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## African Journals | Chronicles from the Road, Part Two: Portraits

*By Manouk Quint*

The thing with photographing portraits is, it's almost the opposite of what we are used to. We, as photographers, are always looking to capture the moments in between; the spontaneous moments, trying to be as invisible as possible to get the shot while no one is aware of the camera. A game of cat and mouse. Shooting portraits is a whole different story to us. We are emotional-shooters; we can not just go out on the streets to shoot portraits of people we don't know. It feels like you're stealing someone's identity, to use it for your own gain. That doesn't work for us. We have to have a connection with someone to get so close, to take a photograph of someone on a personal level. They are part of the picture and it's their story, after all. We make portraits to share that story.

We met a lot of people randomly; asking for directions, on the road, in a bar, in the supermarket, in a queue, at a party, via other new friends or just by coincidence. You cannot choose those moments, it happens to you unannounced, as long as you are open to it.

Here, we will share a few highlights of the encounters we had.

### ***Daniel Mahuleka***

We met Daniel while he was working at the Blacksheep, an amazing restaurant in Cape Town.

Born and raised in Kwazulu-Natal, he moved to Cape town to chase his dreams. He studied economics and journalism and loves music festivals. One of the most energetic, sparkling and happy people who ever crossed our path. His personality is so strong. The click was enormous and we had a lot of fun. He told us about his biggest dream, to work on a Yacht in The South of France. He got all his papers and saved money for a long time. He is there right now, and we will meet again in Amsterdam this summer. We can't believe it.

### **Koy & Tatadoc**

Along the C14 (read about it [here](#)) from Walvisbay to Sossusvlei, when you first enter what could well be the film-set of The Lord of the Rings, after hours of sandy desert, you will pass the first sign of civilisation in its purest form. In the middle of these wide stretches, green landscapes with purple grey mountains peeping out of the horizon, there was a tinned house which caught our eye. Two black guys were sitting out front waving at us. A moment later, we were having a chat. We got some cold beers from the back of our car, and we were talking about wild animals. They knew exactly where a zebra family was at that very moment; their job was to keep an eye on the wildlife and nature. They came from Rwanda, couldn't find a job after high school, and somehow they ended up here. They work for a German woman. They are 20 and 22 and eat porridge 3 times a day and the closest shop is 40km away. It was so special to meet them. Three days later, we drove 40km back with a surprise box full of food, drinks, beers and a letter. We thanked them for being who they are.

### **Kids of Zambia and Tsakane**

And then there were kids. Lots of kids. Two amazing projects came along on our trip. The first one is The Zambezi Sunshine Trust project in Zambia. Our local friend, Herbert, told us about his wife's school – the Nakacheya Primary School, set up thanks to the Zambezi Sunshine Trust Project. We got the opportunity to meet the children and we spent some time at the little school, where they teach and feed 300 children every day, with no electricity or running water. The Sithandi'Zingane care project in Tsakane is the second one. We visited them for three days and worked in the kitchen with the local people to prepare breakfast and lunch for over 500 children, it was an honour to be there and to get to know the people and children.

At both places the children were dancing, laughing, jumping around. So cheerful and full of energy. It was touching. It's always emotional to take portraits of children, because they are just so pure. They also have no prejudice at all. It really does something to me.

Because Africa gave us more than we could have imagined, we wanted to give back. We organised a fundraising exhibition in our hometown, Breda, and sold 80 portraits! All the profit will go to the Zambezi Sunshine Trust project in Zambia and to the Sithandi'Zingane project in Tsakane, Johannesburg. We are now in the process of organising a second addition.

The Zambezi Sunshine Trust project:

<http://www.zambezisunrisetrust.co.uk/projects/>

Sithandi'I Zingane Care project:

<http://www.sithandizingane.co.za/>

*We will never forget the people we met.*

*The most important thing when meeting new local people is to be open-minded and to adjust. Show your respect at all times. It doesn't matter where you are from, who you are, or what you are doing; have real conversations that really matter. Be open to every kind of conversation, from small-talk to serious subjects. And just be yourself, don't act differently. You will feel a connection sooner or later. And remember, you can't be friends with everyone. That's a fact, all over the world. We loved every conversation we had and we couldn't get enough of the stories. And they love to hear yours too.*

Follow Manouk on [Instagram](#) or visit her website [here](#).

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## Manouk Quint

Manouk Robina Quint is a 25 year-old photographer currently living in Amsterdam. She has loved creating stories for as long as she can remember. At the age of 10, she was given a Pentax MZ-5 analogue camera with a 'panoramic setting'. "One of my first photos was a photo of my dad. We went parachute diving together for my 10th birthday. When I landed, I shot him exactly at the right moment; just when he was in front of the sun, with the blue sky as background. I never left my camera at home from that moment on. It felt like magic to be able to capture your imaginations and fantasies in a photo." Manouk now has her own photography business; Hans en Grietje - donotsaycheese.com. Together with her soulmate, Hidde van der Linden, they began by capturing the party-life of Amsterdam in clubs, parties and festivals. Now the duo photograph food, interior, fashion, weddings, portraits and travel, also writing concepts and stories to create campaigns for brands.

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