

WHAT WAS I THINKING ?

A Photographer's Journey Into The Art Of Seeing ...

Gerald Rowles FineArt Photography



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<http://www.rowlesfineartphotography.com/>

“Technique does not constitute art. Nor is it a vague, fuzzy romantic quality known as ‘beauty,’ remote from the realities of everyday life. It is the depth and intensity of an artist’s experience that are the first importance in art.” - Grant Wood

“I would like to paint the way a bird sings.” - Claude Monet

Preface and Artist's Statement

My personal style of photography is not so much a product of nor equivalent to the famed photographers that are household names. However, Ansel Adams was the first photographic icon that influenced my early ventures into the world of black and white film photography with the zone system, and the attendant first magic of the darkroom developer tray.

But the greatest encouragement for me comes from the world of paint and canvas. Grant Wood, Claude Monet, Paul Cézanne, Norman Rockwell, and Andrew Wyeth celebrated simple landscapes and nature's gifts with realism and impression, color and thoughtful composition and most importantly, lighting. After all light is the essential element in both traditional art and photography. Bright and dark, contrast and wavelength, without light the most compelling compositions and glorious colors fail.

Many photographers report that they came to photography after spending their formative years studying the traditions of brush and canvas art. As for me, I discovered brush and canvas art in the late stages of developing my craft. Tardily but happily I have discovered that much of what I was expressing or attempting to express was also inherent in the works of the canvas artists I have indicated. My roots in Iowa share visions with Grant Wood and Andrew Wyeth. My painterly leanings I find most easily in Claude Monet and his love of color and flora. The compositions of Paul Cezanne inspire my still life work. Grant Wood lovingly viewed the same Iowa I do, but with an abstract eye for the rolling croplands and small towns but a more literal eye for its people. Returning to Iowa after spending too much of my adult life living mostly in the west and southwest, I always come back to the idea that Iowa is about the lowans as much as it is the topography. My growing-up history dating back to my youth in

the fifties includes the joyful discovery of Norman Rockwell's illustrations in the Saturday Evening Post. Rockwell's devotion to the average American and their ideals from that era fits my experience and lives on in my memories. Even more recently I was surprised to find that I share with Andrew Wyeth a similar fascination with windows. In fact he painted some 300 canvases that are only now finding their way to the museums from private collections - "Looking out, Looking in".

From the books of a series of talented and successful pro-photographers / artists; David Bayles & Ted Orland "Art & Fear", Chris Orwig "The Creative Fight", Ian Plant, "Essential: Pro Secrets For Unleashing Your Creativity", Guy Tal "More Than A Rock", and Alain Briot "Mastering Landscape Photography" – among others, in the proverbial nutshell, between all the nuggets of their learned craft, was this; if you are going to create art you must first think of yourself as an artist – all the time!

The ultimate judgment as to what constitutes Fine Art is in the eye-of-the-beholder. This book is an exploration into seeing and creating eclectic photographic art that strives to stretch the two dimensional limits of print. If you hear it, and sense it, and feel it, the artful effort was successful.



Gerald (Jerry) Rowles

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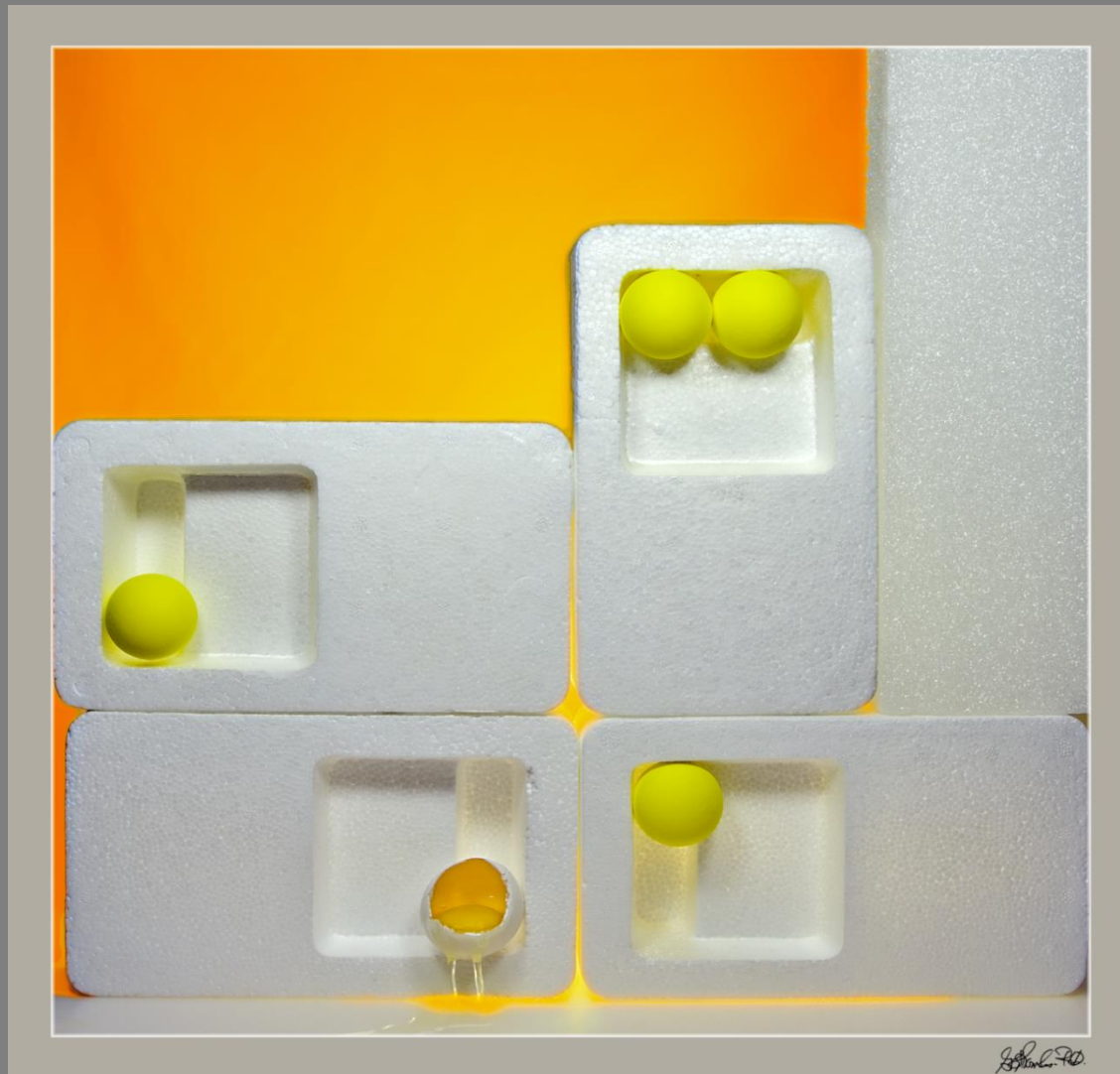
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ALL THE KINGS MEN: I had these foam trays and balls from a display and began to play with their placement when it seemed that Humpty Dumpty just fell into place.

ISO 100 1/45s f/8.0 +0.67ev 24mm



AWE AND APPREHENSION: After visiting the Bridal Veil Falls at Pikes Peak State Park (IA) I was climbing the path back to the park when I turned around to see these two young girls beginning to explore behind the falls with some trepidation – snap!

