

The magnificence of Dubai captured in 8 seconds

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For a number of years, Montreal photographer Nicolas Ruel has been working on “8 seconds,” an ambitious project of photographic works offering a new look at the world’s great cities. From Paris to New York, from London to Tokyo, he is conducting a sharp and structural exploration of figures of architecture, light, and industry. A stop in Dubai was inevitable.

When he visited Dubai for the first time, in 2006, Ruel sensed the effervescence of a city in transformation and motion. He decided to return in 2012 to capture the architectural settings of this quintessential figure of urban modernity. Inspired by the city’s palpable pace and energy, he explored its light, textures, and materials.

The Dubai International Financial Centre, the marina, the old city, the many tall buildings, and the illustrious Burj Khalifa were subjects that particularly caught Ruel’s eye. “The Burj Khalifa is fascinating not only because it is the tallest skyscraper in the world,” Ruel explains, “but because its layered architecture creates an illusion of gradual evaporation and it is integrated perfectly into the urban landscape.”

Transfiguring the city’s qualities in his images, Ruel offers a luminous, graphic, fast-paced Dubai in which metal, glass, and concrete are stunningly superimposed on the heat of the desert.

