

KEITH FISHMAN

Keith Fishman likens the act of photographing to a form of meditation, one in which the essence of a scene becomes a reflection of the artist's state of mind and awareness at the moment of exposure. "Basically, the world to me is one of visual chaos, and the real challenge is to find symmetry, order and geo-metry," explains Fishman, who is president of a product development and marketing company. "My photographs are reductive, much more quiet and visceral. What I'm doing is lifting or extracting vignettes. I call my body of work 'extractions from the periphery,' and find that I'm drawn to what's 90 degrees left or right of center versus what's straight ahead."

Fishman, who has been photographing personally for more than 30 years, at one time considered a career in photography, but found commercial work anathema to his love of the medium as an aesthetic endeavor. "I have a BFA from the Hartford Art School and spent a couple of years roaming New York City assisting commercial photographers, but realized that I disliked being involved in the commercial side of photography," recalls Fishman, who had William Wegman as one of his instructors at art school. "Neverthe-less, I continued to make pictures, and as I look back today, I'm finally able to create order out of this disparate group of images."

Despite his abiding love and appreciation for traditional methods in black and white photography, Fishman, who continues to print and work with standard materials and procedures, has embraced the world of digital outputting for



much of his work. He eschews the more elaborate and fanciful manipulations afforded by digital outputting, however, using the technology solely for localized exposure, tonal and contrast controls. Fishman exposes and processes black and white film in regular chemistry, then scans the film with a Nikon 8000 scanner, and exports the

resulting digital file to Photoshop for manipulation.

"I'm a straight photographer," insists Fishman, "and even outputting digitally, I don't engage any other tools than what you find in the darkroom. There's no compositing or morphing. I'm staying true to what I feel is the craft of black and white and just executing with greater precision."

Mindful of the concerns over the longevity of digital prints, Fishman works exclusively with "carbon quad" black inks, a commercially available, pigment-based ink which, when matched with appropriate papers, has been determined to have an archival permanence of approximately 100 to 200 years. "No one knows the archival longevity of the carbon prints," he concedes, but feels confident they withstand the test of time.

Respective of the archival issues, Fishman says he is totally enamored with the look of his carbon ink prints. "I've always been moved by the old carbon prints," he says. "The patina of carbon pigment ink really spoke to me, and as I started to delve deeper into pigmented inks, I found that the carbon inks produced images with the same kind of patina and luminosity as the old carbon prints. With the testing I did, I found that the carbon prints gave my images a finishing and formality silver gelatin didn't. The work has a painterly quality."

Fishman's love of photography extends beyond the camera to being an avid collector as well. Fishman owns several hundred images in a personal collection

that includes works by Mark Citret, Wright Morris and Max Yavno. Fishman lives in Santa Barbara, California, and is chair of fine art programming for Photofutures at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. The collectors group supports and funds acquisitions and exhibitions for the museum. Fishman is currently editing his work for his first one-person show at the Caruso Woods Gallery in Santa Barbara, and despite the notable tendency among many photographers, in particular those working digitally, to make large, oversize prints, Fishman limits his print size to 8x10. "My prints are very quiet and reductive, and very strong as smaller intimate objects," he explains. "I want the viewer to get close and explore, so I purposely keep them small."—**Richard Pitnick**

■ PRINT INFORMATION

All prints are archival carbon Giclee on Orwell paper, offered in editions of 30. Titled, signed, numbered and dated on verso. Image sizes are varied on 8x10-inch paper and mounted on 16x20-inch board. Prices start at \$600 and increase at specific points as editions sell.

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