ISO 200 1/6s f/5.0 -0.67ev 200mm



BISTRO: On a lovely warm summer day walking past an outdoor café in Des Moines the sunlight glistening on the olive oil bottles provided the impression of a what might be seen at a secluded Bistro on the Italian Riviera.

“I had to go to France to appreciate Iowa.” - Grant Wood

ISO 400 1/160s f/22.0 +0.3ev 70mm



STORIES OF LIFE ON THE FARM: Wandering through a farm implement junk yard in a small Iowa town I came upon this mid-winter scene of several implements gathered in a semi-circle creating an impression of an old-timers gathering to chat about their halcyon days on the farm. All that was missing was a pot-bellied stove. ISO 200 1/25s f/11 0.0ev 160mm



BIRD ON A BRANCH: It all started with a perfectly formed sparrow feather found lying in the grass. I wanted to preserve the delicate pin feathers in some way. The Pine twig in the nearby grass offered the solution.

ISO 100 1/160s f/0.0 0.0ev Lensbaby



GRAPE TSUNAMI: Walking through a city alley I found a rear entrance to a vacant building with a pretty elaborate walkway for a rear entrance. One way we counter the daily media images of tragedy is to find a humorous offset. My impression of this scene was a cartoonish grape tsunami retreating from scattered debris.

ISO 320 1/60s f/11 +0.33ev 30mm



LIFE'S A BEACH: "It is impossible for emotion not to come on us in thinking of that time now flowed away." - Paul Cezanne
ISO 100 1/25s f/11 -0.33ev 70mm



CADDY SHACK: An old brick building with a wonderful weathered roll-up doorway called for a suitable auto of the era in its garage.

“Most artists look for something fresh to paint; frankly I find that quite boring. For me it is much more exciting to find fresh meaning in something familiar.” - Andrew Wyeth

ISO 100 1/30s f/8 0.0ev 40mm



HOME AND HEARTH: An old farm house although stripped of most of its windows and plaster still welcomed through the open doorway, but watch out for those floorboards. Still the aging process had created textures and contrasts that were as distinctive as the original in its youth if not more so. And one could easily imagine the family gathered around the hearth during the holidays.

“I search for the realness, the real feeling of a subject, all the texture around it... I always want to see the third dimension of something... I want to come alive with the object.”
- Andrew Wyeth

ISO 200 multi f/11 0.0ev 26mm



COLOR CODED ASSEMBLY: In an unkempt weedy lot between two buildings in a small Iowa town there is a fascinating collection of fiftyish vehicles rusting away. Not one has any signs of wreckage, but all have had parts pirated for what most likely was replacements. No office or apparent business entity in sight – a charming mystery. ISO 100 1/80s f/11 -0.33ev 40mm



R2D2 AFTER THE BATTLE: Is there anyone who has not seen Star Wars and fallen in love with the chirpy little droid. The domed hood of this ancient Chevy pickup with its hood handles immediately assumed the persona of the diminutive droid in my imagination.

ISO 200 multi f/11 0.0ev 34mm



FLASH FROZEN: Apparently out of its environment a cucumber beetle decided to rest overnight on a cone flower. A nighttime frost caught the visitor covered with evening dew and bejeweled it. When the sun rises it will thaw and recuperate no doubt.

ISO 640 1/13s f/22 0.0ev 200mm



“Nature won't be summoned to order and won't be kept waiting. It must be caught, well caught” - Claude Monet

Such was the case with this lovely Dotted Blue butterfly as it settled in the emerging Cone Flower's crown.

ISO 320 1/1000s f/8 -0.33ev 330mm



SWAN VALLEY IDAHO WHEAT FIELD: I was immediately captivated by this exquisite trio of golden wheat fields, shadowed mountain pillow meadows and blue-white cumulous sky. That night at the motel, bleary eyed from the day, I accidentally formatted the card with this image and others. Needless to say it was several hours later before I had found an undelete software on the internet and finally recovered this jewel from the format drain. Whew! ISO 100 1/100s f/11 -0.67ev 80mm



NOT QUITE HOME: This is one of two images that are the most valued in my photo collection. Almost everyone viewing this image comes up with a similar caption. The abandoned auto stuck in a long abandoned drive leading to an abandoned house which upon close inspection looks as if it was never finished tugs at the imagination looking for the answer to the question, "What happened here?" Its Mountain Home, Idaho location adds to its poignancy. ISO 100 1/45s f/13 +0.67ev 20mm



“When I go to farms or little towns, I am always surprised at the discontent I find. And New York, too often, has looked across the sea toward Europe. And all of us who turn our eyes away from what we have are missing life.” - Norman Rockwell

In north central Iowa there is a small county park which one enters from a descending curve on a state highway that drops into a wide valley. It would be easy to drive by without noticing the narrow unpaved lane leading up a slight hill on which the park sets. There is a small playground with an aging slide and swing set to the west side and a wooded area on its north boundary. A split log fence bounds the wooded area in such a way that one has to walk around the fence to see the valley hidden from view below. But there it is, looking very much like a northeastern U.S. village transplanted by early German settlers to the area. Then its name transports you to a legendary western U.S. site – El Dorado.

I have now photographed this site in its every seasonal mood.

ISO 200 1/13s f/14 +0.33ev 140mm



THE LAST ROUNDUP: One might never guess that this image of a timeworn livestock corral at the edge of a hillside emblazoned with fall colors was captured along a gravel road in northeast Iowa. The sense of timelessness and nostalgia coupled with rich, warm colors has a palpable emotional appeal. ISO 100 1/13s f/16 -0.33ev 32mm



