

STUDIO TIME

Visual Art | Baking | Jessica Kalmar | Knitting | Sewing

What's New?

While reading the short stories from *Four Past Midnight*, some self-help-in-promotion books snuck in there. They've set the tone for the year and this newsletter. | Emotional films seem to have the best soundtracks. That's how I found Martin Phipps.

coolmusicltd.com. | A new break through in knitting! Also, a repeated pajama pattern is sewn, this time for David. | Bread recipes reigned and granola makes a debut this winter. | Please enjoy the newsletter!

Music

The Keeping Room soundtrack
Martin Phipps
The Glimpses

Books

The Artist's Guide by Jackie Battenfield
I'd Rather Be In The Studio! by Alyson B. Stanfield
How to Think like Leonardo da Vinci by Michael J. Gelb

10 Second Artist Statement

The first few seconds upon meeting somebody are the ones that make that lasting impression. In the book *I'd rather be in the studio!* the author remarks on this and suggests summarizing your artist statement to one sentence that takes about 10 seconds to verbalize. I rewrote my artist statement and made it something that can change as my art changes but still remain the same as far as basic theory and personal drive. This statement is what I need to summarize and whittle down to ten seconds.



What is created in the camera is just the beginning. I see a disturbance in the environment or an object surrounded by unlikely subjects, and that makes the initial exposure. After the developing and printing processes I use in the darkroom, the photographs are enhanced even further by tangible methods, such as embroidery.

Books continued

Ways of Seeing by John Berger

Julia Margaret Cameron: A Critical Biography by Colin Ford

I Am Not This Body by Barbara Ess

Four Past Midnight by Stephen King

Knitting / Sewing

My first knitted sweater from Maggie Righetti's pattern. This is for Annie, my friends Leah and Janice's newborn baby.



Flannel pajamas for David. He picked out a moose pattern for the pants contrasting it with a dark gray top.



Sometimes subtle but always deliberate, the addition of the thread (or paint or other material) on certain areas of the paper surface seems to nudge the theme slightly out of the composition and begs to be touched. These elements help navigate the mystery of the image and pull what was once past into the present bringing forth a curiosity about the photograph.

As I've been contemplating this, two scenarios have played out for me this winter. One is the seemingly never-ending trash piles in our yard, and the other are the words of photographer Julia Margaret Cameron.

Trash - a disturbance in the environment

My husband and I have started some yard clean up during February's unseasonably warm weather. The previous owners failed to mention the two junk piles on the property, which hold a great deal of information. Much like reading a mystery novel - every time we tackle these piles the stories develop more and more. And the found artifacts start to make the stories more interesting and become like story prompts to me. As much as I dislike all this trash on our new property, it does seem ironic that we inherited it, and I secretly enjoy sifting through it.

In Julia Margaret Cameron's words

In Colin Ford's biography of Cameron, I've found a lot of sweet details about her life. I was introduced to Cameron in the summarized profile of her in Rosenblum's *A World History of Photography*, a book that was required in my studies at Rockport. At the time that was enough to make the connection to Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession to inspire me. Now, nearly 15 years later, Ford's book has allowed me to make that connection again not only historically, but within my own photographic work.

"At the age of fifty she took up photography, which in her hands became truly artistic, instead of possessing merely mechanical excellence." - Julia Stephen writes about Cameron in the *Dictionary of National Biography* ed. by Leslie Stephen, 1882-1900.

Using the word *truly* to describe Cameron's artistic approach helps to emphasize her individuality as a photographer. She seemed like a woman who didn't care what other's thought of her, who continually practiced the craft of photography, and who was the squeaky wheel (as my husband would say).

Baking

A lot of bread was made this winter season. Mostly recipes from King Arthur Flour and Peter Reinhart's book *Whole Grain Breads*.



Homemade granola has become a staple in our house. It's really easy to make.

Mix all ingredients in a big bowl. Place on a parchment lined baking sheet. Bake at 300°F for 30 minutes, stirring at ten minute intervals.

2 1/2 C old fashioned oats

1/2 C packed brown sugar

1 tsp. cinnamon

3/4 tsp. ginger

3 T canola or coconut oil

1/4 C applesauce

3 T maple syrup, or molasses, or honey

1/4 to 1/2 C dried fruit

1/4 C chopped nuts

3 T flax seeds, ground

"My aspirations are to ennoble Photography and to secure for it the character and uses of High Art by combining the real and Ideal and sacrificing nothing of Truth by all possible devotion to Poetry and beauty." Cameron writes in a letter to Sir John Herschel, 31 December 1864.

Such a beautiful and straight forward way of putting it. I have enough inspiration to go forth and summarize my artist statement. Next time you see me ask, what do you photograph? and I will give you a very compelling, honest, and inspiring ten second reply.



Inside the studio looking out the window, a view noticed while taking a break from embroidering a photograph.

Right-brained is alright, right?

The ongoing question still lives on about what is "art photography." Even in Cameron's time the style of photography she was compelled to make was not fully accepted because it wasn't "perfect" to the average audience. The subject matter, focus, development, and even her personality all seemed to others as a bit off.

"What is focus - and who has a right to say what focus is the legitimate focus?" Cameron writes in the same letter as noted above.

In the book *How To Think like Leonardo da Vinci*, the author, Michael J. Gelb, pulls a thought shared by Professor Roger Sperry who was a Nobel prize winner of brain research where he created the terms *left-brained* and *right-brained*. He once said, "Our education system, as well as science in general, tends to neglect the non-verbal form of intellect. What it comes down to is that modern society discriminates against the right hemisphere," which we know as the side possessing imaginative and artistic thinking. Gelb points this out by suggesting right-brained students "often feel guilty for the way they think and are frequently mislabeled as "learning disabled."

The term "art photography" can be any definition the artist wants. Who is to say what the true definition really is? Just as Cameron defined what *focus* is to her and stuck with it, I too can define what *art photography* is to me and stick with it. After all, there are some photographers out there who call their work "art photography" and I can't understand how or why... but that's what makes the art world so diverse and continually interesting.



Studio Visit

Our new house is big enough for an office for David, a studio for me, and a decently sized darkroom in the basement. You are invited this spring to see our new digs and what is going on in the studio! We will have refreshments and hopefully a beautiful day to relax on the deck. Please email to let us know when you can come out. jessicakalmar@mac.com

Thank You

I'm very pleased you took the time to read this newsletter. Whether it is filled with informative news or tidbits you can take away to make your own, I hope you are able to be inspired. Please reach out to me with your questions, comments, and criticisms. Thank you!

Winter 2017 | Have a beautiful spring! | jessicakalmar.com
