



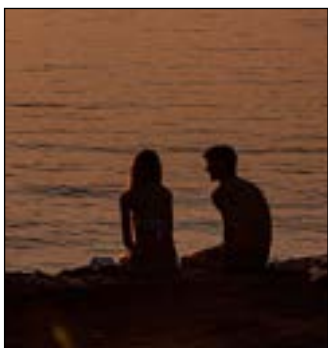
IT CAME OUT 21 YEARS AGO, WE ARE REVIEWING IT ONLY NOW: could the Nikon D2X be the solution to rising film prices?

FIRST DATE IDEAS IN ZAGORJE? Where to take your date in Krapina-Zagorje county depending on your zodiac sign



ZABOK INTERNATIONAL

Volunteers' Monthly Youth Magazine



THE SHORT STORY COMES TO A DRAMATIC END:

Marco Jakovljević's *Svježe Mlijeko* in its third and final chapter: what will become of Jadran and Ena? The unexpected turn of events...



PIPE BURST IN GAJEVA ULICA: 'It looked like a river'. Parts of Matije Gupca severely flooded. Citizens blame 'lack of maintenance'



INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION IN ZABOK FOR TWO WEEKS: what did Mreža udruga Zagor's short-term volunteers think of Zabok? 'We really liked it here, but...'

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 Mreža udruga Zagor

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 Mreža udruga Zagor

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Editor's Note

Dear readers,
welcome to the latest issue of Mla.dost-dobro!

This month's issue, Zabok international, will be entirely in English (with the exception of the third and final chapter of Marco Jakovljević's *Svježe Mlijeko*). The reason why it was decided to do so is because of the contributions of Mreža udruga Zagor's short-term international volunteer team! For the first part of this scorchingly hot July, in fact, a team of six volunteers from all over the world (actually mostly Europe) has been staying with us here in Zabok. As part of their activities, we have also conducted some field work and investigation which have later become two of the articles you will find in this month's issue: *Zabok underwater: burst pipe floods town's main street* and *Hot takes: An honest interview with our new volunteers about Zabok and living in it* are the direct result of the work of volunteers during workshops held by me as part of the volunteers' two-week programme. The first article in particular, *Zabok underwater*, served as inspiration for this issue's title as the end result is more akin to something you will find on the local news rather than a magazine, and having looked at information made available by local news outlet and governmental bodies I am proud to say that it is the most detailed account of what happened in Zabok on the 30th of June that is available to the general public (not that it's life-changing information, but still: Zabok International has to start somewhere!)

I would therefore like to thank Francesca (Italy), Hugo (Spain, yes, just like our Hugo), Lorenzo (Italy), Valeria (El Salvador, currently studying in Poland), Vojtěch (Czechia), and Zoé (France) for their contribution to this month's issue, as well as for being such a cool volunteering team with whom I have personally had a lot of fun. I hope everything is good back in your respective countries.

I would also like to thank Marco Jakovljević once again for his *Svježe Mlijeko*, which with this issue will see its conclusion. I hope I will see more contributions from you in the future, whether it's more short stories or something else entirely (but beware of the infamous Mla.dost-dobro censorship next time! No ljubav u makiji pls).

As for you, my readers, I hope you will enjoy this international-themed issue!

Sincerely,
Daniele Stefanini – Editor in-Chief

Affected streets are Gajeva and Matije Gupca. The water got all the way to the railway crossing!

Zabok underwater: burst pipe floods town's streets



- Flooding in Matije Gupca. Photo: Daniele Stefanini

Zoé Lelièvre, Vojtěch Vasiljev, Hugo Ahn Meneses, Daniele Stefanini

30.06.2026 - 13:00; Zabok, Croatia

It is Tuesday, June 30th. It is the 5th day of a heatwave. And during a heatwave, water is important: we have to stay hydrated, right? Well, what better way to cool down than to literally let water flow freely through the streets of our small town?

Our team of journalists was working on a report about Zabok. It was around 10:35

when they encountered a large puddle of muddy water on the railway crossing by the Park Milana Prpića.

We started to look for the cause of this still flowing stream... By following the polluted road, we ended up at Matije Guca 46, in front of Financijska agencija.

We slowly uncovered the path of destruction leading to Gajeva Ulica: a fairly small one, but certainly noticeable, especially for the owner of a smaller Peugeot,

which was damaged by rubble brought on the road by a steady and unending stream of water.

The scene was supervised by local firefighters and police officers, joined soon by a technical team from Zagorski vodovod. At around 11:30, Gajeva Ulica was closed to traffic, as a team of technicians from Zagorski Vodovod worked to clear the debris caused by the incident.

By 01:00 PM, the situation was completely under con-

trol of the local authorities, with a team from Zagorski Vodovod cleaning mud from the affected streets, and traffic circulation in Gajeva Ulica being restored.

connecting Gajeva and Zagrebačka ulica.

The research findings were later corroborated by T., whose eyewitness account



- Gajeva Ulica closed to traffic due to debris on the road. Photo: Vojtěch Vasiljev

People interviewed at the scene include Police officers, who declined to provide any comment as to what happened, and the firefighters, who limited themselves to stating the obvious (“a pipe burst”) without providing further commentary or context.

Still, our team of journalists, after extensive field researches, managed to track down with precision the spot at which the pipe burst: just above the building in Gajeva 7, by the stairway

proved crucial in reconstructing what happened:

“It was about 10:30. I had just gotten out of my house and was on my way towards the city centre, when on the stairs above Gajeva Ulica I started hearing an ominous, droning noise. I tured my head to see the literal ground swell up, growing bigger and bigger. Then, it all exploded into a huge, steady flow of water. I immediately called the firefighters and Zagorski Vodovod”

According to T., the rupture came in two bursts, the second being the stronger one.

“It was already bad enough, then we heard what sounded like an explosion: at that point, the flow of water got even stronger. It was totally out of control! The tap had to be closed from Zagorski Vodovod”.

T. was also kind enough to provide video evidence of what happened, of which we will show you some screenshots. In the video, we can see the firefighters powerless in front of the river flowing in front of their eyes, waiting for Zagorski Vodovod to close that section of the waterway, which they eventually did. Once stopped, local authorities



- Firefighter looks powerless as the stairs between Gajeva and Zagrebačka Ulica turn into a flowing river in front of his eyes. Photo: T.



