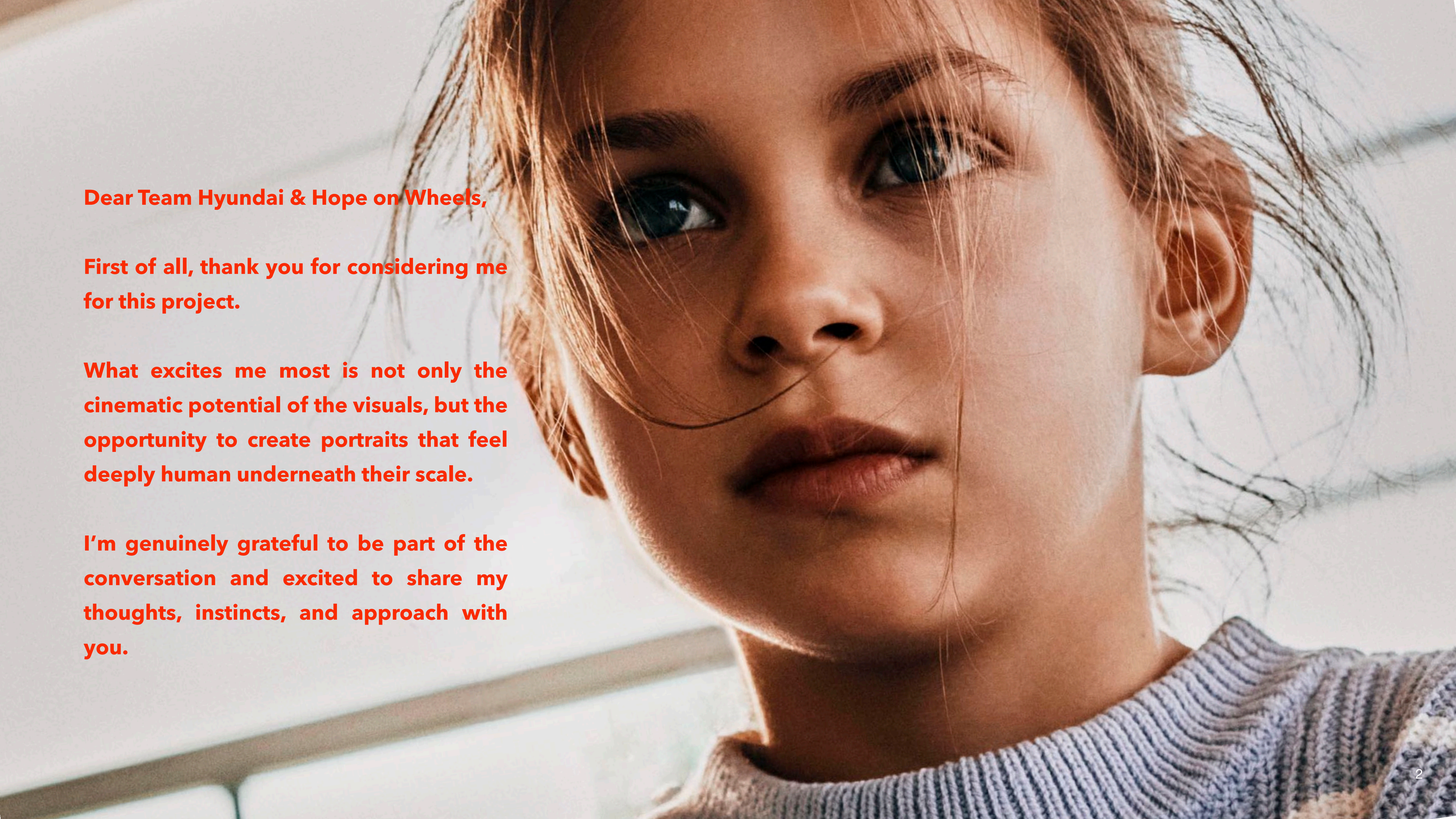

ZAC LAND
INNOCEAN
WOLFGANG ZAC for
HYUNDAI
HOPE ON WHEELS
represented by ATRBUTE
HONCHO!



Dear Team Hyundai & Hope on Wheels,

First of all, thank you for considering me for this project.

