

INSTAFAMOUS!

A GUIDE TO TAKING BETTER PHOTOS FROM 12 INSTAGRAM INFLUENCERS



SMARTER MARKETING THROUGH IMAGERY

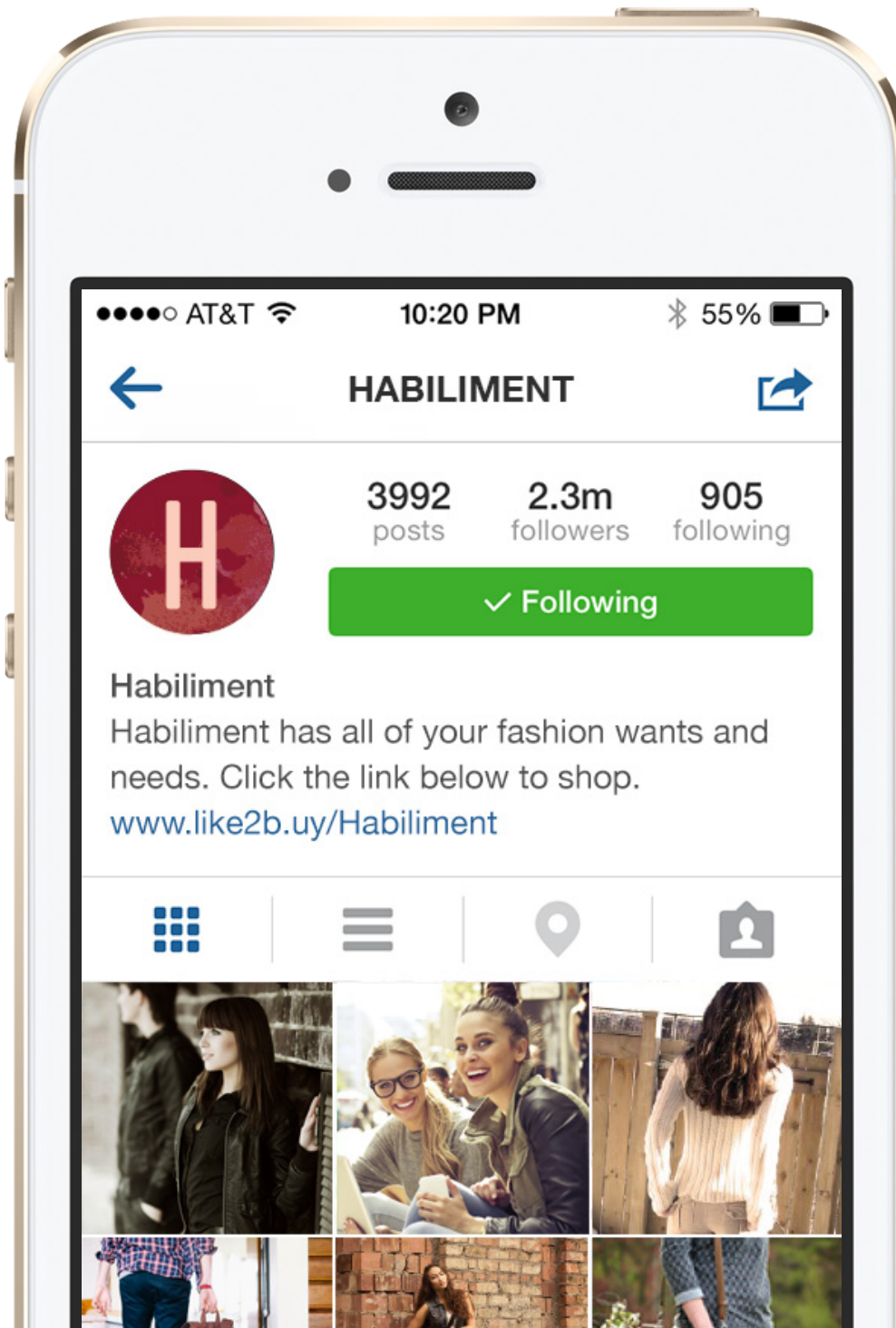
APRIL 2015

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD...

Instagram engagement is off the charts, and for good reason. Unsurprisingly, Instagram is all about images. And in an age when consumers are increasingly communicating in pictures, not words, make no mistake. Instagram is where your fans are – and where they want to be.

Our previous content has attempted to look at some of the science behind what works on Instagram. But whether you're a big brand, a small biz, or your own boss, there's no denying that **succeeding on Instagram isn't just science – it's art.**

To that end, we've enlisted the help of 12 great Instagram artists to help you become a better one. In this guide, you'll find 25 tips for taking better photos, telling authentic stories, and building stronger connections with your fans.



