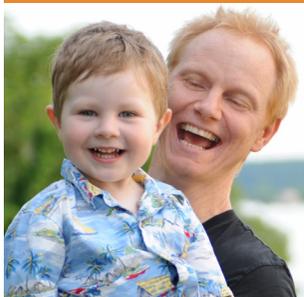


A matter of beauty

Photographer Jordan Matter captures the extra in the ordinary



MEMBERPROFILE



BY VAHANIAN

Name: Jordan Matter

Member at: Nanuet, New York

Member since: 2013

Website: jordanmatter.com

Comments about

Costco: "Props, or accessories, or anything that we might need for the shot, I'm usually going to Costco to get it."

By Hana Medina

COMMUTING. WAITING AT a crosswalk. Going on a picnic. To most of us, these everyday situations may seem like mundane occurrences, but photographer Jordan Matter transforms them into works of art using dancers, athletes and circus performers as his subjects. An interest in any of these professions is not required for Matter's work to resonate. His images are full of lightheartedness and whimsy, and they have garnered rave reviews all over the world.

Matter, a former baseball player turned actor turned photographer, decided to transform his hobby into his profession by making it a New Year's resolution in 2000. "I stopped doing everything else and I only dedicated myself to photography," says the Costco member.

His work mainly consisted of portraits and actor head shots when he started working with a dancer at the Paul Taylor Dance Company in New York. During that same period, he enjoyed watching his son play with a toy bus and admired his joy, enthusiasm and passion for imagination.

"As we get older we lose that imagination, that ability to see the beauty in the everyday moment," he says. "And it made sense for me to use dancers to show those everyday moments in a more beautiful

way than we're used to seeing them."

Thus, his project and best-selling book *Dancers Among Us* (Workman Publishing, 2012; not available at Costco) was born. "The thing I wanted to do, which I think is different from other dance photography, is the idea of creating a scenario and telling stories, as opposed to just doing a pretty picture," Matter tells *The Connection*. "We'd find a cool location and the dancer could do a great pose, but the question was, What's our story? If we don't have a story, then it's not really unique."

Matter, who uses a Nikon camera, makes capturing elegant poses look simple, but it can be anything but. It's often a delicate coordination between maintaining his subject's energy and capturing a shot before security or even the cops ask him to leave. (See the video in our digital edition for examples.)

"Generally, the best locations are not necessarily

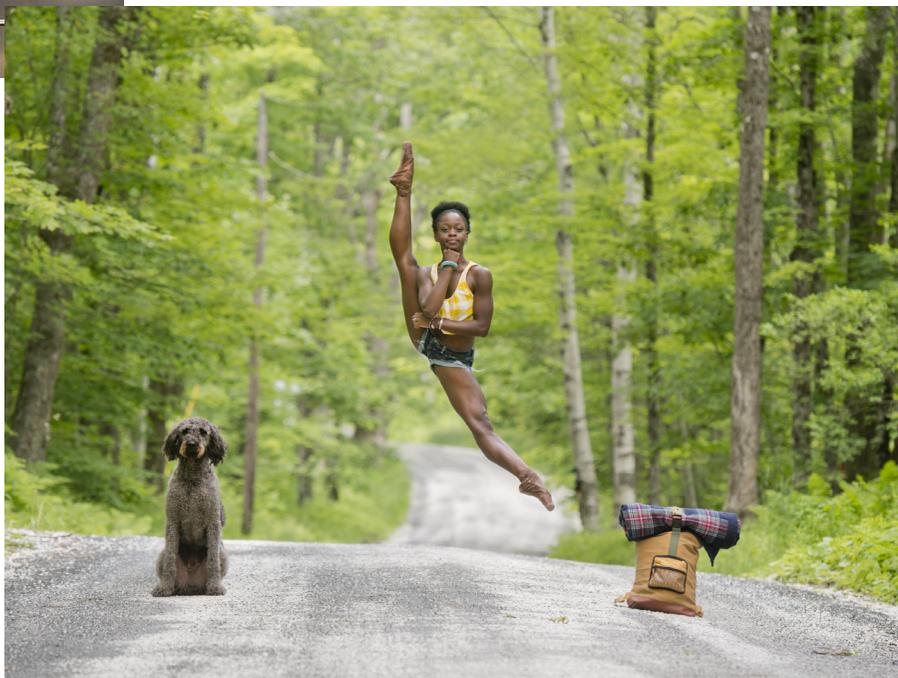
PHOTOS: JORDAN MATTER

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In our digital editions

Click here to watch a behind-the-scenes clip of Jordan Matter's photo shoots. (See page 14 for details.)



open for shooting for the public. So it also has to be that bobbing and weaving around and trying to get it before anybody yells at us," says Matter, who adds that he's never been arrested or gotten in trouble for his work.

His shots are often set up in alternate locations to practice the pose. Once he and his subjects are ready to capture the final moment, they'll run over to the real location and attempt to shoot it as fast as possible. That can take anywhere from a few hours to half a day to five minutes. "It really depends on the shot. I'll keep shooting until I get it," he says.

The Costco Connection

Find cameras, digital storage and other accessories at Costco and at Costco.com. Costco's Photo Centers provide a range of creative photo services.

Oftentimes, the subjects' athletic abilities will inspire the story that Matter aims to tell. His shoots frequently become performances in and of themselves; crowds of bystanders often gather, curious to see what the dancers, performers and athletes are doing and sometimes become part of the shot.

The most rewarding thing for Matter is hearing reactions to his work. "I get posts or emails from around the world—really moving, touching emails about how the images make [people] feel," he says. "I've gotten a lot of emails from people with autistic children who say there's something about these images that these kids are really responding to. They're drawing and painting the images again, or trying to take photographs like that, or whatever. It's been great just to see the reaction of people. It's been really exciting."

Matter is currently working on two projects: *Athletes Among Us*, showing athletes' strength in everyday situations, and his next book, *Life of the Circus*, which will focus on circus performers in everyday situations. Follow his work on jordanmatter.com.

