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# INSIDE STUDIO 280

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*Art is like a treasure map to the secrets of living.*



When artists share a bit of their secrets it makes experiencing the art so much more powerful. Sharing some technical aspects here and some historical background there is just enough to invite the viewer inside and allow some guidance. Much in the same way it is understandable that some details should remain hidden so the viewer can make sense of the piece according to his or her experiences. Because I noticed the importance of this concept early on as a student, this e-zine was developed to reach out to other likeminded people and to share information. After all, we continue to grow as artists and individuals, so why not do so together?

In the backyard a blossoming tree stands in front of a tree house. Shoptalk: 35mm DSLR with Lensbaby.

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## Making a Treasure Map

During Christmastime 2017 I was contacted by a schoolmate, whom I've spoken with very little in the passing years, inquiring about participating in a collaborative photography project. She proposed to have a year long conversation between her and me with only photographs via email, and only one photograph per person every other week. We started the first week of 2018 and continued all the way through the year resulting in an already edited body of work consisting of 52 photographs.

Lisa's intent with this project was to rekindle a relationship with her own art making process knowing she needed encouragement with some kind of structure. I agreed to participate without hesitation not thinking at the time I also needed a change. At first I desperately wanted to use words with my photographs due to our previous minimal contact, but as the project continued the idea of using words was illogical. It was a wonderful struggle to say something in only one photograph and then to interpret the photographic response thereby producing a reply! I think we are kindred spirits, because the year-long conversation seemed to flow like an untamed stream skimming over rocks, parting through grasses and settling in quiet spots.



Working on a book layout for a photographic collaboration.

This project produced a chronological map where Lisa and myself travelled both together and separately. We agreed that when it ended we were a little lost. I think we shared something really profound that maybe we haven't even fully realized yet.

## En Route to Adventure

Knowing the history of the artist is important to fully recognize what their art is communicating. That's the fun part of looking at art. You've looked at it, you've read it according to your level of proficiency, then what? Then the fun begins in a choose-your-own-adventure style of decoding what it is. In the book *Diana and Nikon*, the author, Janet Malcolm, begins with examples of how influential personal life is to making art photography. Upon reading Charis Wilson's memoir of her

life with Edward Weston, which seemed sincere, I noticed she was quick to correct certain anecdotes Ben Maddow published in his biography of Weston; apparently the only biography on Weston, which according to Wilson, is full of false information. But is what Wilson writes trustworthy? There is a need to consider the source when researching.

Lisa and I met 17 years ago while attending an intensive 9-month long photography program. All of the students shared some kind of connection there possibly from the demanding schedule and curriculum, or simply from the scenery and atmosphere. Whatever it was, we were under its spell and able to easily eat, drink, and be photography. The lingering effects from that experience was

*"The camera 'sees' the world with a poet's or a dreamer's loaded selectivity..."*

- JANET MALCOLM

unearthed in the collaboration Lisa and I recently completed. Not only was it significant to reconnect with her by way of photographs, but to reconnect with a fellow alumna from a school that was so immersive. Because of this history we share, the photographic conversation told an uninterrupted story based on allegorical subject matter and mindful compositions. The year-long journey allowed me to slow down in a different way and converse in a manner that allowed me to rediscover photography's compelling nature. I used the camera as I would a pen. After talking about the

project this past January, the thought of continuing it came up; to maintain the conversation in the weekly schedule we organized. But we quickly decided the magic was over and could not keep going at the level we generated. However, as time moves along I believe we could pick it back up in a few years.

## Discovery

While attending an American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP) workshop in early 2002 I won a raffle and was able to pick my prize. As I perused all the goodies on the table a large book stood out with a cover displaying a familiar name overlaid on a close up photograph of a pepper. I remember thinking it would

behoove me to select this item above everything else, but not sure why I thought this. Looking through this Edward Weston book now after reading Wilson's memoir and Beth Gates Warren's accounts of Weston's time with Margrethe Mather, I can identify with the photographs much better, despite the few quotes I've come across from his photographer sons Brett and Cole. Weston's personal life and history really did seem to influence his photography. Just as our own history affects our present. I've discovered that art is like a treasure map to the secrets of living.

*"The photographer can function as long as there is light; his work - his adventure - is a rediscovery of the world in terms of light."*

- EDWARD WESTON



LF Week 14

Wilson wrote her memoir later in life, which may be cause for embellishing certain reports, but perhaps that is the best way to tell stories: wait for a significant amount of time to pass to let those experiences marinate until one is willingly and unabashedly ready to share. Similarly with Sally Mann's lyrical memoir *Hold Still* and Sylvia Plachy's ephemeral recollection in *Self Portrait with Cows Going Home*, the willingness to expose the secrets that make up how and why artists create is such a valuable treat to the audience.



JK Week 15



LF Week 16

The collaboration project with Lisa allowed me to learn a lot about myself as a photographic artist. The amount of effort and consideration each week was demanding yet beneficial to how I was creating other art at the time. With the lack of communication Lisa and I had prior to this adventure, each photograph had to be filled with information in order for us to catch up with one another, not to mention to help the progression of the conversation. Having learned a certain way to see compositionally and talk photographically in the school we both attended, the images radiated a certain kind of mood we were able to work with selectively. If I wasn't mindful with the entire process I would have missed many nuances that were then, and are still now, so very delicate, and what makes art, well, art.