1

STRIVE FOR THEMATIC CONTINUITY.

“Some of the most successful photographers have a certain sort of stylistic continuity throughout their practice. Try having a similar theme, voice or aesthetic. Find your style.”

@justinmeadmaxon

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A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a red t-shirt, stands in a field of tall, green grass. She is looking towards the right, where the sun is setting, creating a bright, golden glow. The background shows some trees and a clear sky.

2

CREATE A CONVERSATION.

“You should always be communicating through your image. Whether it be a subtle message of beauty or a visually compelling story of hope. It’s the story that will always make you feel the image rather than just seeing it.”

@garethpon


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photo: @dante8

3

THINK ABOUT YOUR SUBJECT.

“Take a moment to think about why you want to capture a particular image. What makes it interesting to you? Asking yourself these kinds of questions really does wonders to help improve your photography in general; it also helps define the tone, composition and emotions you want to convey through it. Nothing is more gratifying than when someone else sees your photograph and feels the same emotions you felt when you took it.”

@dante8

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4

GO AGAINST THE GRAIN.

“Challenge yourself to see beyond the narrative. There’s so much imagery out there. What makes an image unique is when it goes against the normal visual association we have with the subject.”

@justinmeadmaxon

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A hand holding a magnifying glass over a street scene. The magnifying glass is held by a thumb and index finger. The lens of the magnifying glass shows a clear, detailed view of a street with a water tower in the background. The background of the entire image is a blurred street scene with a blue sky and a red building.

5

USE YOUR NATIVE CAMERA.

“There are thousands of photo apps out there. But as tempting and convenient as it may be to shoot an image through them, most don’t provide as high of a resolution as your phone does. For example, if you shoot your picture in Instagram, not only are you stuck with a medium-quality image, but you are also stuck with a square.

I like to use my phone’s native camera and then import the image to an editing app. That way, I have complete control of how I crop the image. Plus, I’ll always have an original to go back to.”

@astrodub

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6

SHOOT MANUALLY.

“Always shoot as manually as possible. You can even do this with your phone. Look for apps that, at the least, let you control the focus and exposure. On an iPhone, I love [VSCO](#) and [ProCamera](#). With Lumia devices, you can control the ISO, shutter speed, exposure compensation, focus and aperture all with the native camera app.”

@kirstenalana

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7

BUT EMBRACE TOOLS TOO.

“Don’t be afraid to use the tools that Instagram and other apps provide you to produce your images. The idea that only unfiltered or unedited photos are real is ludicrous and outdated. Photographers have always edited their images regardless of the medium. Digital photography is as real as photos captured on film.”

@bkstreetart

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photo: @kirstenalana

A woman in a black dress stands in a field of tall grass under a dramatic, cloudy sky. The sky is filled with large, white, puffy clouds, and the sun is shining through them, creating a bright, hazy light. The woman is standing in the middle ground, looking towards the camera. The grass in the foreground is tall and green, with some golden-brown tips. In the background, a tall, thin tower is visible on the right side.

8

LOOK TO YOUR LIGHTING.

“By studying light and how it affects the way your scene looks, you’ll get the result you want in an image. Consider the time of day, the character of shadows, and the color of the light. Remember that light is ultimately your tool. The more you learn how to use it, the better your photos will be.”

9

SHOOT IN LANDSCAPE.

“The majority of people just pick up their phones, point and shoot. This makes for some distorted perspectives and dizzying images. It also makes it really hard to crop as a square if, say, you were shooting for Instagram.

Instead, turn your phone horizontally and hold with both hands as you

compose your shot. This works great for landscapes, portraits and general everyday photography. Make sure your grid is on so you can shoot as straight as possible, and turn on your HDR setting, which is available on most mobile phones.”

@astrodub

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10

DON'T BE FLASHY.

“Although they’re getting slightly better, don’t use the built-in flash. It often creates a harsh “deer in headlights” look that’s not flattering to anyone or thing.”

@samhorine

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11

GET IN LINE.

“Use the grid lines on your phone or camera tool to line up points of interest and converging lines appropriately to the rule of thirds.”

@samhorine

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A NEW PERSPECTIVE.

“Be sure to always approach the subject you’re shooting from different angles and distances. Experiment with different framing and interesting perspectives while still keeping in mind that composition makes a good image.”

@garethpon

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BE PLAYFUL.

