

Shadow & Light Magazine

The Art of Photography

Portraits

Image: Kevin Black (detail)
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Notes...

For our first “Portraits” issue more than 50 photographers submitted images. From that, four were selected by the judges for portfolios, while 10 others have single images displayed, with several mini portfolios included.

When it came to selecting the finalists for the cover and full portfolio it became even more challenging. In the end, however, it was decided the Kevin Black had the most compelling portfolio, both in execution as well as content. One can tell how devoted he is to his medium by how each image draws you in and you want to see more. Congratulations, Kevin. Well done!

Rounding out the portfolios, Tom Chambers introduces us to his “Heroines,” based on the teachings of his daughter. In this series he tackles issues that are familiar to us all: life hurdles and daily challenges. Ken Collins works with a timeless dilemma: challenging our creative spirit to translate what our mind experiences into what our creative spirit demands of us. Chehalis Hegner takes a completely different path with her portraits. Utilizing candid photography, as well as expertly staged scenes, her portraits are at once intimate and personal. Each illustrating the variety and timing that capturing great portraits demand.

Mini portfolios were selected from Bob Newman, Greg Markstrom, and Irving Greines. Capturing people who are (for the most part) in constant motion, Bob Newman was able to photographically document Irish Travelers in a truthful manner, while garnering a few awards along the way. Utilizing certain effects to illustrate what he “sees” Markstrom translates a portrait into a theatrical production by taking away and adding elements to create his idea of a finished product, ready for the curtain. Greines continues to capture the lure of street people and scenes in an immediately disarming manner.

The 10 other photographers who made the cut each had at least one image that exemplified what a portrait

can be. Maria Zendejas took to the streets and captured a woman waiting to begin marching in protest with the theme being, “Fiat Iustitia,” (Let there be justice).

Kean chose a different approach and created a very compelling image of double exposure that challenges our visual perception. Laury Sahakangas took a very compelling portrait of a horsewoman in a quiet moment. Ross Kaplan decided on a mystical approach for his interpretation of a portrait, while Sherrie Nickoll offered us a few images from her series, “Portraits of Dancers.”

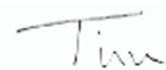
With her portrait Karen Tillison took us to another country and captured an unposed, seemingly very happy moment. Tony Perez utilized classic black and white to frame an image that takes us back to the “Silver Screen” days. Kip Harris shows us how the environmental portrait can be used to great effect. With his up-close-and-personal portrait Thomas Boblett created a classic portrait that will stand the test of time. Using toning and an alternative process to great effect, Greg Smith captured a portrait that could’ve been taken any time in the last century.

As you will be able to experience there is a broad swath across the portrait genre, addressing classic image making as well as adding parts and pieces, alternative processing, and much more.

Moving away from portraiture, E.E. McCollum continues his “On the Road” series and brings us an interview with Santa Fe gallerist and artist Jennifer Schlesinger. He offers us what it takes to mix business with creative pursuits that lead to a very full plate, let alone what moments might be left for a personal life of any kind.

Regular contributors Alain Briot and Steve Immel will return with the next issue, ready to continue to enlighten and entertain us, one and all.

Enjoy!



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Personal Work

Kevin Black (below) Page 3



Irish Travelers

Bob Newman (above) Page 13



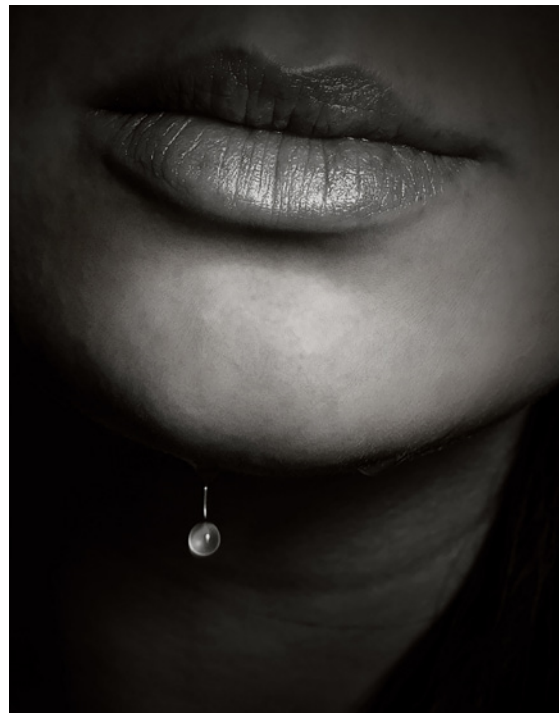
The Heroines

Tom Chambers (below) Page 27



Witness

Chehalis Hegner (below) Page 39



Featured Artist Portfolio

Kevin Black: *Personal Work* • by Tim Anderson



Jessamyn and Son. ©Kevin Black

Tim: As a recent transplant from the Northeast, Kevin, you left a lucrative commercial photography practice in that area to move to New Mexico. What motivated you to make that decision?

