

How I Came to Photograph What I Photograph

In 2009, having for nearly thirty years focused on self-portraiture in my painting and drawing, I bought my first digital camera and computer so I could have JPEGs of my works for my then-new website. Although I had learned the rudiments of photography (including darkroom work) in the early 1970s, during my painting years I had not been paying attention to the ways in which analog and digital photography were changing, or being written about in aesthetic, cultural, technical, or theoretical terms, or might effect my creative life. I was completely unfamiliar with digital photography. But before long, my early interest in photography was reawakened, in part thanks to my seduction by the creative possibilities of photographic software.

I began to photographically document my studio work beyond what I needed for my website -- for example, photographing works-in-progress and my studio furniture, palettes, and tools -- and to photograph whatever compositions or effects of light caught my eye in my studio or elsewhere in my home. I soon started carrying a camera whenever I went outside. In the street, after decades painting and drawing from my reflection in my studio mirrors (I never painted from photographs), I was initially enthralled by the possibilities of photographing my reflection in whatever surfaces I saw it, with all the new, enticing, endlessly varying natural and artificial light, not to mention the unpredictable and varied settings in which my reflection might appear.

My interests soon expanded into taking photographs not related to self-portraiture, and in 2013, after four years dividing my work between painting and photography, I began to put all my creative energy into photography. Through my studies I became familiar with many genres of photography and ultimately came to favor taking photographs in the street, some depicting people, some not.