

STUDIO 280

Visual Art | Baking | Jessica Kalmar | Knitting | Sewing



Side Bar

There is something about the bare trees and the angle of the sun in fall that inspires me to make photographs. Combine this with the Carnegie Museum of Art's newest Talbot exhibit, and I'm all set up for a winter of making art! | Reading about wine and Talbot warms my heart during this chilly fall, while keeping it real with a classic horror novel. | *Reviews* is a new section in the Side Bar. This time it's about Brooks Jensen and his inspiring podcast. | I've been busy making embroidered greeting cards and woven bookmarks for the PCA Holiday Shop sale, but for myself it's cloth napkins and another pair of knitted socks. | The holiday season calls for two recipes to be shared with you - cranberries and cheesecake. | Please enjoy the newsletter!

“On the art of fixing a shadow.” - William Henry Fox Talbot

Some things are destined to be taken for granted. Once in a while we ponder the origins of these things but then continue our consumption of them. Electricity, indoor plumbing, air and car travel... Some things we contemplate about more than others and for me it's photography. This phenomenon is so easy to take for granted today as we have our smart phones, tablets, and computers readily available. It is simple to *take pictures* these days, but I think it might be harder to *make photographs*.

When I taught Introduction to Photography at Robert Morris University, a class about using the 35mm film camera with darkroom lab work, I gave a short lecture on the history of photography on the first day. To get the class started I asked the students when they thought photography was invented. You could see the gears turning in their brains, their brows furrowed as intense thinking commenced. The answers were all over the place. Although that quick presentation reviewed the historical understanding of sun printing, light-sensitive properties of silver salts, and camera obscuras, I mostly lingered with Talbot's negative/positive process from the 1830s. As you see it was necessary to dwell on Talbot and his “natural magic.”

Books



It | Stephen King

- A coming-of-age story with our own private monsters.

Wine. All the Time. | Marisa A. Ross

- Hilarious and factual - a perfect crash course on everything wine.

Specimens and Marvels; William Henry Fox Talbot and the Invention of Photography | Aperture

- An excellent primer to who Talbot was and how he contributed to the invention of photography.

Fox Talbot, Photographer | Robert Lassam

- Lots and lots of photographs to understand Talbot's vision.

Capturing the Light | Roger Watson & Helen Rappaport

- The story of Daguerre and Talbot separately and together makes a quick and interesting read.

Reviews



LensWork Podcast |

Brooks Jensen

Originally started as an audio-blog, this podcast has been going strong since early 2004. I've been a listener since early 2007 and have gathered honest, viable, and inspiring information. A photographer himself, Mr. Jensen's approach is about the craft and importance of the image. This podcast relates to one being an artist who is a photographer. He is able to explain in words what the photographer is thinking and should be thinking; and includes inspirational ideas, directional tips for creative blocks, fulfilling interviews... No matter where you are creatively, this is truly a gem.

daily.lenswork.com/podcast

"How charming it would be if it were possible to cause these natural images to imprint themselves durable and remain fixed upon the paper! And why should it not be possible? I asked myself."

- Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature*, 1844



iPhone image of 4x5 view camera set up, November 2017

"The art life is the life of now."

This quote from Brooks Jensen summarizes the experience of using all the senses on a daily basis and not waiting to fully engage. Seeing and listening internally and externally, smelling, tasting, touching: all beneficial to inspiration. For instance, being captivated by how light passes through a water glass or relishing in the warmth of the sun through a window on a chilly day. Inspiration comes easily to me. My only problem with that is having so much swirling in my mind and not enough time to fully realize these ideas. Even though writing everything down on paper helps tremendously, sometimes I cannot act on the details of those ideas.

Knitting / Sewing

The first attempt of [knitting](#) toe-up socks was a success! This pattern included Judy's Magic Cast-on, Fish Lips Kiss Heel, and Jeny's Surprisingly Stretchy Bind-off.



[Sewing](#) cloth napkins from quilter's fat quarters with a rolled hem is a quick and easy project. A fat quarter is an 18"x22" piece of pre-cut fabric, of which I cut down to an 18"x18" square. The hem is created by using a rolled hem pressure foot for the sewing machine - a method I'm still learning.



"I have not been able this summer to give more than a desultory and divided attention to the subject - I had and still have the intention of making a little photographic tour, in search of objects more picturesque than my own immediate neighborhood supplies."

- Talbot, letter to Sir John Herschel, 1840

Talbot worked tirelessly on his photographic invention from 1833 to what he called "the brilliant summer of 1835." Then production gradually faded until Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre's invention was announced in 1839. As soon as he got word of the successful daguerreotype, Talbot went back to work, with a bit more gusto this time around I like to think, and successfully created his negative/positive process, of which contemporary photography is based on.

