

Shadow & Light Magazine

The Art of Photography

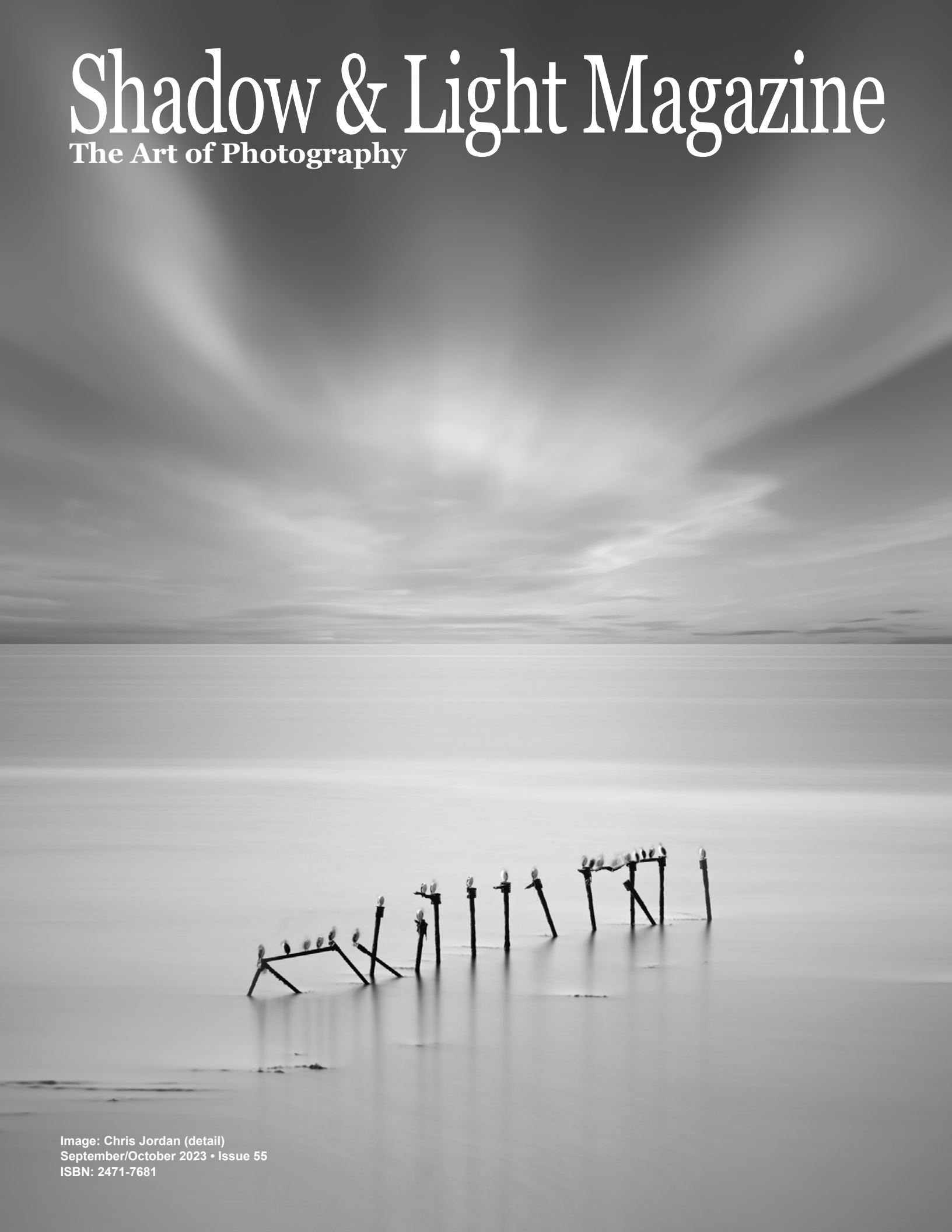


Image: Chris Jordan (detail)
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Shadow & Light Magazine

The Art of Photography

Notes...

A long time ago in a different (mental) galaxy I was in Seattle and met photographer Chris Jordan, for the first time. He was just beginning his photography career and was focused on human consumer waste, in its many iterations.

Over the years we have stayed in touch with emails. Then something changed. I didn't hear anything for a while, until I saw him on my Facebook feed, posting from Chile! Who knew?

Our **Featured Showcase Portfolio photographer, Chris Jordan**, decided to change his life into living a more purposeful existence, which meant changing everything. His enigmatic, "Beauty Emerging," series signals a paradigm shift in his life whereby he lives what he writes about and photographs.

In future issues of **Shadow & Light Magazine**, we will periodically be featuring more photographers who have changed their personal and professional lives to better mirror what their heart and soul has requested. If you have any suggestions for this new approach, let us know.

Showcase Portfolios include Jim Larimer, Tom Chambers, Claudia Ammirata, Fred Zafran, and Robin Bell. I found Larimer in my Facebook feed and was taken immediately by his low-key approach to the still life image. Long-time subscribers will remember Tom Chambers from his previous appearances in the magazine. With his new series, "Declaration," he takes us to an enchanting landscape, which is set to remind us of the Italian Renaissance.

Claudia Ammarita joins us by way of a recommendation from a subscriber and her evocative images display a peaceful feeling yet are "focusing on capturing the essence of instances that otherwise would never be the same."

In his interview with Fred Zafran, our regular columnist, E.E. McCollum, chats with him about the meaning behind the title of the series, "Small Town Empty," wherein the photographer is focusing on capturing the essence of instances that otherwise would never be the same."

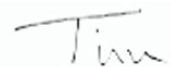
I found Robin Bell in my last Los Angeles Center for Photography (LACP) Portfolio Review session. Her work takes us into junkyards, where we find items that have a nascent quality that belies their physical status.

Another person whose portfolio I reviewed at LACP was Anne Berry, who had recently released her book, "Behind Glass," which features a very compelling collection of photographs made in monkey houses and small zoos throughout Europe, thoughtfully constructed from exquisite archival materials.

Our intrepid writers, E.E. McCollum and Steve Immel are back where they belong. McCollum touches on "Creative Pathways," and Immel looks at what it means to be experiencing "A Drop in the Bucket."

I know I have mentioned it previously but the photographers, as well as the writers who grace the pages of *Shadow & Light Magazine* would appreciate hearing from you. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes of each portfolio and article in each issue.

Just click on an appropriate link and send them a simple "Thanks for the effort!" It will be appreciated.



tim@cygnetpress.com

Shadow & Light Magazine

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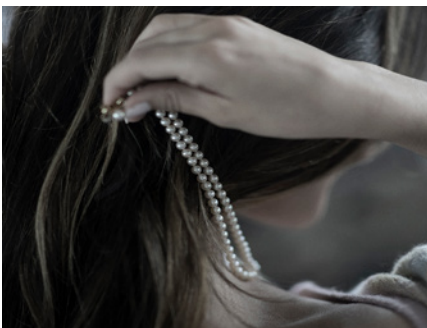
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Shadow & Light Magazine • The Art of Photography



Shadow & Light Magazine's primary objective is to introduce new voices in photography by featuring them in a nationally-distributed fine art photography magazine.

In publishing a wide range of fine art photography, Shadow & Light Magazine will seek to publish those photographic artists who strive to formulate creative ideas and translate them into work that captures and ignites human imagination. Experience, education, and age are not determinates in recognizing quality art.

Shadow & Light Magazine will also feature established artists who reflect the magazine's goal of eliciting an emotional response from the viewer and who provide inspirational examples of imaginative and innovative work.

Not only does Shadow & Light Magazine seek to engage the reader visually but intellectually as well with informative articles, critical insight, and compelling interviews.

Shadow & Light Magazine is a bi-monthly, subscription-based PDF/print publication designed for photographers across all levels of photography offering valuable information about a range of photographic subjects including portfolios, and individual images, along with interviews and in-depth essays.

It is also designed for the photographer who desires to present their work to a large audience, including curators, collectors, gallerists, and photography peers and professionals.

