



Limited Offer – Hand-pulled Photogravure Special!



# LENSWORK

*Photography and the Creative Process • Articles • Interviews • Portfolios*

No. 36 • Jul - Aug 2001



*Articles*

Brooks Jensen  
Leo Tolstoy

*Portfolios*

C. Joseph Gough  
Dominic Rouse  
Peter Steinhauer

*EndNotes*

by Bill Jay

# LENSWORK

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*Photography and the Creative Process*  
*Articles • Interviews • Portfolios*

*Editors*

Brooks Jensen  
Maureen Gallagher

In this issue

*Articles by*

**Brooks Jensen**  
**Leo Tolstoy**

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**Dominic Rouse**  
**Peter Steinhauer**

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# EDITOR'S COMMENTS

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## *Getting Published*

*[Typically in this space you'll find the musings of Brooks Jensen. In this issue Maureen Gallagher will step in to offer her observations and suggestions about submitting your work to a publisher.]*

We couldn't tell you just how many submissions we've looked at since debuting *LensWork* in 1993, but it must be in the *thousands*. As you can imagine, we've thoroughly enjoyed *and* occasionally endured the plethora of parcels delivered daily; each one unique in its contents and presentation. It would be difficult to think of a more interesting way to spend time than going through the tangle results of creative minds. We've seen some wonderful work. We've seen some atrocious work. But, we also see some wonderful work sent in as an atrocious submission.

With this in mind, we'd like to offer some suggestions about getting published – or at least submitting work to a publisher. Of course, unless you've been a publisher, it's not very likely you've been in a situation where you could compare a wide variety of submissions. Just as no two photographers are alike, no two submissions are

exactly the same. And since no two magazines are alike, either, it makes sense that strict rules won't be universal. Nonetheless, these accumulated observations may prove useful in your efforts.

### ***Cover Materials***

The truth of the matter is that cover materials are typically brushed aside in favor of reviewing the *work*. Naturally, if the portfolio is of interest, we're curious to find out who produced the work, but who you are is second to what you've submitted as photography. While biases undoubtedly exist for content, a reputable publisher won't care whether you're a man or a woman; a self-taught photographer or an MFA; an "art" photographer or a "commercial" photographer; an amateur who has been at it for decades; or a student who is just finding their photographic voice. We've published them *all*. It's the photography that counts.

### ***Artist's Statements***

One gets the feeling that much *angst* has been poured into crafting many unintelligible artist's statements. Perhaps it's the pain of facing a blank page. Above all,

make your statement understandable in plain English. Have you ever read through the *entire* Artist's Statement at a gallery exhibit and wondered *what on earth the artist was trying to communicate?* Multiply that times the *hundreds* of submissions that come in to a publisher. Not *all* statements are unintelligible, mind you. But an esoteric artist's statement is easily eclipsed by statements that provide less fluff and more *stuff*; simply share your motivations, curiosities, interests, influences, direction, and experiences. There is little to no interest in why you started photography, what your first camera was, how difficult the work was to produce, or what the photographs are *supposed* to look when you make "real" prints. Avoid telling the viewer how *they* should feel, or even telling the viewer how *you* felt. What *you* felt as related by an artist's statement is irrelevant. The viewer is the ultimate judge of your ability to communicate this most-essential element.

### ***Subject Matter***

As an overview since issue #13 (when portfolios were added to *LensWork*), we've published 32 portfolios featuring *people* (including documentary, portraits and nudes), 24 portfolios featuring *land* (including Americana, west coast, urban, documentary and other) and 19 portfolios featuring *things* (including still life, abstracts and digital images). Subject matter *matters*, but what truly matters is that the photographer have a vested inter-

est in the subject. Think of it as the difference between "casual dating" and building a deep, committed relationship. Those photographers who seem to flit from subject to subject clearly have little to "tell" us through their work, since they have rarely learned much about their subject. Choose a subject that interests and excites you, piques your curiosity, and is *accessible*. Photography is about *life*, and the same rules that apply to relationships with people apply to your chosen photographic subject matter as well. Choose wisely; don't waste your time on subjects that belong to *others*.

### ***Go Beyond the Tripod Holes***

In the eight years that we've been publishing *LensWork*, I'm sure there have been quite a number of surprised photographers; surprised that their beautifully crafted work was rejected. We've seen work that would've inspired Ansel Adams, if only he had seen it as a young, impressionable photographer. But the hard truth is that a lot of the portfolios we review *are* Ansel's work (or Walker Evans', or Jerry Uelsmann's, or Frederick Sommer's, etc.) – only it's copied by some well-intentioned Adams (Walker, Uelsmann or Sommer, etc.) wannabe.

