

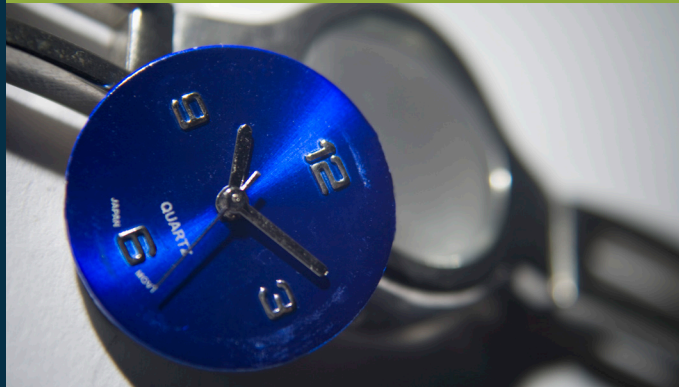
Get Inspired Bio - Jenny Ellerbe

I am a self-taught photographer living in Monroe, Louisiana. Some of my first photographs, taken as a teenager, were of the bayou that meanders through my hometown and the flow of that early work continues today. Nearly all of my photographs are taken within sixty miles of home.

After a twenty year career as a Pediatric Intensive Care nurse, and after returning to Louisiana from Connecticut, I put down the tools of my previous life, picked up a kayak paddle and a camera and started over. I rediscovered the wetlands of northeastern Louisiana and probed their depths with the reverence of a first time explorer.

For the past several years I have been developing a long-term study of rural northeastern Louisiana - the overlooked region that lies between the Mississippi and Ouachita Rivers. I have wandered through the vast farmland and rural communities that rise from it collecting photographs - images that tell the story of this land and what it gives to those of us who live here season after season, generation after generation.

My goal is not just to document this area but to really crawl inside it and see what makes it unique. In black & white I am able to get closer to the bones of what I am photographing and discover images I never imagined existed. Those discoveries, along with the sheer joy I experience through my camera, inspire me to continue.



If you say “yes” to everything that is asked of you, you will not have time to be creative. And it is so easy to say “yes” to all kinds of things and so hard to say “no”. It is hard to say “no” to immediate family, extended family, demands of friends, organizations, messy houses, cluttered basements--the list is endless.

Making art takes lots of time. It not only takes a great deal of time to do whatever it is you are creating, but it also takes a great deal time for what most people would consider “down time”. Artistic down time is a foreign concept to people who are not artists. Our society values busyness over artistic incubation, but you cannot create art without it.

You will feel immensely guilty saying to yourself that your art is more important than time spent with a certain friend, organization or clearing out that large dust bunny that is appearing under your bed! But ask yourself, if there was something really crucial, wouldn't you slash everything that was unessential in your life to take care of it. The answer is yes. Do the same thing with your art.

Learning how to say “no” takes practice. You may want to communicate to your nearest and dearest your new priority, so they won't feel emotionally abandoned. From time to time you will get sucked into situations

How to Make Time for Art.

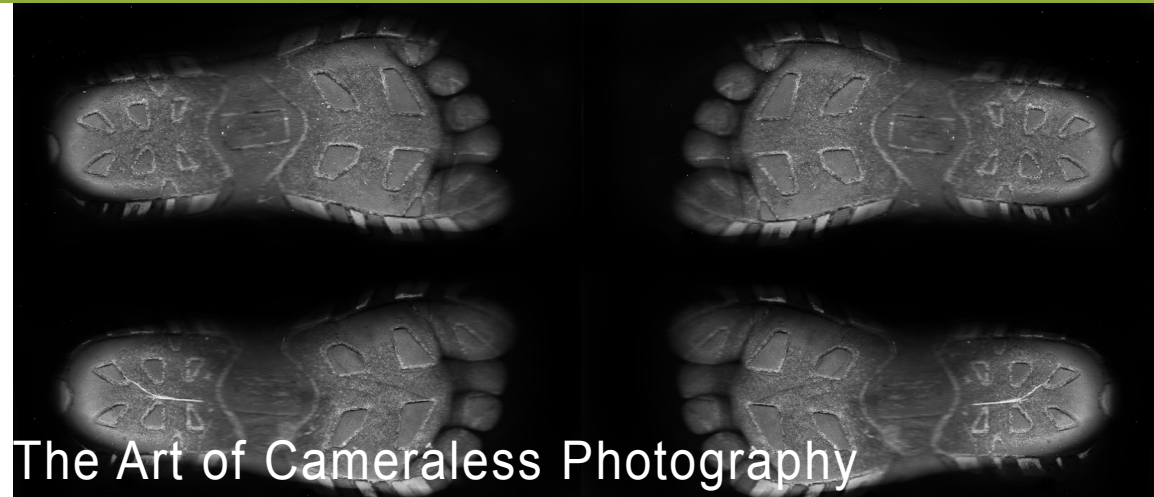
The key to making time for art is the ability to say “NO”.