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Showcase Featured Portfolio

Chris Jordan: *To the End of the World*



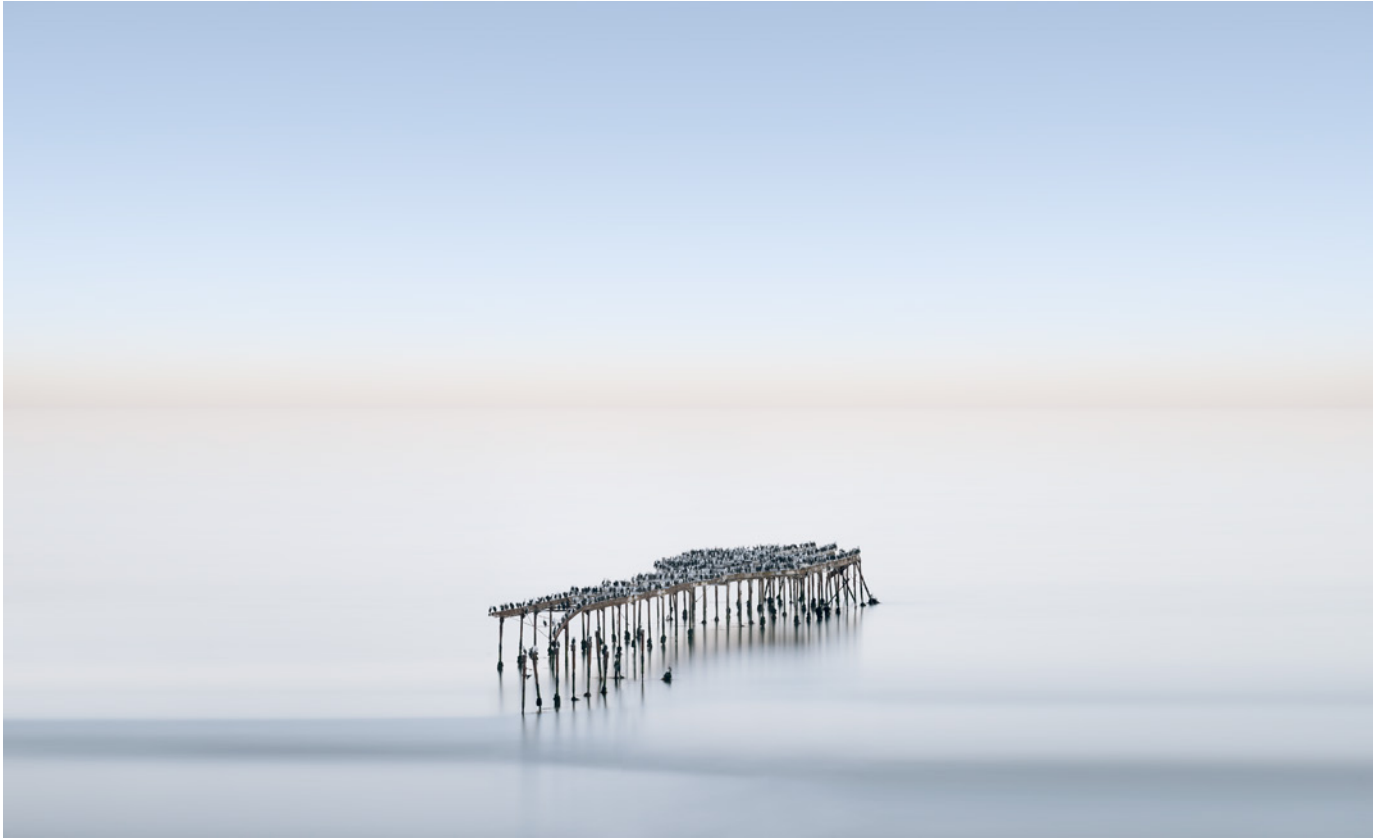
To the End of the World #121 (Unnamed creek entering Lago Llanquihue).

It was about twenty-years ago when I met Chris Jordan. I was with another magazine at the time. I was in Seattle visiting my sons and decided that this would be a good time to arrange an interview with him as he lived there, as well. I emailed Chris and we arranged a meeting at his house. We had a very engaging interview that lasted a few hours.

Since that time, I continued to stay in touch, even if it was sporadic. I followed his trajectory in documenting human waste, in some of its more extreme permutations. We had even joked about getting together again, but never did, in person, that is.

*Then, I began to see posts from him on my Facebook feed. He was in Chile! I was intrigued, of course. I contacted him and after a few emails, here we are. As with most of his projects, his current passion brings out his focus on getting the story right. **Shadow & Light Magazine** is fortunate to be able to present his portfolio and story to you.*

Tim



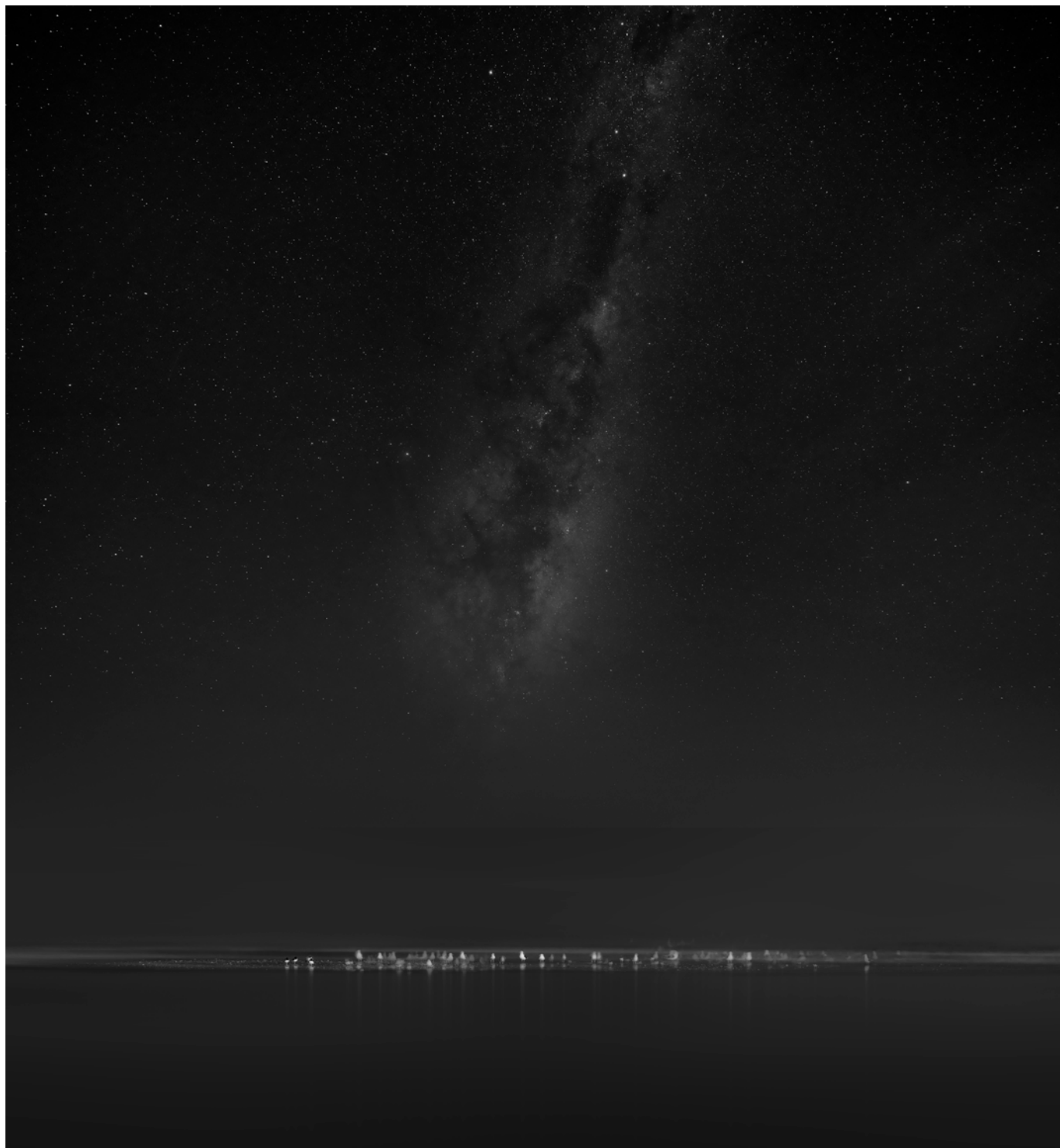
To the End of the World #260 (cormorants on an abandoned pier at dawn), Strait of Magellan, Chile, 2022.

Greetings and cheers my old friend. You have always occupied a special place in my photographic life, as you were the first person ever to publish a portfolio of my images. This was an early affirmation and energetic boost for which I have always been grateful. It came at a formative time when I was insecure about my work's value or relevance. Now, two decades later, in a way I find myself starting over, and here you appear again. The timing is inspiring and mysterious.

You might know that in the intervening twenty years, my projects have taken a long turn into the underbelly of our culture of mass consumption. The intent was to follow my belief in photography as a potent medium for facing the dark realities of our world. I still believe as strongly as ever in honestly confronting humanity's problems, otherwise we risk slipping into a state of collective denial that can breed atrocities.

And I had another thread going all this time, which until now has always taken a back seat, and that is my love of photographing the living world. Privately this has been the heart of my relationship with photography. My personal paradise is a day spent with my camera in a forest or a meadow, or walking along a shoreline, looking for whatever detail captures my imagination in the moment. But I have always been reluctant to share this work, fearful that it would be criticized as irrelevant, derivative, traditional, or passé. I have shown the images to only my closest friends, and sometimes even they have responded with alarm that I am losing my "edge."

continued on page 5>>>



To the End of the World #302 (seabirds with our galaxy rising over the Strait of Magellan), Chile, 2023.

