

Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

April, 2018

Featured Artist
Gregg Morgan

"Moments In Stillness"

Cover Image: The Stranger
© Gregg Morgan



Artist Interview - Gregg Morgan

Welcome, Gregg. Deeply seen images! How did you get here?

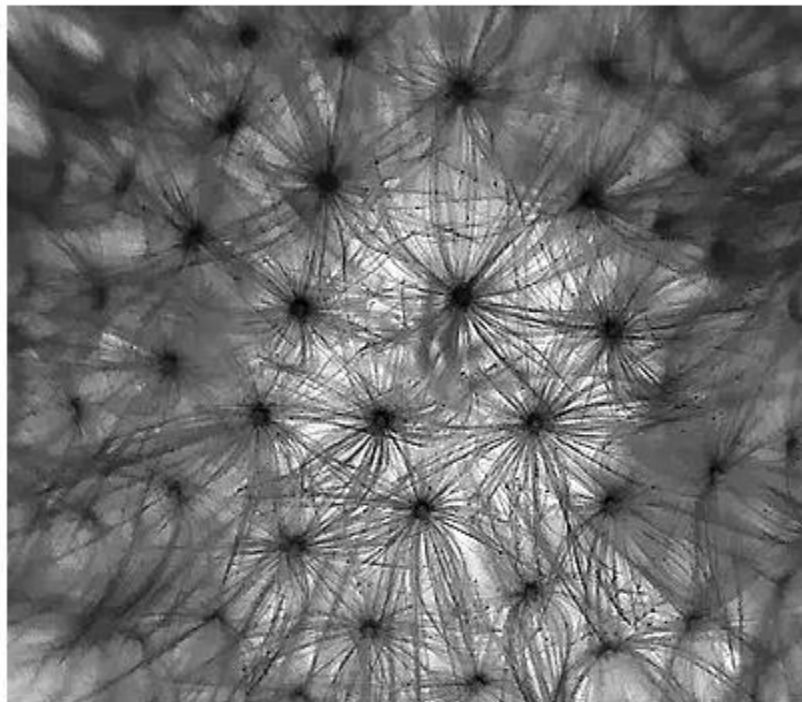
From before I could read, I discovered the power and impact of imagery thanks to *Time Magazine*, *People*, and *National Geographic*. Recently, I have been diagnosed as having Autism, specifically Autistic Spectrum Disorder... my photos have been telling me this for years, I just wasn't listening.

I earned my BFA at the Art Institute of Virginia. The Art Institute (AI) not only understood my eccentric way of seeing the world and my unique approach to problem solving, the instructors also helped me to stop fighting my thought processes and to begin to nurture them. I can still hear my instructors' voices in my head... "Yeah, that's great work, what else you got?" and "Only when the rules are understood can you break them!" and "What about other perspectives?"