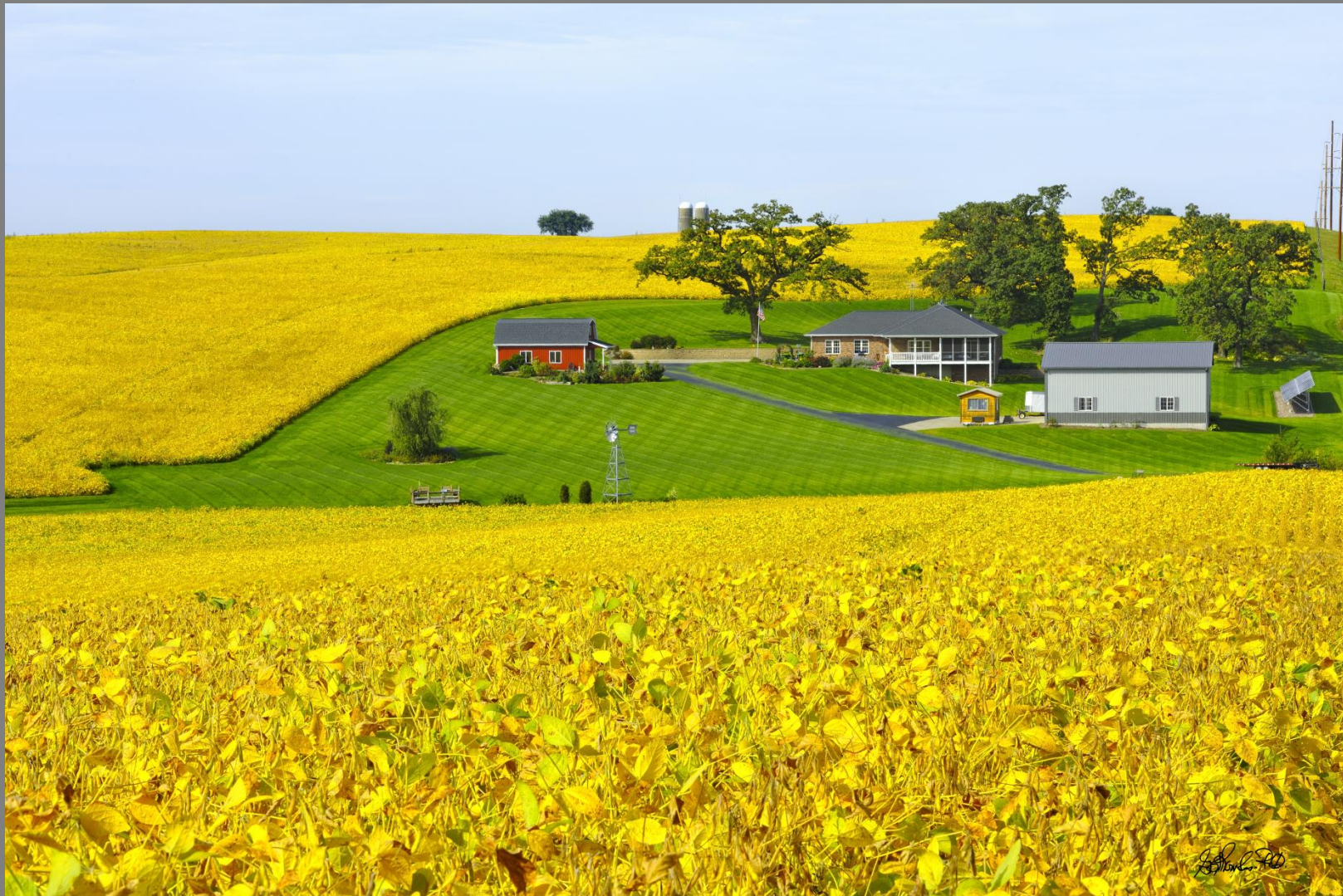
GOD LIGHT PRESSES THE CLOUDS AWAY: I've watched this old barn slowly decay for more than a decade, but it hasn't given way easily, much like the storm head above it. Sitting next to the barn is an early twentieth century Fordson tractor, like a loyal old friend. The last time I visited almost all of the facing side of the barn had collapsed. But the Fordson remains. I'm so glad I captured it before it gave way.

ISO 100 1/125s f/11 -0.0ev 40mm

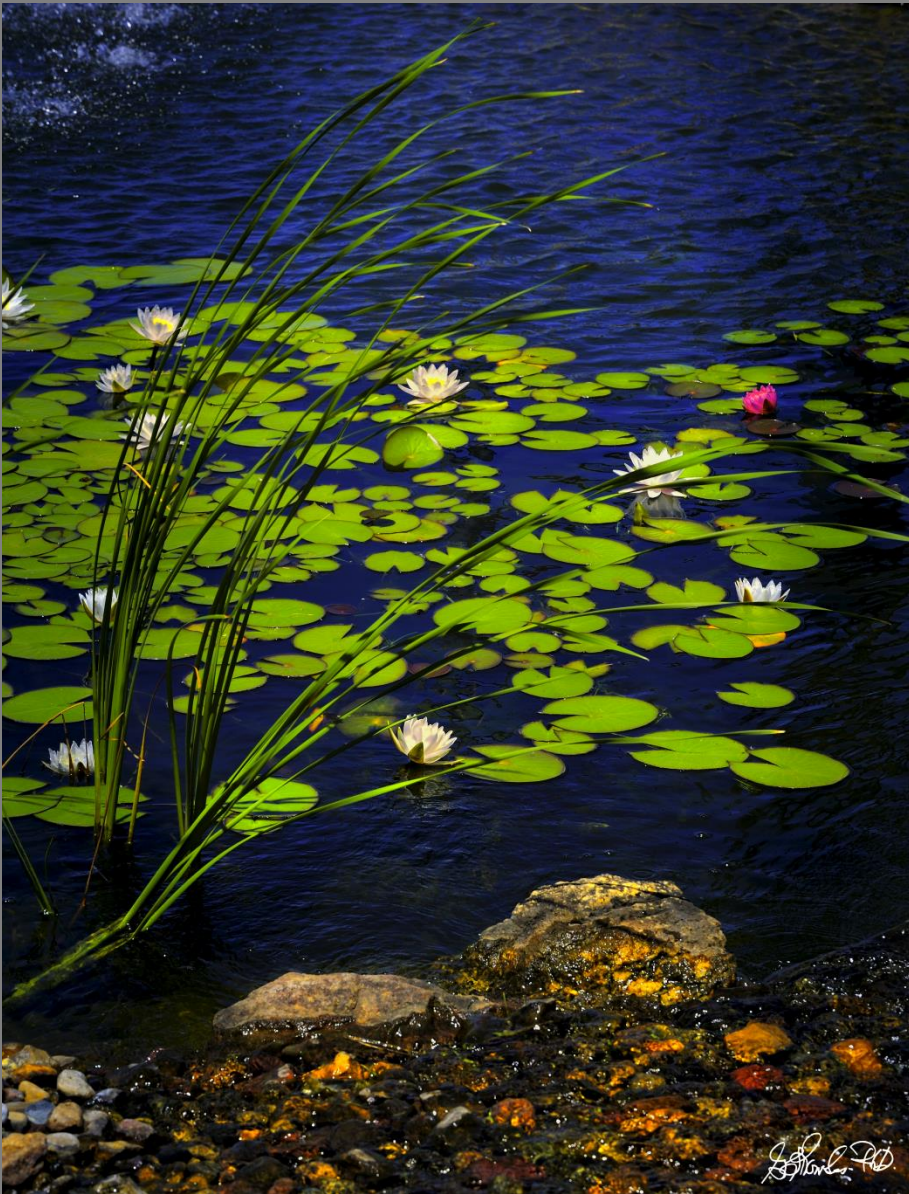


IOWA DOES TUSCANY: Early one cool October morning I was driving along one of Iowa's scenic back roads a few miles west of the Mississippi river. On the horizon was the ridge line separating the farmlands from the mighty Miss. The cool morning air misted the lands below me and as I rounded a curve I found myself transported to Tuscany, Italy. "I had to go to France to appreciate Iowa." - Grant Wood

ISO 100 1/25s f/16 -0.33ev 70mm



AN IOWA POSTCARD: The 'golden hour' rule in photography is that the golden hours are an hour after sunrise and an hour before sunset – with the general caveat that mid-day photos will be plagued by harsh light and dark shadows as well as flat colors. OK, I bent the rule. But this is Iowa, where the gold rules. Golden crops of corn and beans can be seen as far as the horizon in summer's mid-day hours – along with golf course manicured lawns. ISO 100 1/40s f/22 -0.33ev 92mm



“Paint what you really see, not what you think you ought to see; not the object isolated as in a test tube, but the object enveloped in sunlight and atmosphere, with the blue dome of Heaven reflected in the shadows.” - Claude Monet

For Monet the best part of life was his garden and much of that garden included water lilies. Here is an impression of a virtual scene from that garden when lilies are being showered with affectionate breezes.