Kevin: I've been blessed to be a photographer for over 40 years since graduating Rochester Institute of Technology in 1976 with a degree in photography. During that time a lot has changed in the industry and my personal life. It is always an evolution in learning and artistic growth. I've always considered myself a studio advertising photographer specializing in product and food. The only time I photographed people were models for advertising purposes and as hand models. The occasional real people shots for law and accounting firms were also part of my work.

Many years ago, I came to New Mexico to stay on the Zuni Pueblo with my son during a spring break to learn about the fetish carvers. While we visited, I noted how beautiful the light was and how dramatic the landscape is.

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A few years ago, I added video work to my skill set and travelled across the nation with my partner taping interviews for short films and interviews for her website while continuing my studio practice.

Photography today is pretty much movable. Digital capture, rental facilities and equipment has helped me cut my overhead expenses. After a vacation in New Mexico, we decided to sell the house in Pennsylvania and move to Corrales, NM. Really, all we need is fast internet and airport access.

I continue to work back east with my house accounts as well as marketing to new accounts, which grows as well.

I've added several New Mexico agencies and firms here and that continues to grow nicely. So, I have not left too much work on the table, but actually added new markets.

Tim: Once here you chose alternative processes as your creative outlet. Is that a genre in photography you had pursued previously? I know that it is quite a challenge creatively as well as technically. Once begun, how has it evolved?

Kevin: I've never played in alternative photography areas until about five years ago. Sure, I did polaroid transfers, cyanotypes and many other fun photographic processes lightly over the last 40 years, but not too seriously.

Any technique, camera, lens, piece of equipment is another tool to bring to the vision that one sees in their head. I have been drawn to the wet plate images for about a decade now and decided to learn more. As that vision develops, I continue to add various aligned techniques when I see them in my mind's eye.

It is a challenge, but as a studio photographer I have solved a ton of 'problems' over the years to get whatever shot was called for, so this is just another issue looking for a solution. You just get done what you have to do.

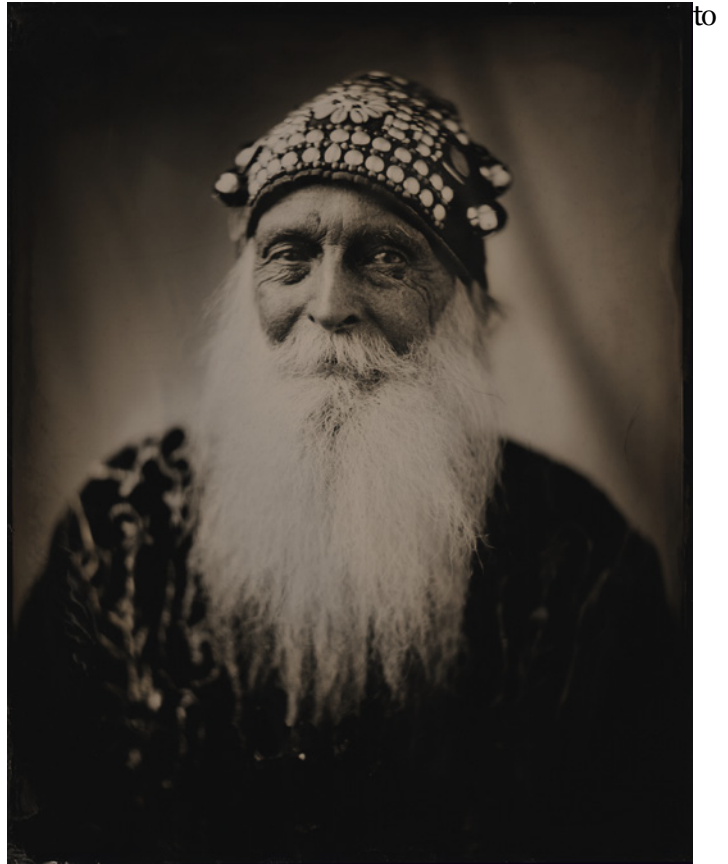
I think the point here is that the process starts with a creative vision, something you envision, something that needs to be communicated to others and then that evolves to the right process for you. For me, the 'technique' does not drive the photo, but the other way around. Hope that makes sense.