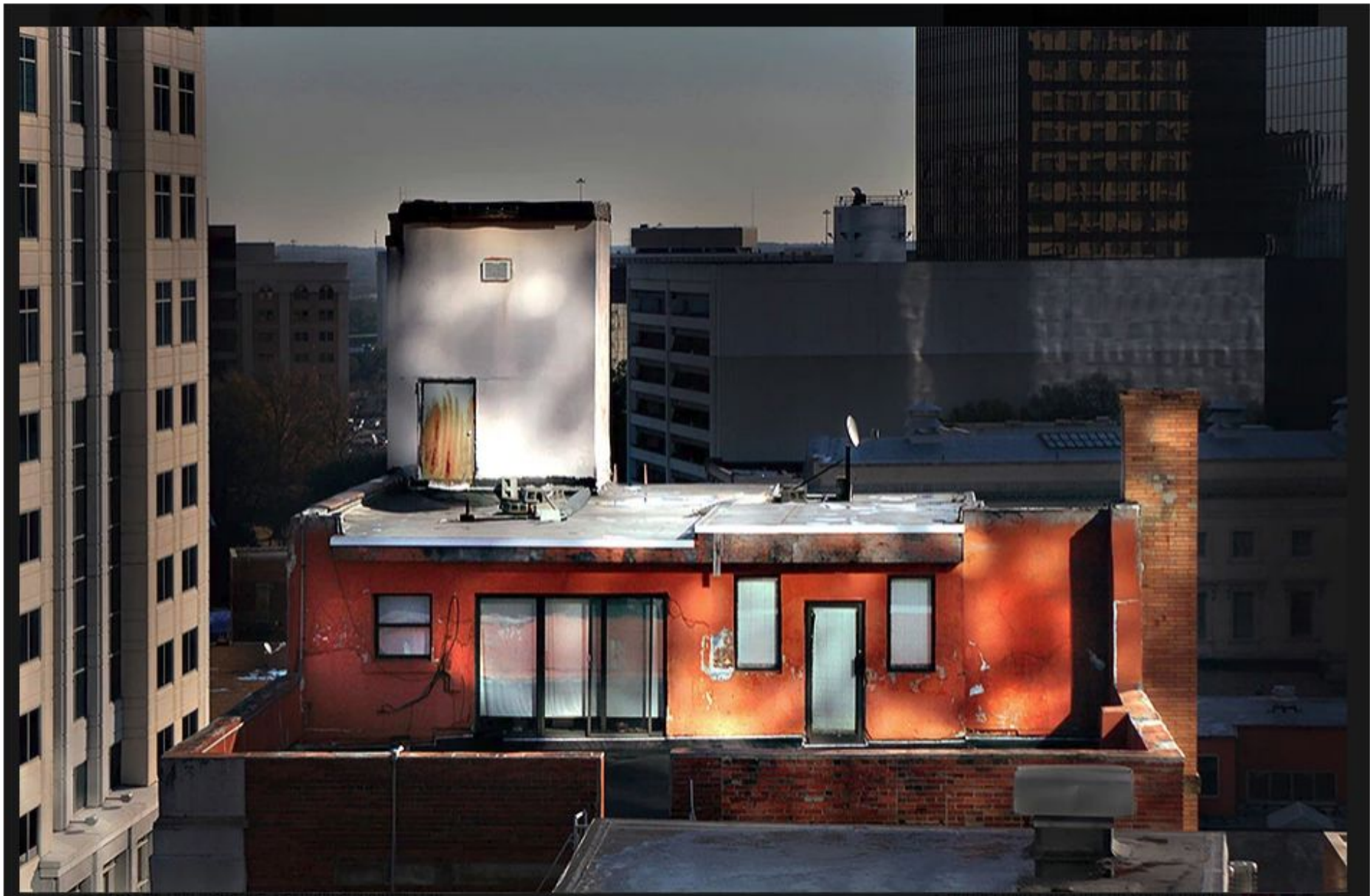
It can't have been easy. Most of us, even those who consider themselves neurotypical, brought illusions to University or formal training that were bashed in the process of getting the degree.

School was a scary, wonderfully, dreadfully, amazing place for an Aspie. The instructors were bastards (brilliant crazy and driven bastards) forcing me to work across all mediums and techniques, most of which I had been ignorant of before. "Why does a photographer need drawing or painting or sculpture?" I see it in retrospect – it was never really the act itself or the finished project, but in the doing. To quote Thoreau, "Not until we are lost do we begin to understand ourselves." Through AI I learned how to apply color theory, to incorporate the elements of design, to analyze and critique my own work more stringently – I learned to slow down and 'see' the image before even touching the camera.

The Art Institute environment encourages freaks like myself to not only accept their understanding of their unique perspective on reality; but to push and stretch and shove and expand that perspective to a new place that can only come from within.

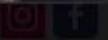


From the Renaissance Masters I have learned to appreciate Light's character, tone, and quality. Science has taught me that the properties of light are not much different than that of water, white light is not white, black is the absence of light, and light has weight (that one still messes with my head.) Photographic technology allows the freedom to create with a camera that which only my mind can envision. In reality, our eyes are limited to seeing only those surfaces which reflect light - the camera allows us to see the darkness coming from the unseen surfaces. My camera allows me to bend time and space, to capture motion in a single frame, to manipulate the laws of physics, to bring chaos from order, and vice versa.