Perhaps it is something about nearing the age of sixty, or the months I spent in solitude during the pandemic. But whatever the cause, something foundational has shifted. Lately I feel more liberated to feel and celebrate the natural world through the medium that I so adore. Yes, there is bad news, which always seems to be accelerating, and it is essential that we attend to it. My work about mass consumption is far from done, and the issues I was trying to face have only gotten worse in the meantime.

But the frame has changed. I see the bad news—all of it—as held in a vast container of beauty. It was always there, but I couldn't see it the way I do now. Perceiving beauty has become a practice for me, and I find that the more one looks into the exquisite miracles of the living world, from the microscopic all the way out to the cosmic, the more complex and awe inspiring it all becomes. Beauty occupies an infinitely expanding experiential space that is literally the size of the entire Universe. At its core is the most amazing phenomenon of all: our consciousness; the incredible fact that each of us is alive in the first place. Held in this light, the problems of human culture can be seen as solvable. The bad news is not the whole picture. Our collective psyche can evolve past exaggerated stories of apocalypse and doomsday. Beauty can serve as a brilliant star by which to navigate forward.

In this way I am on a mission to resurrect nature photography as a legitimate and relevant art form. I wish I could clear out the halls of the world's art museums and art fairs and fill them with contemporary photographs of our gorgeous living world. There is nothing outdated or cliché about nature; the clichés are only in our stale and overly intellectualized relationships with it and with each other. These relationships can be healed, re-animated and re-centered in ways that could transform our culture.

For me the key is reverence. The nature photography I am interested in is about the subject, not about the artist. I am less interested in interpretation or expression, and more interested in clean documentation. Photographing a forest there is nothing I need to "create." Every detail of the living world is a million times more complex and amazing than anything I could ever create, and so I see my job as simply to depict what is in front of me as clearly as possible. In my own work, the images that feel successful are the ones where I have gotten myself out of the way. Then the photo can function more like a window, allowing the viewer to have their own direct experience of the subject, without thoughts of "art" getting in the way.

Technically the medium has evolved to support this approach. The newest cameras, photographing techniques and printing technologies enable a kind of hyper-representation, that to me is so potent that it can be thought of as an entirely new medium. Edward Weston's mystical wish—to see the Thing Itself, but more than the Thing—has become possible in ways he could only have dreamed of. This creates a tremendous opportunity. Right now, is a crucial moment for us individually and collectively to reconnect with the miracle that we are all part of, with massive rippling effects out into the collective mind. I see nature photography as the doorway to take us there.

With that as some context, here are a few images from a broader project I am developing, that I call "To the End of the World." These images were made where I am currently living, in the extreme south of Chile in a small town that faces out over the Strait of Magellan. Southern Patagonia is one of the windiest places on Earth, and I make long exposures of the wild storms that whip across the Magellanic seas and skies. The photos reveal an eerie stillness that resides inside all of the movement, and in a strangely coincidental way this mirrors my internal experience. Lately I have found a space of silence in my own mind, an empty place where there is no time and nothing moves, that serves as a kind of container for everything. Trying to describe this, the mind sails off the map into territory where words fail, but I believe this stillness is something we all know intuitively. Perhaps you can feel some of it in the images.



To the End of the World #108 (sandbar, water and time), Lago Llanquihue, Chile, 2021.

I have come to believe that cultivating a rich relationship with beauty is not a trivial or secondary pursuit. It provides an essential wellspring of joy and internal nourishment that brings all experience into a clear perspective. Whatever is happening in human culture, underneath it like a subterranean river flows the magic of creation in all its grace and majesty. Beauty's currents carry an ancient message that guides the soul like a compass. It reminds us at the core of our being who we are and what we are made of. May its eternal song illuminate our hearts.

cj, Patagonia, Chile, September 2023



To the End of the World #314 (industrial artifact with passing storm), Strait of Magellan, Chile, 2023.



To the End of the World #144 (concrete ring, water and time), Lago Llanquihue, Chile, 2021.



To the End of the World #323 (cormorants on an abandoned pier), Strait of Magellan, Chile, 2023.



To the End of the World #298 (seabirds with moonrise in Aries behind clouds), Strait of Magellan, Chile, 2022.



To the End of the World #340 (water and time, evening), Strait of Magellan, Chile, 2023.



To the End of the World #283 (moonrise in Taurus), Strait of Magellan, 2022.



To the End of the World #312 (Javi Te Amo), Strait of Magellan, Chile, 2023.



To the End of the World #221 (moonrise in Scorpio), Strait of Magellan, Chile, 2022.



To the End of the World #260 (storm passing over the Strait of Magellan), Chile, 2022.

Showcase Portfolio

Jim Larimer: *Playing With Pears*



Three Bartletts.

Once I began focusing on the still life as subject matter for my photography I quickly discovered the beauty, convenience and versatility of pears as subject matter.

The soft organic form of the pear in contrast to the hard linear shape of the stem immediately suggested a multitude of possibilities. Then adding in the play of light and shadow and creative composition along with contrasting elements such as boxes, sacks, glass, etc I found the perfect components for image making!

Jim Larimer

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Bosc on the Rocks



Thinking Outside the Box.



Pair of Pears.



Three's Company.



Generations.



Three Pears.



Bottle and Pears.



Stems.



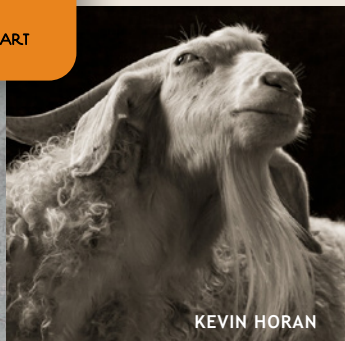
Sack of Pears.

EDITION
ONE
GALLERY

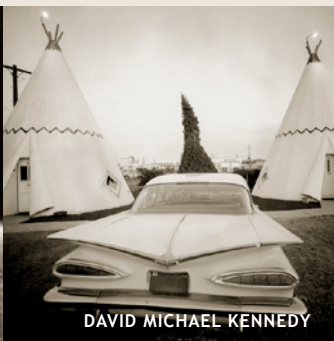
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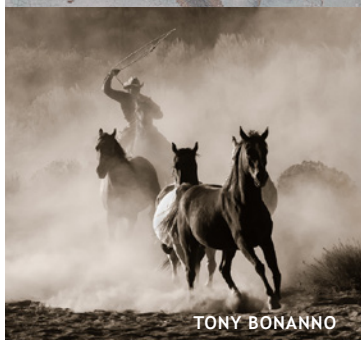
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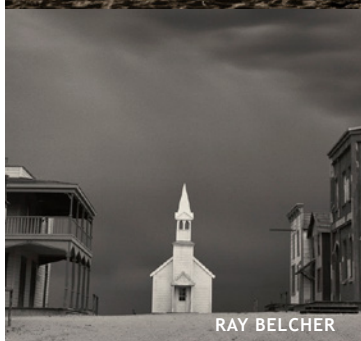
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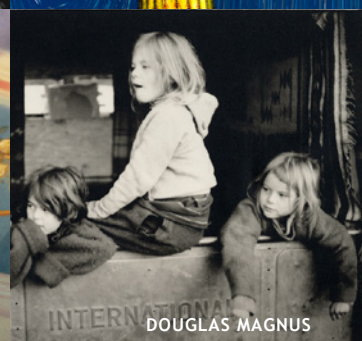
RAY BELCHER



JONATHAN & ANGELA SCOTT



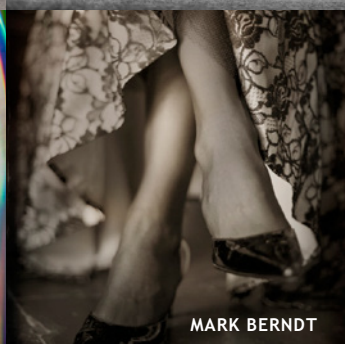
MARK SPENCER



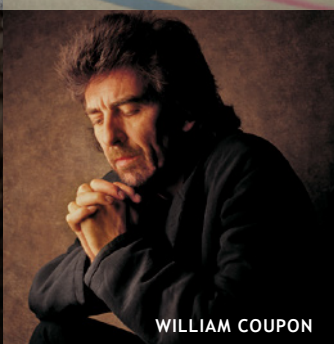
DOUGLAS MAGNUS



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by

E. E. McCollum



Showcase Portfolio

Tom Chambers: *Declaration*



Genesis.

The series “Declaration” was inspired by my return to international travel in 2022. Just as life had changed with the impact of Covid, my photography work shifted from elements of magic realism to surrealism. The Covid years often felt irrational, as though we were living in a different dimension. Through the resumption of travel, I was drawn to the idea of blending the influences of Italian Renaissance art with surrealism resulting in a timeless look and feel.