and events; and it takes a great deal of effort to find a balance between creating art and also having a meaningful life outside of that endeavor.

But remember, “no” is a complete sentence. It will take everyone some time to adjust to your new way of living. There may be a lot of grumbling from a lot of people, but if creating art is really important to you, let them grumble away. You'll find out who your friends really are. The ones that really

“The ones that really care about you will want what's important for you--to create art!”

© Mary Baker



The Art of Cameraless Photography

The possibilities of capturing a latent image from the natural world and rendering it permanent by fixing the image was appreciated by early scientists. By experimentation with different base materials and chemicals they gradually refined processes that stabilized the images and made them permanent. Some of the earliest photographs ever made by William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877) were made by placing plants, textiles and lace in direct contact with materials that had been made light sensitive by chemical treatment. No camera or lens was necessary as the object and base could be exposed to the light and the rays of sun would do the rest.

In France Hippolyte Bayard (1801-1877) did the same in about 1842 in his remarkable cyanotype an 'Arrangement of Specimens' which is now in the J. Paul Getty Museum (84.XO.968.5). Anna Atkins (1799-1871) had also used the same cyanotype technique to illustrate her book 'British Algae' of which the first part was published in October 1843. If the process was well known what was revolutionary about the abstract use of the cameraless technique in the early 20th century? Basically it was the selection of the objects, their juxtapositions and the way light was used to create negative images of the items placed

upon them. The intention here was not to further science by showing the objects themselves but rather to examine the light patterns they created - this was fundamentally different.

The situation is confused as different terminology is used for what is essentially the same technique:

schadographs - Christian Schad (1894-1982) created his first schadographs in 1918 whilst he was living in Geneva. These were done by placing objects and collages onto photosensitive paper and then exposing them to light.

rayograms / rayographs - Man Ray (1890-1976) worked with this method and produced the most comprehensive body of work.

photogenics - Lotte Jacobi (1896-1990) photograms - László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946). As he said in 'Malerei, Fotografie, Film' (1925) - "This course leads to possibilities of light-composition, in which light must be sovereignly handled as a new creative means, like colour in painting and sound in music. I call this mode of light-composition the photogram. It offers scope for composing in a newly mastered material." [p.32, 1969 edition -The highlighting, spellings and bold are those of the original text.] Examining the birth dates of the key proponents of this technique is interesting - they were

all born between 1890 and 1896 and were in their 20's and 30's during the flourishing of Dadaism and Surrealism.

They liked the fact that there were white shadows of various gradations in a reversal of reality and that the translucency of the objects selected and the ways light passed through them created a sense of the mystery of the commonplace. 'Photograms' is the more generally used term except for images specifically by Christian Schad or Man Ray and there have been a number of experimental photographers who have used this approach including:

Georgii Zimin, Theodore Roszak, Barbara Morgan. Floris Michael Neusüss from 1960 started working on life size photograms of the human body sometimes brushing developer onto the photographic paper as the work progressed. This approach is continued by other artists including Angela Easterling in the UK.

Cameraless photographs are still produced by artists such as Adam Fuss and in 2002 Zeva Oelbaum, an instructor at the 'International Center for Photography in New York', published 'Blue Prints: The Natural World in Cyanotype Photographs' (ISBN: 0847824322).

