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FEATURE

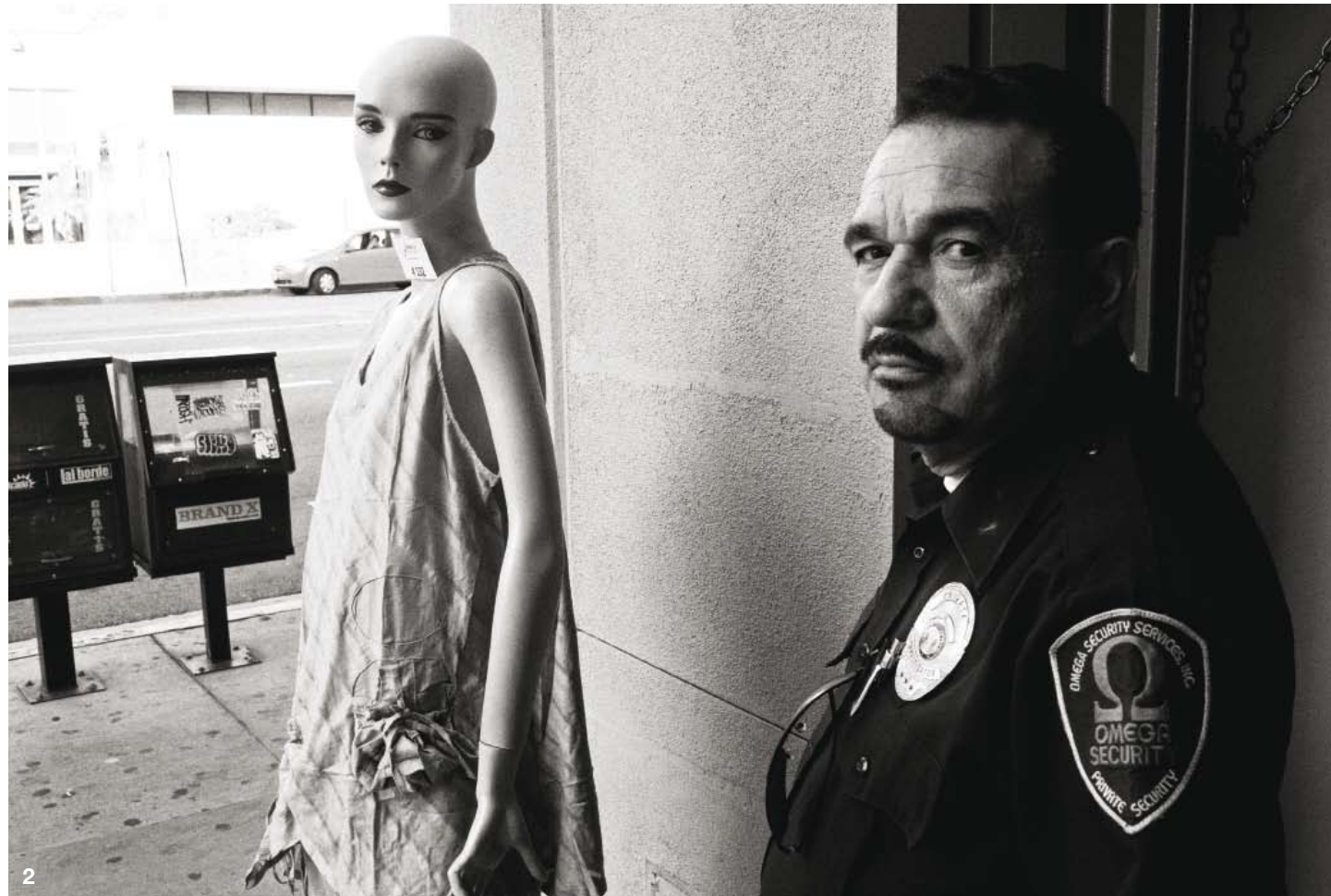
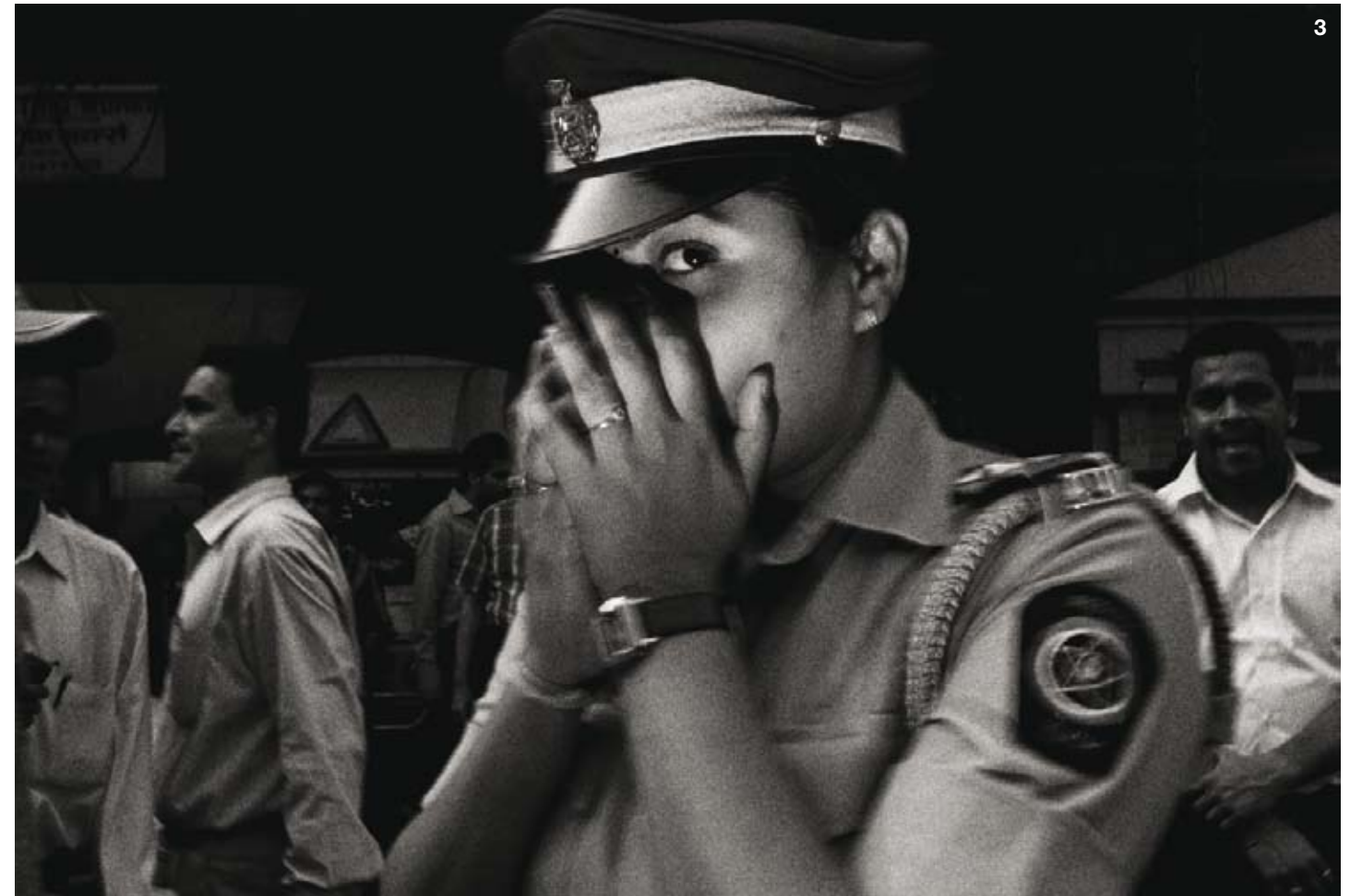
All photos © Eric Kim

