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# WHAT IS A PHOTOGRAPHIC STYLE AND WHY DO YOU NEED ONE?

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Quick Guide  
Written by Ľudmila Borošová





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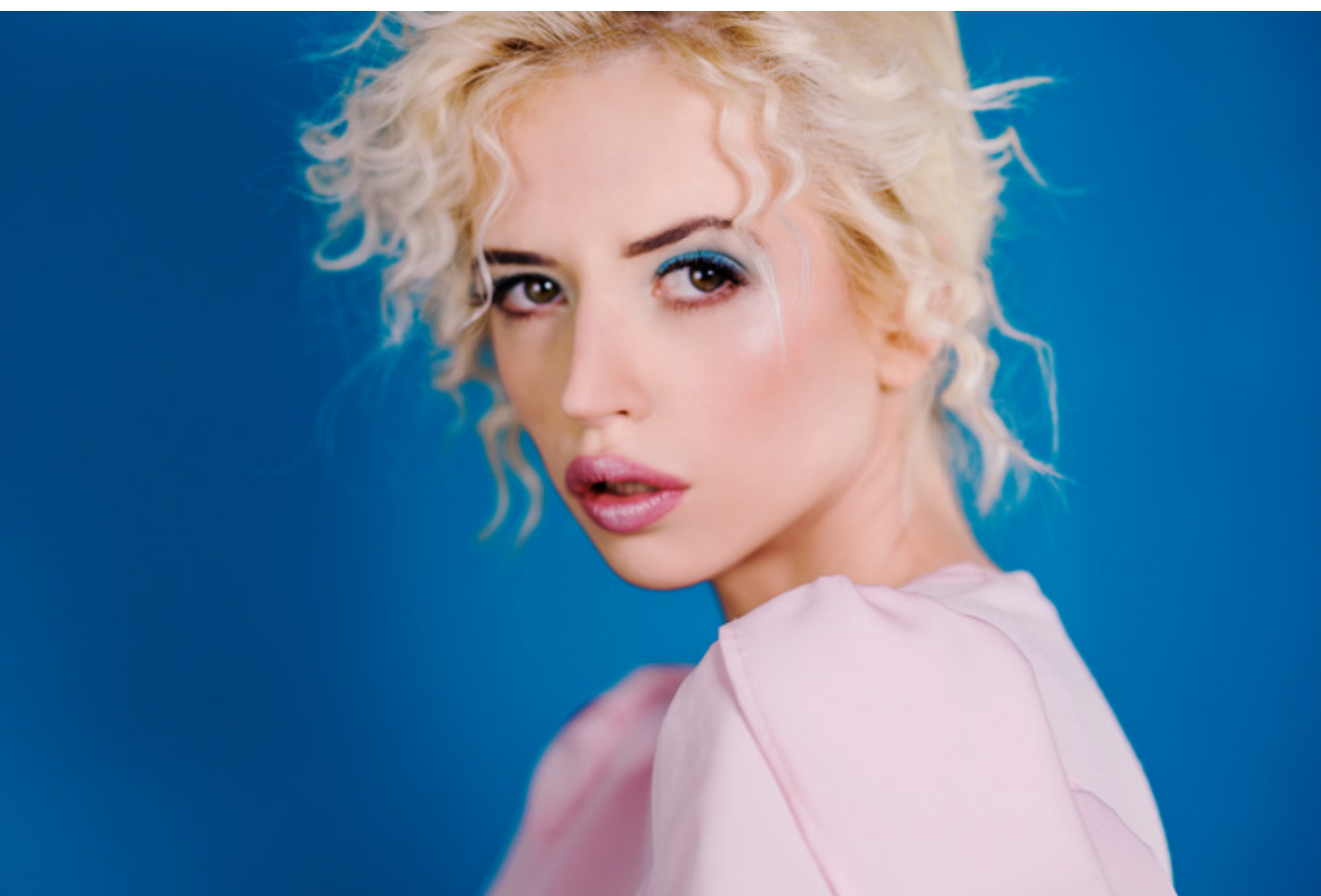
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Photograph by Ludmila Borošová

When was the last time you got asked about your favorite band, TV show, or artist? Our favorite band usually comes quite easily to us, and that's because we already have a filter in our mind for the genres we like. So, what do you listen to? Rock, pop-rock, and a little bit of punk. Easy as that! Let me recommend you a playlist, festival, or a radio station. Musicians are labeling their style to find new fans who enjoy what they do. Is it that straightforward with photography? Do you enjoy any specific photographer's work? What does their style look like? Even if specific words didn't come to your mind, you had quite an image in your head already. But it's a bit blurrier than with music. Am I right?