“Make a story of everything you photograph. You don’t have to be technical about it – this can be simple. Whether using a good DSLR, a point-and-shoot, or being creative with your phone, start using light—and personality—to give your pictures memorable meaning, even etching out silly ideas to shoot little scenarios. If you are careful, your art can consume you. I now find myself browsing toy sections, peering carefully into the plastic packaging of pubescent toy personalities, looking for stuff to wear, hold or accompany a scene.”

@darryljones

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photo: @kirstenalana



14

YOUR BEST SELFIE.

“Look for more creative ways to take self-portraits using tripods or a timer. Anyone can take a selfie-stick photo, but not anyone can achieve a real piece of art with themselves in the frame. I love the [GorillaPod](#) for this type of mobile photography. It can literally wrap around anything, so you don’t need to worry about a level surface.”

@kirstenalana

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15

GET CLOSE TO PEOPLE.

“When you are close physically, the images feel intimate and resonate more emotion.”

@amivitale

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16

THINK BIG PICTURE.

“If you know you’re shooting specifically for Instagram, don’t be afraid to capture images in medium format to begin with, so you can nail your composition and not have to worry about fitting the image you want into a square crop later. I love the iPhone’s native camera app for this, but [VSCO](#) allows you to do that as well. If that makes you nervous, capture both a medium format and a vertical or horizontal image of the same scene. That way you’ve covered all your bases.”

@kirstenalana

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17

DON'T SETTLE.

“Don’t just take the picture everyone else takes. Think about the light, your position, the framing, the angle. Maybe look up or turn around. Sometimes you’ll find the best stories to tell in a picture when you’re thinking out of the box.”

@justtravelous

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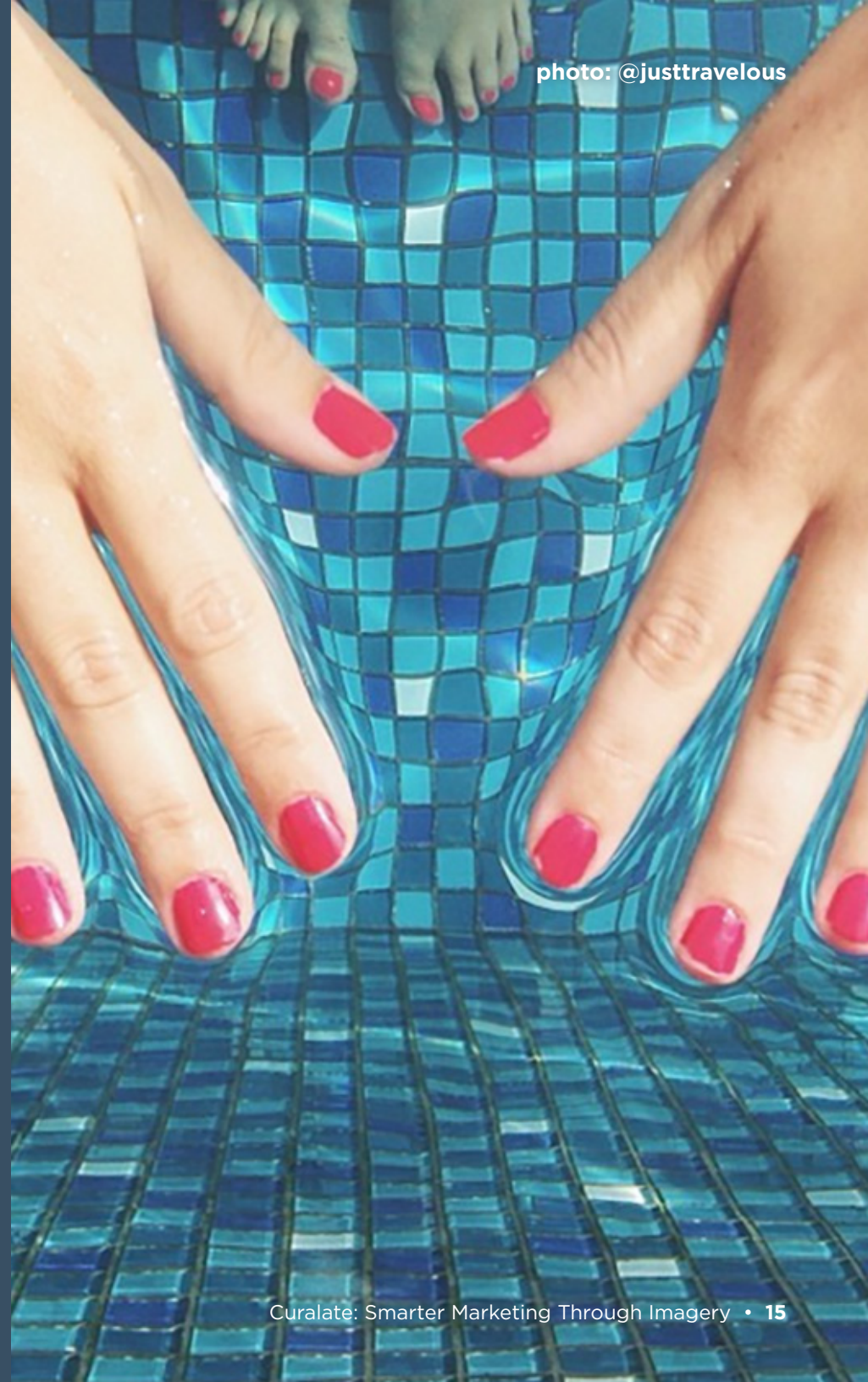
TAKE YOUR TIME.