Narration is a key element of my work. All of the women represented in this series “Declaration” belong to a society of women living not in the past or in the future, but in a different planetary space and time. They tell stories and reveal ideas of importance, perhaps of an existential nature.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), was not employed in the creation of any of these images. All elements of each image were photographed or hand-drawn by me, Tom Chambers.

Tom Chambers

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Ascension.



Justice.



Presentation.



Rejuvenation.



Repose.



Revelation.



Visitation.

Showcase Portfolio

Claudia Ammirata: *Sense of Impermanence*



Somewhere.

The inspiration for this photographic series arose while I was on a train in Italy at the end of 2019. At high speed, while contemplating the landscape through my window, I realized that what I witnessed utterly remained left behind in the blink of an eye; a continuation and passage of an instant soon to be fleeting in fractions of a second. Everything around us was seemingly being forgotten.

Realizing that all exists in transience, flight, and disappearance, ignited within me a profound certainty that both the moment and our bodies are ephemeral and that our memories of the past will grow more and more distant.

Along with those moments that will be definitely lost in time, this sense of impermanence motivated me to record situations that manifest themselves poetically, focusing on capturing the essence of instances that otherwise would never be the same.

It was also in my interest to find elements that could somehow connect us to other people's past. Objects and garments that could link the lives of those who are no longer here with our own life—in the present. While those things might pass from one generation to another, sadly, the fragility of our experiences will inevitably continue to fade towards oblivion: there's no beauty without death.

Claudia Ammirata

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Il Suo Tempo.



La Serenissima.



El Regalo.



Cascading.



Treasure Keeper.



A Look Back.



All is Gone.



Tu recuerdo.



Just Imagine.

Showcase Portfolio

Robin Bell: *Still Lives Reimagined*



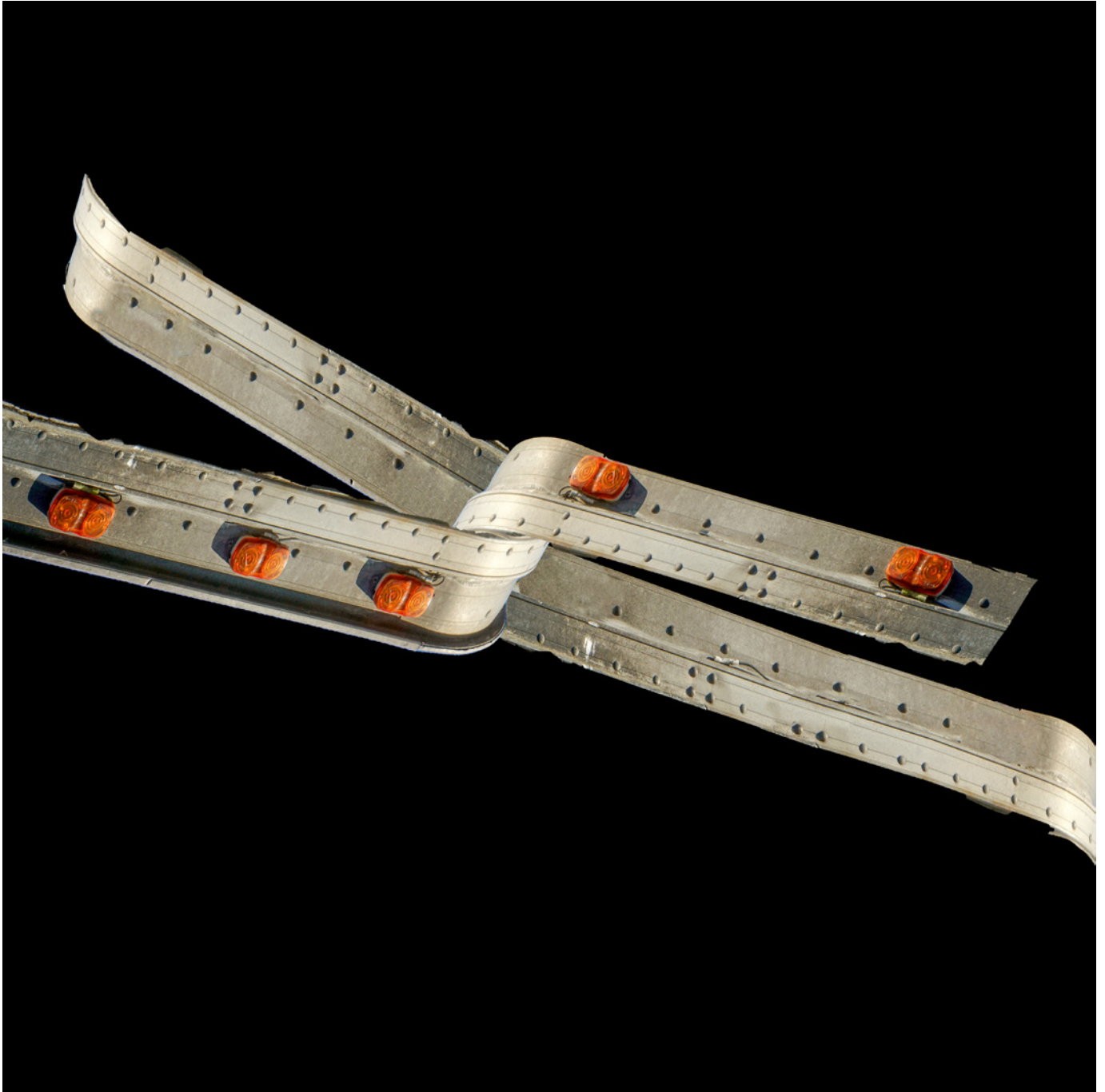
Industrial sites have always been a landscape of possibility to me. The colors and textures of excavators and debris are beautiful. Cast-offs can look like alien beings. I grew up on construction sites, and I've photographed beat-up industrial geometries and abandoned detritus for years. It has felt natural.

On this project I have gone a step further. I strive to create images of junk feel paradoxically alive. I select fragments from the original photos and digitally recombine them. Inanimate objects have been cut and repurposed to imply organicity and sometimes a range of human attributes. Some images stand alone, yet hint at strange beings. Others are linked together or paired. They are sometimes playful or sometimes sensual, suggesting connection.

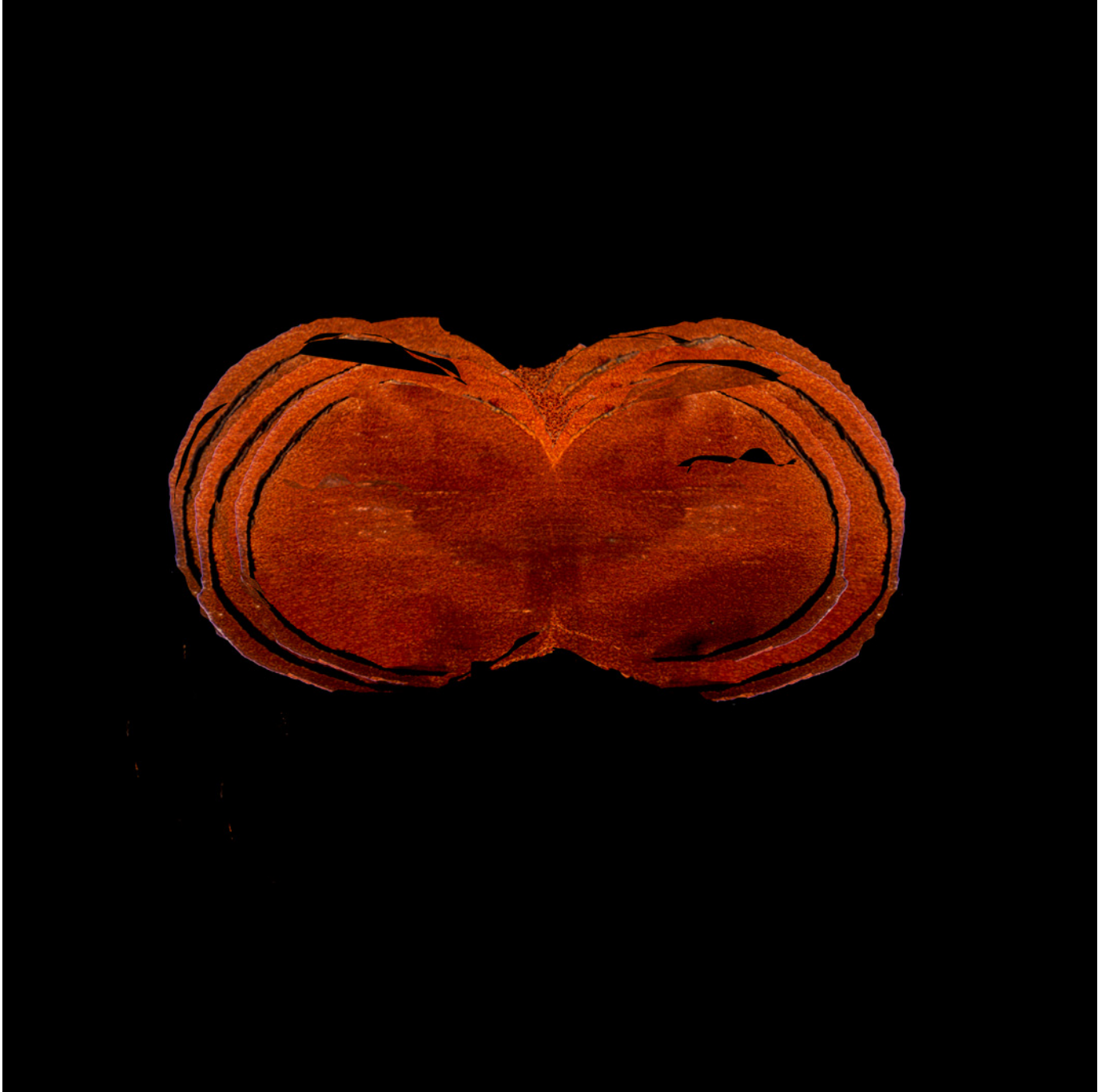
This is a new project in progress, but it is in a continuum with the rest of my work. It is a meticulous focus on a subject for the purpose of creating multi-dimensional abstraction, and the project is a conversation about illusion. As long as I find more junk to photograph, the project will move forward.

