

FUJIFILM
X
SERIES



Adrian Murray's
→→ guide to ←←
photographing
children



Adrian Murray's

guide to

photographing children

It's hard not to smile when flicking through Adrian Murray's portfolio. His portraits of children are simply delightful – capturing the curiosity and wonder of a time in life that (as any parent will testify) goes by very quickly.

Perhaps this is why we take more photographs of our kids than almost any other subject. We like to look back on those times when they were messily learning to feed themselves and jumping in muddy puddles as the funnest times in the world. But Adrian's photography goes even further than this. "The goal of my work is to get people to remember their own childhood," he reveals. "Childhood is something we only get to experience once. It's a time of discovery and wonderment, and that's what I try to capture in my images."

Adrian uses FUJIFILM X Series cameras to create his unique brand of imagery, citing the speed and ease of use of his X-T2 and X100F cameras as being particularly important. He also shoots with a FUJIFILM GFX 50S when absolute image quality is key.

Kids will be kids



Adrian's portraits have an observational quality to them. In fact, the children he photographs are usually not looking directly at the camera – they're more likely to be preoccupied with a toy or distracted by something else that's going on around them.

This is no accident: kids just want to play and have fun, and Adrian says it's best not to interfere too much. "You don't want to spend hours trying to photograph children; their attention spans are as short as they are," he jokes. "Let them play, explore and imagine."

FUJIFILM X Series cameras are designed to be small and unobtrusive, which is ideal for this kind of photography. But you can help yourself even further by remembering to take a break from shooting every now and again. "Keep the camera down for some of the time. If you push the kids to do something, then you're not going to get good results," advises Adrian.

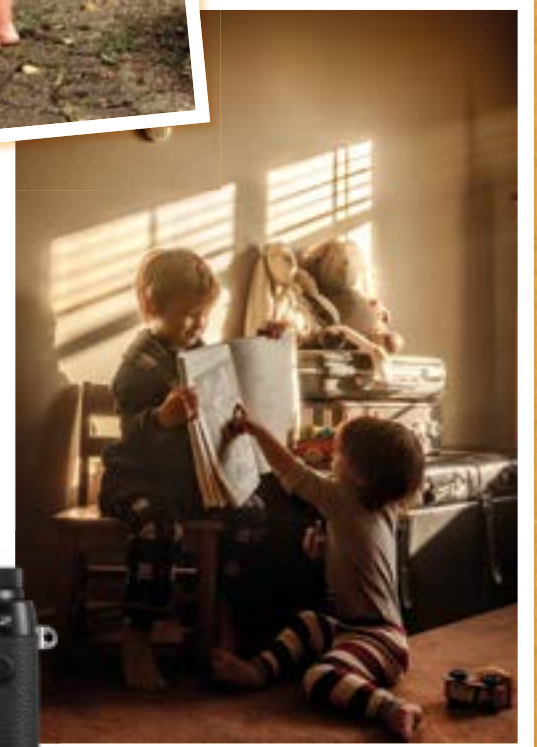


Dial it in

Children are constantly on the move, so you'll need to be quick to capture a precious moment on camera. The traditional controls found on X Series cameras can help you here: it's possible to set exposure mode, aperture, shutter speed and ISO before your camera is even switched on, which is something that Adrian finds very useful.



As I pick up my camera, I tend to put the exposure roughly where I think it's going to be then make adjustments as I shoot to get brightness just right. My camera's external controls are key in this."



Location, location, location...



One of the most important aspects of any children's portrait shoot is your surroundings. A location should be interesting for your subject, but not so unfamiliar that they are wary or nervous. This could be outdoors at the beach or a local park, or just inside at home or in a relative's house with a supply of toys on hand.

Ideally, your location should be well lit. Aim for a day with some cloud cover if you're outside, or try to keep the action by a large window if you're indoors.

This might all seem a little involved, but Adrian warns about overthinking things. "Honestly, you are at the whim of your child, not your own. Let go of control and accept that they are the ones in control. Be ready for anything! And bring along some snacks – that never hurts.

"I like to shoot with natural light because it gives me the freedom and flexibility to move around with the subject. Let them roam around and your photos will be stronger for it," he adds.





Get down to their level

The thing about little people is that they are... well, little! And that means that we have to adopt a different viewpoint when we photograph them, compared to shooting pictures of adults.