Tim: Besides portraits, what other areas interest you, and how do you plan to incorporate it/them into your portfolio, so to speak?

Kevin: I did not start with portraits at all. Back in 2006 I realized that was a genre that I ignored. People move, have egos. For me, people had been nothing more than props in a photo. I decided to learn more and went to the Maine Media Workshops the summer of 2007 to work with Michael Grecco on the dramatic portrait. This was the first class I treated myself to, an investment in self.

It was a lot of fun and I learned to trust myself. For decades I was used to shooting for others. Following layouts. I had developed a sophisticated style, but I was still used to executing the client's job. I did not learn anything new in terms of technique from Michael, but I did learn that I just needed to create for me alone. That was valuable.

So, portraits became the next challenge. I spent a summer photographing cowboys in New Jersey at



Oma. ©Kevin Black



Support. ©Kevin Black

Cowtown Rodeo. For 19 Saturdays, my son and I drove to Pilesgrove, NJ, set up a pop-up canopy studio, powered a generator for lights and shot portraits of the contestants and spectators with my PhaseOne digital camera.

That was a watershed event for me. I had a great time, met some really interesting men and women and made some strong portraits. Who would have thought that I became comfortable photographing people?

Now, I am generating conceptual images, involving people based upon some of my learnings with my partner's website. If you remember, we traveled shooting video for her website. It was around women's integrative medicine. For the better part of six years I learned and listened to thousands of health professionals and women about their ideas and concerns surrounding serious health issues, such as breast and ovarian cancers as well as other life altering issues. This was transformative to me as a

continued on page 7 >>>



Hopi Woman, Melissa. ©Kevin Black (cover image)



person and a man.

This experience informs what I do in every aspect of my life now. I am a better man, father, partner, human and photographer for those years. I continue to work in that field today, although in a much less day to day manner.

I've started several new projects. One is called "The Art of Healing" and it involves making photos surrounding the dreams and concerns of people dealing with fear and health issues. I am working with therapists whose patients are suffering from cancer, loss, PTSD and other serious life events. We generate ideas using words that come up in these therapist lead sessions, such as peace, strength, support and connections to earth. I then work with the patients to photograph these concepts in wet plate. We are now planning a show of the work in a local institution to foster discussion in the community at large as well as with the family, health professionals and care givers of the group. It is fun and powerful. This work is different for children, our veterans, the elderly and other patient populations. It is transformative to me and seems to be valuable to the teams.

I also shoot my interpretation of botanical portraits. Photographing beautiful flowers and botanical elements -beauty in another form!

Tim: I know that you have ventured out to conferences, and alternative process conferences. Do you see yourself doing more of that in the future?

Kevin: I've become a happy little learner, so I will always attend conferences that interest me. I have also begun to teach classes in wetplate, portraits in digital and studio lighting. I learn so much whenever I teach or go to presentations of others. Photography is just another big community. Opportunities abound everywhere to learn, grow and share.

Tim: As we rapidly seem to be moving into a new decade of the 21st century, what are your plans for the future? Where would you like to be, photographically and creatively, five years from now.

Kevin: That is a tough question. The one big desire I have is to bring wet plate and other alternative photographic processes to the advertising and design world. Editorial has always had a little interest in telling a story with non-traditional photography. It is time for the advertising and design world to embrace aspects of these processes.

My goal is to shoot a couple of national campaigns a year using wet plate and other alternative photographic processes. I'm already working on two campaign ideas that are very promising and fun.

I also want to continue to shoot The Art of Healing project across the nation. My goal with that is to utilize a number of organizations to provide the patient populations and gallery venues. One of the intentions is to use this art as a means of generating conversations with patients, therapists, care givers and the general public. Art facilitating conversations—imagine that.

Tim: What about this medium is it that drives you to continue to want to "draw the curtain" over your back and push the shutter release?