Whatever path we choose in life is bound to evolve. There are plenty of directions to follow, but they are all on the same course. Talbot's life was filled with perpetual learning of all sorts of topics that when combined, as if in one huge text, make sense of his generous contribution to photography. Sometimes it seems we need to act right away, but most times our own speed limit of choice is the best one. And maybe one of our wheels will be squeaky enough to be noticed.

Inspiration is Everywhere

It takes time to make a photograph. Even if one is keen on understanding composition and finding the decisive moment, there is mental preparedness to account for. In lieu of the *Archive* section, these recent "words of light" are what I want to share with you. The fall season steals away our time with holidays and preparing for winter, that we often miss some of the peacefulness that quietly lurks around us.

Baking

Cranberries - the holiday staple, in whatever form, that always seems to show up from Thanksgiving through the New Year festivities. When the task falls on me to make cranberries I always try a new recipe. Here is this year's:

1 C fresh orange juice
 1/3 C dried apricots
 1 C sugar
 1 pound fresh or frozen cranberries, rinsed
 2 T fresh lime juice

Combine orange juice and apricots in large saucepan. Bring to a simmer, then cover and turn off the heat. Let it sit about 20 minutes. Add the sugar and cranberries, and bring all to a simmer. Cook, stirring often, until cranberries *pop* and comes to the consistency we all know and love. Remove from heat and stir in the lime juice. Can make this up to 3 days ahead, storing it in a tightly covered container in the refrigerator. Serves 6.



Recipe from the book *Almost Vegetarian Entertaining* | Diana ShawOop

"And this led me to reflect on the inimitable beauty of the pictures of nature's painting which the glass lens of the Camera throws upon the paper in its focus - fairy pictures, creations of a moment and destined as rapidly to fade away."

- Talbot, reflecting on his experience using the camera obscura foreshadowing his first photographic experiments, 1844



The garden is now home to any caterpillars or bees who need a safe place to hide until spring. The only thing edible to us now are the walking onions. That and the photographic qualities some of the untrimmed flowers possess.



Baking continued

Peppermint Mini Cheesecakes - a little holiday twist on this basic but decadent treat.

Crust:

1/3 C graham cracker crumbs (4 full crackers)
1 T brown sugar
1 T butter, melted

Filling:

1 package 8-ounce cream cheese, softened (I use Neufchâtel, but it's up to you)
1/4 C white sugar
1/8 tsp peppermint extract
1/4 tsp vanilla extract
2 peppermint candies, crushed

Preheat oven to 325°F. Grease 6-cup muffin pan.

In a medium bowl mix crust ingredients. Measure a rounded tablespoon for each muffin cup. Bake in preheated oven for 5 minutes. Remove and cool.

Beat together the filling ingredients. Fill each cup 3/4 full. Bake for 25 minutes. Cool completely in a pan before removing. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Recipe adapted from a handful of other recipes, and tweaked for a quick and yummy dessert.



The latest photography exhibit at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh is titled *William Henry Fox Talbot and the Promise of Photography*. Clearly this has been a source of great inspiration for me!

So much so that I located my glass plate negatives made in 2005 (then regrettably stored in a box soon after) and chose six to print. It was a little heartbreaking to work with these fragile objects that had been neglected for so long, but the resulting prints were exquisite enough to breathe life back into them.



For quite a few months I've been thinking about making photographs on our property with the 4x5 view camera (a large format camera with bellows that produces 4"x5" negatives). Inspiration didn't click until finally, on a warm fall day, I made four exposures in the bright sunlight surrounded by bare trees.





Carnegie Museum of Art

photo by Kamila Sych

Inspiration



Carnegie Museum of Art | Gallery One

William Henry Fox Talbot and the Promise of Photography

On view through February 11, 2018

foxtalbot.dmu.ac.uk

A catalog of almost 10,000 letters written to and from Talbot.

*"...tell Mamma & every body I write to to keep my letters & not burn them."**- Talbot wrote in a letter to his stepfather in 1808 when Talbot was just 8 years old.*

Pittsburgh Center for the Arts Holiday Shop

1047 Shady Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Open through December 30, 2017

M/T/W 10am-5pm, TH/F/Sat 10am-7pm, Sun 12pm-5pm

jessicakalmar@mac.com

Thank You

If you have any questions, or want / can give further information on any of the content in this newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact me. I hope your holiday season is filled with honest smiles, and you have a good start to winter! Look for the next Studio 280 Newsletter around February 6, 2018.

Fall 2017 | Happy Holidays! | jessicakalmar.com