes extraordinary. **Marius Rustad** talks to Elizabeth Roberts about what he shoots...close to home



## Marius Rustad

Name: Marius Rustad

Born: 10 May 1980

Located: Norway

**Elizabeth Roberts** *You say that you took these pictures in close proximity to your home during 2006-2008 – do you live somewhere extraordinarily beautiful or are you just clever at finding the right spot?*

**Marius Rustad** I guess that is a matter of opinion. I personally don't find any of these places particularly beautiful, but when

conditions are just right Mother Nature will hide imperfections and naturally enhance the more interesting features. It's very challenging to portray ordinary places, that you take for granted, in a beautiful way, especially when it's where you grew up. Add to that the importance of just the right weather and you end up with a lot of zero

shot sessions. That's when being close to home is good.

**ER** *Your style, you say, has developed through your interest in conveying a sense of melancholy, sadness and loss – can you say where this stems from and why it interests you?*

**MR** They are complex feelings that have



**Eight Birds**

a broad palette of emotions. Like a fine wine compared to a can of soda – if that makes any sense. My two biggest passions in life are music and photography and I've always been more attracted to the slow and mellow minor key songs than your average two minute jolly sing-along. It's hard to explain. I've always been sort of a loner, a

single child, going about his own business. My photographs are very personal, they're like thoughts and feelings materialised into mirror images of my mind. Wow, that was deep... (ha ha ha). But seriously, I don't go around and feel sad all the time – I have different sides – I think all people do. I just like to explore the darker ones.

***ER** Being alone is an important part of your image making – can you say why?*

**MR** I only feel inspired when I'm alone – alone with the world around me. Random people are distracting and throw me off my game. I feel connected to my surroundings when I am the only person present...like it communicates with me, be it a single street ▶



**Buoy**

◀ light, a lonely building or the beautiful sea. I'm a little shy too and I guess I feel more free to shoot whatever pops into my head when there's no one else around.

**ER** *What is it that makes an image beautiful for you?*

**MR** Tough question. Well, a really beautiful image gives me some sort of physical

reaction – goosebumps, or my tummy starts turning a bit, or my heart pounds a little faster...I know it when I feel it. I have a very broad taste in photography and I'm all over the place when it comes to appreciating different styles. I'm a huge Eggleston fan – he's a rock star – brilliant pictures. Todd Hido's Roaming stuff is pure beauty...

Stephen Shore's Uncommon Places is breathtaking...anything by Josef Hoflehner, Danny Clinch. The list goes on – Candy Cigarette by Sally Mann is probably one of my favorite pictures ever – it has everything. *(At the time of writing this Marius had no idea that we were featuring Sally Mann's work in the same issue! ER)*



**Early Morning**

**ER** *In terms of technique how do you go about taking these pictures (what camera do you use etc)?*

**MR** I'm a total gear junkie when it comes to cameras, they are beautiful objects, and I spend an unhealthy amount of time on eBay looking for whatever I'm into at the moment. When it came to the Close to Home series I was all about simplicity. All the images are

shot with one camera, one lens and one type of film – a Hasselblad 503cw with an 80mm lens and Fuji Acros. I used a lot of long exposures which, in combination with rough weather, gave the images that ethereal quality.

**ER** *Why do you use black & white?*

**MR** It just feels natural, at least when it

comes to my landscape work. Velvia sunsets don't do it for me. Black & white has a timeless quality and a way of emphasizing form which is an important element in these shots. I usually isolate material objects surrounded by the flowing powers of nature and black & white helps calm everything down while still bringing attention to the ►



**Floater**

◀ lines that appear in the photograph.

*ER Is this the kind of landscape you grew up in – and if so, do you think this affects the kind of pictures you take?*

**MR** Yes, this is where I grew up, but no, it doesn't affect what kind of pictures I take. I shoot who I am, and whenever I get that

feeling where I want to take a picture I just try to make the best out of what I have and what is available around me. It's all about feelings. Doesn't matter if I'm in Hollywood with a Leica M6 and shooting colour negatives or at home with a medium format shooting black & white. To another person the pictures might look totally different, but

to me they convey the same feeling and the common factor is that they both started out as a thought in my head that was triggered by what I saw at that point in time. Again, it's all very hard to put down in words.

*ER How important is water to you?*

**MR** Water is very important to me. I feel very



**Diving Tower Study I**

connected to the sea. There is something about it that makes me calm and reflective. It has beauty and lightness, but there is also something dark and scary about it. It triggers a lot of senses in me.

***ER** What kind of projects are you currently working on?*

**MR** Right now I'm a little here and a little there...I very seldom work on specific projects, but I do feel that setting boundaries helps in keeping some sense of direction. I'm going to Denmark soon and hope to bag a few shots on that trip. I have a feeling that might evolve into a bigger project.

***ER** Is *Close to Home* finished or do you think you will continue with it?*

**MR** I promised myself that *Close to Home* was done, but I keep coming back to these places and also finding new and exciting locations whenever I step outside, roaming about. I don't know...we'll see. One thing is certain, I will never stop taking pictures close to home. ▶



◀ **Still Standing**



Night Swimming ▶



**Distant City**

◀ All pictures shown here are from a project entitled *Close to Home*

**B+W**