

THE JOURNAL
PHOTOGRAPHS / STORIES / OBSERVATIONS
JOE UPKA

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WELCOME TO THE JOURNAL OCTOBER 2020

Time seems to be the issue this month. We can mark the passage of time with the comparison of images from different decades occupying the same space in a photograph. What was and what is can coexist in the same space simultaneously. It's a violation of the laws of physics, but this is art and artists don't pay much attention to the laws of physics.

The passage of time is marked by the crystallized minerals on partially submerged rocks and trees. The problem of photographing inanimate objects on a vast scale is before us. It takes time to figure out how to arrange elements that won't move into a dynamic arrangement. When the time is right, we can act and create something from the few elements we see.

We end with a lack of time and commitment. When we do not figure out what we want to do photographically, the efforts are scattershot, very wide and equally shallow.

Baroque Pulpit



After the Memories



Buildings are demolished

People go away

Memories are forgotten

After the Memories are forgotten

All we have left are the photographs



















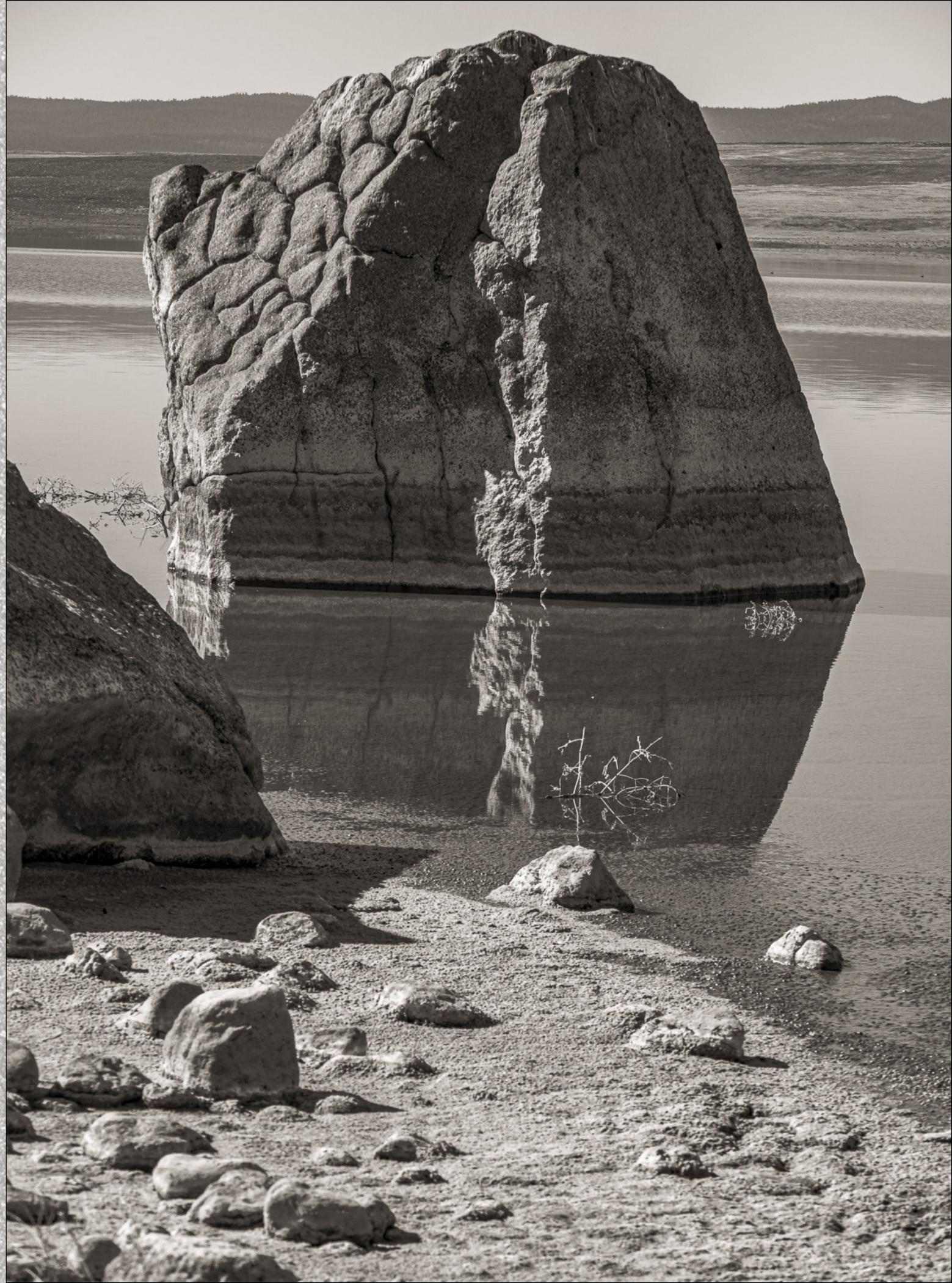
A black and white photograph of a large, rugged mountain range overlooking a valley. The mountains are steep and appear to be covered in sparse vegetation or are rocky. In the foreground, a river flows through the valley, with a rocky shoreline on the right side. The sky is clear and bright. The overall scene is a natural landscape with a prominent mountain range.

