

Jonathan Bourla

Photography

View the full portfolio at <http://www.thecreativefinder.com/jonathanbourla>

Professional Experience and Curriculum Vitae

I am a fine art photographer, based in New Zealand. Taken mainly with a camera similar to the plate cameras of one hundred years ago, the limited edition photographs are printed on one hundred percent acid-free cotton rag paper with pigment ink. Varied subject collections including Hidden Life of Water, and artistic photographs of everyday items such as "Bruce's Jandals" and an "Aubergine" (Eggplant).

Previous Clientele

Fine Art work.

Awards and Accolades

Artist Statement

My Fine Art Photography is a process, a series of several stages. The aim is to produce my personal interpretation of the scene before the camera, reflecting how the scene and lighting made me feel at that time.

Before exposure, I have pre-visualised how I will want the finished fine art photograph to look. The developed film negative is just the beginning for the Interpretation stage, where I creatively craft an image from camera's output into a Fine Art Photograph, one that aims to be both artistically inspired and also technically excellent.

The Interpretation stage would be near impossible if the film negative didn't contain all the information I need in an accessible form. To achieve this I work with Ansel Adams' Zone System. This is a means of controlling the negative's characteristics by jointly choosing the camera exposure and the film's development time. This system was very hard to grasp at the beginning, but all became clear when I attended a workshop in Ann Arbor, Michigan run by photographer Howard Bond.

I tend to like photographing in softly diffused light, either waiting for a cloud to be in front of the Sun, or at that special time after sunset or just before sunrise - I prefer the light after sunset as it allows me time to set up and focus the camera in advance.

My primary camera was made by the English firm of Gandolfi, and is a large format, field, view camera. It is rather like a plate camera from a century ago, and is both very challenging to use, but also equally rewarding. My camera is constructed of Black Walnut wood combined with black metalwork – and at those times that I use my second camera, an excellent Mamiya, I find myself missing the Gandolfi. I get interesting responses to this camera. One group of retired people who were walking nearby came to investigate, and remarked on the similarity to cameras their grandfathers had owned. Another time a young boy asked me if the camera was just for show, and whether I had a proper camera hidden inside!

One aspect that usually becomes clear to me before I make the camera exposure is whether I want the image to be midly rectangular, or more square-ish or alternatively a long and skinny panorama. I aim to use the appropriate lens, and be positioned as close to the scene as possible, so that as much of the negative is used.

I usually follow the convention adopted by most large format photographers, in that everything in the photograph should be sharply rendered. For something that would seem quite straightforward, this is actually quite a challenge to achieve.

Gandolfi exposures have been from a "short" half a second, up to lengthy times in excess of an hour. Unlike some fine art photographers, who are prolific shooters, shooting thousands of images, I produce a small number of carefully taken negatives. The vast majority of my negatives are "keepers".

My process has changed over the years from printing in the darkroom, to scanning the negatives in a special film scanner, and then performing the "Interpretation" stage on a computer. The tools I used in the darkroom have the same names as their equivalents

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