Robin Bell

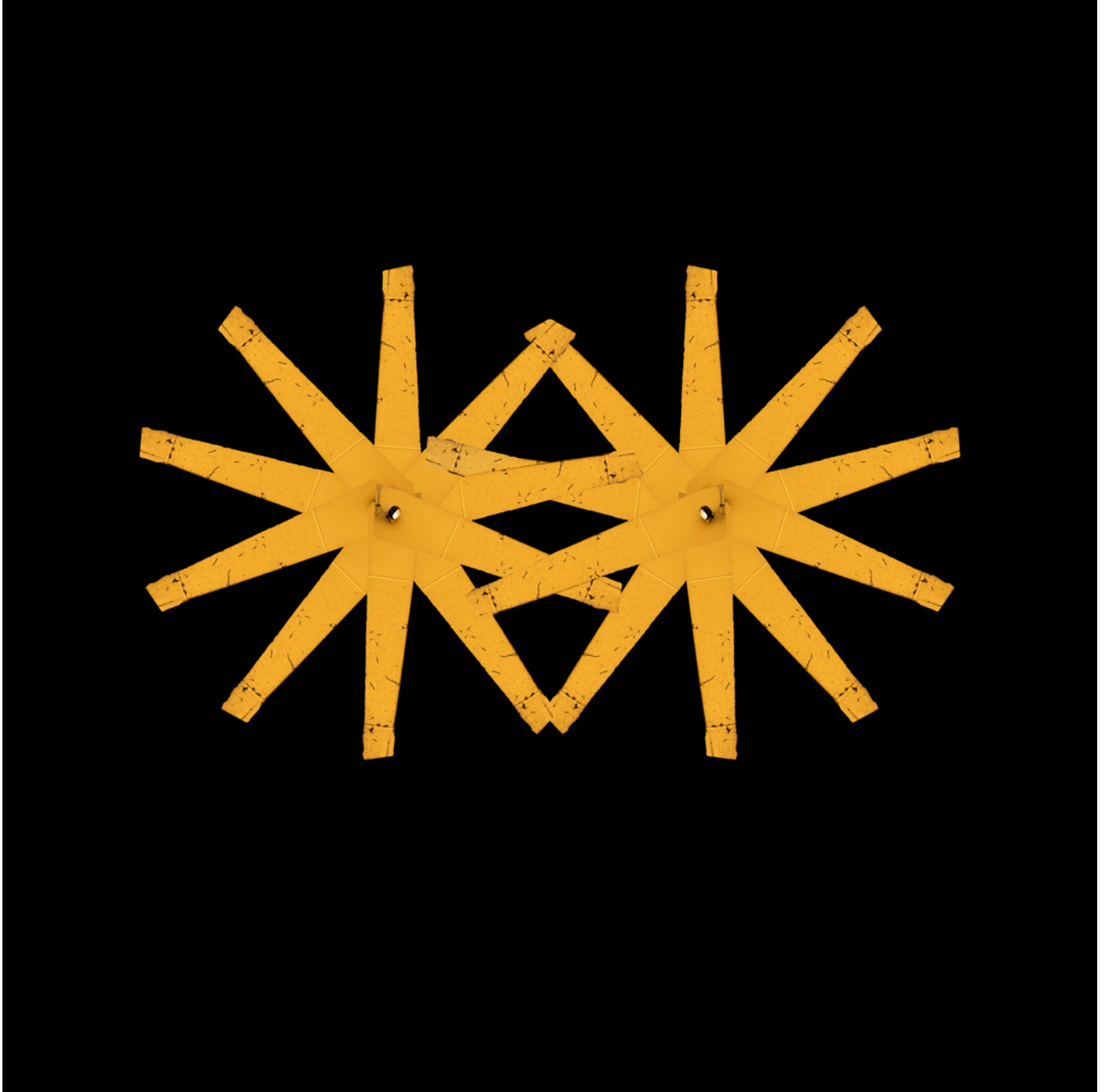
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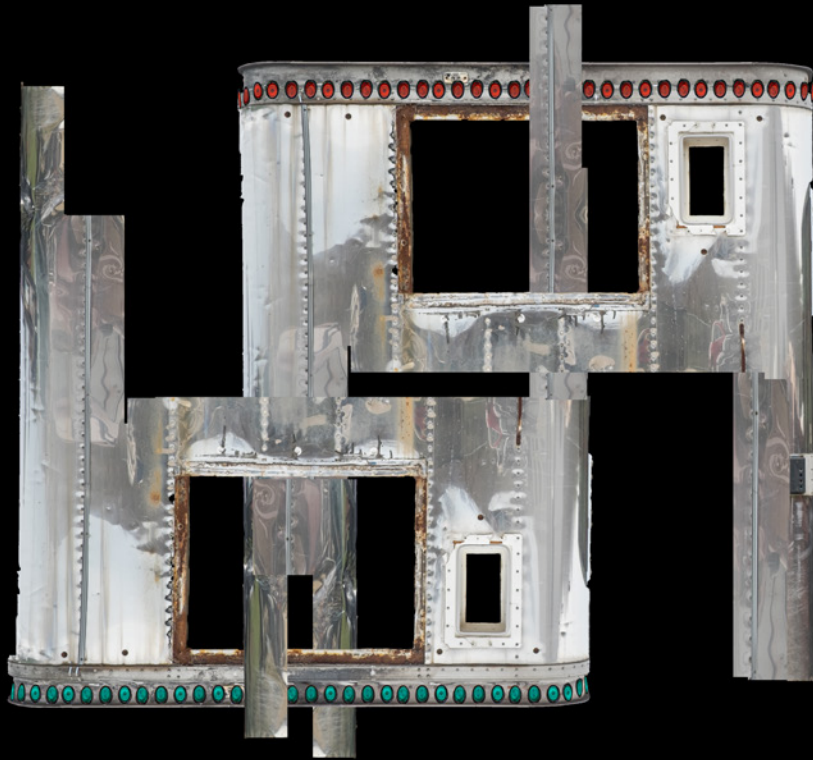


















Showcase Portfolio

Fred Zafran: *Small Town Empty*

by E.E. McCollum

I've known Fred Zafran and his work for over 10 years now and am an admirer of both the man and the photographs. So, it was a pleasure when Tim Anderson decided to publish this body of Fred's work and asked me to do the accompanying interview. Fred has always chosen to explore the depths of photography both visually, in his stunning use of light and shadow and conceptually, in the ways in which his images ask how we make sense of the world in which we find ourselves. This could be a dry and, frankly, uninteresting pursuit were it not for Fred's virtuoso technical skill and the stunning photographs he produces. We look at Fred's prints because they are beautiful, and then see something more. Born out of the isolation of the COVID pandemic in a small town in Virginia, *Small Town Empty* asks us to consider the range of experience to be found in those dark and silent times.

Artist Project Statement (Zafran):

By March 2020, the pandemic had reached us and our small town in Virginia had shut down. Businesses closed, services were suspended, and our town became empty. The absence of activity was visible, but the strange emptiness unseen was new and unknown.

I began to photograph our town at night when darkness revealed with greatest clarity this new terrain of apprehension and uncertainty – the deserted streets, the closed storefronts, the furtive solitary figures. Even the night sky, its muted light and the shadows cast was different somehow, hushed, with new secrets to tell. Over the months I photographed the arc of the town's struggle to contend with the pandemic shutdown, its tentative efforts to reopen, and the returning necessity to close once again. This photo essay emerged as the result.

