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10 QUESTIONS Dario Ferro

Official Canon photographer Dario Ferro is nothing if not a man of action. His work centres on extreme sport, and his is a high-risk life requiring intense concentration. Nick Smith meets up with him to find out more...

If there is speed, danger and action happening then Dario Ferro is sure to be around. Now one of the most respected and established extreme sports photo reporters, Dario's interest in images and films began in his early teens.

An expert skier and canyoning instructor, Dario has travelled the world capturing memorable images that have been published in international magazines for three decades. He also covers mountaineering, parachuting, athletics and Formula 1 racing.

Dario is the first to admit that he has a typical Latin temperament. For him photography is all about passion: his desire to take special pictures comes from a deep-seated emotional connection to the outside world. He is deeply saddened by the decline in the use of film, but accepts that today 'there is no choice' but to work in the digital domain. Currently living in London, Dario has a long-term project documenting Mike Horn's Pangaea project, a four-year transcontinental expedition that uses no motorised transport.

DARIO - IN BRIEF

Age 55
Time as pro 22 years
Where based Valle d'Aosta, Italy and UK
Specialities 'As long as I'm outside I'm happy'
Studio or home 'My studio is the world'
Digital or film Digital
www.darioferrophotographer.com

BELOW Ice climbing on Monte Bianco (Mont Blanc), European Alps





ABOVE Urban climbing, Italy **ABOVE RIGHT** Canyoning around Mont Blanc **BELOW** Ice climbing on Monte Bianco (Mont Blanc)

1 When did you realise you were going to become a photographer?

It all started when I was 17 or 18. I just wanted to finish school and go outside. I didn't go to photography. It came to me. It called me and I came.

2 What was your first camera?

A film SLR by Canon. I think it was the A-1. Heavy, no autofocus, but it was the best I ever had. I've always used Canon. I started with a Canon and I'll finish with Canon.

3 What formal training do you have?

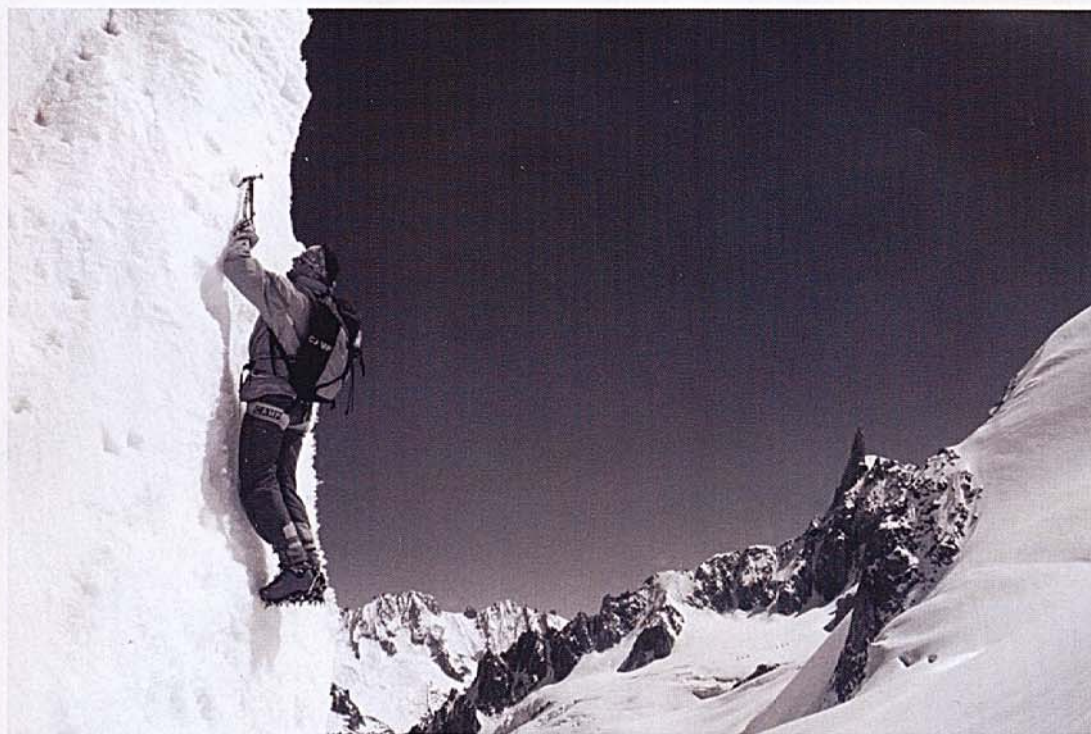
I think in photography there are two styles. One is in the studio and the other is outside. For inside, it is important to be trained, but for outside you just have to go outside and do it.

4 How important is it to specialise?

My real focus is extreme sport. But it is impossible to specialise in extreme sport when you live in London. But I would like to shoot the Olympics in London next year.

5 What is the best assignment you've been on?

It was when I photographed the world record highest parachute jump without oxygen. It was a jump from 12,800m and I was photographing my friend Patrick de Gayardon.



6 What's the worst thing about being a professional photographer?

Nothing. It's incredible that people pay for me to live my dream. But there are some negative sides; 52 of my friends have died in extreme sport. This is the price we pay.

7 Film or digital? Why?

I love film. I want to touch my pictures. In the digital world you don't know where they are. But today there's no choice and digital has completely changed the way I work as a photographer.

8 What's the most important thing you've learned from another photographer?

I'm not really influenced by other photographers. My girlfriend has so many books on photography, but I've not read one. I am an animal for the photography.

9 What does photography mean to you?

There must be adrenaline, speed, danger or action. Photography for me is to live in the moment. Mountains are my dream and my blood. For me, when I take the

picture it is in my heart forever.

10 What makes a great outdoor photograph?

The picture is not in the camera. It's not even in the brain, but in the heart. A good picture makes your blood pump faster. ■

DARIO'S GEAR

Cameras: Canon 1DS MkIII (x2)
Lenses: From 15mm fish-eye up to 300mm telephoto
Other: 'I refuse to use a tripod. I've not bought one in my life.'