World's Best Apartment

Contact with Ben and on social media





Negative Bubble



Stranger's House



The Grove



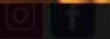


Bright Fence - Splash

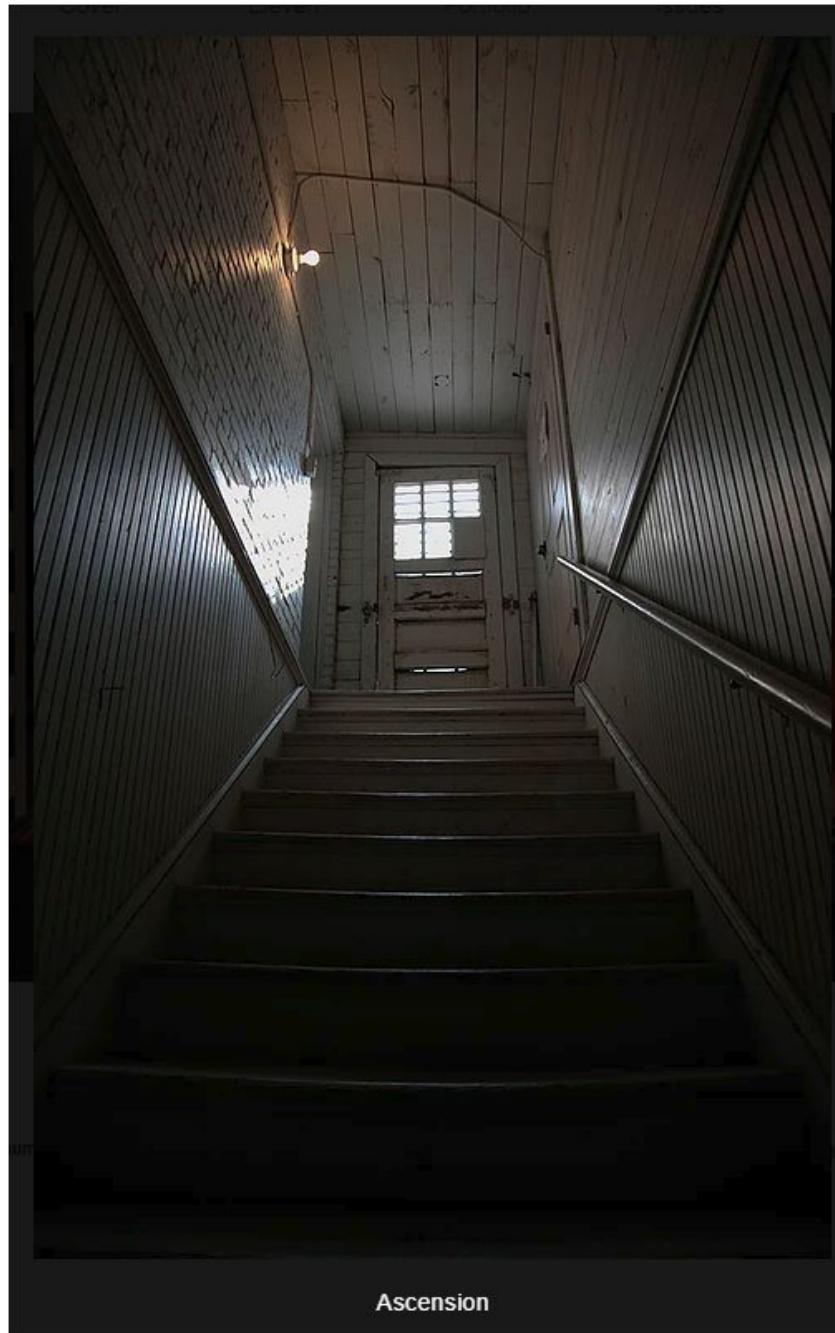


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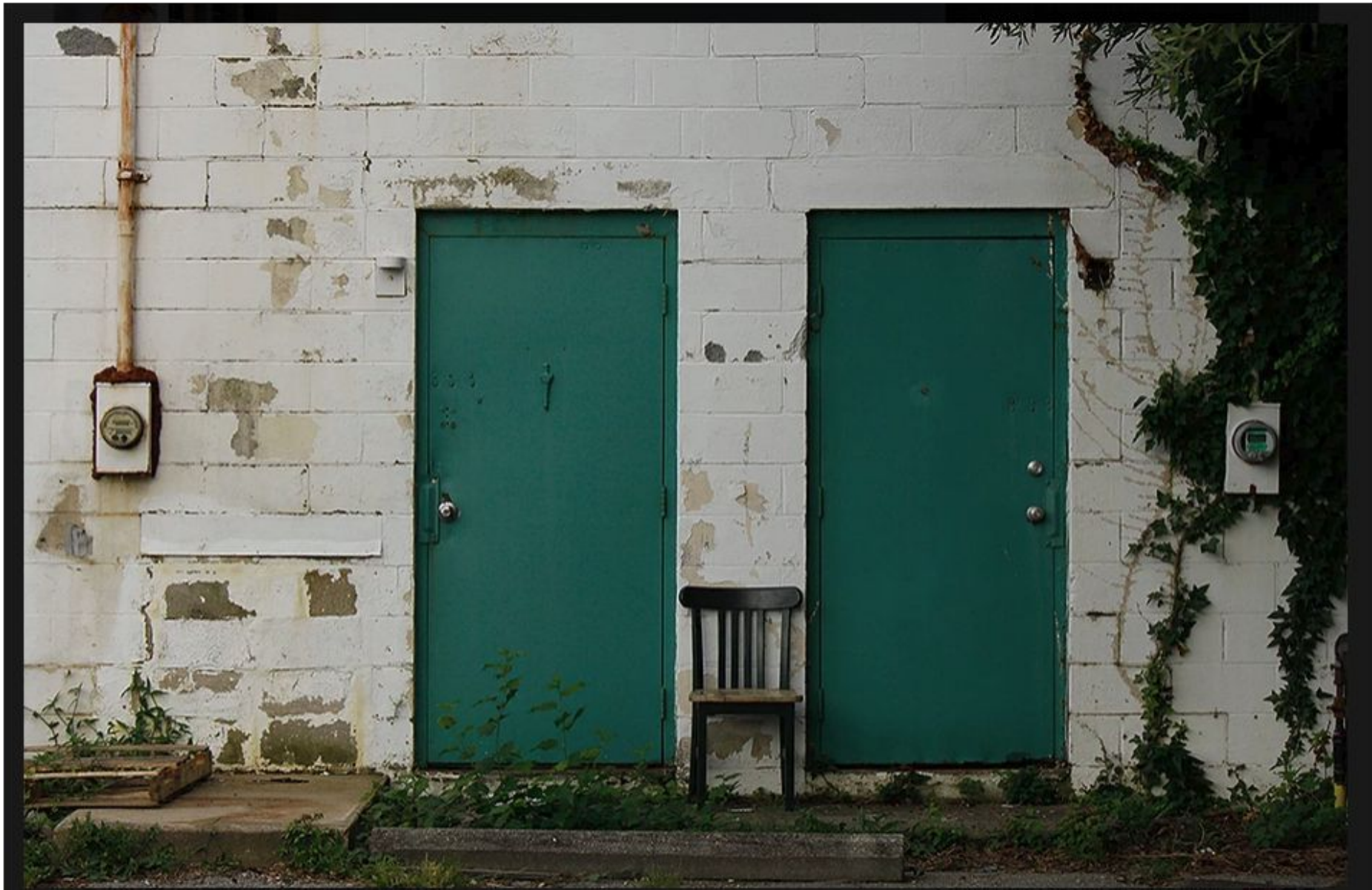
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Cubist Smokestack