Photogallery: Hole in the ground left by pipe explosion (top left), damage to apartment complex on Gajeva Ulica (top right), debris left behind by water on Gajeva Ulica (bottom).

Photos: Vojtěch Vasiljev

could start examining the full extent of the damage.

Other than leaving a huge hole in the ground, damaging a parked Peugeot and flooding part of Ul. Matije Gupca, the rupture partially flooded an apartment: allegedly, inside there was a bed-bound old lady who couldn't move and had to be evacuated. Still allegedly, the firefighter's quick intervention would have ensured that the partial flooding could pose no threat to the lady.

As for the cause of the accident, it is officially unknown: local news media and Grad Zabok in a public statement reported the rupture and consequent disruption to the provision of drinking water to some parts of the city, but no technical explanation as to



- Zagorski Vodovod cleaning leftover mud from flooding at railway crossing.
Photo: Daniele Stefanini

the nature of the rupture was provided.

Still, some people have their theories. During our investigations, one resident seemed pretty certain as to what the cause might have been, and gave the following statement while venting their frustration at us:

"I am not surprised by what happened, considering how things are done, how we do "maintenance" around here. And then, when you call [who's in charge] to know what happened, they all wash their hands, they "don't know anything", they say".

With the general lack of information surrounding this case, every possible lead that could help us better reconstruct the causal chain of the events of 30th June is welcome. Should you, reader, know more about what happened, please contact us on our instagram page (@mladostdobro_magazine). We would gladly follow up on this case with the information received.



- Zagorski Vodovod on site restoring access to Gajeva Ulica.
Photo: Vojtěch Vasiljev

danekeov jukebox

Top 6-7 EX-YU summer hits for when you are...
...drinking Cockta on a Dalmatian beach resort

Do you remember what it felt like to spend your hard-earned vacation days in a summer resort near Zadar back in the '80s?

Me neither, because I was born only in 1999. However, through my decent knowledge of the rock music that was in vogue at the time * a very loose macrogenre now known as 'EX-YU' because, as you might know, there used to be a much bigger country here back in the day -, these are the songs that would make my summer playlist or rather, mixtape.

(yeah that's what people used to do back in the day: I can totally see myself waiting hours in front of a radio to record them on a cassette and then give it as a gift to the mysterious lady I am sort of in love with who works as a waitress for the sezona in some random pizzeria in Benkovac (ZD), hoping to totally impress her)

Editor's note: the studio version of 'Vruce Igre' by Parni Valjak is not available on Spotify, so I was forced to add a live version. I highly encourage you, however, to look for it on YouTube or SoundCloud because it's golden

Stand-out track: Hajdemo u Planine

... but the truth is that I don't even like the sea, reason why I will most likely spend the rest of my summer here in Zagorje and back at home in Italy on the Apennines (which are a mountain range, for those who don't know). Bijelo Dugme, as true pioneers of the former Yugoslav rock scene, already back in '86 understood the great life truth of summer and seaside pleasure being an illusion sold to the masses for corporate profit. Hajdemo u Planine (Let's go to the Mountains) reminds us that real fun starts over 600 metres above sea level, where you can watch from above, in a cool, gentle breeze, as hordes of people waste their savings to get packed like sardines in overcrowded beaches while dying to the scorching heat and getting bitten by mosquitoes. And for what? So they can go for a swim? Well you can do the same in Donja Stubica for much less money, and with the addition of water slides (the most amount of fun I ever had while wearing swimming shorts, 130km from the Adriatic Sea!). As Alen Islamović (who, by the way, was also in Donja Stubica) would say:

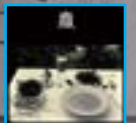
Na vrh mi je glave i kupanja, sun-anja gnja-
va-e
Sauvaj me, Boe, sauvaj me, Boe, naro-ito
pla-e

(I have had enough of swimming,
sunbathing is hassle
Save me, God, Save me, God, especially
from the beaches)

Scan to playlist!



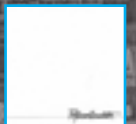
1. Bijelo Dugme - Hajdemo u Planine



2. Haustor - Moja Prva Ljubav



3. Djavori - Stojin na Kanutunu



4. Prljavo Kazaliste - Sladoled



5. Parni Valjak - Vruce Igre



6. Jura Stublic & Film - Kad si Mlad

7. Go to a Dalmatian beach resort and find out...

NIKON D2X: CAN A 2005 FLAGSHIP DSLR REPRESENT THE PERFECT MIDDLE-GROUND BETWEEN DIGITAL AND ANALOG PHOTOGRAPHY?

As you might have noticed from the past issues, your dear Editor-in-Chief has a thing for photography.

It all started in 2022, when I found a beautiful Canon AV-1 film camera, along with its 50mm f1.4 lens at a garage sale back in Italy for just 30€. Since then, wherever I go – especially if it's some far-away place, I always bring a camera with me, capturing moments and views I want to remember and, hopefully, improving the way I do so in the process. Throughout the years, I have accumulated a modest but sizeable collection of photographic gear, with the goal of overcoming the technical limitations presented by my gear and unlocking more creative possibilities. Yet, now that I invested some money into a more than capable Nikon D780 full-frame camera and a very nice set of lenses, I understood that the quest for “optical perfection” is not always everything in photography, and that sometimes technical limitation makes for a more fun shooting and creative experience. Isn't namely the look produced by technical limitation, coupled with the more tactile, “physical” experience, the reason why people flocked en masse back to film photography starting from the late 2010s, and eventually the reason why I, myself, was drawn into the hobby?

Problem is: nowadays film photography – much like and for the same reasons as collecting vinyl records – has become an expensive hobby. If you walked into any photography store back in 2022, a 36-exposure roll of Kodak ColorPlus 200 – not even that great of a film stock to be honest – would set you back 5 EUR and something. Now, the same exact roll of film will oftentimes set you back upwards of 15 EUR. And buying

the film is just part of the expense! You then need to develop it -that's at least another 7 EUR per roll – and have it scanned or printed - here prices vary wildly, but it's generally more expensive than the development itself -. All of these things can also be done at home, of course, but buying the necessary equipment – despite significantly cutting the cost per roll – requires an initial investment of several hundred euros if not more (not to mention: it is extremely time consuming). Digital photography, on the other hand, requires you to pay the price of the equipment and then... that's it! You can take hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of pictures for the price of... storage room on an SD card and then a hard drive.

