

How I Came to Photograph What I Photograph

Having for nearly thirty years focused on self-portraiture in my painting and drawing, I bought my first digital camera in 2009 so I could have JPEGs for my then-new website. Before long, my interest in photography, which had been hibernating for forty years, was reawakened. 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 the rooms of our home.

I started carrying a camera whenever I went out. In the street, after decades basing my paintings and drawings on my reflection in my studio mirrors (I never painted from photographs), I was initially seduced by the possibilities of making photographs of myself reflected in whatever surfaces I encountered, with all the new, enticing, endlessly varying natural and artificial light.

My interests soon expanded into making photographs not related to my painted and drawn self-portraits, and although I was aware of the role of defined projects, story-telling, and cultural, political, or social concerns in photography, I felt most naturally inclined to make photographs in the street, image by image, individual works not intentionally related in any way.

As I seek images in the street without a message, narrative, or project in mind, I am aware that in the moment of my wanting to take a picture there is a complex interaction between my momentary frame of mind and my decades of looking at and reading/thinking/talking about painting, drawing, and photography. Moreover, this complex interaction is ever-changing; the weighting factors of whatever thoughts and feelings might be at play in the shutter's moment are fleeting, impossible for me to fully know and articulate.

If my photographs can be said to have any purpose in common, it might be this: to honor the visual abundance in whatever is ordinary that we pass every day in the street, so much of which has the potential to please or even thrill us.

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February 2020