“I must have flowers, always, and always.” - Claude Monet

ISO 200 1/500s f/11 -1.67ev 95mm



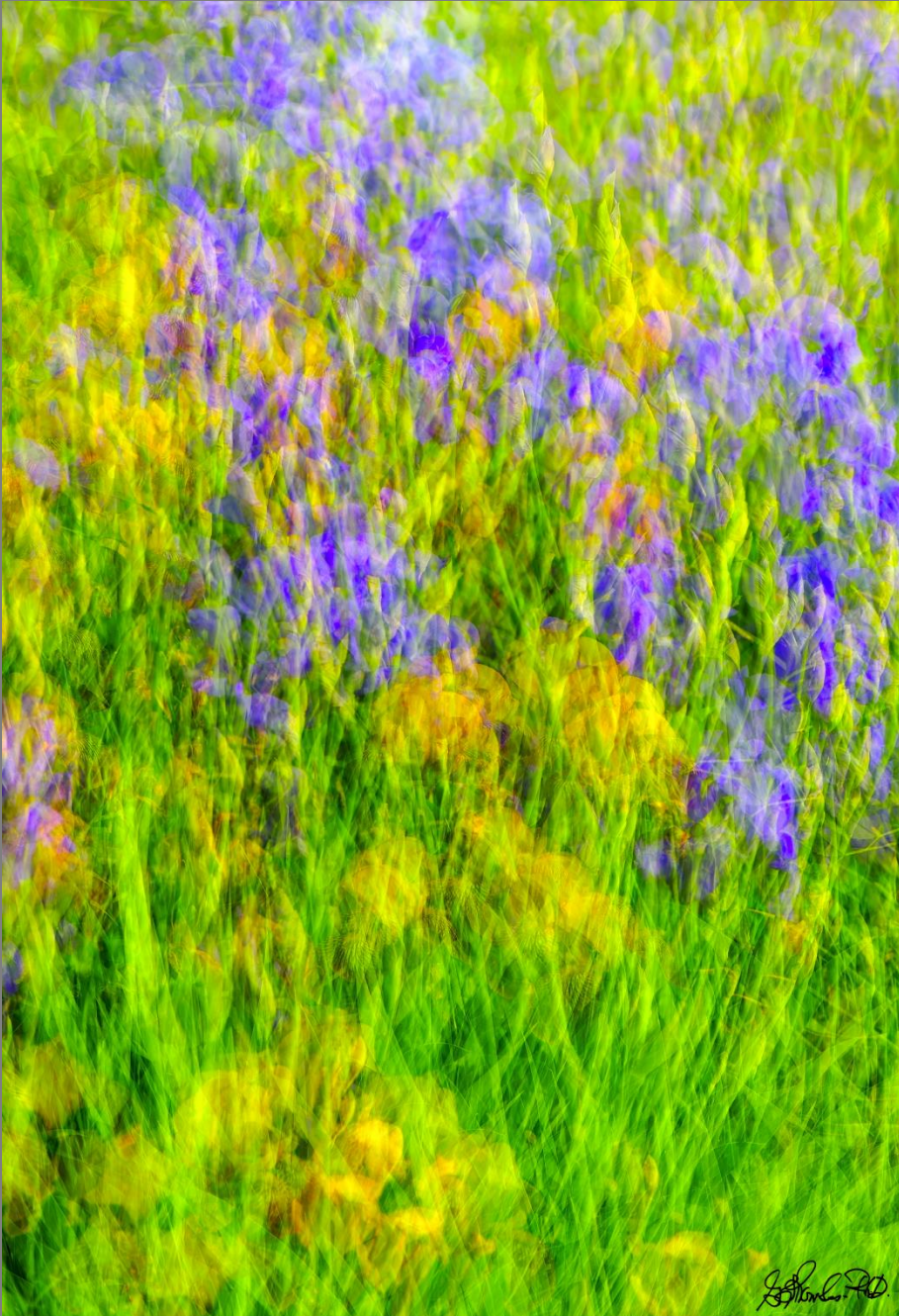
FROM THE OPEN FIELD TO BATTLEFIELD: In the daily rush of the to-do list the first casualty is the time for seeing the gifts that nature places all round us. The flower's name, Bird's Foot Trefoil, doesn't exactly roll off the tongue like the Fleur De Lis it resembles, so my choice was to go with the latter. To me the Fleur De Lis conjures an image of gallantry; the feather an arrow; and the dew drops tears for the fallen.

ISO 200 1/500s f/8 0.0ev 200mm



SURREAL GARDEN: Familiar objects become like visitors from a Dali-esque dimension in a verdant cosmos of their own. "For an Impressionist to paint from nature is not to paint the subject, but to realize sensations."
- Paul Cezanne

ISO 200 1/500s f/8 0.0ev 200mm



IRISES – SELF PORTRAIT

“I've done what I could as a painter and that seems to me to be sufficient. I don't want to be compared to the great masters of the past, and my painting is open to criticism; that's enough.”
- Claude Monet

When I came across this field of irises they were blowing wildly in the wind making it impossible for me to capture them in stasis. But again Monet came to mind and it seemed most appropriate to allow the flowers to paint themselves as he might have rendered them. But then again, I am not the master.

ISO 400 1/500s f/11 -0.33ev 105mm
- handheld without vr



A MONET-ESQUE GARDEN: "The painter, being concerned only with giving his impression, simply seeks to be himself and no one else." - Claude Monet ... Well ... sometimes a photo capture wants to feel the caress of Monet's brush and the depth of the painter's oils. My apologies to the master for this limited tribute.

ISO 200 1/10s f/22 -1.0ev 82mm



FIESTA: Fortunately oil and water do not mix. But together they are far more creative than was the faddish 1960s Lava Lamp with its undulating gelatinous globules suspended in a glass cylinder. In this capture, individual oil islands floating on a shallow water base in a clear container situated above colorful objects form endless kaleidoscopic patterns.

ISO 200 2.0s f/32 -0.67ev 105mm



VISION MATRIX: Another incitement offers endless creative explorations, for which I thank Bryan Peterson. Instead of spritzing a flower in order to photograph a micro mirror in a single water drop I imagined many water drops on a transparent surface in order to capture multiple mirror images of a single flower.

ISO 200 0.5s f/32 -0.67ev 105mm



THE SHOE FITTING ROOM: Although my collection of Industrial-mechanical images is eclectically wide-ranging, the nostalgia of the blacksmith shop is most satisfying. More often than not the blacksmith conjures images of the wild west and the cowpoke's steed. But the blacksmith was an integral mainstay of the farmlands as well when horse-drawn plows and wagons were employed for farm work. In Amish country the blacksmith is still a viable trade. In the very small town of Haverhill, IA the Matthew Edel smithy, Founded in 1883, remains as it was in the 1940s when Edel passed away. In this capture my eye travels from the shoe rack back to the enormous wood sledgehammer sitting on a log pedestal. The thought of lifting it is one thing, but what would a day of driving wooden fence posts with it be like.