ERIC (EMc): First, a little bit of history. How and when did you begin to make photographs seriously?

FRED (FZ): Photography first came into my life in my teenage years. I grew up in Philadelphia which has miles of beautiful inner-city parks and wilderness and I was particularly fond of the wilderness area of the Wissahickon Valley not far from my home. I would borrow my father's 35mm Mamiya Sekor and head out to photograph my friends and the woods. It was all analog photography at that time of course. Tri-X is what was used and I had access to a pretty good darkroom where I learned to develop and print my photos.

At sixteen, I made what I consider to be my first "good photograph," an image of a young woman, Martha, a friend of mine, crouching under an umbrella in the rain and mist by the bank of a woodland creek. That image opened my mind to the possibility that a photograph could be more than simply a depiction and a remembrance. A photograph could be poetic.

EMc: Why photography? What is it about photography that leads you to choose it as a vehicle of artist expression?

FW: Perhaps it is astonishment – quite simply the astonishment at the very fact of one's own existence in the world. Everything deserves our careful attention and awareness, even the smallest details may contain great secrets. I suspect this is what brought me to photography and led me more deeply into a photographic practice. With each passing year, I have become more certain of the symbolic power of the photograph, and that

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metaphor is more revealing than literal depiction. Consider the first image in the Small Town Empty portfolio, entitled “Threshold.” This opening image is a photograph of the town, but it is less an actual depiction, than a symbolic representation of a landscape transformed by the pandemic, ominous and shrouded, under a now too distant moon.



Threshold.

EMc: I would like to explore this answer a little further. In a presentation you made earlier this year, you spoke about the importance of poetic narrative in your work. Would you share these thoughts with us?

FZ: When I speak of the “poetry” of the photographic image, I mean something very specific. In literature, poetry exists because of the limitations of language (prose). The poet, moved by the world around her, uses words to point beyond themselves, to express some deeper meaning or insight. The same is true with a photograph as poetic narrative. The expressive (poetic) photograph points beyond the limitations of the depicted subject matter. The images are suggestive, evocative, rich in symbolism and metaphor.

EMc: How did Small Town Empty come about?

FZ: It was 2020 and COVID had descended upon us. Suddenly everything became unknown. I live in a small town in northern Virginia and decided that I would use this time of apprehension and uncertainty to explore what had fallen upon our town and society. I wandered our town in twilight and darkness and made photographs. There was a visible emptiness everywhere, with only a few individuals venturing out. There was also a palpable silence, a veil upon the town, something unknown at work.

In the first nights of the project, I felt a measure of apprehension, of potential exposure to a virus whose effects we didn't fully understand. But this concern quickly passed, replaced with the excitement of exploration and discovery of a new terrain. The nights were filled with mystery and were particularly beautiful.

EMc: What was the trajectory of the project? Did you know immediately what you wanted this project to be, or did it develop as you made the photographs?

FZ: At first, I didn't fully understand what I was seeking or the photographs I was making. Although I had lived in the town for nearly three decades, the pandemic had created an unrecognized and unfamiliar domain. With excitement and trepidation, I ventured out at night every week for 18 months and let the photographs guide me. Over time, the images began to speak to each other, to contextualize each other, and the body of work began to take on form and direction.

As an example, the second photograph in the portfolio — entitled “King and Market Streets” — became particularly resonant for me when the image was first “received.” It revealed the direction for the entire body of work. The signs and symbols in this photograph would echo repeatedly in the images I subsequently selected for the essay.



King and Market Streets.

EMc: The project took shape during the early COVID epidemic here in the US. Is it specific to that situation or do you find in it a larger meaning, a meaning that speaks to something more universal?

FZ: Although the initial impetus to create this work was the arrival of COVID, ultimately this project was

not about the epidemic. As I continued to photograph at night, the empty town began to shimmer with insubstantiality, with a lightness and fragility. The few individuals who ventured out appeared as lonely apparitions. The body of work became a reflection on the nature of our brief and uncertain lives – just flickering lights of transience and ephemerality. Unexpectedly, I felt a deepening sense of kinship and compassion for my fellow travelers in the night.

EMc: The viewpoint in the series seems to be one of distance, isolation and, perhaps, because they were all made at night, hiding in the shadows. When people appear in the photographs, they aren't involved directly with the photographer. Why was this viewpoint important to you in this project?

FZ: In this body of work, when people appear in my photographs, the distance and isolation shown are intentional. People were fearful and cautious at that time; their lives upended by a perceived danger they didn't understand. In a sense, they become shadows of themselves. I photographed people just as such, shadows blending into the fabric of the empty night.

EMc: What else would you like us to know about *Small Town Empty*?

FZ: When COVID hit, everyone stopped going to galleries and I stopped exhibiting. When we emerged from the pandemic, I was on to other projects, initiatives and exhibitions. The portfolio and story of "Small Town Empty" has not been exhibited to date, and I am grateful for the opportunity to share this work in *Shadow & Light Magazine*.



Colors of the Night.



The Coffee Roaster.



Three on Loudoun.



King and Royal Streets



On Market Street.



On the Corner.



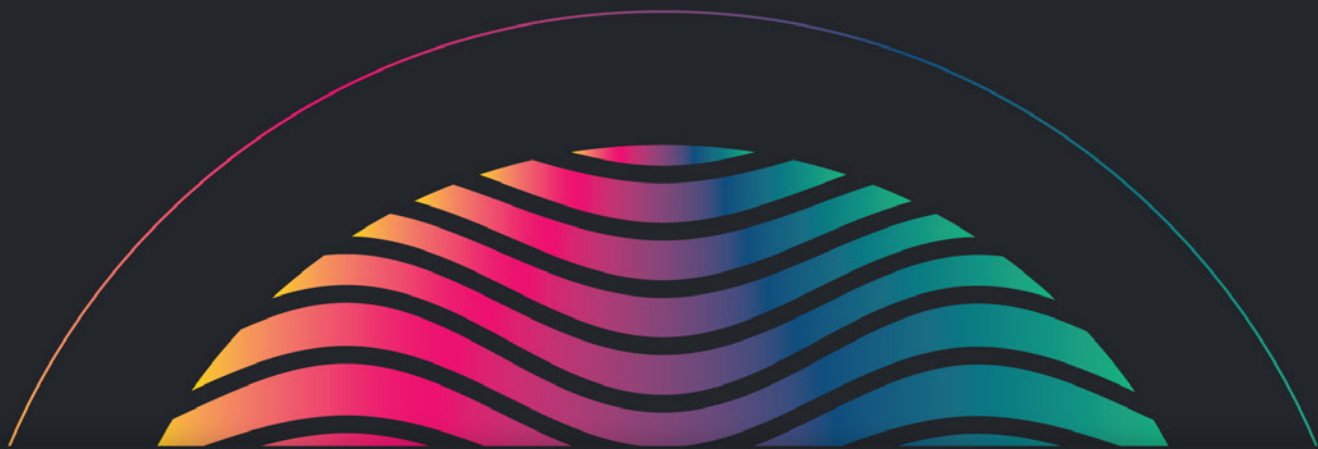
King's Tavern.



Closing Time.



Empty.



*“A better camera won’t do a thing
for you if you don’t have anything in
your head or your heart.”*

Arnold Newman



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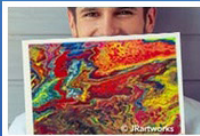
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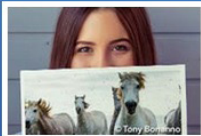
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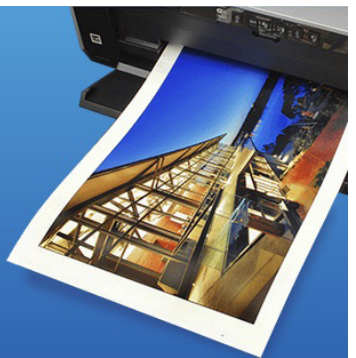


For Artists



For Photographers

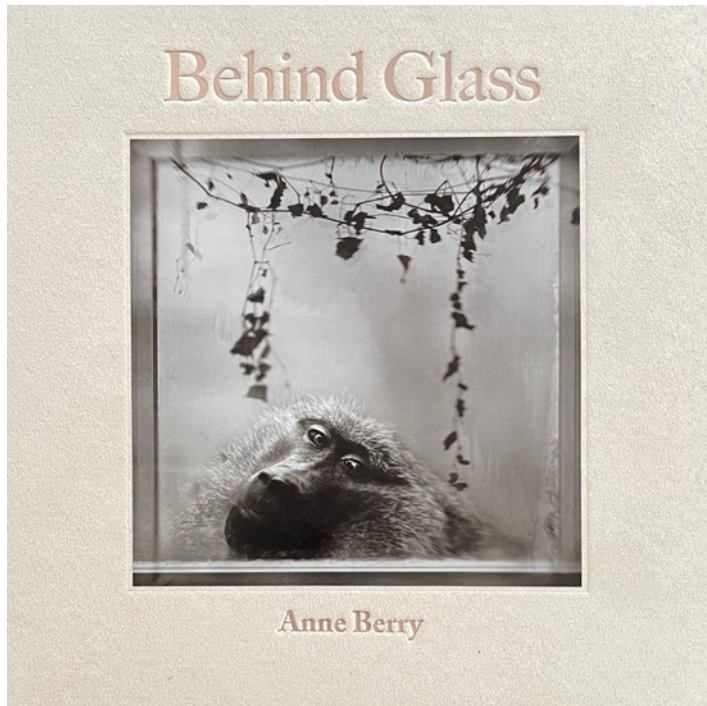
★★★★★



Turning Pages

Anne Berry: *Behind Glass*

by Tim Anderson



Even though we, as humans, have been experiencing more and more serious challenges as the days and years go by, our challenges are little compared to what other inhabitants of this planet face on a continual basis. We do our best to decimate land for our continual quest for more of this and more of that, with seldom a thought of the consequences faced by the animals who inhabit that land.