JK Week 17

# SIDEBAR

## Coconut Bread

Another no-knead bread recipe for you. This one comes from the book *Bread Toast Crumbs* by Alexandra Stafford. Although it is extremely yummy plain, it gets even better when toasted and spread with peanut butter, fruity jam or just regular butter.

- 1 cup unsweetened shredded coconut, toasted
- 4 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 1/2 tsp instant yeast
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut milk, well mixed
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1/4 cup melted coconut oil



In a large bowl whisk together flour, salt, sugar, and yeast. Add toasted coconut and toss to coat. In a separate bowl, whisk together coconut milk and boiling water. Add the mixture to the flour, followed by the oil. Using a rubber spatula, mix

until liquid is absorbed and ingredients form a sticky dough ball. Cover bowl with a damp tea towel or beeswax and set aside in a warm spot to rise for 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease two 1-quart oven safe bowls with softened butter. Deflate dough then transfer it to greased bowls. Let dough rise in a warm spot for 15 to 25 minutes or until the top of dough crowns the rims of the bowls.

Transfer bowls to oven and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until golden all around. Remove bowls from oven and turn the loaves out onto cooling racks. Cool at least 15 minutes before cutting.

## Review Session

Street Photography to Surrealism  
The Golden Age of Photography in France, 1900-1945  
February 9 - May 5, 2019  
The Frick Pittsburgh

There are a lot of gems in this exhibit. The first time I experienced it I started at the end. Right through that doorway was a direct view on the opposite wall of **Henri Cartier-Bresson's** decisive moment photograph of the man jumping over the puddle. Jaw dropped, eyebrows raised, and breathless I made a beeline to it and gaped. It was my first time viewing an original print of this important photograph. In a different room a little corner was dedicated to just a couple of **Jacques Henri Lartigue's** photos not displayed in the usual way but actual cutouts from his contact sheet. Oh, the excitement!

There were so many more gems throughout the multi room exhibition. For instance, little introductions to lesser known photographers of this era, and many original prints on a variety of now retired photographic paper. It was a very enjoyable stroll through a genre of photography that helped define photography as an art.

## Reading List

*Margrethe Mather & Edward Weston* | Beth Gates Warren

- In my quest to learn more about Weston's pictures, I explored his love life and came across a gem named **Margrethe**. A complex, or maybe not, woman eager to make a presence in the art world.

*Through Another Lens* | Charis Wilson

- This book by Weston's second wife was very candid and loving. Wilson shared so many **private stories and insights** about Weston and herself that it left me satisfied in the understanding of Weston's photographs: why and how he made them. After reading this I decided to not read the "official" biography on Weston by Maddow.

*Photoklassik International* | Marwan El-Mozayen editor-in-chief

- A thick magazine full of everything **analog** in the world of film photography. To those who think "film is dead" this magazine is just a tiny bit of proof that film is certainly not dead. This international version is recent as of January 2019 and includes tips, technical information, photographers, history... YUM!

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# ARCHIVE

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## *Journey to 30*

from 2006

It seemed that turning 30 years old was more of a milestone than any other age. Life events probably defined that at the time with the stress of presenting my graduate thesis, figuring out what's next after graduating, and deciding whether or not to break up with the boyfriend all happening at once. I decided to turn 30 in a natural hot spring near the top of a mountain in the state I was born. It took some preplanning, a few plane rides, driving on rugged roads hoping mountain passes were open from the recent snowfall, meeting new people, and determined quietude from the stress I left back at school. Looking back on

it now, I realize it was more than just a birthday. It was a solid transition from one life to the next. It wasn't about my upcoming thesis or finding a job or even about that boyfriend. It was about stamping that time card and collecting the next. It was about a pivotal moment.



## Shoptalk

Camera: Holga  
Film: Kodak Portra  
Photo paper: Fujicolor Crystal Archive Type II  
Printing: Chromogenic prints / RA-4 process







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# OUTSIDE STUDIO 280

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With what topics do you find yourself continuing research? Perhaps an ethnic recipe in a magazine sparks interest in understanding that particular culture better. Or it could be a casual conversation with a coworker where you find yourself saying, "Oh yeah, I'll have to look that up." Maybe the most obvious place is online when you travel down that rabbit hole of search engines. Considering all the routes at your disposal, realize the variety of mystery out there and edit appropriately. Then share some of your own secrets, but only enough to allow others to continue their research.



Standing in front of Henri Cartier-Bresson's photograph *Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare, Paris*; one of two known master prints. Photo by D.Dulick

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## Thank you

A continuous artist statement, Inside Studio 280 is a quarterly report on creativity and constructive endeavors in and around the world I share with you. I hope you enjoy it and that you find evident beauty this season. Look for the summer edition around August 5, 2019.

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Spring 2019 | Share some treasures. | [jessicakalmar.com](http://jessicakalmar.com)