ISO 100 multi f/16 0.0ev 24mm



THE SMITHY'S OFFICE: A well-placed skylight provides ample day illumination for the minimal office fold-out desk – essential before widespread availability of electric lighting. The Edel Smithy also features a full array of woodworking tools from the various brace and bit combinations to an elaborate belt-driven series of table saws and drill presses for the purpose of rebuilding wagons, carts and wheels. The wooden floor planks around the desk were well-trod for more than fifty years as evidenced by the elevated wood knots whose denser structure resisted the wear from foot traffic.

“Shadow is a colour as light is, but less brilliant; light and shadow are only the relation of two tones.” - Paul Cezanne

ISO 100 multi f/11 0.0ev 34mm



GRANT RAPIDS AND VALANCE: The overhanging foliage now whitened by the infrared spectrum forms a frilly valance for the rushing rapids. The cool misty air and shaded bank lends a freshening briskness to the scene.

ISO 200 1/20s f/16 -0.67ev 24mm



OMINOUS SKIES: Near the town of Greenfield, IA are the remnants of an early brick making plant's kilns and smokestacks. This photo, taken in the summer of 2002 less than a year from the events of 9/11/01, stirred ominous memories of the tragic Twin Towers. Overhead, the con trails bespoke the proximate passage of aircraft. The infrared effect transformed the surrounding foliage into eerie billowing clouds of white dust while the abandoned bicycle added a poignant reminder of more carefree days.

"An art which isn't based on feeling isn't an art at all."
- Paul Cezanne

ISO 200 1/125s f/16 0.0ev 25mm



CHICHAQUA SUPER MOON: the Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt area's "natural features include old oxbow river channels and backwaters, marshes, and wetlands." The various oxbows form loops that bend and wind in different directions that slow the river flow so it has wonderful reflective qualities which draw the photographer. So it was on the night of the rise of the Super Moon I anxiously awaited the arrival. The haze on the horizon was quite dense so it was some time before the moonrise finally cleared the obstruction. As it transpired, the late arrival turned out to be fortunate in that it provided a wonderful reflection in the slowly moving water in one of the oxbows.

"Optics, developing in us through study, teach us to see."
- Paul Cezanne

ISO 100 multi f/11 0.0ev 116mm



BLOOD MOON ECLIPSE: The Midwest skies frequently obscure astral events with clouded nights. On the night of the 2015 Blood Moon the skies were perfectly clear providing an unobstructed view of the entire eclipse transit. This was my first astral capture employing the Tamron 150-600 VC. It responded impressively with sharp detail and accurate colors. Combining the individual frames into a panorama preserved the detail while creating a 27" x 40" base canvas.

ISO 320 1/100s f/16 -0.33ev 600mm



MIRROR, MIRROR: She is beautiful, cooperative, and able to endure hours of posing without becoming petulant. She has provided me with endless opportunities to experiment with lighting and composition for portrait work. Nola'D has become a real asset and a good buddy.

ISO 100 0.8s f/16 0.0ev 130mm



ARRANGING FLOWERS BY MOONLIGHT: The unique employment of an antique window frame in a portrait setting creates a revised rule of 1/4ths. In using the window to frame the model in soft, warm directional light the artist conveys a sense of intimacy. There is also a mild sense of voyeurism that creates a bit of tension in the viewer.

“My aim is not to exhibit craft, but rather to submerge it, and make it rightfully the handmaiden of beauty, power and emotional content.” - Andrew Wyeth

“I do what I can to convey what I experience before nature and most often, in order to succeed in conveying what I feel, I totally forget the most elementary rules of painting, if they exist that is.” - Claude Monet

ISO 100 4.0s f/16 -2.33ev 38mm



PARISIAN RIVERBANK: On a warm autumnal day along a riverbank where a restored paddle boat was moored I found myself thinking that the scene was similar to what Monet frequently painted. “ here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink, here a streak of yellow, and paint it just as it looks to you, the exact colour and shape, until it emerges as your own naive impression of the scene before you”. - Monet ISO 100 1/10s f/16 0.0ev 52mm



OVER THE BRIDGE TO GRAMP'S FARM: "Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, you all had great moments, but you never tasted the supreme triumph; you were never a farm boy riding in from the fields on a bulging rack of new-mown hay." - Grant Wood These then are the ethereal picture memories that accompany the reverie.

ISO 100 multi f/16 0.0ev 92mm

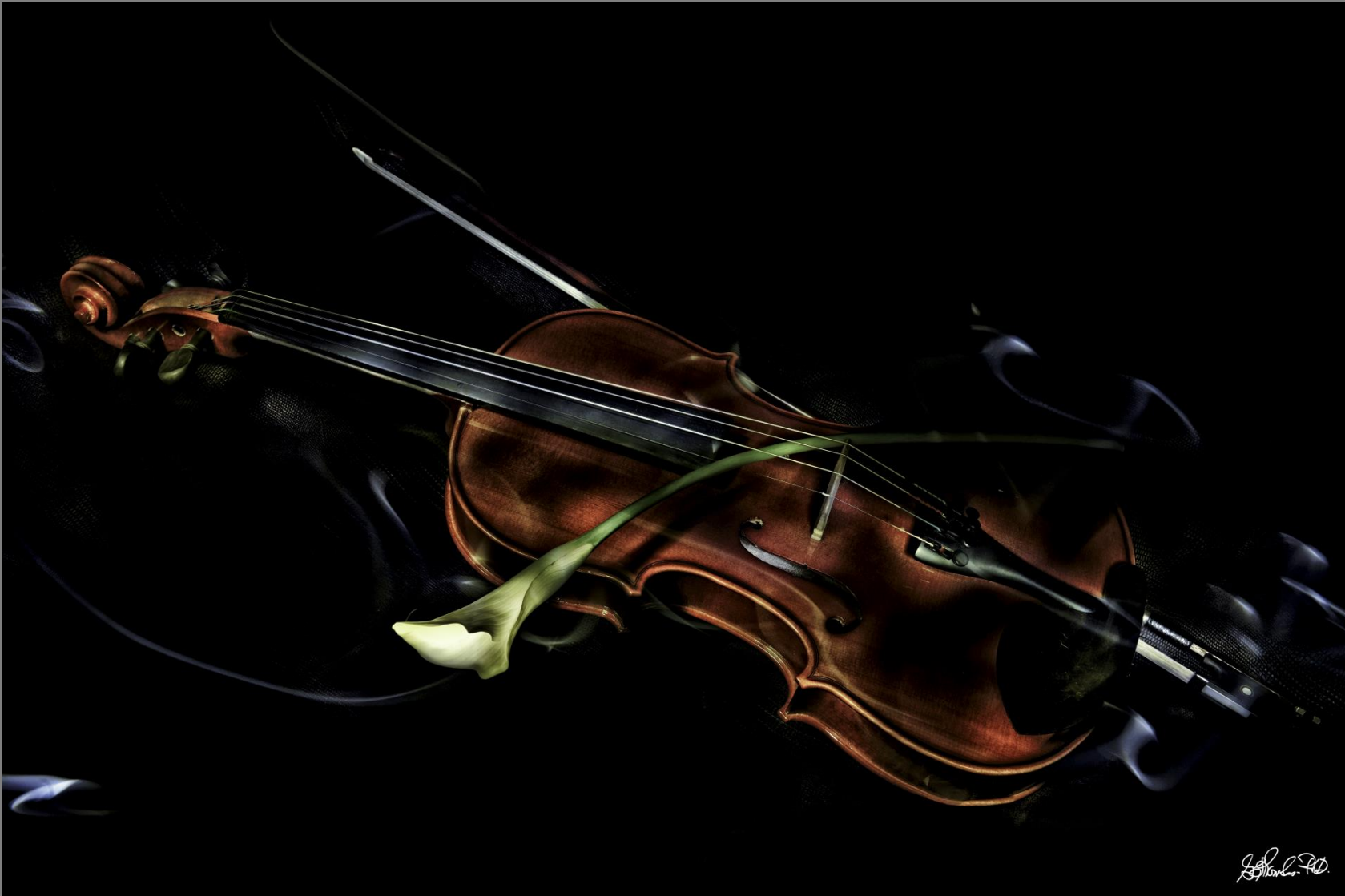


FRUIT BOWL AND WINE: I pre-visualized this composition after looking at a series of simple still-life paintings by Paul Cezanne. Like many of his era he was a master of light.