It doesn't matter if you want to become a commercial photographer, wedding photographer, or a creative artist with exhibitions. People will hire you (or follow you) for a reason. They will purchase tickets to see your artwork for a reason. And the reason is simple: your style.

### Today, we'll cover the following:

- What can I imagine as a photographic style?
- Why is it important to have a personal style as a photographer?
- How can I find my own photographic style?

 **Recommended Reading:** Want to learn how to make your photos stand out from everyone else's? Grab a copy of Photzy's Effective Storytelling premium guide.





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## SO, WHAT IS A PHOTOGRAPHIC STYLE?

Short answer: it's the result of every photography decision you make. From start to finish. From camera angle to preset colors to retouching technique. It's *your signature*.

The idea behind finding your own photography style is the same as creating your signature. In an ideal world, just by looking at the photograph, we should be able to tell that it's you who made it. Think about it the same way as you approach your music taste, furnishing your apartment, or your choice of clothing. It makes it who you are and distinguishes it from the crowd.

As mentioned above, photographic style is more than just coloring; it's your every decision. What factors can determine your style? There are many, but the best examples are as follows:

- Camera angles, distance, focal length, and lens types
- Usage of aperture, sharpness levels, and bokeh
- Your light preferences (natural/artificial) and direction
- Composition and organization of the photograph and its elements
- The emotions your photography evokes
- Level of editing, skin retouching, and special effects
- Level of creativity versus reality
- Editing style, dominant colors, and favorite presets
- Amount of contrast, and emphasis on certain parts (e.g. eyes)
- Genre of photography and common visual styling
- The pace of your photographs: still or moving
- The visual aspects your models have in common
- The way you present yourself and your work online: your use of language, your website, your social media, use of watermarks, and your customer service

## YOU NEED A STYLE! HERE'S WHY

Your style will be one of the fundamentals of your business. There are many reasons why that's true:

### **1. It's the magnet that attracts the right clients**

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If your photography style is very close to your heart, chances are that your client will have a similar taste or personality. There is nothing better than being chosen for just being yourself! Your dream clients will understand everything from your communication to your execution, and they will be more than happy to pay for it. This way, you can avoid stressful situations like attracting price shoppers and re-editing your sessions. Stay true to your style and the right people will find you!

### **2. It helps you set the right expectations**

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When you have a consistent portfolio, your client can expect consistent results. Aligning the expectations is a crucial part of booking a photographer. One of your customers' worries is their photos not turning out as expected. By setting these expectations,

your customer can relax. If you're specializing in boho weddings with rustic tones (and that's what you present in your portfolio), your client will expect the same results and book you if their decorations match. Your work can also become a source for their inspiration!

### **3. It's free promotion and recognition**

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It takes years to build your reputation. I'm confident to say that there are only a few photographers in my area that have managed to master this! Whenever I see some pictures posted and don't see credits immediately, I challenge myself to play a guessing game called "Who shot the picture?" And I'm proud to say that I'm right 95% of the time. And that isn't thanks to my skills; it's the ability of a photographer to build a great visual signature. Once you get into this stage, your customers will have a special mind-connection. They will have your name in their head without even seeing it! This works the same way as TV ads or billboards: the more you see it, the more you want it.





Photograph by Ludmila Borošová



Photograph by Ludmila Borošová

## THE MAGIC IS IN REPETITION AND CONSISTENCY

If you stay true to your style, you will develop yourself greatly! It is about the small steps you take daily that make up who you are as a photographer. Create visuals that align, work with similar locations, and perfect your editing style. It doesn't need to mean using the same preset over and over again! It can also mean posing your clients a certain way or getting the same emotion out of the picture. Do not feel pressured to stick to the routine. Routine will kill your creativity. You need to get better through each repetition!



## DON'T HAVE YOUR STYLE YET? HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

### **1. Analyze yourself and your favorite photographers**

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What do you like about your work and where could you get better? Do you have any favorite photographers that are your idols? Do they have anything in common in their style? There is nothing wrong in looking up to more experienced photographers. Inspiration can guide you forward! Just take a quick moment to close your eyes; the first thing that comes to your mind is the right direction for you. Trust your instinct.

### **2. Make a list of your personal preferences**

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Get more specific! What are the photography genres you enjoy? What lenses and equipment do you prefer? What is a color palette that you find the most beautiful? How would you like others to describe your photography? You should be doing what you fancy the most. This way you will never lose your motivation and sense of creativity! Write down all your thoughts in words. Only this can enable you to move to the next stage: visuals.