“Anne Berry’s photographs are poignant and deeply disturbing,” writes Jane Goodall in the opening text, which we see after we meet several of Berry’s portrait subjects, first. “Each one speaks to the loneliness, the depressed spirit, and the despair of the incarcerated individual. Try to imagine the passage of the hours, days, weeks, months and years, trapped in a life that has no meaning and leads to nothing but death. Knowing full well that these are sentient, highly intelligent, and emotional beings highlights the shocking level of our

inhumane attitude toward animals. Together we should demand an end to exploitation of this sort.”

To go through Anne Berry’s *Behind Glass* without reading the informative and enlightening, yet compelling text is to turn your back on something that needs our attention. It needs our attention because if they become extinct, we won’t be far behind.

Dr. Jo Setchell, Professor of Anthropology, Durham University, and President, Primate Society of Great Britain, writes in the Preface, “Human consumption patterns are driving primates to the brink of extinction. As I write, more than 60 percent of primate species are threatened with extinction, and 7 percent are declining in numbers. If we don’t act now, these numbers will only increase, and species will vanish within our lifetimes.”

Anne Berry’s poignant portraits capture the humanity and dignity of primates captured in small zoos throughout Europe, South Africa, and Brazil and many other parts of the world. It’s a project that began in 2009, when she found herself in Paris where she was walking around Ménagerie Zoo in Jardin des Plantes, in Paris. She discovered that she had an immediate connection to and an affinity for the primates. Since we, as humans, have known for many years that we share a close connection with them, she knew the animals on the other side of the glass felt the same way.

In her statement, Berry writes, “It is my goal to motivate people to feel compassion for primates and an obligation to protect them. Most of the primates I photograph qualify as endangered, and all of them are facing stress from loss of habitat and human activity. The plight of primates on Earth is urgent; our indifference will condemn them to extinction, and we will follow.”

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Axel. Der grüne Zoo, Wuppertal, Germany, 2016, Lion-Tailed Macaque, endangered

Over the years there have been many changes to zoos, not only in the U.S., but around the world as well. Zoos also have a very checkered past, with many of the earlier zoos guilty of shoddy practices as far as animal environment and health was concerned. Fortunately, much of that has changed with greater emphasis on the welfare of species.

These portraits invite us to stop and spend a few minutes with each inhabitant. We get to know them by their names, Axel, Conny, Floris, etc. Berry wants us to get to know them and become more interested in their



Conny. Zoo Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany, 2014, Chimpanzee, endangered

welfare. She is currently working with Project Chimps in an effort to raise much-needed funds and to enable there to be more interest in their plight. She is heartened as she watches those who care for these animals show tremendous compassion as they go about their tasks.

“Nevertheless, there are the facial expressions conveying wistfulness and contemplative loneliness that Anne Berry has captured in these remarkable photographs,” writes Jerry Cullum, writer, curator, art critic, in the Foreword. “Her subjects appear hugely appreciative of the bond that has formed between subject



Gretel. Zoo Antwerpen, Antwerp, Belgium, 2011, Crested Black Macaque, critically endangered

and photographer and given what we now perceive of their inner lives, there is no reason to doubt this interpretation. Although we can't know what their own understanding of the situation is, it is clear that many of them are adopting emotionally evocative poses."

Anne Berry has paid close attention to the publication of *Behind Glass*, not only in the quality of the her portraits but in the making of the book itself. One can immediately tell that this was a labor of love and that no detail would be overlooked. The finished is worthy of the subject matter.

This book has already found a space in my "Special" bookcase, with white gloves close at hand.○



Jimmy. London Zoo, London, England, 2018, White-Cheeked Gibbon, critically endangered

***If you would like to see more of what Project Chimps
does, follow this link: www.projectchimps.org/***

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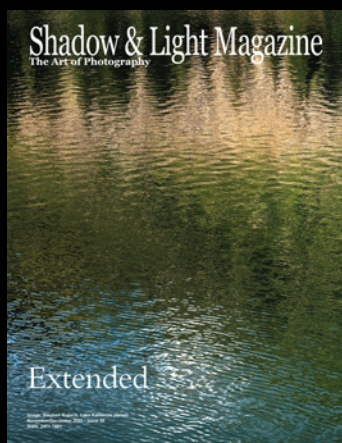
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Mindful Matters

E.E. McCollum: *Creative Paths*



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This photograph (previous page) — of my wonderful colleagues and talented dancers, Anna Russell and Emanuel Tavares — popped up as a Facebook reminder not long ago. I spent several years photographing dancers in the studio, working with a number of very talented folks from the greater Washington, DC area where I lived at the time. With a lot of hours, hard work, and many failures that I learned from, I began to know my way around the studio. The empty space was both a challenge and a possibility. The challenge was to create something interesting when the only elements were the white cyclorama wall, a few props, the studio strobes, and the collaboration between me and my colleagues. Likewise, the possibility was to create something interesting when the only elements were the white cyclorama wall, a few props, the studio strobes, and the collaboration between me and my colleagues. Of those components, collaboration was the most fertile. I had several sessions where the models and I didn't click and, despite wonderful manipulation of the light and space, the images lacked life. In other sessions, technical errors were overcome by the energy of the relationship between me and the dancers.

There were so many interesting stories told in that studio. The beauty of bodies. The astounding things that bodies can do. The way in which light and shadow wrap themselves around us. In this photo, there's the story of longing, doubt, sexuality even, and how male and female bodies, men and women, both oppose and desire each other. I loved the process of working collaboratively with such talented people, and the wonderful photographs we made.

And then, it was over.



A painter — Vincent Desiderio — who juried me into a mixed media show when I was just getting started in photography said, in his juror’s talk at the exhibition opening, that an artistic life is sustained by finding a big enough question. I have never forgotten that, although his statement left me mystified because I had never thought about art as being an attempt to answer a question. But the idea of something “big enough” guiding creative work made sense. Some artists do exactly that. They find a direction that sustains their vision while not constraining them, that provides plenty of space in which to grow. Desiderio’s approach likens our creative lives to a novel with a grand narrative that unrolls over years and years, considering the same artistic question from a variety of perspectives. Many truly great photographic careers have been built on such a path. Ansel Adams forged his photographs from his vision of the unspoiled wilderness of the American West, and the need to preserve it — a vision that lasted throughout his life. Richard Avedon found the portrait a primary vessel for his vision. Avedon’s guiding question seems to have been, “What can the encounter between subject and photographer reveal?”

The trick is to find something big enough. Some artists doggedly pursue a direction but, as time goes on, the life drains out of the work. We all know artists whose work moved us early on but now seems a diminishing repetition of what they have done for years. And for whatever reason — too little boldness, lack of imagination, or the seduction of outward success — they don’t abandon a road that is no longer leading anywhere.

While the “big enough” question seems to be the way in which many careers are structured, my experience with dance photography — and with my other photographic projects — suggests to me that there might be another way. Rather than a novel, a creative life can also be like a series of short stories. The questions may be circumscribed but that doesn’t mean they are uninteresting. The bodies of work may be smaller, the perspectives different, the subject matter or photographic processes changing from project to project. But the work is not less artistic or “amateur” in the derogatory sense of that work. Such projects have depth and engage us.

I could have continued to make dance photographs, of course. The work was pleasurable, the people I met were first-rate, and the photographs satisfying. I received a lot of acclaim for the work, and even sold a few prints! But, like a short story, the narrative came to a close. I began to feel that I had little left to say that a dance photograph could express. This is a crossroads I have encountered a number of times in the years since I began to make fine art photographs seriously. I remain proud of that work and still show it. But I’m not making it anymore.