"Usually when we shoot portraits we're used to staying at the same level as our subject. But when you're photographing kids, you have to come down to their level. Crouch down or get on your knees if you have to," Adrian advises. "One of the things I see people getting wrong the most is photographing a kid who is three feet tall from five and a half feet in the air."

Getting down to your subject's level is not only a good way of seeing their faces but it also puts the viewer in a childlike state – seeing the world from the point of view of someone who is less than half their own height.

FUJIFILM X Series cameras that feature a tilting LCD screen make this job a lot easier. You can hold the camera near the floor without having to get quite as low yourself. Just be aware that your subject will likely look up at your face if you call their name, and not into the camera's lens. You should also remember to look up occasionally if you're trying to keep communication going.

• X Series models with tilting screens •



FUJIFILM X-T3

For fast moving subjects like children, you need a camera built for speed – and they don't come much quicker than this. The FUJIFILM X-T3 can shoot at 30fps with no viewfinder blackout and focus continuously on faces as they move about the frame.



FUJIFILM X-T20

The FUJIFILM X-T20 is packed with features that will make life easier when shooting kid's portraits, and its portable design means you can take it with you more often – great for photographing the family when you're out and about.



What's the right lens for photographing children?



The question of which lens to use for portraits of children is a difficult one, chiefly because there is more than one right answer. The best decision depends not only on the location in which you're working and the type of light available, but also the creative look you are going for – which is an entirely personal choice.

"You need to ask the question about lens choice when you see what you are photographing," says Adrian. "Are you working in poor light? Go for a fast aperture. Are you shooting in the rain? Something that's weather-resistant is probably a good idea. Think you'll work indoors a lot? Then perhaps stick with a wide focal length so you can work in tighter spaces.

"Zoom lenses are great and offer lots of versatility, but their widest apertures are somewhat limited. On the other hand, fast prime lenses are amazing but you'll be limited by your focal lengths. I personally shoot with both zooms and primes, but lean towards primes."



I think if I had to give a personal preference for just one lens, I'd recommend something like the XF23mmF1.4 R lens for an X Series camera, or the GF45mmF2.8 R WR lens if you're a GFX system user."

Great lenses for children's portraits



XF23mmF2 R WR

A compact wide angle prime lens with a fast F2 maximum aperture and weather-resistant construction.



XF50mmF2 R WR

Photograph your subject from further away with this highly portable, fast aperture telephoto lens.

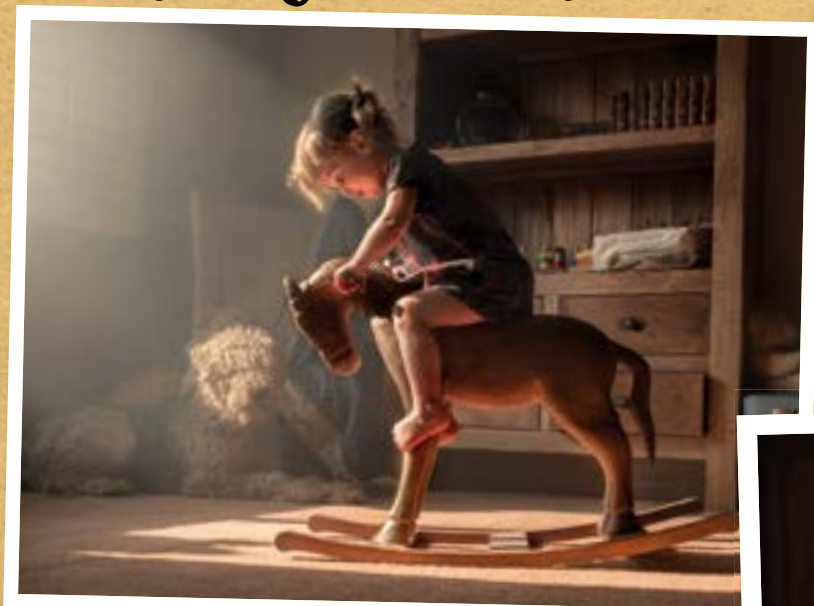


XF16-55mmF2.8 R LM WR

Incredible image quality and weather-resistant construction in a lens that provides focal lengths from wide angle to short telephoto.