“It sounds simple, but I’ve been witness way too many times of people snapping pictures with their mobile devices too quickly, putting no thought in stopping for a moment to compose themselves and the shot. One thing that photography has taught me is to exercise more patience. (Sometimes easier said than done!)

If you’re walking down the street and see something you want to take a photo of, don’t be afraid to stop for a few moments to think about the shot, what’s in frame, what you’re focusing on, etc. Or, if you’re at brunch with your hungry friends and want to take a tabletop food photo, ask them to be patient before they start eating until you get your shot.”

@dante8

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19

FIND A DECISIVE MOMENT.

“Henri Cartier-Bresson called it the “decisive moment.” A great photo needs to be a real moment. To get real moments instead of manufactured moments, you need to be patient and wait for them to happen. I suggest finding an interesting place – just stop and wait and watch. You become a part of the landscape if you slow down and let life unfold in front of you. People forget you are there, and that is one way to get an authentic moment.”

@amivitale

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20

KEEP IT REAL.

“Believe in what you’re shooting. You will be inspired creatively, and the photos will show. When I’m out in nature, for example, I only share the photos that bring back the feelings I had when I was out in the wild.”

@kevinruss

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21

FIND YOUR STYLE.

“On Instagram, people often check out the profile before following someone new, so it’s important that your pictures follow the same style. This can be a special angle, a story, or the way you edit your pictures. Personally, I love using the [Afterlight](#) app, especially the filters “russ” and “elm.” What I also like about Afterlight is that you can choose the amount of filtering you want to apply to a photo. Play around with it, and even combine different filters to find your own unique style.”

@justtravelous

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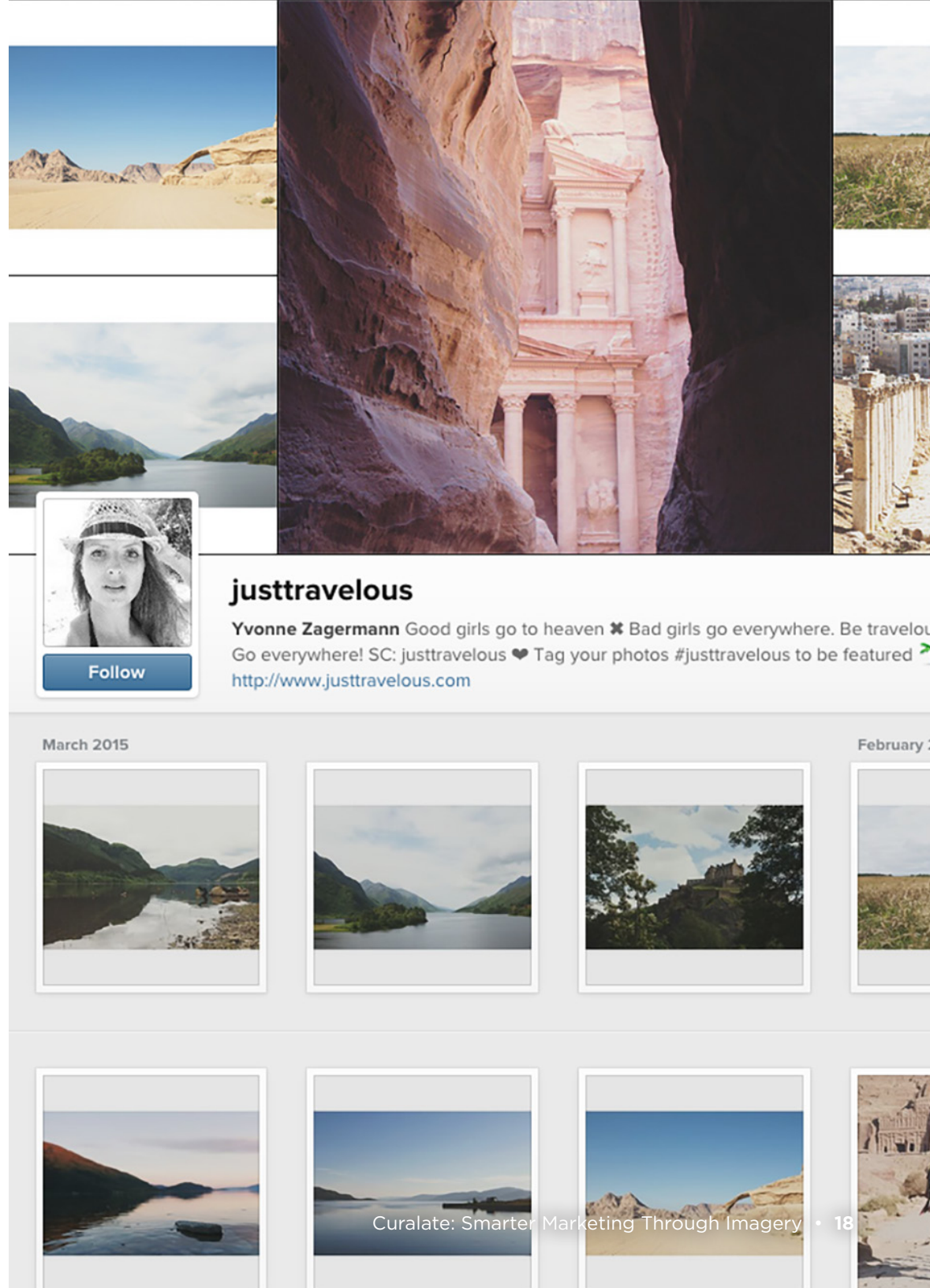
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MIX IT UP.