What excites me most is not only the cinematic potential of the visuals, but the opportunity to create portraits that feel deeply human underneath their scale.

I’m genuinely grateful to be part of the conversation and excited to share my thoughts, instincts, and approach with you.

THE KIDS COME FIRST

What stayed with me after the call was not the idea of warriors, nor the visual language of cinema, nor even the ambition of creating portraits large enough to carry emotional weight across billboards and screens. It was something far quieter than that. The thought of children entering a studio carrying experiences that have already altered the texture of their everyday lives, children who have spent time in hospitals, inside uncertainty, inside waiting rooms and long corridors and conversations spoken in softened voices, and the realization that the camera, if used carelessly, could so easily turn them into symbols instead of allowing them to remain human beings first.

And perhaps that is where this project truly begins for me. Not in spectacle, not in transformation, but in attention.

Before anything is photographed, before fabrics are chosen or sets constructed or references discussed, someone walks into the room. A child with a particular way of moving through space, a particular silence, a particular humor, a nervousness hidden behind exaggerated confidence, or confidence hidden behind complete stillness. I have always believed that photography begins long before the shutter is pressed. It begins in the slow process through which people stop protecting themselves from the camera and begin, almost accidentally, to exist naturally inside its presence.

Children notice immediately when adults arrive with an agenda. They notice when they are expected to perform inspiration instead of simply being allowed to exist. They also notice something else: when curiosity is genuine. When somebody is actually looking at them instead of merely looking for an image.

That difference changes everything.


TORONTO
GIBRALTAR
ONTARIO
ONTARIO
Les Ateliers
DESSIN DE MODE
TARMAK

PEOPLE ARE MY SUPERPOWER

Over the years I have come to understand that the photographs people respond to most deeply are rarely the result of technical perfection alone. They emerge from a different place entirely, from trust, from atmosphere, from the strange invisible energy that develops once someone feels safe enough to lower their guard for a fraction of a second.

That has always been the part of photography I loved most.

Not directing people into performances, but remaining open long enough for something real to appear unexpectedly between instructions, conversations, pauses, gestures, between the moment somebody laughs too loudly out of nervousness and the moment they forget entirely that they are being observed.

Especially with children, these moments cannot be forced. They have to be earned patiently. Which is why I do not think of this project as creating portraits of young warriors in the traditional sense. The strength we are searching for already exists inside these children long before any costume, paint, lighting setup, or cinematic reference enters the room. Sometimes it appears openly, sometimes it hides itself inside humor or stubbornness or exhaustion or extraordinary calm. But it is already there.

My responsibility is simply to recognize it when it surfaces and to create an environment gentle enough for it to remain visible.






THE MARK, MADE REAL



I keep returning to the handprint.

Not as a graphic device or branding element, but as something physical, something that belongs to the body and therefore changes the emotional reality of the photograph the moment it touches the skin.

We live in a time where almost anything can be added later, corrected later, perfected later. Textures are cleaned, faces softened, realities adjusted until images no longer seem to belong to human beings at all, but to some cleaner and more artificial version of existence. Perhaps because of that, physical presence has started to matter even more.

I want the handprint to exist for real in front of the camera. I want the children to feel it on their skin. I want the slight irregularities of the paint, the edges, the pressure of the hand itself, the small imperfections that appear once something leaves the digital world and enters reality.

Because once something becomes physical, people begin responding to it differently. The body understands it before the mind does. Posture changes slightly. Stillness changes slightly. The image stops feeling constructed and begins feeling lived.

And I believe audiences feel that difference immediately, even if they cannot fully explain why.





NOT A COSTUME



The visual worlds surrounding these portraits should never feel like escapism in the obvious sense. I am not interested in dressing children as fictional heroes or creating the emotional distance of fantasy. The references to warriors, mythology, and cinematic archetypes are important, but not because we intend to recreate them literally. They function more like emotional echoes, traces of resilience and dignity and readiness that quietly shape the atmosphere around the portraits without overpowering the children themselves.

Everything must remain grounded in humanity.