I therefore started asking myself: is it possible to get a part of the film-shooting experience on digital? That's when I ran into discussions about early 2000's digital cameras: these cameras are nowadays starting to become more and more sought after due to the distinctive look – sometimes referred to as “film-like” – produced by early digital sensor technology. Still, the hype surrounding them seems to still be in its infancy, therefore prices for these products have so far only sensibly increased: cameras which back in the day cost several thousand euros can now still be bought for about one hundred euros or even less. This, however, could change at any given time, as I learned the hard way with film photography and vinyl records: I therefore decided that if I wanted to jump on this bandwagon, it would have to be now before the hype tax wreaks havoc on the used camera market.



My choice: the Nikon D2X



What I received in the mail, and how much I would have paid for it back in the day

After a lot of research and a 150 EUR PayPal transaction, a package was delivered to Mreža udruga Zagor. Inside it my purchase: the Nikon D2X. This now 21-year-old camera was delivered to me in its original box, along with its original price tag from back in the day: 5,799 EUR is what somebody in France paid for it back in 2005, at a time in which you could have easily bought a new city car for that money. To understand what warranted such an exorbitant price, we can take a look at what Nikon themselves had to say about their product after it was named the „European Professional Camera of the Year 2005 – 2006” by the European Imaging and Sound Association:

“It is hard to imagine any digital camera rivalling the extraordinary performance of Nikon’s D2X. This rugged high-end model has been designed to satisfy the most demanding professionals, and includes every function and feature imaginable. It has first-rate metering and flash exposure to complement an image resolution of 12.4 megapixels, and an autofocus system distinguished for its accuracy and speed. Optics are first-class and the camera will shoot continuously at eight frames per second. High-tech touches include a wireless data transmission capability, and the ability to connect with GPS navigation systems. The Nikon D2X is a dream come true for those who constantly seek the best of the best ”.

If these specs may seem totally unimpressive if not outright subpar by today's standards, back in 2005 they used to be groundbreaking, especially for a technology that was still in its infancy. We might

even argue that the Nikon D2x, in an era when the digital transition in photography was just starting to happen, represented the point at which digital proved it could be more capable than film in terms of output.

Still, we don't live in the early '2000s anymore, and after having used the D2X in a variety of settings for two months, I will now give you my impressions as to how a Nikon flagship camera holds up more than two decades after its introduction, and whether it can bridge the gap between modern digital and film photography in the current era.

The good (or good enough)

Being launched as the company's flagship camera, Nikon spared no resources the development of its D2X: even 21 years later, the Nikon D2X stands out as a product that was built to the most rigorous standards, with great attention given to its design and robustness. Its body, made out of magnesium alloy, would give one the impression that you could trust this thing to work even in a battlefield: in perfect Nikon fashion, the D2X conveys a sense of solidity and reliability that is unparalleled, giving you the confidence that, no matter how tough the environment, it will do its job reliably and with precision (it could even be used as a self-defence weapon!).

Behind the Nikon D2X's design is Italdesign Giugiaro (the design studio of legendary Italian designer Giorgio Giugiaro), whose portfolio ranges from the relatively humble Fiat Panda and Volkswagen Golf MK1 to the less-humble Maserati Bora and DeLorean DMC-12 (yes, the car from Back to the Future). The design, a continuation of a long partnership between the Italian studio and Nikon, is far from being uniquely captivating: it also keeps functionality in mind, with a great deal of attention being given to button/dial placement and ergonomics. The camera setting are controlled entirely through physical buttons and dials (no need to access on-screen menus to, for example, change ISO, shooting mode, and even picture quality or light balance), which provide extremely satisfying tactile feedback and are intuitively placed on the camera body. The camera sports an additional vertical grip, which

With its 12.2 MP APS-C CMOS sensor, the Nikon D2X can still produce impressive results at lower ISO values

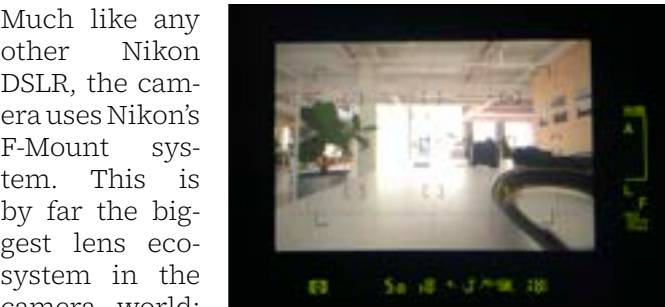
Nikon D2X, Sigma 10-20mm f4 - 5.6 @20mm f6.3
1/320 sec, ISO 100.



Nikon D2X, Sigma 10-20mm f/4 - 5.6 @20mm f/9
1/500 sec, ISO 200.

Both pictures are JPEGs straight out of camera, using Nikon's colour and monochrome profiles. No further editing was applied.

allows users to actuate and adjust the camera settings while being held vertically for portraits. Its view finder, even after 21 years, is absolutely stunning, providing a clear image and an impressive 100% coverage of what will end up in your sensor.



A look through the D2X's Viewfinder

Much like any other Nikon DSLR, the camera uses Nikon's F-Mount system. This is by far the biggest lens ecosystem in the camera world: if we combine Nikon's lineup with those of third-party manufacturers such as Sigma and Tamron, we get a library of more than 2,500 lens models produced from 1977 onwards that will work flawlessly on this camera. From vintage manual-focus film-era lenses to modern production models, the Nikon D2X, much like most Nikon DSLRs, offers endless possibilities. As a Nikon shooter, other than batteries and charger (we will get to this point later) I could simply continue using my current library of F-Mount lenses, which so far have showed no compatibility issues. Speaking of lenses, I was surprised by how well autofocus worked on such an old camera: despite the on-paper low af-point count of 11 (my D780 has 51), the camera focused reliably and relatively fast, arguably better than my more recent D3200.

