

SPIN



Hey Julian

Julian Lennon's new photo exhibit is an immersive, intimate portrait by an uncor

Written By [Liza Lentini](#) | May 15 2021, 10:00 AM ET



Since [Julian Lennon](#) astounded us with his 1984 solo debut *Valotte*, he's repeatedly proven himself a beautiful and poetic storyteller. Now, at 58, with six studio albums and an essential lifetime honing his craft as a photographer, Aston Martin Residences in Miami recently unveiled The Art Gallery with an exclusive virtual exhibition, *Vision: 27* images of Julian's rarest photos, including unseen work, developed at the height of the pandemic, curated by the artist himself. He is the first featured artist in this virtual gallery program.

From his exclusive shoot with [U2](#), to portraits of the Princess of Monaco, Charlene Wittstock, to his work in fashion and travel, this state-of-the-art, immersive 3D experience is now showing through July 7 on the [Aston Martin Residences website](#).

"I aim to grant the viewer intimate access to the lives and locations of my subjects, as well as insight into my own personal journey," Julian says. "In a city as vibrant and diverse as Miami, I invite the residents to draw a relationship to their own lives in these images, and to unite us through empathy in the lives of others."

Son of Beatle John Lennon and his first wife Cynthia, and the inspiration for such beloved classics as "Hey Jude" and "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds", Julian's work consistently reflects warmth and purest intention, whether through his music, photography, thoughtful filmmaking and philanthropy, or his acclaimed children's book series about honoring the earth.

As his full name reflects—Julian Charles John Lennon—he is his father's son, but an artist in his own right. For those who don't know Julian Lennon, *Vision* is an excellent place to start.

We spoke with Julian about how he started taking photos, that U2 shoot, and why there's no such thing as perfection.



Respire, 2011 CREDIT: Julian Lennon

How did you start taking pictures? Do you remember your first camera?

Likely, the same way most people do...by being given a camera as a present, in one's youth.

I don't necessarily remember my first, though the most important one was a Polaroid SX-70 Land Camera, which I still have to this day.

What's the difference between making music and photography?

Well, both are about capturing a moment, an essence, a time and a place in many ways... I prefer to see the similarities than the difference... It's all about embracing and sharing various art forms.

Music nowadays is so corporatized — can you still get spontaneous or revealing photographs of rock stars?

There's always something that hasn't been seen...



Wake Up and Dream, 2010 CREDIT: Julian Lennon

How did your U2 shoot come about?

I was staying at a house, and the U2 boys were looking for a place to write and possibly record, and I was leaving for NYC for my first ever photography exhibition, at the Morrison Hotel Gallery, formerly CBGB's.

So, I suggested they use the house, as it had some great sounding rooms. They did! But after we agreed, I found out my exhibition was delayed... So, I moved in with a friend next door, until I could leave for the exhibition. In the meantime, I'd popped over to see "The Boys" and Edge (knowing I was an up and coming photographer) said, I know you'd like to take a few pics, let me talk to the others and I'll let you know.

The next day, Edge said, "It's all good..." I was overjoyed, but very nervous, as I didn't want to get in their way, and didn't know them so well at that point. So, I went over, camera in hand, but they also had "in-house" photographers there, shooting video too, so it was a fairly busy landscape. Trying to not distract, I only popped in on a few occasions, as I didn't want to disturb them. But... the first time I went over and snapped away, I came back and looked at the images on my laptop, and thought they looked terrible, not the band, the pictures. Like quick holiday snaps.

But I was fortunate enough to be chatting to Bono one early evening, and it was very chilled and relaxed, and I was literally just laying on the floor, looking up at Bono, who was sitting on a chair, staring out of the window, but low and behold, there was a picture of Dad, up high on the wall behind him... And so, just took a snap, then and there, and thought, "That's it!" What transformed me right then and there, was that I was shooting most earlier pictures "head on"... and what inspired me about this particular shot was the angle. Without that particular angle that I was at, laying on the floor, looking up at a hero of mine, who was sitting underneath a picture of one of his heroes... Well, it just wouldn't have happened, and that made me realize, that we should all look at things from time to time from a different perspective, as that may just give us a better understanding of the situation around us, or the situation we're in.

It was because of that particular photo that my understanding of photography and communication through imagery changed forever, and I've never looked back since. It continues to remain one of my favorite images, alongside "Wake up and Dream" which is of Edge walking by a whiteboard, with that exact title, but he's walking away, so you cannot see his face, but you know it's him.

And because of that time with them, and with their agreement that I was able to use these images at my first ever exhibition, between some Rock 'n' Roll images and the fine art photography of clouds and landscapes that I had originally intended for the exhibition.

"Imperfections" are what can make a photo so special—would you agree?

I absolutely agree. But also, there's no such thing as perfection, at least, not in my book. Even "perfection" in one person's eye, can be truly ugly in another's...

How does great photography distinguish someone when everyone, because of phone cameras, is a "photographer"?

I believe most true artists have a unique trait/quality about them, something that



Bar-Bao Buggy, 2018 CREDIT: Julian Lennon

What intrigues you most about Cuba?

I was fascinated as it was one of the many countries I hadn't visited. And I had a friend who moved there, who was telling me all about how wonderful and magical it was. So when I had a spare week, I just booked a flight, got on a plane, camera in hand, and off I went. Generally, that's how most of my trips happen, unless they're charity orientated.

What is your favorite photograph by someone else?

"California, 1955" by Elliot Erwitt, and by looking at my Cuba collection, you'll see why.

Who's the sexiest person you ever photographed?

On a professional level, I'm not sure I have yet.



Charlene Wittstock CREDIT: Julian Lennon

What makes a photograph intimate?

I believe it's a sense that you can relate to it...possibly in a number of ways...a time, a place, a string of one's memory...

Which rock star/group do you wish you'd shot and didn't (or hope to)?

Aye, aye, aye...that question gives me a brain ache! There are too many to mention, or consider one over the other...

I have some portraits coming up later this year that may answer this question.