I also think that the wardrobe should avoid leaning too heavily into contemporary streetwear language. If pushed too far, the work could quickly begin feeling post-apocalyptic, overly stylized, or costume-driven in the wrong sense. The warrior should always remain stronger than the styling itself.

For me, the balance should feel closer to 90% warrior world and perhaps 10% personal reality. Small emotional details. Talismans rather than fashion statements. A favorite bracelet. Worn sneakers. A necklace. A stuffed animal attached to armor. Tiny personal fragments that still belong unmistakably to the child inside the warrior.

The wardrobe should feel worn rather than displayed. The textures should carry weight. The environments should feel inhabited instead of designed merely to impress. I want the children to feel strong inside these worlds, not hidden by them.

There is an enormous difference between empowerment and disguise.

Children know the difference instinctively.


BUILT WITH THEM, NOT AROUND THEM



What interests me most are often the details nobody could fully plan in advance. A particular object a child insists on carrying. A reference to a favorite hero. A color that reminds them of safety. A posture they return to naturally without realizing it. The smallest personal details often become the emotional center of an image because they belong entirely to the person being photographed and not to the production surrounding them.

I would love to leave space for those things.

And I also love the idea of allowing the children themselves to shape parts of these worlds with us, choosing the references, archetypes, or emotional details they feel instinctively drawn toward. Because the strongest images rarely emerge when identity is imposed from the outside. They emerge when people begin recognizing themselves somewhere inside the image.

Not to illustrate fantasy in a literal sense, but to allow fragments of each child's inner world to quietly enter the photograph and remain there. Because ultimately people do not emotionally connect to perfection. They connect to recognition. To moments that feel observed instead of manufactured.

And perhaps that is why the quietest details often remain with us the longest.


PORTRAITS WITH PRESENCE



Sometimes stillness can carry more power than movement ever could.

Sometimes a child looking directly into the lens with complete calm says more about courage than the most elaborate action sequence imaginable.

I want these portraits to feel suspended somewhere between realism and memory, between cinema and observation, between strength and vulnerability, without ever forcing the viewer toward a single emotion too aggressively. The images should leave room for people to enter them slowly, to discover details gradually, to remain with them beyond the first glance.

Because those are the kinds of photographs that stay alive in people's minds.

I imagine these portraits carrying a cinematic scale while still protecting a profound sense of intimacy. Images large enough to live on walls, screens, billboards, yet quiet enough to hold a human gaze without collapsing into spectacle.




UNDER ATTACK



THE SILENT COMPANION

The more I thought about the relationship between the children and the vehicle, the less interested I became in treating the car as a traditional product element within the image. It never felt separate to me. Not an object placed into the frame afterward, but another presence inside the portrait itself.

In many ways, I see the vehicle almost like a spirit animal moving alongside the child. A silent companion carrying traces of the same emotional journey, the same resilience, the same atmosphere of survival and transformation. They do not simply share the frame. They belong to the same emotional world.



That is also why I don’t imagine the vehicles appearing polished or untouched. They should carry texture, weight, dirt, imperfections, signs of movement and experience. The tires should not feel showroom-clean. The surfaces should not feel overly perfected. Both the child and the vehicle should feel as though they have emerged from the same world, passed through the same battle, arrived together.

What interests me emotionally is the feeling of connection between them. Not ownership. Not product staging. Presence. Almost like two figures standing side by side after having gone through something difficult together.

And perhaps that is why I keep thinking of these images less as automotive advertising and more as portraits, where the vehicle itself becomes part of the psychology of the image rather than merely its background.



NOTHING BEATS DAYLIGHT

Because all environments in this campaign exist outdoors – forests, arenas, deserts, open landscapes – my instinct is to approach the lighting with as much naturalism as possible.

Whenever possible, I would prefer working inside a daylight studio environment where natural light can be shaped, controlled, softened, intensified, or redirected throughout the day while still preserving the emotional complexity that only real daylight can create. Nothing beats daylight. It carries imperfections, transitions, atmosphere, and emotional nuance in a way that is almost impossible to fully replicate artificially.

I also like the idea that each portrait can exist within its own emotional light situation rather than forcing the entire campaign into one identical lighting setup. Some portraits may feel harsher, more contrast-driven, more exposed. Others quieter, softer, more suspended. That variation allows the campaign to feel larger, more cinematic, and emotionally more expansive as a body of work.