Despite being absolutely unimpressive by today's standards, the Nikon D2X's 12.2 megapixel CMOS sensor is still capable of delivering wonderful shots at lower ISO settings. If we start from the axiom that on a normal sunny day the lens you put on your camera is more important than the camera itself, the Nikon D2X can still produce results technically superior to anything that can come out of the most recent of smartphones, especially if all you do with pictures is post them to social media.

I think it's important to remind that the maximum resolution for pictures supported by Instagram, for example, is the equivalent of 1 to 2 megapixels, and that 4K screens roughly correspond to 9 megapixels. So, unless you are planning on looking at your pictures on an 8K TV (which most people don't have), and considering that most smartphone screens, including the Iphone 17 Pro Max, go up to roughly

2k, the megapixel count will hardly be a problem

Another point worth mentioning in favour of the Nikon D2X is its amazing battery life. With the huge EN-EL4 batteries in optimal conditions being rated to up to 3,800 shots per charge, I can confidently bring my D2X for several days of shooting without the need for a backup or charger, which is perfectly on par with what my D780 can achieve (albeit, with a much smaller battery pack).

The bad

Talking about batteries: this is where the negatives begin. With the last Nikon digital camera using this specific battery pack being introduced all the way back in 2009, production of batteries and chargers has been discontinued some years ago, meaning that sourcing them is neither easy nor cheap, and that it will only get worse in the future. After spending 150 EUR on the camera body itself (and an almost dead battery), I had to splurge an additional 50 EUR for an official albeit second-hand Nikon charger and 35 for a third-party battery: that's 85 EUR! More than 50% of what I had originally spent on the camera.

Speaking of discontinued technology, instead of modern storage formats like SD cards the camera uses CompactFlash: this format, introduced all the way back in 1994, has been gradually phased out by all camera manufacturers, and no new stock can be found in stores. This means, on the one side, that is unlikely you will already have a device or external reader for it. On the other side, even though the cards themselves are relatively easy to source and inexpensive on sites such as Ebay, does it even make sense to pay at least 5 EUR shipping for a card that at most will set you back 10 EUR? Luckily enough (?), the previous owner of my D2X has left a Compact Flash card inside of it. The problem is that it is only 512MB, meaning that I can only shoot at most up to 80 JPEGs or 24 (!!!) RAWs. Definitely not an ideal situation.

Another thing to keep in mind while using this camera is that its perceived solidity comes at a heavy price: its weight. The D2X weighs a staggering 1.2kg, and that's without a lens! Depending on your glass of choice, you might find yourself with 2kgs hanging from your neck/shoulders. It is not exactly compact either, being even bigger than my full-frame D780 despite being a crop-sensor camera. Having gone through the experience of carry-

ing the D2X with me for whole days I can confirm that this setup is less than ideal for longer trips.



Comparison shots taken at ISO 3200. Raising the ISO past 800 has terrible consequences for dynamic range and color noise. Even my D3200, an entry-level DSLR from 2012, VASTLY outperforms the D2X in low-light scenarios.

Going back to its technical capabilities, the Nikon D2X suffers especially in the low-light department. If in the previous section I praised what could be normally achieved at lower ISO counts, by cranking up

that ISO dial that the camera really starts to show its age: past ISO 400, significant noise is introduced in the picture, with ISO 800 being the last usable threshold for any color image. ISO 1600 (listed as HI1 in the camera's menus) is still somewhat usable for black and white images (but only for specific artistic purposes, see later), and ISO 3200 is outright unusable. If you are planning to use this camera in a low-light environment, even your smartphone will most likely do a better job at retaining detail.

The rear LCD screen, while allowing for picture review, really shows its age. Mine in particular is really bad: it has become somewhat foggy and has a weird line going through it. Still, other D2X users with screens in ideal conditions convene with me that the screen is not good at all: its poor color rendition and low resolution (roughly equivalent to 320p for those who had to use YouTube with less than ideal internet connections back in the day) can be used at best to check framing and composition, and has personally led me to think I had nailed some shots whereas they were in reality completely out of focus. The screen is also too dim to reliably review pictures in the sun or in brightly lit environments, which also makes it unreliable to gauge exposure levels.

Being a 22-year-old camera, the D2X also lacks any video capabilities or live view mode: whereas I really don't mind not being able to shoot video (as I mostly do photography), the lack of Live View was particularly frustrating in those situations in which I physically could not take my eye up to its amazing viewfinder (like when shooting from above my head, or really close to the ground).

If you want a good performing camera for little money, the Nikon D2X clearly is not an answer. If performance by objective parameters is all you are after, you will be better off looking at DLRS from the early-mid 2010s, such as my D3200, which for about the same price will give you back images far superior to those of the D2X in this sense.

The beauty of limitation: the D2X as a middle-ground between modern digital and film

Still, something keeps drawing people towards outdated and technically inferior technology: the Nikon F6, released one year before the D2X and considered by many to be the most advanced film camera ever

produced, is for all intents and purposes a technically inferior product to even the most entry-level of DSLRs produced in the past 16 years simply due to the inherent limitations of film as a format. Yet, it fetches five times as much as the D2X on the used market because film photography, despite its technical shortcomings, is more in vogue than ever, and the F6 is among the most advanced tools at doing just that.

So: does it make even sense to criticise the lack of features like live-view or video mode in a camera which was released back when cameras were not expected to do such things? Can the unavoidable shortcomings of shooting with what, at the end of the day, remains a 22-year-old camera really be considered flaws? Or should we simply consider the D2X as a product of its time and embrace its limitations as creative tools, much like we do with film cameras?

I previously talked about the D2X's objectively poor high ISO performance as a negative. Yet, it is namely this characteristic that if embraced could give out-of-camera pictures a very distinctive look. Between ISO 400 and 800, the D2X's images really do start losing detail at a rate more modern cameras wouldn't. Yet, the way they do so make for slightly noisier, softer images, which retain the camera's distinctive colors without major disruptions. The result is an image with quasi-filmic properties straight out of the camera: slight grain, softer edges, and punchy colors provide a slight nostalgic feeling to the final image without feeling overly limiting while still giving you enough creative room in post-processing for minor corrections.

