

DARKUS



**ROBIN LAANANEN**  
US/THEN



Having spent a number of years on the road with American indie-rock band Warpaint, photographer Robin Laanenen will be releasing her book *US/Then* in July 2017 which documents 7 years of the time she spent with the band. We caught up with Robin to find out more about the latest book and to also find out more about the world of music touring from this truly inspirational photographer.

**Darkus Magazine:** Congratulations on your book, 'US/ THEN' which is released in July. How are you feeling with it being just a few weeks before the release?

**Robin:** Thank you! I'm very excited to have the release date quickly approaching, it's been a long time coming, and I'm looking forward to watching the reaction of both the band and their fans. I'm very proud of the result of this collaboration.

**DM:** What gave you inspiration to create the book?

**Robin:** While traveling with the band, I was able to capture the most intimate moments, daily, and I became inspired to share this aspect of tour that is typically unseen. Even the most monotonous of times can be beautiful as it's all part of the big picture. It's not "just" a tour, it's a person's life, and the lives of those they're traveling with. I was initially drawn to the road after witnessing the sacrifices one makes to pursue the life of a musician, to be able to do what they love for a living is an amazing opportunity involving hard work, dedication, and it's also a choice not without its complications.

**DM:** Documenting 7 years of your time with *WARPAINT*, what helped you to decide which parts you would be including in the book?

**Robin:** I wanted to pick photographs from each part of touring - live, portrait, candid, the cities we've spent time in - to offer as realistic of a "day in the life" view as possible.

**DM:** What have you enjoyed most about working with Warpaint since 2010?

**Robin:** While traveling extensively around the world, we've become a family, and I've enjoyed watching them grow in so many ways. There's no easy way to put into words as to how it feels to

experience the vastness of the world with people, to share how it changes your perspective on life.

**DM:** Do you feel that some of the work featured in the book, captures a more delicate side to the band that fans may not have realised until now?

**Robin:** Yes, I feel the photos in the book capture a more intimate, more real side of the band. There's a trust between the band and I, to always have my cameras around, that I believe can be seen in the book. A person could be going through a rough day, but if a beautiful photograph comes from that time, then it should be taken, regardless if it's used for any purpose other than existing.

**DM:** Having not been just the band's photographer, but also their tour manager amongst other things, did you ever have such a thing as a typical day?

**Robin:** There are typical moments of a day but never one in its entirety. As their tour manager, I have to predict what "could happen" and deal with any crises that arise. As a photographer, I have to, equally if not more, be ready to capture a moment, a light, that quickly disappears. I've noticed the lack of sleep attributed to the tour manager role can be counteracted with picking up a camera; the best tool available for being present in the moment and feeling a higher sense of awareness.

**DM:** Do you think as the music scene has continued to evolve, touring is also not the same as it used to be?

**Robin:** I do believe the music scene has continued to evolve, bands are able to get their music out without being signed to a label, take more control of their artistic vision. On that note, there's a reason why touring is still the consistent method for most bands to make an income. I feel touring is easier than it used to be, with the levels of technology available; advancing/planning tours, the increased methods of keeping in touch with loved ones, along with the advancements of production at venues/festivals. At the same time, these same technologies (phones, computers) can inhibit a person from experiencing the feeling of the movements of traveling, being in different cities, allowing yourself to be out of your comfort zone.



**DM:** This book is more than just photography, its about capturing moments which are even more powerful than words. Would you agree?

**Robin:** Thank you, yes, I would agree. I decided not to include captions as I'd like for the person holding the book to have their own feelings as to what's going on while looking at the photographs.

**DM:** Even though this book predominately focuses on Warpaint – were there ever moments where it encouraged you to look back at your own progress and evolution as a photographer?

**Robin:** Yes, it did encourage me to look back, to gauge any sense of evolution, along with forecasting for the future, being inspired to shoot. I would love to shoot more documentary scenarios.

**DM:** As people check out the book once it becomes available in July, what would you say is the best way for them to fully embrace and understand not just about Warpaint, but the world of live music?

**Robin:** I would hope that by looking at the book, listening to the live recordings, it'll give a strong sense of what it takes for a show to happen. With not only rigorous travel and demanding schedules, but also feeling far from loved ones, familiarities and looking at those you travel with for the continuing sense of comfort and home. There's a lot more to putting on a show than is usually considered. I hope people can see not only the gratitude of doing what you love for a living but also the hardships that come along for the ride.

“US / THEN” is available July 1st 2017 through Setanta Books”