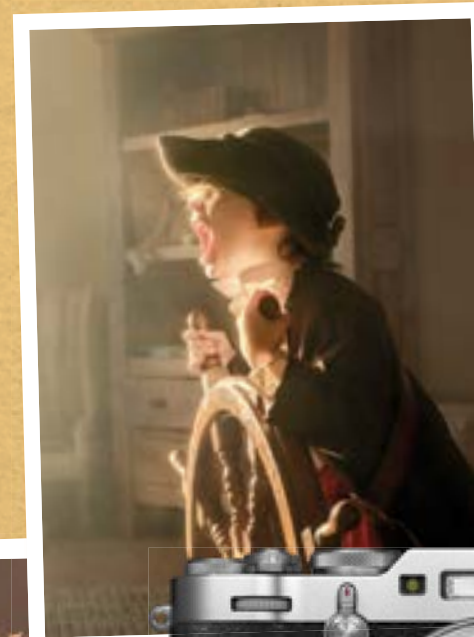


Capturing the perfect expression



One of the things that Adrian loves the most about his X Series camera is the electronic viewfinder. "I love having the EVF to give me an immediate view of what to expect in the final image before I shoot it," he says.

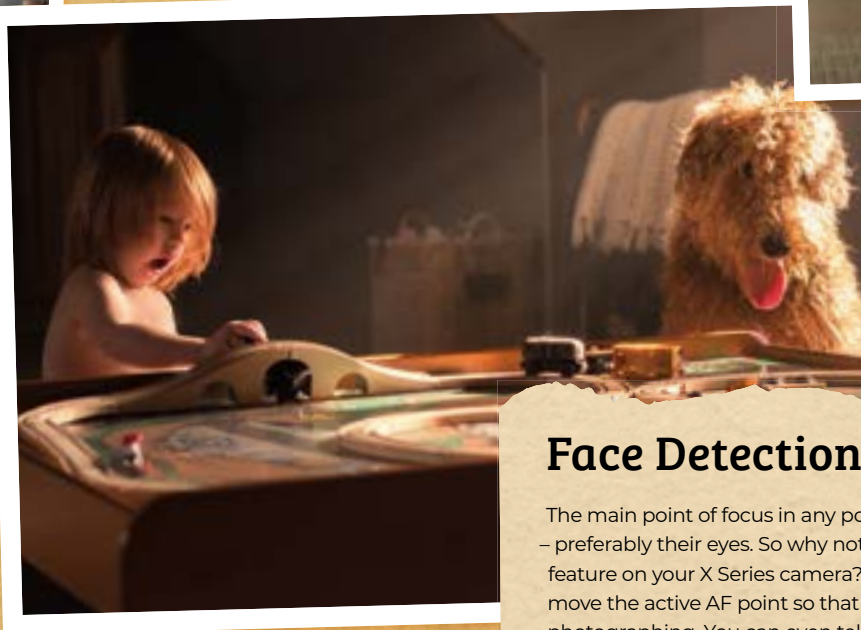
Indeed, the high quality EVFs you'll find in X Series cameras preview everything from exposure and depth-of-field to color, contrast and the effects of different Film Simulation modes. And because you are seeing exactly what the camera's sensor is seeing, you'll be able to compose with absolute accuracy.



If there is one habit that we need to break in order to get compelling and natural portraits of children, it's our fixation with smiling – or more precisely trying to get other people to smile with those immortal words 'say cheese!'

"It's something that drives me crazy!" confesses Adrian. "For generations we've been told to crack a smile, and it's the least genuine aspect of photography. It's something I have to remind my own family of whenever a camera comes around my nieces and nephews. The phrase is just so ingrained in cultures all around the world that it's difficult to stop."

This is a good point: very few people walk around with a permanent smile on their face all day, so why do we want to capture this in a photograph that is supposed to capture the essence and personality of our subject? Instead, Adrian suggests a more observational approach: watch them interact with their environment and try to capture the curiosity and fascination on their face. It'll be a much more natural expression than anything that comes from saying 'cheese'.



Face Detection AF

The main point of focus in any portrait should be the subject's face – preferably their eyes. So why not try out the face detection autofocus feature on your X Series camera? Once this is switched on, the camera will move the active AF point so that it's always over the face of whoever you're photographing. You can even tell it to prioritize the left or right eye, if you like.