I have furthermore found particularly enjoying using this camera in monochrome mode: while anything above ISO 800 becomes unusable when shooting color due to high levels of color noise, if shot in black and white this camera can produce usable results up to ISO 1600, with the now-gray-scaled color noise making for a more gritty and punk-ish look, which I actually really like.

Despite its limitations (or perhaps thanks to them), I was still able to achieve shots which I deem highly satisfying. My current 512 Mb CompactFlash card, while severely limiting the quantity of pictures I can take at a given time, also changes my approach to the act of photography. Much like in film photography, archival space becomes a scarce commodity rather than an endless pit in which you can shove as many pictures as you want, forcing you to be selective with

what you decide to shoot. Still, the digital nature of this limitation makes it much more forgiving than 35mm film: a missed or accidental shot is not etched forever onto a piece of photosensitive material, but becomes just some data on an electronic chip, which can be deleted at any time. Plus, being limited to 24 RAWs or 80 JPEGs greatly reduces the time I spend post-processing the images on Lightroom: editing 24 pictures sounds much less daunting than sorting through 150, and 80 JPEGs... well, not much editing can be done with them anyways.

I also found the technical limitations of the D2X's rear LCD to be a perfect sweet spot between the painstakingly long process of film development and the immediacy of seeing what your picture will look like even before pressing the shutter through live view. All you can get off the D2X's rear LCD is but a rough approximation of what your final image looks like, about just enough to decide whether a picture could have turned out good or is a total lost case. The feeling of waiting to get home to plug the camera into a PC to uncover whether you nailed focus and exposure, whether the colours actually look good or not, or if there are any finer details that might make or break your picture, is a bit like waiting for your film scans to get back from the lab, without being as long, frustrating, and expensive.



Fine, "film-like" grain appearing at around ISO 800.

Conclusions: the process as the key to enjoyment



Noise levels at ISO 3200 in monochrome. It's technically not good, but who cares! I love the non-artificial gritty look.

Out of the cameras I own, the Nikon D2x is from a user-experience point of view the most satisfying to shoot with – even more than my much more recent and capable Nikon D780.

Like driving a vintage, well maintained BMW, there is something to the feeling of shooting with a camera which was engineered to cater to the needs of the world's biggest professionals that transcends objective parameters such as sheer technical capability. The sound of shutter actuations, the tactile feel of the all-physical controls, as well as its build quality and ergonomics, remain first class even after more than two decades; its inherent limitations, while frustrating if looked through the lens of the contemporary drive towards technical perfection, become instead refreshing or even liberating if fully embraced.

Still, to do so takes having the right mindset: I treat my D2X like a film camera, in the sense that if I shoot with it I do it for fun rather than necessity, and I am perfectly conscious of what I can achieve with it and what not. With modern, all-capable cameras, we photographers have the tendency of overshooting (you never know what will look good and what not), but this has two negative downsides. The first is that we end up with SD cards full of pictures, which at some point we will have to sort through and edit: I don't know about you, but I am personally not a big

fan of tweaking sliders on Lightroom, and much prefer the part of the process in which I am adjusting settings, finding ways to compose cool views, and pressing the shutter. The second, and perhaps most important, is that this urgency to shoot everything „because we can“ makes us to some extent alienated from the present moment, which on top of being detrimental to the interaction with the environment, those around you, and even yourself, i believe to also be detrimental to the photographic process itself: it happened to me that when I was somewhere with friends or my girlfriend I found myself too absorbed into shooting everything I thought might have looked cool to experience what was actually going on around me, and not only does that negatively impact the quality of the time you are spending, but also the quality of the connection to the situation and environment that is necessary to capture their essence - which is what photography, at least for me, is all about.

When I go out with my D2X and my 512mb CF card, I know my photos are limited, both in terms of storage space and qualitatively by technical parameters. The simple result is that I shoot less, but when I do it's more intentional. Limitation imposes me to choose more carefully what to shoot rather than bringing my camera up to my face for any given thing, which in turn makes me more present both in the photographic process and in the real world. The limitations also lower my expectations as to what the final image will look like, or rather, they change them: the end result of photography becomes less about technical parameters and more about vibe and feel, and most importantly it's easier to drop the expectation of having to come out of every shot with groundbreaking material. Paradoxically, by being forced to shoot less and by taking off the pressure of expectation off of me, I ended up not only getting shots I was really proud of, but I also found myself enjoying the process much more, whether alone or in the company of other people (Plus, there is always something extremely comforting about being able to tell others or yourself tha if the photos end up looking bad it's because they were shot „on a stupid 21-year-old camera“ :)).

The bottom line is: my time with the D2X served as a reminder that photography can still be process-driven rather than result-oriented. In all the shoots I took it to, the D2X, both due to its strengths and limitations, brough focus back to that part of the photographic creative process which I love the most: the simple act of going out to shoot something.

HOT TAKES: An honest interview about Zabok and life in it with our new volunteers



BOK! Today we have prepared an interview for our new friends, about our cozy town, Zabok.

They are professional volunteers through European Solidarity Corps. Just make sure you know the team: there is 6 international volunteers from the whole Europe!

We have Zoe from France, Francesca and Lorenzo from Italy, Hugo from Spain, Valeria from El Salvador (currently living in Poland) and Vojta from Czechia...

Now, are you curious how foreigners see our ... town? Even if you are not, you are about to find out :D

A survey

To find out, the volunteers came up with an anonymous, 10-question poll. Anonymity was employed as a means to ensure the unbiasedness and authenticity of the responses. The questions were the following:

- What were your first impressions on Zabok?
- Describe Zabok in one word

- Write down the first thing that caught your attention
- Do you think Zabok is well connected to the rest of Croatia?
- Who is the most famous person in town?
- How good of a place to live do you think it is? (1-5)
- Rate the quality of the food (1-5)
- Rate how friendly Zabočani are (1-5)
- If you had the opportunity to change something, what would it be?

Let's take a look at what they had to say...