So I roamed the local antique shops, finding a window here, a bowl there, a bit of boxcar siding and a woven basket. The afternoon light was carefully placed, and the resulting deep shadows were softened with a pen light. Then the images were merged to create a photo in the likeness of a Cezanne.

“For an Impressionist to paint from nature is not to paint the subject, but to realize sensations.” - Paul Cezanne

ISO 100 4.0s f/16 -2.33ev 38mm



BLUE NOTES: I received a picture of my young niece standing with one foot braced against the opposite leg while playing a violin tucked beneath her chin. She was grinning mischievously. I decided then that an image of a violin would be her Christmas present. Days of searching for a used violin, and a trip to the florist for some Cala Lilies, followed by thirty exposures of light traces. Voila!

ISO 100 30.0s f/16 0.0ev 42mm



THE STORYTELLER: " Without thinking too much about it in specific terms, I was showing the America I knew and observed to others who might not have noticed. My fundamental purpose is to interpret the typical American. I am a story teller." - Norman Rockwell Capturing this group at the Iowa State Fair awakened vivid memories of Rockwell's images. ISO 100 30.0s f/16 0.0ev 42mm



READY TO HELP: A farm lad getting ready to show his calf to the judges is engaged in a battle of wills with the critter. The calf looks to be heading left but the boy wants to go right. Following closely nearby throughout the struggle is a brotherly monitor ready to jump in if things get out of hand. His body language says I'm ready, but the crossed arms say I want the youngster to be left to succeed with the challenge on his own.

"The view of life I communicate in my pictures excludes the sordid and ugly. I paint life as I would like it to be."
- Norman Rockwell

ISO 1600 1/80s f/8 -0.67ev 200mm



MOM'S FAVORITE: At the annual hot air balloon fest I captured this moment. The juxtaposition of the stern mom in her Hawaiian shirt re-directing her oblivious bubble-blowing son, given his shirt, made me suppress a chuckle since I was within earshot. "I learned to draw everything except glamorous women. No matter how much I tried to make them look sexy, they always ended up looking silly... or like somebody's mother."

- Norman Rockwell

ISO 200 1/500s f/8 -0.33ev 98mm



PERCHERON PRIDE: Attending a draft horse show in my estimation is nearly a life-changing event. That is not to say you will suddenly become someone you weren't before, but you will come away with a sense of amazement at the enormous size and gentleness of these creatures. Equally amazing are the lengths employed to groom and display these beauties - woven manes, manicured hooves, elegant tack and the elegant carriages they pull. An art form in its own right.

ISO 200 1/250s f/10 0.0ev 86mm



TEMPLE ARCH: In the midst of a downpour familiar objects become blurred impressions open to whatever one's imagination might conjure. The only substance left in this image is a suspension arch and what seems to be a city skyline. The foreground, after some study might suggest the outlines of a pagoda temple.

ISO 400 1/100s f/11 +0.67ev 85mm



PEPPERMINT DROPS: Raindrops on the window are like distorted mirror reflections while behind them are the unmistakable colors and forms of early Crabapple blossoms. In this image I can imagine a taste of tangy peppermint flavor. A tasty impression of spring's joyous offerings.

ISO 800 1/80s f/8 -0.67ev 105mm



MOUNTAIN MAN: On this whirlwind re-visit to the south-central Rockies the weather was not very welcoming. It could have been a message from nature that this was not a place I should be, or it could have been more likely bad timing. Despite the rainy days I came away with some images that are unusual in some respects. In this capture I immediately glimpsed a cloud formation that impressed me as the facial features of a bearded mountain man. Even now, a decade later I find the image haunting.

ISO 100 1/20s f/16 -0.67ev 22mm



COTTONWOOD PASS STORM CLEARING: One of the most rewarding captures of this re-visit to the Rockies came about as I was just wandering across Cottonwood Pass waiting for the storm to clear. The distant mountain range coupled with the rain-glistening s-curve is mildly reminiscent of the Ansel Adams photo of the Snake River and the Grand Tetons, particularly when I render it in black and white. But in this case I prefer the original color rendering. ISO 100 multi f/16 0.0ev 32mm



SPRING DREAMSCAPE: It's all in how you arrange the thing... the careful balance of the design is the motion.
- Andrew Wyeth

The dawn was coming with an awesome, fleeting, light and color and reflection. I could feel the time slipping away, so I decided to allow the gulls to capture the sense of time passing with the motion of their flight.

ISO 100 multi f/16 0.0ev 32mm



COLORFUL NURSERY: With the Robin's simple sweet song we are assured that spring is here or very nearby. As I was wandering through a grove of Crabapple trees looking for blossom opportunities, a female Robin began scolding me with her rapid intense chirps. Looking up I saw the reason for her concern – a low lying nest with three perfect eggs waiting to hatch. I ran to my truck and grabbed my little step stool so as to get above the nest for this capture. After a few clicks me and my stool quickly left the scene and mother Robin's anxieties were allayed.

After I began the post-processing I realized that an unconscious process had been operating in crafting the composition. The full nest was included within the frame. The nest was actually the most significant part of the photo; the eggs and blossoms and leaves were just colorful ambiance. This is why artists speak of the difference between looking and seeing.

The structure of the nest is virtual perfection in complex design and function. It is constructed of hundreds of dried strands that required as many trips to collect them. The bowl is cupped in perfect dimensions to accommodate and protect the eggs and brooding mother. The lip is carefully rounded, reinforced and smoothed; the base flares out in a pyramidal shape for stability. And when all is said and done the pivotal epistle arrives, "Who taught her to do that?"

"Commonplaces never become tiresome. It is we who become tired when we cease to be curious and appreciative."

- Norman Rockwell

"Genius is the ability to renew one's emotions in daily experience." - Paul Cezanne

ISO 100 multi f/16 0.0ev 38mm



WESTERN SKIES: There are a number of scenic driving designations for Iowa roadways, one of which is called Western Skies Scenic Byway. This favorite is located in west central Iowa and features rolling hills and rich farmlands. So it was one morning that I set out to explore this area to find an ideal spot to capture the star trails. By late afternoon I found it and began the process of setup and waiting until finally the process began and this resulted.