Face detection AF is great for child photography because it lets you concentrate on your subject without worrying about whether their eyes will be sharp. With the camera in AF-C Focus mode, simply half-press the shutter button and wait for that priceless expression to appear. You'll be ready to shoot when it does!

Focusing on

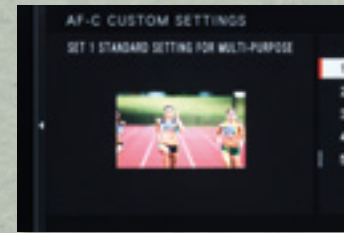
moving subjects



If there's one thing that's easy to predict about kids, it's that they are unpredictable! When they're not restless, they are fidgety. When they're not distracted, they're preoccupied by something they shouldn't be. And when you're photographing them, you need your camera to be ready for anything!

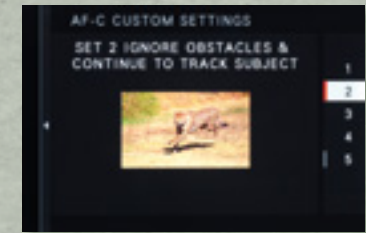
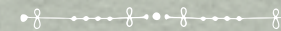
One of Adrian's X Series cameras is the X-T2, which copes very well with fast-moving and unpredictable subjects, thanks in part to its customizable AF-C continuous focusing modes. Three aspects of the camera's behavior can be adjusted: tracking sensitivity, speed tracking sensitivity and zone area switching.

That might sound very complicated, but thankfully, adjusting focusing behavior on the X-H1, X-T2, X-Pro2, X-T20 or X-E3 is as simple as selecting one of five presets, each labeled with the type of movement it's best for.



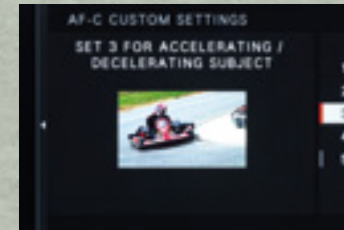
General

When you're not quite sure what you'll be photographing. The camera will momentarily ignore obstacles that get in the way, but won't anticipate changing speed.



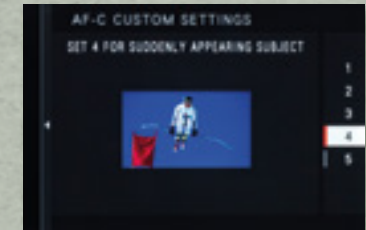
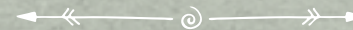
Ignore obstacles

When tracking a moving subject, this preset will ensure that the camera isn't distracted by other objects getting in the way.



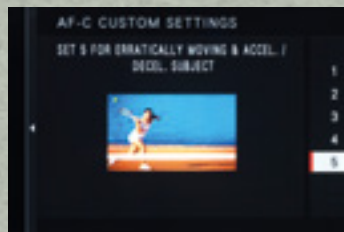
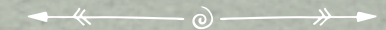
Accelerating/decelerating subject

For subjects that change their speed at a fairly predictable rate, this is an ideal setting.



Suddenly appearing subject

Ideal for those times when you have composed a shot and you're waiting for your subject to appear in the frame.



Erratically moving subject

The perfect description of a toddler? This AF-C preset aims to react quickly to changes in speed and ignore obstacles which may get in the way.

Remember to enjoy yourself !

Our last piece of advice is to make fun a big part of your photography. When your subjects enjoy themselves, you'll enjoy yourself too and all this will come across in your pictures – which will be remembered and cherished for many many years to come.

FUJIFILM
X
SERIES



FUJIFILMXGFX.COM

#FUJIFILMX_US **f /FUJIFILMXUS**
@FUJIFILMX_US **▶ FUJIFILMYOUTUBE.COM**

Various of the background images depicted in this brochure are simulated and not created with the actual products referenced. FUJIFILM and FUJINON are trademarks of FUJIFILM Corporation and its affiliates. All third-party trademarks used in these materials are the trademarks of their respective company owners.

Adrian Murray is a FUJIFILM-compensated professional photographer.

© 2018 FUJIFILM North America Corporation. All rights reserved.