What was your first impression of Zabok?	Describe Zabok in one word.	Choose one thing that caught your attention	What is your favourite place in Zabok?
Little city with an industrial past I was surprised how modern and organised the train station is, especially compared to the one in Zagreb, that it's great to be able to find a bit of everything Where the [redacted] did I end up and why is there a huge [redacted] chimney I liked the hills and the nature It's a cozy town, with beautiful view and friendly people wow it's hot.	Developing Alive Re-Generator Cozy Community Cozy Town	Regenerator Must be the nice old lady that investigated an accident. She looked like she's the boss Tower The huge art chimney The street art The views The sense of community	The old bar near to the church re_generator The bar Ideally like the park closer to the old city centre The bar The regenerator Regenerator
	Who is the most famous person in Zabok?	If you had the opportunity to change something what you would change?	
	Marija Marija Bar guy Marija Gebert The owner of the bar Marija Gebert and the bald guy from the bar MARIJAAAAA	The Square in front of the train station I would support local artists more, it's not like they're not supported, but there's simply no limit for that :) Put a REAL city center and more green areas I would bring the focus of city life back to the old city centre and away from the new, gentrified centre I would build more cycling routes More places to hang out add public transport or trees	
Rate the food here	How friendly are Zabočani?	Do you think this is a good place to live?	Do you think Zabok is well connected to the rest of Croatia?
3 4 4 4 5 4 5 avg. 4.1	3 4 3 3 4 5 3 avg. 3.6	3 5 3 3 3 4 2 avg. 3.3	4 5 5 4 4 5 3 avg. 4.3

The results are obvious – they like it here! But let's go into it a little bit more...

Firstly, the volunteers noticed and appreciated a sense of co-ziness emanating from the small community as well as its proximity to nature, but at the same time are surprised by the quantity and quality of services that such a small town can offer. Particularly appreciated in this sense appear to be the wide availability of stores of all kinds and the local cultural life: the Centre for Urban Culture Regenerator and Krčma Polanović have been overwhelmingly listed as our volunteer's favourite places, being mentioned directly in 6 out of 7 responses and indirectly in the missing one (I did, in fact, write „I really like the parts closer to the old city centre” and by that huge emphasis was implicitly on Polanović).

The tightly-knit infrastructural connections to the capital Zagreb, especially the railway, have been evaluated overwhelmingly positively, with the level of satisfaction of Zabok's connections to the rest of Croatia averaging an impressive score of 4,3 out of 5: very good numbers for a rather small urban centre.

One thing is certain: the volunteers REALLY liked Marija Gebert, with 5 respondents out of 7 mentioning her as “the most famous person in Zabok”. Furthermore, “Marica Kuharica” might have also greatly contributed to the impressive score of 4.1/5 attained by Zabok in the food quality department. Honorable mention also for the owner of Krčma Polanović, who appears to be the only other famous person in Zabok after Marija.

Zabok's industrial past certainly does not go unnoticed either, albeit ambivalently: some of the respondents appear to have received a positive visual impression from the ZIVT chimney overlooking the city, but at the same time appear to be highly critical of the new city centre and specifically of Zivtov Trg.

Furthermore, despite the praises for railway and road connections to the rest of Croatia, Zabok has been consistently deemed lacking in the public transportation coverage department: Zabok has the roads and railways to facilitate its opening to the rest of the country, but trips to neighbouring communities remain difficult if not impossible for those who do not own a car. Also mentioned is a lack of green inside the city: the green Zagorje hills indeed appear like a distant mirage to those who

gravitate towards the train station and City Park areas, as we continue observing trends of urban cementification at the expense of the local greenery.

by volunteers, on average, comfortably more than acceptable, and this is no small feat.

Conclusions

Still, overall, the volunteers appear to be rather content with the local community: the locals have been awarded an average score of 3,6/5 for their friendliness, and Zabok a 3,3/5 as a place to live overall. These numbers, which could be considered unimpressive when compared to the other level of satisfaction questions in this poll, are still testament to a community which managed in just two weeks to create living/social conditions which were deemed

Considering the modest size of the Zabok community, and that most of the volunteers had never set foot in Croatia and that were therefore completely alien to the local culture and customs, Zabok appears to have produced a sense of inclusion and overall satisfaction which is unusual for communities similar in size, especially in volunteers belonging to a demographic which tends to gravitate towards the bigger cities and the spectacles and opportunities they offer.

This article is a result of a collaboration between the international volunteering team and me - Daniele, Editor-in-chief. Yet, while I tried to keep my tones as neutral as possible and just present the results of the poll as they are, the parts of this text written by the short-term volunteers appear to be far more enthusiastic about the local community and their two-week experience than mine. All I can say is that I am glad that the community that has been hosting me for the past 6 months was appreciated by them, and that they left as satisfied as they did.

(That is, of course, unless they lied. That could also happen!)



Our Volunteers: Hugo Ahn Meneses, Valeria Peña, Francesca Zaccardelli, Vojtěch Vasiljev, Lorenzo Letizia, Zoé Lelièvre. Once again: Thank You!

Svježe Mlijeko

Treći dio.

Marco Jakovljević

Jadran je čekao cijeli tjedan da se vrati na posao u malu trgovinu. Ništa drugo nije radio otkako su mu rekli da će se vratiti svojim normalnim smjenama u centru.

“Ne mogu te zamijeniti, trebaš ići tamo, eventualno zatvori malo ranije...”, rekao mu je Floki. S jedne strane, osjetio je olakšanje. Zadnji put kad ju je vidio, osjetio je krivnju prema svojoj supruzi. Pitao se je li normalno imati takve fantazije. Pomislio je na Enu, makar na trenutak, dok je vodio ljubav. Na nju je mislio i prije spavanja, i kad je bio sam kod kuće, ili u kupaonici. Ali sve je to ostalo samo u mislima. U zadnje vrijeme bio je toliko prožet sramom i grižnjom

savjesti da više nije mogao ni uživati sa suprugom. “Može li se voljeti dvije osobe?”, bila je njegova stalna misao. Ponekad bi si rekao da može, kao kad se voli supruga i kći, ali nije bilo isto. Onda bi rekao da nije ljubav, nego libido. Ali kako je moguće da ne nalazi mir? Voli li svoju ženu? Voli je. Slatka Mirjana... Trudna je, čeka njihovo dijete, dijete koje su željeli i već vole, zbog kojeg se odriču svega. Kad je vidi kako miluje trbuh, gotovo zaplače. Voli je, želi nju, i zato mora izabrati.