ISO 400 55 exposures f/5.0ev 16mm



STAR FALLS: Ordinarily a photographer seeking star trails wants to compose their photo with the North Star as the central point so as to capture the magic of the full earth rotation and a circular exhibition of star movement. One morning, though, as I was exploring a nearby state park I wondered what the effect would be to incorporate the lake spillway in the composition when orienting the composition in a westerly direction. Returning that evening I set up my camera and tripod to explore the morning's pre-visualization. The result was this pleasing juxtaposition of opposing light flows and landscape suspended by rim light and reflections of the final sunset glow and distant town lights. The multiple exposures retained the final sun glow in the lake waters while the sky gave way to darkness.

Critic asks: 'And what, sir, is the subject matter of that painting?'
- 'The subject matter, my dear good fellow, is the light.' - Claude Monet

ISO 400 153exposures f/4 0.0ev 28mm



ROSE APPLE SCEPTRE: Sceptre - A staff or baton borne by a sovereign, as a ceremonial badge or emblem of authority.

“With an apple I will astonish Paris.” - Paul Cezanne

“For an Impressionist to paint from nature is not to paint the subject, but to realize sensations.” - Paul Cezanne

“My eyes were finally opened and I understood nature. I learned at the same time to love it.” - Claude Monet

“What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.” Shakespeare

ISO 100 1/13s f/8 -0.33ev 105mm



SNIFTER OF DAISY ON THE ROCKS: The intoxicatingly fresh scent of a daisy is reminiscent of freshly cut grass. After using this bloom in another setup I couldn't bear to toss it in the trash so I dropped it in a wine glass with a bit of water to keep it alive and fresh. It survived for days; taunting me each time I walked by. So finally I couldn't resist its charms any longer and decided to capture a number of images with it as the centerpiece. This best expresses it ...

ISO 100 55 1/250s f/16 0.0ev 62mm



VANITAS 16.1: "I don't think that there is anything that is really magical unless it has a terrifying quality." - Andrew Wyeth
17th century Vanitas art came into being with the intent of raising awareness of the brevity of life and the inevitability of death. After viewing a number of these paintings I was alternately haunted and inspired by those of Pieter Claesz.
ISO 100 1/250s f/16 0.0ev 62mm



RIDERS ON THE STREAM: One of the most beautiful places in Iowa is the Yellow River Forest State Park. During a late summer visit I hiked over to a favorite vantage point – Paint Creek Overlook. Since my last visit the foliage had almost completely overwhelmed the view. As I was navigating the sketchy footing and narrow viewpoint a couple of equestrians entered the creek to water their horses. Leaning precariously into the foliage with tripod and camera I had just enough time and lens to capture this eloquent summer image.

ISO 100 1/30s f/16 -0.67ev 70mm



RUSTY SKY OVER RISING MISTS: Along the western edge of Iowa is a 200 mile remnant of the last ice age where loess (very fine) soil was blown across the Missouri river forming 640,000 acres of high dunes. The dunes eventually developed topsoil that was capable of supporting farmland which is beautifully terraced. The rich foliage and cropland on rolling hills and terraces of the Loess Hills Scenic Byway in many ways rivals the famed Palouse Scenic Byway of Washington State. This uniquely beautiful area is fortunately close at hand. Call it God's country. ISO 100 multi f/22 0.0ev 70mm



TINKERBELL SUNSET: The 200 mile stretch of scenic land known as the Loess Hills Scenic Byway extends along Iowa's western edge as related earlier. This image was created towards the southern stretch. When I traveled here this day it was my intention to photograph another sunset scene from this same vantage point, but I didn't check my compass for the actual location of the setting sun at this time of year. Maybe it was Tinkerbell who redirected my attention. In any event the Loess Hills once again rewarded my visit with a dynamically beautiful sunset. ISO 100 multi f/22 0.0ev 27mm



SUNBLUSH MORNING: From east to west and north to south Iowa is blushing beautiful. Blushing so because Iowans aren't the kind to brag ... or maybe they don't want too many people to discover what they're missing. As Yogi Berra famously said, "Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded." I know; it's complicated. Like western Iowa the eastern edge is also characterized by rolling hills. But on this side they drop into the Mississippi instead of the Missouri. On this early morning the night's cool air and the cropland's warmth created a stunning hazy sunrise. ISO 100 multi f/16 0.0ev 50mm



SPRINGTIME AT HOGBACK BRIDGE: Madison County's covered bridges are famous all over the world. I once was doing business with several Japanese companies and as a result often hosted visitors. Invariably they would ask to be taken on a tour of the covered bridges as well as John Wayne's birthplace. This capture was made with my portable window which I carry in my pickup for such opportunities to view the countryside Through My Window.

