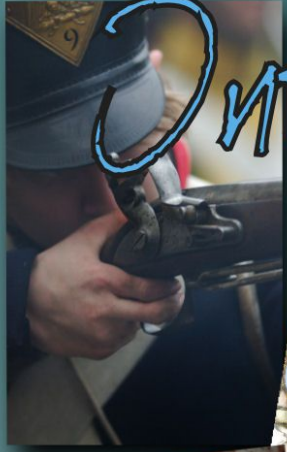


# PLAYING HISTORY

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*Interviews*



Roberto Fusconi  
*photographer*

Interview by

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[www.playinghistory.altervista.org](http://www.playinghistory.altervista.org)



Thank you to Silvia and Anna Lisa for this interview.

**1)What does photography mean to you?**

**What is it that you would like to say, what are you looking for and, above all, what attracts you to the world of historical re-enactments?**

Photography for me isn't just a hobby, but a true travelling companion for more than 10 years.

In it I look for simplicity, harmony and to capture the emotions of that moment.

And I like to think of those who return to look at my photos, re-experiencing the same sensations of that moment, as on the day the photo was taken.

“Moments relived in time”: this for me is the concept of photography. Reenacting history, in particular, is a terrific photographic exercise. You can take general photos and portraits; one has the possibility of searching for something particular or catching action with a series of shots. [he portrait. you have the possibility to search for the particular or moving photos .]

Being also a lover of history, I could not find a better match between culture and hobby, as when I go and photograph a re-enactment.

**2)If you had to describe yourself through your photos, what images would you present?**

Over time I have discovered I'm more of a portraitist but basically all of the photos represent me .They all have emotions and memories to relive, they are all my story.

**3)Tell us something about you, how you ended up in this job, apart from your passion obviously. What triggered your desire to take a camera in hand and to report on the world which was surrounding you?**

During the eighties, with my first earnings, I was able to purchase a used camera.

Before then I had never looked into a camera viewfinder, but I had a profound interest in anything regarding images and the feelings that the photo is able to give to you.

Over time I have perfected my style and technique, by reading everything, visiting exhibitions but, above all, taking photos, composing shots, and looking at what surrounds me through the camera lens.

Then hours and hours in the darkroom to discover how to make the pictures come to life. The satisfaction of bringing to light an emotion to share.

With the passing of time, sharing photos was what triggered my interest in photography and more so now it is much easier with social media.

**4)What is the perfect photo for Roberto?**

The perfect photo is the one which has the best harmony between the elements Where the subject, while attracting the focus to itself, results in perfect balance with its surroundings.

I can say that this is my way of photographing and I've noticed others like it too, but the perfect photo remains to be taken.





**5) In your work what motivates you to choose one face over another?**  
 Io non sono un metodico o un progI am not methodical or a planner) but I'm more instinctive.

In the search for a shot, many factors speak to me, but one thing is fundamental; the availability of the subject to be photographed. If you don't find this synergy the moment is lost.

Meaning basically that it's an emotion, and that I'm hardly conscious of what I'm photographing.

I photograph from the first moment in that case will help the shot even changing the lens so as to enhance the spontaneity. For me everyone is a photographable subject, although I mostly prefer to photograph female faces because they convey more emotions.

**6) I have noticed that not only have I known you through reporting of period events, but that you are fascinated by the diversity between them. Where do you feel more comfortable and why?**

I've always been attracted by everything in costume and disguise. I started at Venice Carnival; an event I still cover today.

Then through my job in the railways I started being a regional photo journalist (in my area, Lombardy) and for many days during the month alternating my job in the railway station with photographic outings on the train network (trains and other stuff) in Lombardy and all over Italy. It was an experience for over 10 years which enriched me from a photographic point of view.

Only in 2010 I joined a group and I discovered the world of reenactment. Through a photographer friend I started with a Napoleonic reenactment - a true baptism of fire.