Ena se osjećala shvaćeno i obuzeto njime, njegovim humorom, pogledom i načinom. Što on ima što njezin dečko nema? Je li zgodniji? Možda,

ali je li to važno? Vjerojatno ne. Je li bistriji, profinjeniji? U svojoj melankoliji i nakon što je probio početni zid, da, definitivno. Ali poznaje li ga uopće? Kad bi mislila na njega, zamišljala bi ga kako sjedi u dnevnoj sobi svog stana i čita uz prigušeno svjetlo lampe, ozbiljan i zamišljen, potpuno uronjen u knjigu. Zamišljala bi ga kao strastvenog ljubavnika. Voljela ga je zamišljati takvog, jer ona sama, s te strane, nije mogla reći da je potpuno zadovoljena. Njezin dečko bio je nježan, dobar, gotovo bez mane. Nježan, bezopasan mladić koji joj, međutim, nije znao probuditi emocije – ne kao Jadran, ili kao što je ona zamišljala da bi on mogao.

Dok je o tome razmišljala, gledala je svog dečka kako sjedi ispred televizora. Kako je smiješan bio, kako drag. Kao prvog dana. Ponekad je mislila da se zaljubila u njega samo



zato što je bio tako nježno nespretn. Nije to bio jedini razlog, ali osjećala je veliku nježnost prema njemu. Život s njim značio je večere na kauču pod dekom, vožnje biciklom uz rijeku i društvene igre. To je bio život koji je željela – miran, bezbrižan, djetinjast. Željela je učiti u školi kako bi ostala pomalo dijete, zauvijek čista.

Jutro je mirisalo na svježe mlijeko, kao prvi put kad su radili zajedno. Samo što to jutro bilo – drukčije. Ali oni to nisu ni slutili. Cijelo vrijeme su razgovarali, smijali se, šalili. Sve kao i uvijek. Ljudi koji su ulazili bili su poput neprimjetnih zrnaca u vjetru, poput kapljica u oceanu. Ena i Jadran ih gotovo nisu ni primjećivali. Samo su se neprestano gledali, u prisutnosti kupaca ili bez

njih, tražeći odgovore jedno u očima drugoga. Tražili su onaj trnac koji im je taj pogled davao i hranili su se njime, približavajući se satima u nekom čudnom, nevidljivom plesu. U potpunoj ekstazi napokon su se našli licem u lice, opasno blizu. Tišina. Nisu govorili ništa. U mislima su ponavljali scenarij koji su si pripremili, pokušavajući se oduprijeti želji, potrebi da se dotaknu i...

“Šta je?”

“Mislim da znaš šta je...”

Rekavši to, ona se približila njegovim usnama, ali je stala nekoliko milimetara od njih. “Nemoj,” rekao je, stavljajući joj ruku na rame, “ne prelazimo tu granicu.”

“Ne mogu više, ne mogu ne prijeći je.”

Progutavši knedlu, on je prvi

put nakon nekoliko minuta skrenuo pogled.

“Griješimo, ne isplati se...”

“Kako to možeš reći?”

“Volim svoju ženu, želim nju u svom životu...”

“I ja volim svog dečka.”

“I onda zašto?”

“Jer je jednostavno tako, ne mogu te ne željeti, postoji nešto što me...”

“Privlači.”

“Privlači.”

Tada se Jadran lagano odmaknuo.

“Ne lažem ti, u nekoj drugoj prilici, u nekom drugom kontekstu ili svijetu, ne bih oklijevao da te poljubim, ali...” rekao je, približavajući ruku njenim usnama i milujući ih s tugom – “ne mogu, i ne želim. Razmisli, ne poznajemo se stvarno, ovo je samo dječji flert, nešto što bi ionako kratko tra-



jalo...”

“To kažeš ti.”

“Ne znaš koliko mi je teško to reći...”

Oči su joj postajale sve crvenije.

“...možda bismo trebali stati, možda bih trebao razgovarati sa Flokijem i tražiti premještaj...”

Oboje su osjećali kako im suze klize niz obraze i padaju na pod.

“Molim te, samo jedan poljubac...”

Njezin glas se slomio. Jadran uzeo joj je lice u ruke i naslonio čelo na njezino. Zatim je približio usne, ali ih nije dotaknuo, ostajući na minimalnoj udaljenosti. Disali su jedno drugo, prihvaćajući se u istom zraku. Zatim su se uhvatili za ruke i gledali.

“Kako si slatka.”

Ona se nasmijala kroz suze.

“Nismo stvoreni da budemo udaljeni. Ponekad se ljudi sretnu i shvate da su na neki način povezani. To se nama dogodilo. Ne možeš se praviti kao da se ništa ne događa, ne možeš se ignorirati ta veza koja postoji među nama. Večeras ćeš se vratiti svojoj ženi i možda ćeš nju poljubiti, a ja ću učiniti isto sa svojim dečkom. Onda ćemo im reći da ih volimo, jer ćemo osjećati da ih volimo. A sutra ujutro osjetit ćemo laganu prazninu u sebi i obuzeti će nas osjećaj pobune, bijesa, i opet ćemo se tražiti – i ponovno ćemo se pronaći, budi siguran.”

Nakon što su još jednom približili usne ne dopuštajući da se dodirnu i nakon što su ne-

koliko sekundi čvrsto držali jedno drugome ruke, napokon su otišli. Sve je bilo istina. Te večeri, kad se vratio kući, on je poljubio svoju suprugu, i rekao joj da je voli, jer je to osjećao. Ona je učinila isto, šapnuvši mu “volim te”, dok su se nježno zagrlili. Zaspali su bez poteškoća.