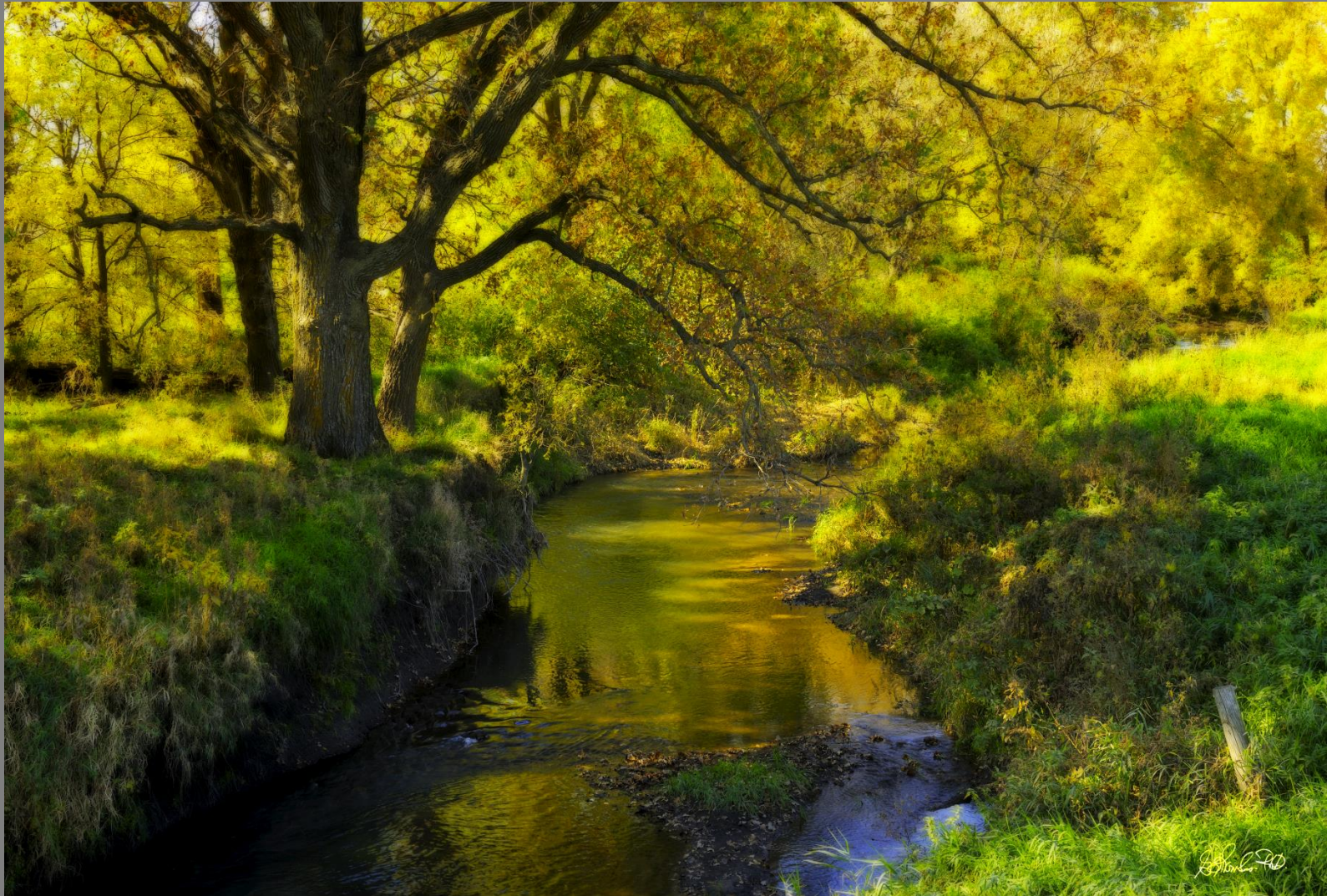
ISO 100 1/100s f/16 -1.0ev 48mm



COUNTRY SUNRISE AND SHANTY LACE: Just a few miles from my bungalow is a lone windmill that is only operational in that the wind vanes continue to rotate. One morning I decided to capture a sunrise Through My Window. On this occasion I decided to add a lace curtain to fill the frame with a homey feeling. I could almost smell the coffee brewing as I looked through my portable window. As an aside, with this technique I have also broken a cardinal rule of photography – the Rule of Thirds. In fact, with my window I have created an alternative rule requiring that each frame of the window contain some major or minor element. You might call it the Rule of Sixths.

“What you have to do is break all the rules.” - Andrew Wyeth

ISO 100 multi f/22 0.0ev 20mm



STREAM OF DELIGHT: In all the collection of Claude Monet I could not find a more idyllic stream setting. The closest to this kind of idyllic setting was in the master's water garden. Don't surmise that I am elevating myself to the master's level. I did not create this location but like Monet I merely captured and optimized a scene of nature's creation. For that I am enormously grateful to have stumbled upon it and to be able to gaze on it on my studio wall when the winter winds are howling outside my studio window.

ISO 100 1/20s f/11 -0.67ev 52mm



ENCHANTED GROVE: "I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape. Something waits beneath it; the whole story doesn't show." - Andrew Wyeth

Indeed Wyeth was correct. There is little to indicate in this scene of a foggy pond and almost leafless grove whether it is Fall, Winter, or early Spring. It is in fact early December and two weeks later the pond was frozen and the grove had a full coat of snow. It was the mystery of the setting that drew me in.

ISO 100 1/4s f/16 -1.33ev 92mm



YOU TALKIN' TO ME?: What was he thinking? I can't begin to know. However and whatever I only know that I was glad that he was on the other side of some very thick glass at the Omaha Zoo. But the eyes and slightly opened lips of this adult male gorilla were without doubt very intense in appearance and hauntingly indecipherable. One might say inscrutable.

ISO 200 1/250s f/5.6 0.0ev 400mm



FISHING SQUADRON: I never tire of watching Pelicans fishing. Whether individually or in a herding squadron like this one they are singular in purpose and skill. I have several captures in which a Pelican has gulped a large fish like a carp but it is positioned the wrong direction in the pouch – they can't swallow a large fish unless the head goes down first. Watching them expand and contract the pouch without a tongue to aid them is fascinating to me, but then I am easily entertained by nature.

ISO 200 1/250s f/8 -0.0ev 135mm



HUNTED AND HUNTER: I almost let out a yelp when I walked into this hunter's cabin and came face to face with this snarling Bobcat. I'm pretty sure it would be hard to sleep soundly with that cat lying about.

This capture was completely candid. The room arrangement and lighting were completely serendipitous and I merely stepped into the scene, bent slightly, pointed my camera, set the exposure and click. It was one of those moments. Post-processing was minimal and the image was cropped.

"I don't think that there is anything that is really magical unless it has a terrifying quality." - Andrew Wyeth

ISO 200 1/250s f/5.6 0.0ev 400mm



SILVER BEAUTY, AZURE SKY: For me this is an image that captures the essence of winter's natural beauty. Winter cold and snow are evident, but also evident is the crisp, clear winter air as depicted by the azure sky. The S-shaped trunk brings the tree to life as if it could speak. One might be reminded of scenes from Lord Of The Rings. Trees speak verrry slowly.

ISO1200 1/60s f/16 + 0.33ev 38mm



DAWN FALLS INTO THE HOLLOW: I first came upon this Loess Hills scene during the warm months and made a mental note to return in winter to capture the alternate seasonal mood. Being drawn to cozy winter scenes is one of my traits as a photographer. I think that it warms me to come upon such a scene when my body is aching from cold. Suddenly I feel transported into the cottage before a wood-burning stove, where the scent of warm bread wafts from the kitchen when it has just been taken from the oven to cool.

ISO 100 1/60s f/16 -1.67ev 100mm



NEVER FORGET: In 2006 on the fifth anniversary of 911 there was an Iowa memorial called “Healing Fields.” In the designated location 2,977 flags bearing yellow ribbons with names and photos of the victims were displayed. On the day of this capture a light rain was falling – teardrops from heaven. This is my small memorial for those immense sacrifices. “I think one’s art goes as far and as deep as one’s love goes.” - Andrew Wyeth

LOOSE ENDS

"Of course, there will always be those who look only at technique, who ask 'how', while others of a more curious nature will ask 'why'. Personally, I have always preferred inspiration to information". – Man Ray

MY CAMERA BAG: (partial list - most frequently used)

Nikon D3X (2): I am satisfied that no subsequent sequels, to date, supplant the superb results of this earlier flagship.
Nikon D700 (2): Still provides very satisfactory enlargement resolution with only 12mpx – exceeds some 24mpx DX crop sensors.
Nikon D3300: Coupled with the Tamron 150-600 for wildlife rivals the Nikon 600mm VR.
Nikkor 24-70 f/2.8 (2): Always on a tripod so VR not needed.
Nikkor 70-200 f/2.8 VR II (2): As with the 24-70 essential backup.
Nikkor 14-24 f/2.8
Nikkor 24-120 VR f/4
Nikkor 16mm f/2.8
Nikkor 16-35 VR f/4
Nikkor Micro 105 VR f/2.8
Nikkor Micro 200 f/2.8
Nikkor 200-400 VR f/4
Tamron 150-600 VC f/5-6.3
Gitzo Tripods with Really Right Stuff Ballheads (2)
Nikon GP-1A GPS
Fujifilm IS Pro (Infrared modified body)

"I can't work completely out of my imagination, I must put my foot in a bit of truth, and then I can fly free." – Andrew Wyeth

"When I judge art, I take my painting and put it next to a God made object like a tree or flower. If it clashes, it is not art." - Paul Cezanne

"Everyone discusses my art and pretends to understand, as if it were necessary to understand, when it is simply necessary to love."
- Claude Monet

"The sky calls me. The wind calls me. The moon and stars call me. The dense groves call me. The dance of the fountain calls me. Smiles call me, tears call me. A faint melody calls me. The morn, noon and eve call me. Everyone is searching for a playmate. Everyone is calling me, 'Come, come!' - Sri Chinmoy.