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Meet Karim Carella, our contest winner for "Artist of the Year".



We recently launched our very first Artfinder Awards, recognising the many talented artists on our site. In partnership with [Chateau Orquevaux](#) who supplied the incredible prize of a free residency for the 'Artist of the year' award, we reviewed hundreds of artworks to select the best talent in each category. Following a series of votes by our artist community, internal team and the public, [Karim Carella](#) took first prize. Today, we speak to Karim to discover the inspiration and creativity behind his work and why he picked 'A tuscan homestead before the sunset (studio 2)' as his entry.



A tuscan homestead before the sunset (studio 2)

Photograph
by [Karim Carella](#)

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Could you start by introducing yourself to our community?

My name is Karim Carella and I was born in Bari, one of the most important seaside cities in southern Italy. I grew up in my hometown where I graduated in Statistical and Economic Sciences. I have always been passionate about travel and nature, curious and more than ever eager to discover and engage with different places and cultures.



Bucolic white farmhouse

Photograph

by [Karim Carella](#)

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How did you get into photography?

My first memories related to photography date back to my childhood and adolescence. In fact my dad, a great photography enthusiast, owned some of the most iconic models of analogic devices such as a Rolleiflex 3.5 and a Hasselblad 500 and I remember them well as part of all our travels. In hindsight, I believe that that period was decisive for my future choices. So after having dedicated to photography for pleasure and as a pure hobby for several years, in time it became an integral part of my life, leading me to the decision, about fifteen years ago, to commit full time and professionally.



Idyllic Tuscan road from the Gladiator movie

Photograph

by [Karim Carella](#)

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What are your favourite subjects to photograph and why?

I have always been a landscape photographer. I have never wanted anything else than to photograph landscapes and totally immerse myself in the places I visit and explore.

In the landscape, and mostly in the scenarios offered by remote and uncontaminated places or where the presence of human beings is reduced to a minimum, I find the favourite subjects for my photographs. I love immortalising marine horizons, sinuous hills, solitary trees and houses, rocks emerging from the waters of lakes or the sea. All these subjects reflect my way of feeling and listening to nature, my idea of an evocative and sometimes dreamlike search for the beauty that the natural world can still offer.



The Sea inside (studio 8)

Photograph
by [Karim Carella](#)

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What is your artistic process?

My artistic process takes place in four distinct phases. The first phase is purely in my mind: it is there that the idea of a photographic project is born.

In the second phase, in my work studio, begins the research phase of the places and subjects following the project idea. I document myself by reading and gathering information about a specific territory, I study maps and identify potential subjects. I also study the climate in relation to the different seasons of the year and the light conditions by virtually observing the path of the sun during the day. In short, I scrupulously analyse everything I may need in order to arrive at the shooting location sufficiently prepared.

The third phase is actually in the field: I reach the chosen place and I begin with the direct observation of the subject. It can happen that I have to return to the place several times to identify the best moment and angles to take the shot, or it can just as often happen that I have to give up for various reasons.

In the fourth and final phase back in the office, having in mind a clear idea of the result I want to obtain, I dedicate myself to the scrupulous selection and development of each single photograph. In some cases it can be easy and immediate, in many other cases long and complex: there are photographs that see the light even several months after I took them, others that, despite all positive sensations, are discharged because they are far from my initial concept.

How did you go about selecting your entry for the contest?

After three years in which I dedicated to the creation of abstract landscape projects, in 2023 I decided to return to figurative landscape and to focus on the scenic beauties of Tuscany, the region where I've been living now for eight years,

which no surprisingly is considered one of the most beautiful regions in Italy and the world.

In particular, I decided to focus on the Val d' Orcia, a UNESCO heritage site since 2004. I am deeply in love with this part of Tuscany because it offers glimpses and views which are perfect for my way of understanding landscape photography. Among the shots taken last year in Val d' Orcia I choose 'A Tuscan homestead before the sunset (studio 2)'; because it best symbolises that idea of romantic and perhaps a little out of time photography that is one of my distinctive features.

And in all sincerity, I would have never thought that this photo would give me this very prestigious award!



Tuscan hills in spring colors

Photograph
by [Karim Carella](#)

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What inspired you to create this photograph?

Many factors inspired me to create this photograph. First of all the sound of silence which characterises this place, that I have often photographed in recent years. And probably because I idealise it as the perfect place where I could spend my old age peacefully, in the company of my wife, many pets and surrounded by lots of nature.

Do you have any final words of advice for any emerging out there wanting to make a living out of their art?

I have to say it first: An artistic career is not an easy path. On the contrary, in most cases choosing art means choosing a life path fraught with difficulties... However, my advice is: never stop believing in what you do, never let yourself be discouraged by all those - and there will probably be many - who will judge your choice with scepticism and will maybe try to make you give up.

And last but certainly not least, to all those who wish to pursue this path: You should never stop discovering, learning and improving yourself, because an artistic path is a continuous learning journey.

Cover image via [Karim Carella](#)



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