

Series Number 6

One More Look

1988

Nine Photographs

Essay - July, 2024

Michael Nye

One More Look

My parents had five sons and one daughter. As I write this, both my parents have died. I am the luckiest because I was born in the middle, the third oldest, which gave me a particular perspective. Every time any of my brothers or sister would visit our parents, my mother would cry when they left. Driving away dissolves in a moment. To take ONE MORE LOOK as I was leaving is as simple as turning your head around again.

My wife Naomi, was invited to Oregon to be writer in residence for a rural library project through the Oregon library system for three months in 1988. We drove cross-country and followed, as much as possible, the Oregon trail. Our two-year old son, Madison in the backseat, sang along with Bruce Springsteen, "One Step Up". He memorized every word and demanded that we play the song over and over.

*Woke up this morning, the house was cold
Checked out the furnace, she wasn't burning
Went out and hopped in my old Ford
Hit the engine but she ain't turning . . .
We're the same sad story, that's a fact
One step up and two steps back*

How we interpret what we see is often related to how we feel, our moods and temperament. The emigrants on the Oregon trail must have felt the, stepping backwards as they moved forward. As we drove, we read emigrant stories out loud. Words can't satisfy an appetite, but vision can. Gold was heavier then. Crystal and fossils embedded along the river's edge were tiny mirrors pushing them forward. ONE MORE LOOK is as simple as turning your head around again.

We drove across the state of Idaho and crossed the border into Oregon. Who wouldn't stop and stare at the drama of the Columbia River? We were stunned. How can a river have such a wild imagination? (Even considering that over the last century it has been dammed and tamed by private interests.) Captain William Clark took ONE MORE LOOK when he wrote in 1805, describing the 'Short Narrows' of the Columbia River:

" . . the horrid appearance of the agitated, gut swelling water was boiling and whoring in every direction. . "

Driving alone, along the Oregon coastline on Highway 101 from Cannon Beach south, the whole world was a shimmering, white dreamy fog. Dampness lowered and uncovered itself. The ocean holds so much water. I would randomly pull off the road and park, then hike into the thick darkened forest. Each hike was a window into a continent of trees and the undergrowth's layered history. On one such random look, I came across what appeared to be a shadow of an old road. *"Maybe, I thought..."* I followed its tender crease down into a valley. There, finally, in front of me, were huge wooden trestles that supported an old wooden bridge crossing a deep gorge. On the floor of this bridge was soil. Out of this soil on the bridge, trees grew and reached high into the forest's canopy. This is what time can do with a forest. How many men, how many days, how much resolution created this scene? The ocean up close is a rumble and roar, but as the sound moves into a forest, it's a sizzling, a whispering arising from the earth. I brought my wife Naomi and our friend Kim Stafford to this spot for ONE MORE LOOK. We imagined that it must have been a logging camp active in the 1920s. Beyond the bridge was a round grassy mound and as we dug, we discovered buried garbage relics. ONE MORE LOOK is as simple as turning your head around again.

SERIES 6: "One More Look"

This small, very simple series of photographs is about annexation. The act of appropriating a second image advances spaciousness, a breeze that blows toward a larger perspective. Each scene is two separate photographs. They connect at one of their corners. The first photograph, (the first look) is on the bottom. The second photograph, (One More Look) is on the top. These scenes, like vision itself, has many sides.



