



2022 Women in Construction: Jill Lotenberg,
JillPhotography.com

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Name: Jill Lotenberg

Title: Photographer | NYC & NYS Certified

Company Name: JillPhotography.com

Starting out in the construction business, who or what empowered you?

My grandfather, Irving, my dad, Mike, and his foreman, Jimmy. My pop signed me up for IBEW's Local 3 Electrician College Summer Apprentice Program while I was studying fashion at F.I.T. I was mortified sitting in OSHA class with all the boys I grew up with in Electchester, as the only girl, (this was in the 80's). My grandfather beamed ear-to-ear peeking through the Union's classroom window and even coming into the class, to make sure I was okay. Cut to the first day on the hi-rise Equitable Center job, in Manhattan. I begged my dad's foreman to let me talk to my dad, who wanted me to be my own person and not "someone's daughter." Jimmy said, "Jillie, tough it out, give it one day to experience the hard work your grandfather and father do every day to put food on your table. If you don't like it, tonight, look him in the eyes and tell him you want to quit." From that moment forward, I realized the tangible work all these construction workers did to create this beautiful city, creating good lives for themselves, and their families. I spent two summers wiring buildings, loving the comradery and my family, even more.

What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months?

Walking the dog while living in sad Manhattan silence during the shutdown, I heard a rare car blasting "Kashmir" by Led Zeppelin, echoing through the canyons. It was wonderful! That moment I decided to use any future music I heard on the streets as inspiration for creating my personal photography projects, which I hadn't had time to do in many years. Buffalo Soldiers, then Drake to Fleetwood Mac took the pulse of the city, and fed my memory cards. Must-read books also fed my pandemic to-do list proving inspiration for my 2021 Alice & Wonderland photo series in NJ, exactly where I began my creative journey in high school. Full Circle, an exciting achievement for me, and my portfolio, to be shared soon... another to-do!

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