Graphic design by Ludmila Borošová

### 3. Create your own mood board to help you visualize your style

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Do you remember cutting pictures from newspapers to glue them together on one piece of paper when you were a kid? It's time to do something like that... sort of. Create one place that will serve as your treasure box, whether it's a digital folder in your phone or laptop, an online blog, or a tangible collection of photographs. Whenever you get inspired from someone else's work, put it there. Eventually, you will uncover lots of similarities that might not be visible in the first place. This will have so much value and will shape your perception of what a photography style is! You will have a clearer view of where you're heading.

### 4. Reflect on where you're going and create a goal

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What type of photographs bring you the most happiness? The first three steps made you visualize it, but if you're at the beginning of your journey, you need to be able to work for it with clear steps. Use the SMART method to determine your goals: they should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. Set a goal, such as editing 10 sessions with similar atmosphere that reflect your own signature. Make sure that you set a specific goal (10 sessions) with a measurable output: what will you be looking at in the pictures? Colors, posing, and camera angles? Are there more criteria you want to follow? Make your goal challenging, but not impossible. And finally, give yourself a clear structure, a to-do list, and a deadline to make sure you take it seriously! All in all, this experiment will be so much fun, and you can only gain from it.






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## 5. Stay true to yourself

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Finding your style won't happen overnight, but it will bring you success if you listen to your heart. Don't let any outside elements influence you, such as opinions of customers, number of followers, or other photographers' profiles. Be open to constructive criticism but learn to perfect your style instead of changing it completely.

Whether you're doing photography professionally or as a hobby, finding a photography style is a process that you will eventually go through (even unconsciously). Don't be scared of it. Let it take you on an amazingly creative journey that will teach you a lot about yourself and your artistic preferences. You need a style both for yourself and your peace of mind, and for your customers. And even if you think you don't have one yet, your customers and followers already see a style in you. Go ahead, ask about their opinion, and shape it to your liking: you will be surprised where this can take you.

 **Recommended Reading:** Want to learn how to make your photos stand out from everyone else's? Grab a copy of Photzy's [Effective Storytelling](#) premium guide.

### **Self-Check Quiz:**

- 1) What is the short definition of a photography style?
- 2) What are some of the factors that can determine your style?
- 3) Is your website, social media, and use of language also a part of your style?
- 4) Who are your dream clients and how can you use your style to attract them?
- 5) What are some of the customers' worries, and how does having a style help solve them?
- 6) How can you use your unique style to leverage marketing?
- 7) Do you need to stick to the routine to follow your style?
- 8) What steps can you take to find your own photography style?
- 9) What should your goals look like?
- 10) Do your customers already have an opinion about your style?

### **Assignment:**

Follow the five steps of finding your own style. First, analyze your work and that of your favorite photographers in your head. Second, put it on paper with real words and descriptions. In the third step, visualize it with a mood board. Create a SMART goal for yourself and stick to it. Never lose track on the road and always stay true to your photography beliefs!





# Hey there!

Let's get real for a minute... Learning photography can be super challenging! But we're here to help you every step of the way! Here are 3 of our most useful (*and FREE!*) photography resources:



## 3 Free Photography Cheat Sheets

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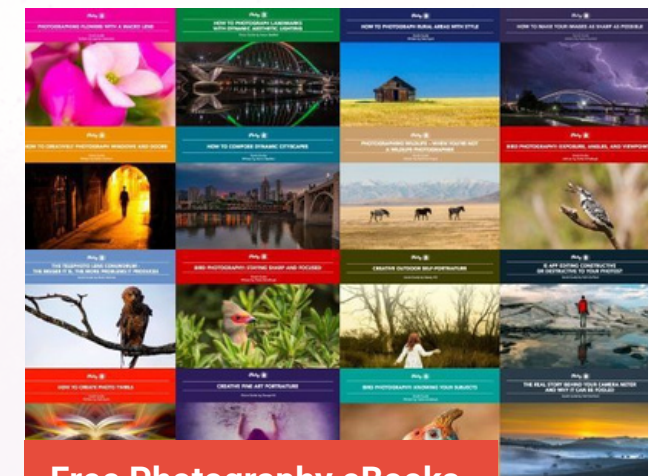
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ludmila is a Slovak photographer focusing on portraiture. She does photography while finishing her Master's degree in Business Administration, specializing in Entrepreneurship. She is based in Prague, Czech Republic but loves to travel around the world and share her stories, as well as her photoshoots, on her blog.

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Instagram: [@ludmilacaptures](https://www.instagram.com/ludmilacaptures)

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