“Think about your Instagram page as an online portfolio. Your images should showcase your versatility in shooting a variety of subjects and a variety of shooting styles. For example, aim for a mix of close-ups, wide-angle shots, composition styles, use of color, and so on.”

@charissa_fay

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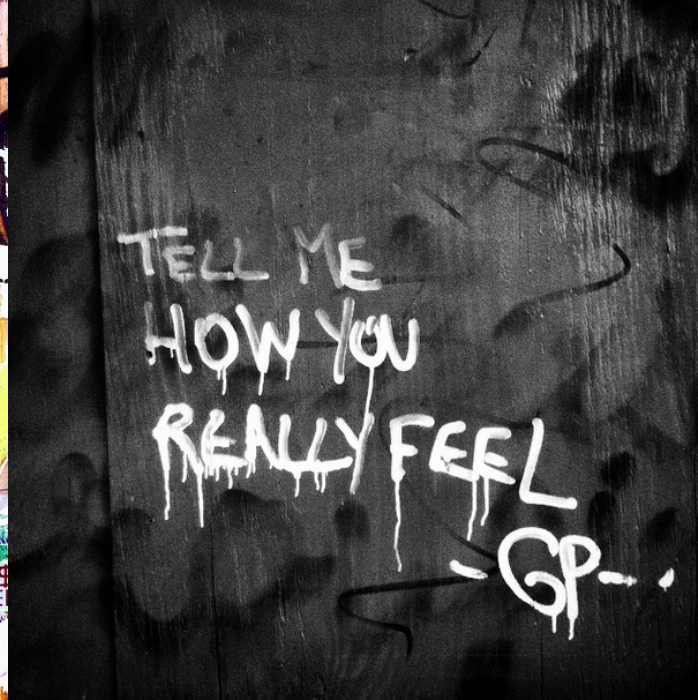
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PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.

“Practice as much as you can. Take photos every day to continuously improve your shooting and editing capabilities. This will train your eye to look for interesting images in any situation. Plus, the more you practice, the better you’ll get. I usually shoot several shots of the same image to get the one I eventually post.”

@charissa_fay

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24

HAVE A PROJECT IN MIND.

"Always have a project to shoot. This will give you focus. It can be anything; it does not matter. What matters is that the passion for your project translates on to your work. Powerful images are always powerful because of the person behind the lens."

@bkstreetart

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TAKE PHOTOS THAT BRING YOU JOY.

"Do something that you wake up thinking of. And if it makes you happy, do it the next day, and the next."

@darrylljones

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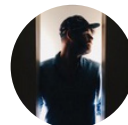
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Promotions in your voice, not your vendor's.

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