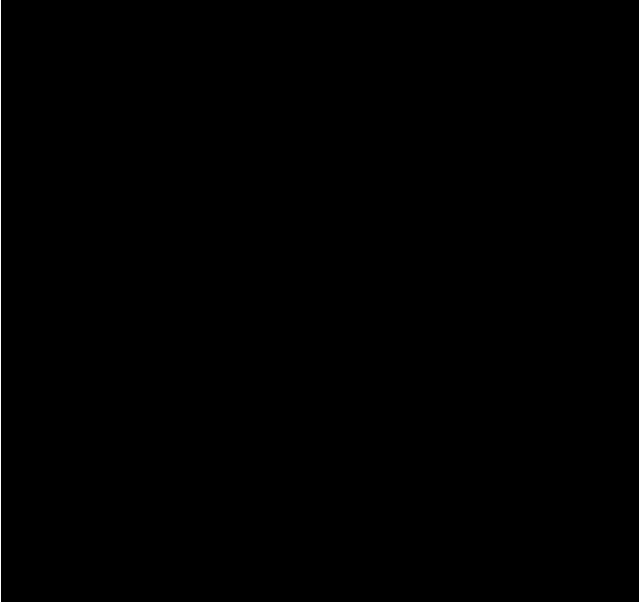
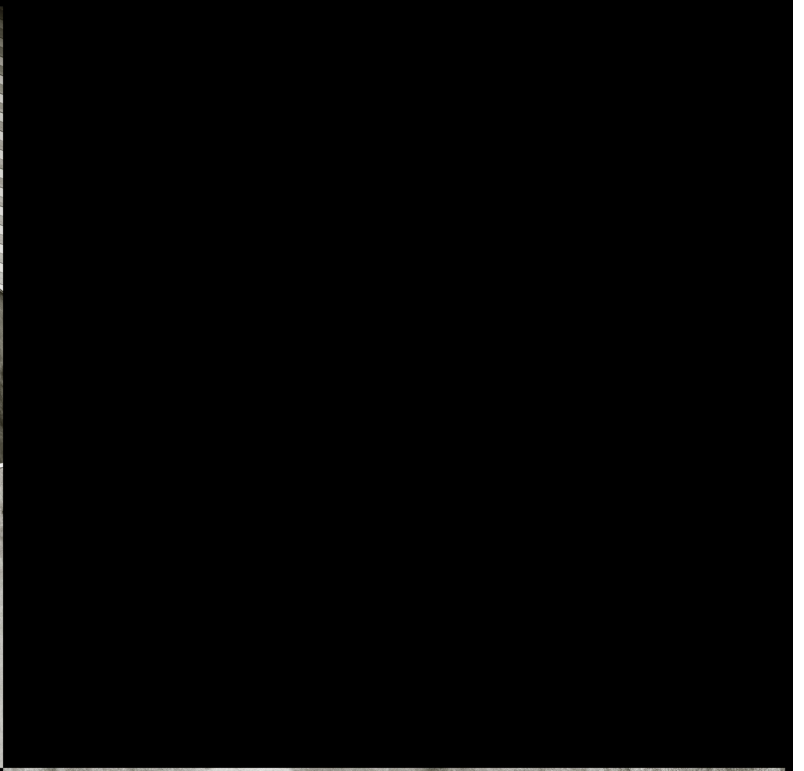
This series was an attempt to visualize an idea, a notion of turning my head around as I was leaving for just One More Look. Where do the edges lead? Why didn't I see the second image the first time? One More Look is to look again, to look around, to look closer, to look in-between. It is attention that separates and connects the two images. Where will this simple idea of a photographic series tumble and rest? What would I find out by turning my head around, for One More Look?

The cliffs protecting the wild Pacific Ocean along the twisting Oregon coast take One More Look before darkness arrives at night. I exhibited this small series of photographs twice. Each time someone, a curator, a family member, a stranger would say, *"Mikey, this series doesn't work."* Or, *"Michael, it might be best not to show this series anymore."* Several said, *"I really don't like the way the photographs look."*

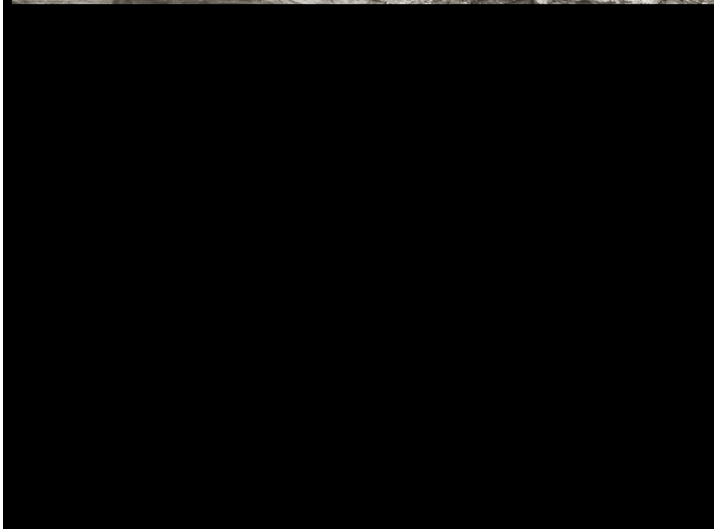
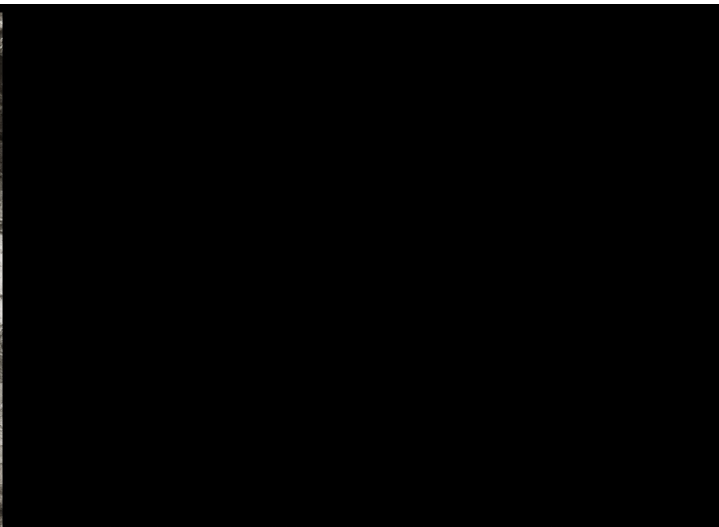
This series of photographs has no ambitions. These photographs shouldn't have poor self-esteem, but they do. They don't want to be owned or traded. They are shy and would rather live alone in dark places or in boxes dreaming of distant connections, third cousins, go-betweens, and early morning alliances.