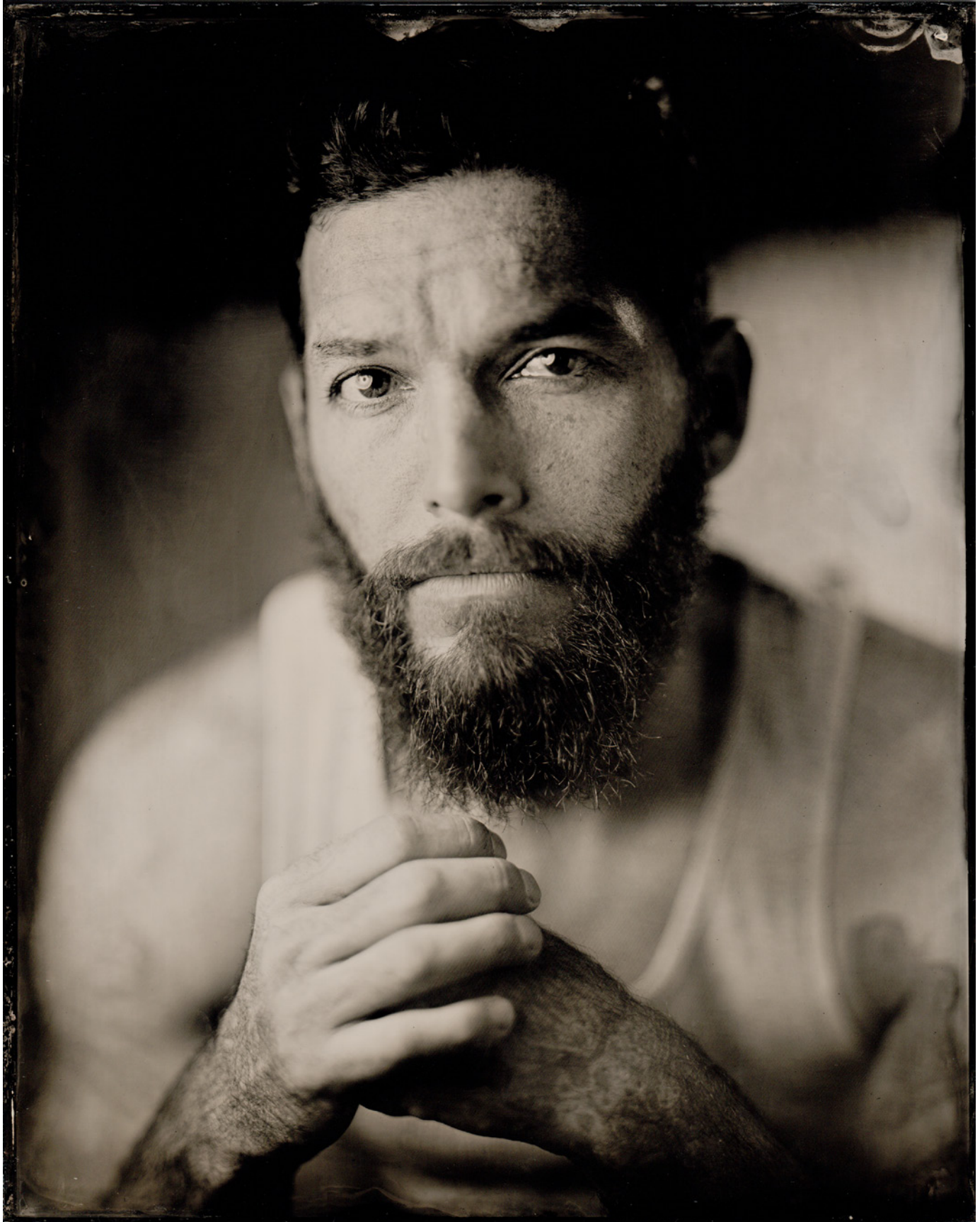


Clarence. ©Kevin Black

Kevin: The wet plate process is difficult and requires a lot of steps even before I remove the lens cover to expose a plate. Most of my lenses do not have a shutter or an aperture. I have to cut, edge and polish black glass in order to make the image. I mix the collodion formula, silver nitrate bath, developer and fixing bath. Sometimes the collodion needs to age a few days or weeks to clear in order to be ready to shoot.

Working with a view camera and barrel lenses has its own challenges. All told, it serves to slow me down and make me present in a more deliberate way in order to make the photograph. By the time I actually shoot, I've had the time to approach the subject with more intentionality and presence of mind.

I enjoy this challenge. It is a ton more work than clicking a shutter, which I do almost daily in my commercial work. This is personal time. Something I do for myself to feed the soul, if you would. ○



Jesse Ryder. ©Kevin Black



Elvira. ©Kevin Black



Xamie. ©Kevin Black



Aaron. ©Kevin Black