

Project Introduction

Twenty-Four Series: Photographs & Essays:

Leaving a childhood on the gulf coast of Texas, where sports was important, then finding myself moving to Texas Tech University, West Texas with larger changing skies impacted my consciousness in life. It is where I became most curious of other peoples' stories, their hopes and their realities. I discovered new perspectives without judgments on my part. The early good and evil dichotomy opened up into a consciousness with plenty of room with alternative perspectives about the world. I played tennis on scholarship, studied history and participated in student government (senate) as a student at Texas Tech University. I will always be grateful to your campus and faculty for giving me a deeper sense of teamwork, time and a spaciousness of possibilities.

Every photograph holds a secret. The twenty-three series of photographs in this collection were made between 1983-2001 and the essays were written in 2024-2025. Photographs specialize in time travel, moving from now to then. The language of "looking" goes deeper than surfaces.

The twenty-three series of photographs and essays are diverse in subject matter. *Siberia, Russia – Labrador, Newfoundland – A Desert in Texas – Cattle Auction in San Antonio – A Rainforest in Hawaii – Kurdish War in Iraq*. There are also conceptional photographic series including: *– In Between – Words & Images – Saints – Against the Glass – Unplanned & Unforeseen – and Not so Powerful*.

What connects these series is less about geography or foreign travel and more about wanting to understand individuals, communities and places, ideas and realities unlike my own. Randomness and intentionality stroll hand in hand.

Over a three-year period during the late 1980s, I wrote letters to four photographers I deeply admired: "*Can I visit with you about your work and about the nature of photography?*" Everyone wrote back saying, "*YES*". I met Ray Metzker in New York City. He told me as a directive, "*Don't be careful*". I met Corlotta Corpron in Denton, Texas – she said, "*When you fall in love with something, it is all you see. I fell in love with light*". I met Manuel Alvarez Bravo twice in Mexico City. He told me, "*Photograph what you care about.*" I met Frederick Sommer, Prescott, Arizona in the middle of a heavy snowstorm. He wondered out loud, "*Think about verbs, not nouns.*" The attached body of work, *Photographs & Essays* carries these imperatives as an echo or a whisper.

Photography is not just about *Photographs*. These photographic series are also about what is experienced, imagined, learned and remembered inside and outside the borders of the photograph. How does anyone photograph the serious remoteness of landscapes or the emotional longing many feel and share? The act of photographing is also the act of *Not Forgetting*. In the middle of the night, in the darkroom with a soft orange glow of the safelight, photographs resting in running water are owners of their own light.

Working as a photographer has always been about setting an idea or question or attention into motion to discover what photographs – experiences - revelations might emerge from that hopeful endeavor. Like rain water swirling down a valley, where will it end up? “*Light and dark*” are invitations to critical thinking. “*A flash of light*” in our peripheral vision is an exclamation mark. Longing, fragility and reciprocity are symbols in the same way as satisfaction or delight. Every person, every place is a map to somewhere else.

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Note:

I used photographic film, processed and printed in my darkroom. Most of the photographs were made using a large format 8x10” or 5x7” View Cameras.

My four long-term Photography & Audio traveling exhibitions (not a part of submitted Photographic Series & Essays) have traveled to over 130 cities around the country.

See michaelyn.org

Children of Children (Teenage pregnancy)

Fine Line, Mental Health/Mental Illness

About Hunger & Resilience (Hunger)

My Heart is Not Blind – On Blindness & Perception.

The Traveling Exhibition, *My Heart Is Not Blind* - is also a book published by Trinity University Press. 2020