At the same time, I fully understand the technical demands created through the CGI integration of both the vehicle and the environments. Perspective, directionality of light, contrast ratios, reflections, shadows, lens behavior, and spatial consistency all need to be considered carefully during production in order for the final compositions to feel believable and emotionally seamless. I also look forward to collaborating closely with the VFX supervisor on set to ensure that the photographic and digital layers integrate naturally from the very beginning of the process.

A second approach would be building the lighting entirely through artificial sources while simulating daylight conditions inside a controlled studio environment. That method naturally offers a higher level of technical consistency and control, although it also requires a larger lighting setup, more infrastructure, and a more constructed workflow overall.

Both approaches are absolutely possible. Personally, I will always lean toward the emotional unpredictability and realism of natural light whenever the production allows it.

BUILT FOR BILLBOARDS

For this project, I would primarily work with the Fujifilm GFX100 medium format system.

The camera delivers over 102 megapixels of resolution, allowing for an extremely high level of detail, texture, tonal depth, and flexibility throughout both production and post-production workflows.

This becomes especially important considering the scale and technical complexity of the campaign itself, from large-format billboard applications and cinematic cropping flexibility to texture preservation, CGI integration, lighting consistency, and high-resolution compositing workflows.

The medium format sensor also creates a very specific visual quality that feels both cinematic and intimate at the same time, especially in portraiture.

Beyond image size alone, the system allows enormous flexibility when integrating additional CGI elements later in post-production while still preserving realism, texture fidelity, and overall image integrity.

At the same time, it is important to me that the technical side never overpowers the emotional side of the image. The camera should create space for honesty and detail – not distance.



KEEPING IT HUMAN

Post-production, for me, is not a process of correction but of protection. Its purpose is not to erase humanity from the image, but to preserve the emotional truth that existed in front of the camera when the photograph was taken.

Skin should remain skin. Texture should remain texture. Imperfections should remain where life placed them.

Especially now, when so much visual culture is moving toward artificial smoothness and digitally generated perfection, honesty begins to feel almost radical again.

Audiences, particularly younger audiences, have become extraordinarily sensitive to images that feel emotionally empty beneath their polish. Perhaps because so much of life now happens through screens, people have started searching again for traces of something tangible, imperfect, physically present.

I think they are searching for proof that something actually happened. And that, more than anything else, is what I hope these portraits will carry. Not the feeling of an idea imposed onto reality, but the feeling of something real that briefly revealed itself in front of the camera and was allowed to remain exactly human.



THE WARRIOR WITHIN

One of the most meaningful aspects of this social extension, for me, is the idea that my connection with the children can begin long before the actual portrait is photographed. Not through formal interviews or creative concepts developed separately afterward, but through a shared creative process that already begins inside the hospitals themselves.

Rather than approaching this hospital moment as an interview where I simply listen while the wardrobe or costume team sketches, I would love to sit down with the children personally and make the drawing part of our direct exchange. Talking, sketching, exchanging ideas, passing drawings back and forth, allowing the children themselves to grab markers, add details, change shapes, invent textures, symbols, colors, or completely unexpected directions.

What interests me emotionally is not the idea of designing a perfect warrior character for them, but discovering one together with them. The sketches themselves almost become the first portraits. Not polished concept art, but traces of imagination, trust, humor, personality, and instinct slowly appearing together by hand on paper.

And strangely enough, this is also where some of my early years at university quietly find their way back into the process. Alongside photography and graphic design, I also studied art at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna - and I love the fact that those years spent sketching and drawing now become part of building connection inside hospital rooms.

I also believe audiences would deeply feel the honesty of that process. Not simply watching a transformation afterward, but witnessing the emotional moment where imagination, trust, and identity slowly begin taking shape together long before they ever exist in front of the camera.


THANK YOU!



You've got the brand. I bring the lens - and the energy, the vibe, and the humor to keep it human.

Let this be the start of something iconic.

I hope you enjoyed getting to know me and my approach - and that you'll take this ride with me.

– Wolfie ZAC

LET'S MAKE IT LEGENDARY.