Ascension

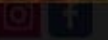


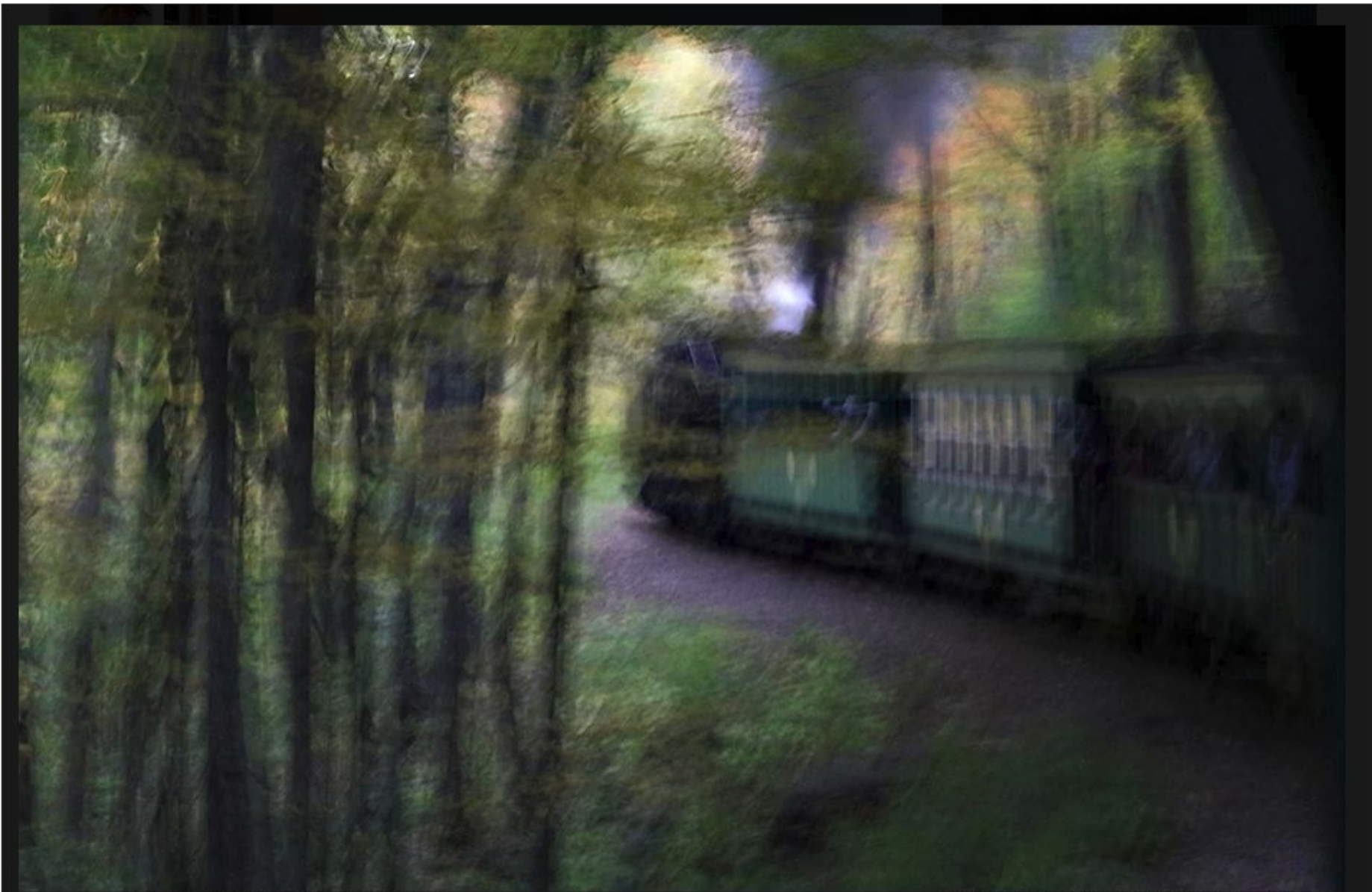
Two Green Doors, One Chair



The Stranger

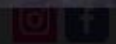
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Forest Train



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Lost Cottage

Artist Interview - Gregg Morgan



It is helpful to think of autism spectrum disorder as a talent for extraordinary focus. Talk more about your process, how you make these amazing images.