ON THE STREETS WITH ERIC KIM

Having become something of a legend in his own lifetime, **Eric Kim's** street photography has reached a worldwide audience. Based in Los Angeles, he writes a vibrant blog, runs workshops from Amsterdam to Melbourne and has collaborated with Leica, Magnum and Invisible Photographer Asia. He talks to B+W about his work



Hearts, Los Angeles, 2011





Glazed, Los Angeles, 2011



Nails, Los Angeles, 2011

ERIC'S WORKSHOPS AND BLOG

When I started street photography, I had a difficult time finding anything on the internet about how to approach it. I had questions in my mind like: how do I take a photograph of a stranger without his or her permission, and not get punched in the face? What should I be looking for when shooting on the streets? What makes a great street photographer?

So I started a blog. It was born out of my passion for street photography, and wanting to share my love and knowledge with others. About a year ago I got laid off my job, which gave me the opportunity to travel the world and teach photography workshops. I have taught in Beirut, Seoul, Tokyo, Amsterdam, Berlin, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Sydney, Melbourne, Zurich, London, Toronto, Mumbai, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu. My work has been exhibited at the Leica stores in Seoul, Singapore and Melbourne.

I put my heart and soul into my blog and update it regularly with tips about street photography, as well as hosting inspirational street photographers from all around the globe. But I also put a huge emphasis on community – it's not just about me.

Visit: erickimphotography.com

My first experience with street photography happened by chance. I was standing at a bus stop when I saw a man with horn-rimmed glasses reading a book. There was something so genuine and unique about him. My heart was beating as I brought my camera to my eye, and at that moment he looked directly at me and I instinctively pressed the shutter. My heart froze. But I had made my first street photograph.

I started experimenting. Using what I had learnt while studying as a sociologist at UCLA, I tried getting very close to people when I took their picture – and, surprisingly, I have never got punched in the face (yet)! I began to see that I could make statements about society through street photography.

The images you see here are from a project entitled *Proximity*. The word implies a geospatial relationship between two beings. When passing by a stranger, there always exists a moment of silent exchange – most of the time both individuals glide by without much more than a glance at each other. But what happens when we embrace that moment of exchange, challenge it, and capture it? For this project, I have striven

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to capture the essence of proximity – when two individuals truly acknowledge one another's existence and realise that physical closeness opens up an opportunity for emotional connection.

Through these images I have captured a wide gamut of emotions and moments from my subjects, ranging from love, hate, anger, surprise, curiosity, and even fear. There's a measure of discomfort within this point of propinquity, hence many prefer to avoid it. However, through this project, I hope to present the beauty in these brief seconds of exchange. *Proximity* challenges viewers to recognise and look beyond the layer upon layer of walls we set up around ourselves. What exists beyond these walls? What stories do these moments of proximity tell?

My motto is always to shoot with a smile, and from the heart.

B+W