In the end I was upset, full of smoke, and angry ... but happy and with excellent images with an atmosphere of battle.

This encouraged me to continue, even to discover different eras.

**7) In the photos of events with period clothing, how do you express yourself best: amongst the festivities in the social moments or amongst the tension of battle?**

As I mentioned to you, that baptism of fire, made me appreciated by those re-enactors who always encouraged me to follow them into the battlefields of Jena, Lipsia, Arcola and Sarzana.

Undoubtedly the battle can take you sometimes into unpredictable situations but I have always found myself at ease.



Additionally, the moments of life on the campsites are made memorable and compelling by the professional realism of the re-enactors. All this has allowed me to take a series of photos that have given me a lot of satisfaction.

Both scenarios, social and battles, are an expression of the same story and I can put myself in both situations without preferring one or the other.

**8) In the settings of historical re-enactments have you ever thought of being on the other side?**

**If yes, which character would you like to dress up as?**

No, my place is always behind the subject.

Even though during a battle, to be able to take a photo up close - I'll wear a uniform of an important figure, from the French army, the "Commissioner of War".

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 Note\*:

*In the French Army from the Ancien Regime of the first Emperor, the*

*title of "Commissioner of war" was indicated by the military and public officials charged with the tasks of administration, accounting and military logistics.*

*The creation of this figure is due to Giovanni il Buono who established the institute of 30 April 1351 and it remained active until 29 July 1817, when by order of the King, it was suppressed and replaced by a military administration body.*

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**9) Frequently attending the Napoleonic events, by now you know many of the main re-enactors. Who amongst these re-enactors do you prefer to photograph and why?**

I arrived into the re-enactment world of Napoleonic events in an important time of its story, the bicentenary.

During these years, all the places where its story took place, commemorations occurred regularly.

I could get to know and photograph people from many countries: French, Russian, Belgium, Czech, German and English, but sympathy towards the Italians went further.

In those years I was able to get to know the official part of the Napoleonic world; the ladies with their fabulous clothes, Court life, the Balls, all which allowed me to develop the type of photo I've always wanted to capture, uniting the beauty of the historical palaces with a touch of historical ambience.

**10) Have you ever encountered difficulty capturing the true essence of the subject you portray?**

**What did you do in that case how did you overcome it?**

Yes, this always happens. I have to tune into the event, establish what the scenes are which would give me the right emotion. I prefer a natural situation where the subject doesn't feel observed and conditioned into unnatural poses.

This relaxed attitude towards the subject has allowed me an easier approach and more intimate images portrayed.

**11) How would you explain your work as a photographer to a young man who wanted to approach this profession and what advice would you give him?**

I am self-taught; not having attended courses, so I have not acquired all of the knowledge and tricks photography presents, but reading a lot, I realised that technical theory is certainly important, however a true photo is born out of our imagination and each one of us is a potential great photographer.

What I feel compelled to advise is to develop a sense of the frame and an understanding of light.

The frame is the only important element for the photographer's creativity, the rest is editable.

But light is an essential element for a balanced atmosphere.



12) And finally, a location or an event that you would like to photograph, which you have not yet had the pleasure of capturing?

Thinking of the Napoleonic era, the event I would like to photograph is the coronation of Napoleon. It's an event which is a bit complex but not impossible.



13) A final curiosity, at the recent event in Lucca where we met, I noticed that you often had your daughter by your side.

How proud are you about this and is there competition or collaboration between the two of you? Francesca is just starting out and she is getting more involved. I'm pleased she is passionate about photography and that she's understood the importance of the image. This will help her a lot in her future job as a cartoonist.

*Silvia Basile*



Thanks to Roberto Fusconi for being our pleasant guest with his photographic masterpieces ...

... and from the one who is spending time with his shots, we pass to a dance teacher who helps us to understand what is hidden behind the organization of a historical Grand Ball.

Follow us in the next interview with Nino Graziano Luca, president of the National Company of Historical Dance.