Boundaries and Transitions

Boundaries and Transitions

Boundaries and Transitions are fertile ground for photographers. Places where there is a change from one surface to another, one material to another, from something visible to invisible are places that are photographer magnets. We are drawn to these places because there is a change, a dynamic relationship an interface between two dissimilar things.

These boundaries have their own shape, proportion and properties to challenge our composition. Oft times we do not immediately see the beauty and design in the transition. It requires thought and planning to distill what is before us in order to see the beauty before us.

















Hey, I Can Fix That

Frank picked up that God awful lamp not at a garage sale, not at the dump, but in an abandoned house. The previous owners of the house didn't even consider it worth the effort to throw into the garbage.

It was that worthless.

But for some reason Frank thought the idea of a lamp with a clock was pure genius. When he brought it home Thelma told him to turn around immediately and take it out of the house. That's how it wound up here at the shop.

Frank's never been able to get either the lamp or the clock to work. So it sits there on the shelf next to another one of Frank's "Hey, I can fix that" project, an old box camera that he is sure he can fix...



Not Much of Anything



Not Much of Anything

The morning's photography had been pretty slim. Heavy, gray overcast skies and intermittent rain storms kept us dodging raindrops and photographing through the open windows of the truck. The craic was good, but it was one of those days when the photographic gods had it in for us.

We stopped for lunch at the Tygh Valley General Store and were sharing pleasantries with our fellow diner/travelers/locals at the communal lunch table. In order to keep the conversation going, we inquired about interesting sites to photograph nearby. One of our fellow diners suggested the State Park, "just down the road a piece."

Advice from locals, just like landscape photography, is a crapshoot. With nothing to lose, we set out down the road a piece and found the State Park. There was a little bit of everything there to photograph, so with no thoughts or plans in mind, we photographed a little bit of everything.

Landscapes, rock abstracts or whatever we could work up into a photograph was fair game because up to that point photography was tough.

With absolutely no planning and not much thought we didn't get much of anything.











Postcards from the Creative Journey

April 15, 2018

Common Things

"Hopper took something that was common and made it look uncommon." These few words from a short film about artist Edward Hopper say so much about what makes great art. I just love it when a complex idea can be distilled into its essence and expressed in just a few words.

The quest is how to make the common uncommon. I would suggest this quest can be accomplished by constant long, examination of the common subject under many different conditions. Patience is a virtue and being patient around a subject spending time observing, waiting, remembering previous observations, synthesizing visual memories and generally developing a visual relationship with what intrigues you.

How do I know this is true? Edward Weston made forty four different photographs of peppers. That he kept trying after Pepper #30 means he wanted to keep trying, working, perfecting his method of photographing peppers.

You don't know you have reached your goal until you go past the goal and look back and see you have arrived.

People don't spend time looking at the common thing. That's why there are so few good photographs of common things. Photographers stop and take the time to visually fall in love with the common things around us.





Well, it started when I got this email from a guy in Nigeria...



A Few Closing Words

After the Memories

This Academy Street project uses vintage photos as part of a panoramic layered image bringing the past and present together in one frame. Some of these images will be displayed as part of the FENCE exhibit in October, 2020. The [FENCE exhibit](#) is part of the [CLICK! Photographic festival](#) in Durham, North Carolina.

The Academy Street folios are:

After The Memories [One](#) and [Two](#)

[Victorian Lady](#)

[Southern Gothic](#)

An Icon Transformed [One](#) and [Two](#)

[A Change of Pace](#)

[A Walk Down Academy Street](#)

Transitions and Boundaries

Lake Abert, an alkali lake near the Oregon/California Border is quietly disappearing because it has no source of water other than rain. The water is toxic to most plant life so the banks are mostly barren. The desolation has its own beauty and the photographic issue to address is setting the boundaries and transitions between land, water and sky. It takes a lot of thought and planning to decide where to draw those boundaries with a camera.

Not Much of Anything

White River Falls is one of those little State Parks that is out of the way and not heavily visited. The decision to photograph there was made at lunch. No preparation, thought, or plan of action was prepared before we left or on the way there. We also had only the vaguest of ideas on what we would find once we arrived.

With that level of planning and an all too ready trigger finger, I began to photograph whatever happened to be in front of my camera. Without a plan and without some thought, the individual images are acceptable, but their value is in a lesson learned.

Without a plan, you won't get much of anything.



Joe Lipka has shared his vision since he began photographing.

In the last thirty years, his photographs have appeared in over one hundred juried exhibitions, more than twenty solo exhibitions and have been printed in both *LensWork*, *Black & White Photography* (UK) and F-Stop Magazines.

His website www.joelipkaphoto.com has continuously evolved since it was launched in 2004. His blog *Postcards from the Creative Journey*, published weekly since 2010, feature a photograph and a little bit of writing.

His newest blog, *The Daily Photograph*, is simply that. A new and interesting image posted every morning at 8:00 AM.

COLOPHON

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Joe Lipka

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Web site: www.joelipkaphoto.com

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