Sljedećeg jutra njih dvoje kolega su se teško probudili, otišli u kupaonicu, oprali se i sjeli gledajući u prazno, na školjku WC-a. Tada su počeli osjećati čudan grč u sebi, novi i neobičan osjećaj. Požurili su u svoje sobe i brzo se obukli, željni da prožive taj dan, taj tjedan, sve do vikenda. On je razgovarao sa Flokijem, ali nije prošlo kako se nadao. Mogao je prestati raditi vikendom, ali morao bi se nadok-

naditi tijekom tjedna – malo u centru, malo u maloj trgovini. Nisu više ništa rekli, nisu više spominjali tu večer. Nije ni bilo potrebe. Počeli su se gledati stidljivo, iskosa, da ne budu primijećeni. Ponekad se, međutim, moglo primijetiti kako si ispod pulta dodiruju ruke jednim gotovo neprimjetnim pokretom. Njihova dnevna doza. Nekoliko mjeseci kasnije rodilo se dijete, a on je napokon pronašao bolji posao, onaj koji je oduvijek želio. Floki ga je jednog dana nazvao i rekao da mu prijatelj iz stranke ima veze u poznatim novinama, za koje je Jadran počeo raditi i gdje ima svoju kolumnu koja je posebno cijenjena. Ena je diplomirala i počela raditi u školi. Živi s dečkom i ne čini se da će se stvari uskoro mijenjati.

Ponekad se ona i Jadran sretnu na ulicama grada – koji i nije tako velik. Ako su u društvu, pozdrave se, ona dobaci koju šalu djetetu i tu sve završi. Ako su sami, gledaju se, zure jedno u drugo i, ako idu u istom smjeru, hodaju jedno uz drugo, neprimjetno dodirujući prste. Ponekad joj on šapće: “Kako si slatka”, a ona se nasmije. Ona svaki tjedan čita njegove članke. Čeka ih s leptirićima u trbuhu, kao da su pisani za nju. Kad se Jadran, Mirjana i dijete nalaze kod Jadranovih roditelja dolje, a zrak je toliko nepodnošljiv do te mjere da postaje gušljiv, Jadran pomisli na Enu te izlazi van da se prošeta. Kad se Ena nedjeljom probudi i vidi svog dečka kako igra videoigre, pomisli na Jadrana i na njegove usne, bolno ih želeći. Ali ovo nije sve.

Postoji i jedna posebna tendencija, slučajnost koja možda i nije slučajnost. Ponekad se dogodi da se Jadran, njegova supruga i dijete nađu u istom restoranu ili kafiću u kojem je Ena s dečkom. U tim prilikama obično sjede jedni iza drugih, ili jedan nasuprot drugome, ali u dijametralno suprotnim dijelovima prostora, tako da se mogu gledati bez prepreka, bez poteškoća. On razgovara sa suprugom i šali se s djetetom, dok ga ona promatra i smiješi se, nostalgичna zbog njegovih šala i dosjetki.

Kad se Ena nasmije nečemu što je rekao njezin dečko, Jadran se lagano nasmije i pomisli: “Kako si slatka.”

KRAJ



Zagoscope

Dear readers,

Summer is here, and as you might know it is the season... of love!
No real love can blossom without a first date. Yet, since you are short on money, your options will most likely be limited to the Krapina-Zagorje conuty (told you you shouldn't have bought all that unnecessary bull[redacted] during the spring).
What to do now? How will you impress your date?
Don't worry: I will now give you budget-friendly recommendations on where to take and what to do with who you think might be your future husband/wife depending on your zodiac sign.

Aries (March 21 – April 19) – Pavlovec Zabočki

Your love interest told you they are into theatre. However, you don't feel like going all the way to Zagreb to the Croatian National Theatre. It might be time to take them see "Luka Modrić – Moja igra" at the Vatrogasni Dom in Pavlovec.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20) – Desinić

You will pick up your date at 7:00 AM in front of their house. Then, you will drive all the way to the Veliki Tabor in Desinić. As you stand in the courtyard, you will tell them that they are more beautiful than the illustration of Veronika Desinička on the cartons of milk by Mini Mljekara Veronika (doesn't matter if they are a man, and that if you were Frederik II of Celje you would never have them imprisoned alive into the walls of the Veliki Tabor but at worst imprisoned by... your kisses :)))))).

Gemini (May 21 – June 20) – Donja Stubica

You will spend a Saturday evening at Terme Jezerčica going on the waterslides.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22) – Gornja Stubica

You will take your date to the Museum of the Peasant Revolts. After holding a 10-minute-long monologue on how much you hate Ferenc Tahy and how the peasantry should revolt against the oppression of the nobility, you will propose, with ring and everything, in front of the huge Matija Gubec statue.

Leo (July 23 – August 22) – Hižakovec

You will take your date to Matija Gubec's birthplace. You will then proceed to make love on his bed.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22) – Veliko Trgovišće

You will take your date on a fancy dinner at Hotel Restaurant Se-Mi. After spending the entire dinner having a monologue on how Croatia is the best country on earth, you will suddenly stop and say "what if we kissed in front of where the first President of Croatia was born..." You will then lean in for a kiss.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21) – Zabok

You will go to Polanović for gemišt. After the 3rd or 4th, when both of you will be "happy" and relaxed, you will ask the waiter to play Them Bones by Alice in Chains. You will then proceed to give everyone a live karaoke performance of the song (with screaming and everything), even though nobody asked.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21) – Krapina

Your date will be a disaster.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19) – Budinščina

Meteorite trip or something? IDK, never been there.

Libra (September 23 – October 22) – Oroslavje

You will take your date to Pizzeria Oro-Goro so they can try the Matija Gubec pizza. When they try it and have a look on their face clearly showing no particular enjoyment, you will look at them in disgust and start a monologue on how they are part of the "disgusting oppressing nobility" betraying the peasantry. This will build the necessary tension for you to lean in for a kiss.

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18) – Konjščina

Will go around town asking people if they know where Darko Rundek used to live while dressed as cowboys, listening to Šejn on repeat (ja cijeli život sanjam kako odlazim uz rijeku).

Pisces (February 19 – March 20) – Kumrovec

You will hide in the house of [person I cannot mention]. At night, when the Muzej Staro Selo staff has long left, you will come out of your hiding spot and start cooking dinner. You will eat on the table where he would eat, and go to sleep in the bed where he would sleep. Early in the morning, you will move back into the hiding spot, waiting for the museum to open again.