There are many questions that arise in deciding when it’s time to move on with one’s creative work. One question is motivation. Am I ending because the work still has space in which to grow but it has grown difficult to proceed? Perhaps the next step is a technical leap that seems too challenging, or a conceptual barrier that I can’t seem to find my way through. With dance photographs, for instance, I might have tried moving away from the studio to outdoor locations with all the equipment and arranging that would take. (Although, I have to say that I find the “ballerina in the wrong place” photographs of dancers in Grand Central Station, or big city subways, or at the edge of the Grand Canyon, tedious after a while) Or I might have had to dig deeper into my subject matter. What else do I have to say that dance can tell us? What more do we want to know?

I’m guessing many of us have had the experience of pursuing a subject or way of making photographs that brings satisfaction and learning and beauty and then just runs out of steam. I didn’t abandon dance quickly. I think it is important to stick with a project to make sure you’re at the end and not simply in a slump. But I found myself not looking forward to studio sessions like I did earlier on. The photographs I was making began to lack the kind of depth that I felt my work needed.

continued on page 81>>>







Ending an artistic approach or body of work presents challenges. I am currently at the end of a project that I have spent more than three years making. The work feels complete; the combination of photographs and text works, the design is taking shape, colleagues to whom I've shown the project are supportive. Yet I can't seem to declare it done and move on. I've thought and thought about what is holding me back. In this case, there are a couple of things. First, I love this body of work. It is my first step into a deeper and more thoughtful way of making photographs, a step that I had wanted to take for a long time. Where my previous projects have involved the manipulation of a set of physical components — dancers, set, and lights; the geography of a small pond near my home across four seasons, bodies in a nylon cocoon — the current project involves a more abstract concept and the combination of photographs with different subject matter to approach that concept. Ending the project feels like letting go of something important — an exhilarating period of growth in my work — that I'll never experience again in the same way.

Another challenge to ending is that I don't have a clear vision of what comes next. Letting go of my current project seems like plunging into the void. What if the next work is just pedestrian? What if nothing comes next? Making photographs is more than just an activity for most of us; it is also part of who we are. Starting anew risks losing part of ourselves.

Whether a lifetime's novel length photographic practice or a volume of short stories, the challenge is to find a path that sustains us, and to know when or if that path begins to fade. ○

Telling Stories

Steve Immel: *A Drop in the Bucket*



Glen Canyon Dam from Page, Arizona.

“And in it never failed that during the dry years the people forgot about the wet years, and during the wet years they lost all memory of the dry years. It’s always like that.” So wrote John Steinbeck in *East of Eden*, the book he considered his first. The year was 1951.

Steinback’s passage is as timely today as it was in the Post-War West. Some will pounce on 2023’s generational snowpack and the rainfall brought by Hurricane Hillary as proof that the West’s 23-year drought was nothing more than a dip in the natural cycle. They’ll contend that climate change is a myth and certainly not a product of man’s befoulment of earth, water, and sky. Science says otherwise. And our eyes see what’s real.

Steinback wrote of a thirty-year cycle when there would be five or six wet years, six or seven decent years then little rain and “The land cracked, and the springs dried up and the cattle listlessly nibbled dry twigs.” It sounds like he was describing the first 23 years of the very dry and very hot 21st century.

“This buys us a year,” longtime Colorado River expert Brad Udall told USA today. “It doesn’t remotely come close to solving the long-term problem.”

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“Big snow years are happening half as often as they used to while dry years are happening 2.5 times as often” reports Udall who studies the Colorado River at Colorado State University’s Colorado Water Center. He continues “There are two important components to get to a better place. The first is wishing for high flow years and the other is cutting demand. We only control one of them.”

After Hurricane Hillary drenched California and western Nevada and after the epic snowpack in the Sierra Nevada and the Rockies water conditions have changed only marginally. Lake Mead stands at 20 feet higher than 2022’s low point, but four feet below 2022’s high water mark and 20 feet below 2020’s high. It may rise another 20 feet by February 2024. That’s a bandage on a gaping wound.

Not only is Lake Powell’s water level plummeting but its capacity is falling, too. The reservoir has lost 7% of the capacity it had to store the water when it opened in 1964. Further, California is depleting its ground water at such a rate that cannot be replenished. And to add stupidity to folly, most of the water provided by a series of atmospheric rivers and culminating with Hurricane Hillary’s torrents was not absorbed into the earth or saved in any fashion. Nature’s rare bounty rushed unimpeded into the mighty Pacific. It’s testament to our failure to preserve precious stores of water for an even hotter and dryer future. Then California for inexplicable reasons waived all water its conservation mandates.

I returned from a four-day photo safari to Lake Powell and Lake Mead in early June. I hoped to show the reservoirs at their lowest ever water levels. But I was seven weeks too late to record the cataclysm. Lake



Glen Canyon Dam from Lake Powell.



Lake Powell with Navajo Mountain.

Powell and Lake Mead reached their lowest water levels ever on April 23, 2023. That's when Lake Mead was at 26 percent in capacity and was just 35 feet above Deadpool. Deadpool is the water level below which the reservoir can no longer release water into the river below it. I worried that I had missed my chance to show the reservoirs at their driest and lowest.

But I agonized unduly. Even after the epic snow melt and greatest rainfall in a hundred years the results of 23 parched years were vividly apparent. The bathtub rings around Powell and Mead were as tall as a six-story building. A cantilevered dock pierced the sky 80 feet above Lake Mead's surface.

Paul Miller, a hydrologist at the Colorado Basin River Forecast Office told CNN, "We're doing great from a water year perspective." But the drought deficit is so large experts say it would take four or five more years of snowmelt like this year's to really fill Lake Powell and Lake Mead. And one good year is usually followed by three dry years. So, the modest gains we've enjoyed in 2023 can vanish in one vicious summer.

At best this winter's snowpack, California's atmospheric rivers and Hurricane Hillary's largess are buying time for states to find ways to use much less water. It's breathing room. As Brad Udall told us, "This buys us a year." The states may finally be listening. In May 2023 the seven states that depend on the Colorado River entered into an agreement on actions to cut water usage over the next three years. "This is an important step forward towards our shared goal of forging a sustainable path for the basin that millions of people call home," Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camile Calimlim Touton commented.



The boat ramp was under water in 2021.

While the agreed to steps and preservation commitments were less than the federal government had sought Interior Secretary Deb Holland called the agreement a testament to the administration's commitment "to find consensus solutions in the face of climate change and sustained drought." Had the states not reached consensus the federal government could have imposed draconian cuts from California, Arizona, and Nevada's total apportionment of 7.5 million acre-feet of water.

In the summer of 2022, the Interior Department had declared an emergency caused by the 23-year drought that had desiccated the west. and reduced water levels in Lake Powell and Lake Mead to within 35 feet of Deadpool, the level at which the reservoirs could no longer deliver water at all. It was an ominous possibility and might well have happened without the once in a lifetime snowpack, California's atmospheric rivers and the torrents unleashed by Hillary.

The western states were instructed to reduce water usage by as much as four million acre-feet, about one-third of California's annual flow. After delivering that breathtaking demand Interior Secretary Deb Haaland stepped aside to allow the states to forge a plan. The negotiations went nowhere so Secretary Haaland rejoined the negotiations in April 2023. The department reduced its demand from a 4 million acre-feet reduction to 2 million acre-feet. And a month later the seven states that rely on the Colorado River reached an agreement to reduce water by about 3 million acre-feet by the end of 2026.

While I had read that Lake Powell and Lake Mead were at 26% of capacity on April 23, 2023 Lans Smith, the



Navajo Mountain.

affable and knowledgeable boat captain on my Lake Powell photo tour told me it was actually 23% at its low ebb. He checks the water levels every day. Landmasses that were islands on June 7 were land bridges on April 23. And narrow channels such as Antelope Canyon at Lake Powell couldn't be navigated at all. At high water the captain's favorite swimming platform was a rock pillar rising 10 feet out of the lake and in June after two months of gains it was still 80 feet above us in the boat.

Lake Mead's pattern was a carbon copy. It had gained more than 20 feet of water from the record snowmelt, but the situation is still desperate. According to experts it would take five years of snowfall like we had in the winter of 2022-23 for the lake to reach the level it enjoyed forty years before. As one recent headline conceded, our recent gift of water, "is a drop in the bucket."

It doesn't take much imagination to visualize the lakes 185 feet higher in 1983 or at full capacity in 1964. The bathtub rings so evident in this post would disappear and all but the tallest islands would be under water. The water levels would have been nearly as high as the dams.

Expert forecasts indicate that, "The lakes will never refill to capacity." And 2023 will be the hottest year in recorded history. It makes me thirsty just thinking about it. ○



Antelope Canyon #1.



Antelope Canyon #2.

Antelope Canyon #3.





Boulder Dam from Lake Mead #1.

Boulder Dam from Lake Mead #2.





Lake Mead looking north from Boulder Dam.



Lake Mead from Stewart's Point.



The dock to nowhere, Hemenway Harbor.



What's left of Stewart's Point.

Endpaper...



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