July, 2024

* * * * *



One More Look - One



One More Look - Two



One More Look - Three



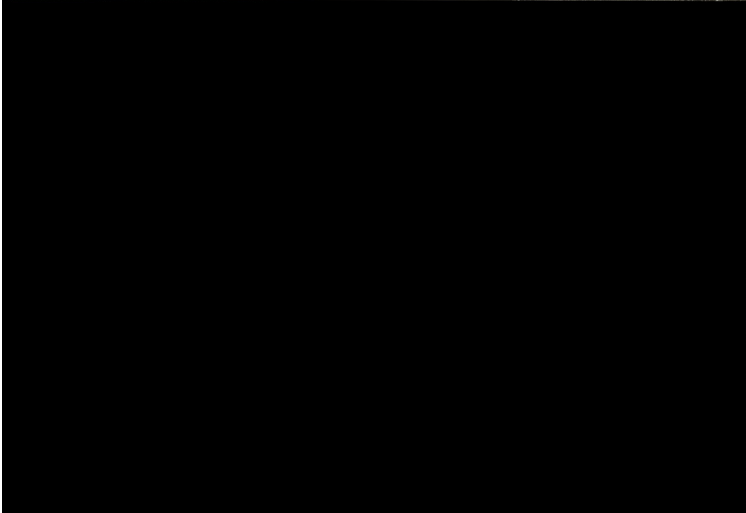
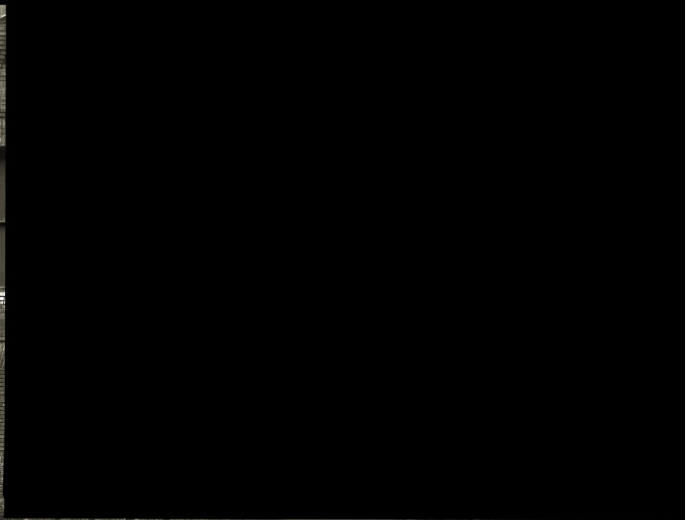
One More Look - Four



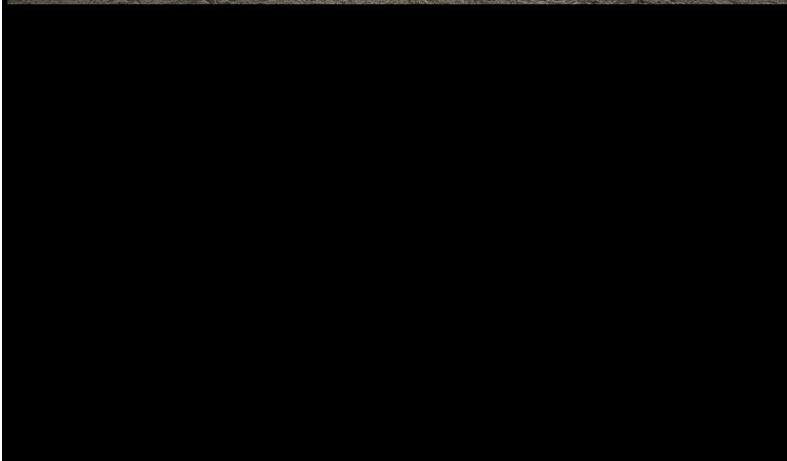
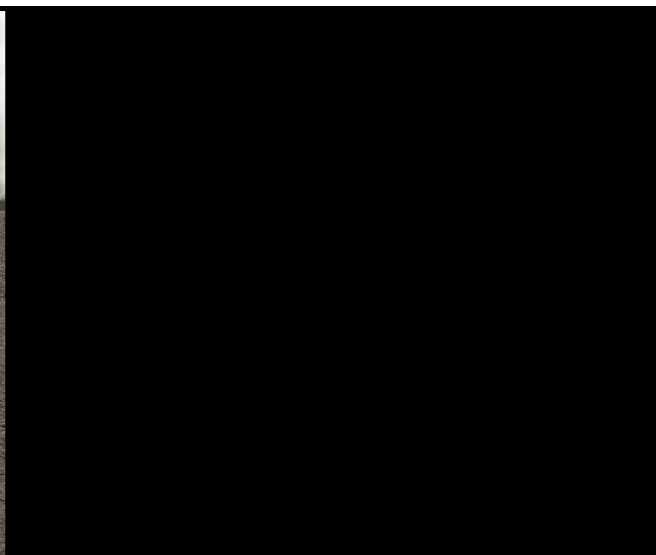
One More Look - Five



One More Look - Six



One More Look - Seven



One More Look - Eight



One More Look - Nine