



Bernard Caelen, also known under his pseudonym Irving S. T. Garp, is a fifty-year-old prosecutor from Belgium. His winning photo is called "The Seed of Brick" and was selected as the best photo in the 'My Green City' category in [Metro Photo Challenge](#), the world's largest photography competition.

What are you trying to achieve with your photography?

I am a creative person. My dad was a writer, and I have read proficiently. He gave me the same passion for writing and reading. I have a lot of imagination and I was looking for a way to express it. Photography is a quick way since once the photo is taken, you can post it directly on any social media and get an audience right away. My first goal is to challenge the audience. My work is more than just pictures: it tells a story. That's where my artist name comes from, Irving S. T. Garp, in reference to the writer John Irving and his book *The World according to Garp*. In John Irving's books, the worst disasters can happen in the middle of a sentence where you weren't expecting them, in a mundane scene of everyday life.

Why did you choose the "My green city" category?

I took this picture prior to this contest but when I saw the theme I realized the setting fitted perfectly to it.

What was the process behind this picture?

It's always the same process: I get the idea and then look for the appropriate setting, the accessories and finally the models. Nothing is left to chance, everything is organized.

What is the story behind this picture "The Seed of Brick"?

The story is rather simple and poetic. We have this scenery, this dark vision of the city. And this little girl (Her real name is Elisa), in this world of bricks who found this flower and water it in the hope it will grow and take over the city.

I don't know what repercussions my work has. For me, they have a certain meaning, but beyond that, each person, with their own story, interprets it in a certain way.

Was this the first time you entered this competition?

It was the first time but I will most likely enter again next year.

Did you know that the theme "My green city" was chosen by Metro International through a partnership with the United Nations team on climate change? Is it an important theme for you?

I care a great deal about climate change and all the environmental problems linked to it. I try to be a good citizen and respect the environment. As a father, I want to leave to my daughter a good world to live in.

What are you hoping this success will bring?

While I am fifty, I am still a "young photograph" autodidact. "The Seed of Brick's success brings a new credibility to my work. Even though I already made a name for myself in the world of photography I hope this success will allow me to go beyond the Belgian borders, a country I am proud to represent.

A Taiwanese student wrote a dissertation on my pictures he found on my [website](#) . Published on his own site, his work travelled. From one day to the next, Chinese surfers were sending me friend request on Facebook. Knowing that pictures taken in Belgium can be appreciated all the way across the globe is very exciting.

