# Unite Joburg Photographer Interview 2: Anthony Bila

Anthony Bila is second in the series of interviews with the photographers that joined adidas Originals to capture the streets for Unite Joburg. Known as “The Expressionist”, Anthony tells of  his experience working with and capturing the good people in and around Mary Fitzgerald Square in Newtown.

**AREA3: Joburg is a melting pot of cultures and diversity. As a photographer in this city, how does this diversity affect your work?**

The diversity in Joburg is incredible. And it’s the reason my work even exists. It’s the same reason my blog is called “The Expressionist”. I believe people express themselves through their clothing but also in their countenance, their demeanour. All I do is try to capture those moments where people most honestly express themselves, hence the moniker of the blog and myself being “The Expressionist”. I’ve always wanted to bring Africa to the world and the world to Africa, in my small way, I do that through my photography and the advent of the internet makes my ambition that much easier.

**AREA3: Portraiture is such a subjective thing, and that’s what makes it interesting. When you’re doing portraits what do you try to capture?**

I try to capture is the person’s personality; their nature. Whether you’re an angry, happy or sad person; I want authenticity in my portraits, no makeup, no frills, no masks. I look to capture moments: what you’re feeling in that specific moment in time. This proves more challenging but when you succeed, the results often speak for themselves.

**AREA3: Do you have a special connection with the neighbourhood that you chose to shoot in?**

I certainly did have a connection with the people I photographed; whether it was the homeless man who had nowhere to go, or the eight year old girl with a mother who has cancer or even the blind albino woman who asks for money from passers-by; I listened to their stories and connected with them as people, not as subjects.

**AREA3: In working with adidas Originals, how have you represented originality in your portraits?**

Well that’s a subjective thing really. I feel I honestly depicted the area I was in, I limited telling my friends and acquaintances about where I was shooting and why. I wanted to authentically capture the place and people as it is, as it would have been irrespective of whether I had been there on the day or not. I think that was the most original aspect of my work, the reality, and the honesty.

**AREA3: How does it feel to be part of such a multifaceted campaign like Unite Joburg?**

It was really exciting and challenging to work alongside some really talented photographers and showcase my work in my own original style next to theirs; I felt really privileged to be able to do that. It was also a humbling experience in that I got to connect to people I photographed in a way I normally don’t get to. It really enhanced my perspective and reminded me why I do what I do and why I must continue to do it in the most original and honest way I can.

**AREA3: You had the opportunity to meet and spend time with Danny Brown in person. Any pearls of wisdom?**

I think the lesson I learned the most can be summed up in this quote I once read: “The conductor must turn his back on the crowd to lead the orchestra.” Stay original.

The Unite Joburg Photography Exhibition, featuring portraits by [Hanro Havenga](http://whyhelloclarice.wordpress.com/), [Chris Saunders](http://www.whatwasparadise.com/), [Anthony Bila](http://www.anthonybila.com/), [Justice and Innocent Mukheli](http://iseeadifferentyou.tumblr.com/) and [Stephanie O’Connor](http://www.connervarinblog.com/), will be up in [AREA3](http://www.area3.co.za/blog/)  from 3 December until 9 February 2014. (Closed for the holidays from 20 December 2013 to 13 January 2014.)

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