It all starts with a few double espressos to help me get moving, a few beers to calm the jitters for smoother camera operation, and a smoke as a little visual cortex enhancer. I cue up some Ambient Techno or some Long-Haired music and I'm off. With camera in hand my eyes are scanning everything, the music helps slow me down and scrutinize more effectively. Then something catches my eye and time becomes protracted. I don't hear the music, I don't feel the weight of the camera, the environment melts away, the weather doesn't touch me – all that exists is the scene. My mind is going through ISO, shutter speed, aperture, distractions external and internal, evaluating light's qualities, filter use, post edit effects. What will the light be like later, what elements can I try to introduce; what do I have to remove? That takes about 1.5 seconds.

At moments like these I feel rooted to the ground, becoming part of the image, I am the image, and the image is me. The rules for shooting my with a camera are ironically the same as a rifle - Breathe, Relax, Aim, Squeeze. It is here that I discover whether I was able to create what my mind saw. A feeling of absolution washes over me, fills me, a sense of contentment confirms that this is my calling and that my life, replete with all its iniquities and transgressions, unerringly has led me to that place, at that point in time, to share that vision with others.

Artist Interview - Gregg Morgan

Your work is jewel-like color and delicate transparency. What hardware, software, post techniques make that happen?

As for post-editing, all of my images are created in the camera. I learned early that carrying a ton of gear makes me want to shorten my day, my freedom of motion is limited, and, if I ground my gear, I spend more time keeping an eye on that than my purpose for being there. Traveling light and moving fast is the key. Accordingly, I carry one weapon: the new Canon 6D Mark II (considered a medium format digital camera) equipped with my primary lens, an 85-300mm zoom. The key to the zoom lens for me is the versatility. It provides for the opportunity to step back and bring the scene to me or full zoom to isolate a specific aspect of that scene (in a macro kind of way). Most shorter lenses tend to distort an image on the periphery, an aberration that bends light, creating angles and curvatures and lens flares that don't exist in my mind's eye. Telephoto lenses also offer the added advantage of creating shallower depths-of-field. At full zoom, I can deliver a photo of one bird in a flock or one petal of a rose. I have much more control of my images than I have with other types of lenses.

My local contemporaries tell me all this is almost inconsequential. I simply respond... "Almost."



Artist Interview - Gregg Morgan

Your work is deeply emotionally affecting. Yet, these are not shocking images. Whether rich in detail or highly minimal, they somehow get into memory, and we keep going back to "be there" again.

Many have told me that I have a 'Good-Eye.' Ironically the eye is but a lens, it is the mind that sees and interprets. There are times that I experience episodes of synesthesia; at times I can hear light, specifically sunlight. The quality of the light at times fills my head with horns and strings and sometimes voices, rising and swelling and ebbing away, as my sight is robbed of light. Night brings on a new symphony, that always feels like Jazz Fusion.

I love having my images printed on 20"x30" metal sheets and mounted flush to the wall. For me they provide an anchor; I find a center and a sense of balance. They take me back... I wish I could provide the soundtracks and maybe scratch-n-sniff cards. What I do offer my viewers is a pause, a moment to maybe inhale and actually take the time to feel the air they breathe. I invite you to become as lost as I was when the image was captured.

What's next? Upcoming projects, shows?

In the short-term I am loading my life into my Honda Element and driving the 6,000 miles from Norfolk to Seattle. Hoping to get there by way of Burning Man. I say hoping because I am at heart a realist and don't wish to jinx myself... this journey to find my America and the "John Doe Clubs." So join me on this adventure into the "Land with Heart" ... or is it the "Wild-Breadbasket?" Facebook - Mil1lion.



Images throughout: © Gregg Morgan



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