"If I've seen further than others, it's because I've stood on the shoulders of giants." This quote by Isaac Newton is a noble way of giving credit where credit is

due. But notice that he didn't say "If I've seen the same as others, it's because they showed me which turn-out to take." Many photographers who have traveled to Yosemite know what I'm talking about: the famous Wawona viewpoint where Adams made *Clearing Winter Storm*. God only knows just how many *other* tripods have been set up on that very spot, to try to capture the same incredible view. But if you've been to Yosemite you've probably learned something else: Adams' images were *found* in the landscape, seen in his *mind*, and perfected in his *darkroom*. He had a *lifelong relationship* (there's that darn word again) with Yosemite Valley that allowed him to cultivate the wealth of imagery that is his legacy. So, the question is: What "giants" would you learn from, and then look beyond? Somewhere in a back issue we published the quote "Seek not the wise men of old. Seek what they sought." It's still a favorite of mine and well-worth repeating.

### *Timing*

Sometimes you can get it right, only to send in a submission at the wrong time. Part of that, I think, is because a particular subject will come into fashion, and photographers will move towards that glowing white light – like moths. While some of these submissions are sincere and offer incredible depth, others can be knock-offs and, while flawlessly executed, simply

have the feeling of a one-night stand. It's usually the sincere ones that come through the door first; it's the copy-cats who follow. That's not to say that only *one* person can work sincerely in any one subject. It's just rare to receive more than *one at a time*, and even if virtuous work arrives on its heels, once the subject is published it would be rare for a magazine to re-visit that subject very soon. If you're creating a body of work that truly excites you, the best advice is to get it organized and submit it to publishers while the subject is yet "yours."

### *The Publisher's Deadline*

Never, never, *never* forget that publishers need content. With deadlines arriving at regular intervals, the publisher looks to the editorial staff and outside submissions to pull together each issue. The quality of the issue is largely dependent on the quality of the submissions. Far too many photographers assume they have no chance of ever being published. *Certainly*, goes the logic, *they must be inundated with submissions*. There is some truth to this; every magazine reviews far more than they can include. On the other hand, imagine the challenge of coming up with a hundred or more pages of content six to twelve times a year. The key to being published is to recognize the challenge and make it *easy* for the publisher to select your work. We'd like to share some of the observations that

we've gathered through the years — in no particular order:

### ***Packing peanuts***

Why would this come first to mind?

Hmm ... probably because it's the most *annoying*. Is it my imagination, or do packing peanuts just have a way of getting *everywhere*? Foam blocks or wadded-up paper provide good cushion, and don't leave the room — and everyone in it — covered in statically charged debris.

### ***Packaging***

While submissions aren't "graded" on their packaging, it does leave an impression if the submission is sent in with little care given to aesthetics or adequate protection in transit. We've pretty much seen it all — from cereal box cardboard to submissions that would do Fort Knox proud. Our preferred packaging (if we could live in a perfect world) would arrive in a sturdy box, contain the most incredible photography we've ever seen, be easy to peruse *and just as easy to put away*. And did I mention that it wouldn't leave little foam "peanut" particles all over us?

### ***Editing***

Editing a body of work to a tight submission of eight slides will more than likely go *nowhere*. Let the editors be editors; give them some room to move. Send too much rather than too little; cover your bases by sending "additional images" if you feel

compelled to tightly edit the central submission. How many is the right amount? That depends on the magazine. Here at *LensWork* we tend to publish portfolios of 12-20 images. Therefore, we prefer to see about 30 related images in a submission. A magazine that only uses three images might be overwhelmed with 30. *Know the publication and their style* before you submit work for review. There have been a number of occasions where we've excerpted a particularly compelling subject from a large body of work. We can't do that sort of editing if we don't see the work to begin with.

When editing, think in terms of storytelling, or creating moods. You're not going to fit your entire photographic history into a single magazine submission, so think about the publication's preferences and select related images that best suit its overall style. Just as most people don't want to read a series of random and unrelated paragraphs, so it is with photographs. Make your images fit together as a *body of work*; make it clear for the editors *and their audience* to see what you are trying to communicate.

### ***Know the publisher and their submission guidelines***

It's a bit telling when we receive at *LensWork* a portfolio of *color* work for consideration. We don't publish color, so what do these people expect? It's also useful

to know the editorial bias of a publisher: there are those who will publish mutilated bodies, and those who won't – whether in color or not. Some publishers want text, some want technical data included, some need titles, some prefer slides and other prints. Be sure to do your homework and provide all of the requested materials.

### *If you're serious, send prints*

Speaking strictly for *LensWork* here, slides are convenient for the photographer, but create a reviewing hoop-jump for editors. If you're taking your best shot to get published, send prints. If you don't have at least one set of "reproduction prints" you need to get back in the darkroom. Make *three* sets while you're there. Reproduction prints are printed as well as you can make them – don't skimp! – but are intended to be used for reproduction purposes (as opposed to gallery exhibitions). They are not fine art originals and should be of little consequence if they are damaged or lost in transit.

### *Gallery prints*

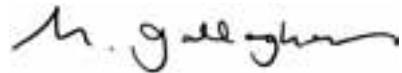
Keep in mind that if you are sending your highly prized "babies" to a publisher, you are sending them into a *production* facility. Those submissions that arrive in carefully packed art cases – complete with pristine white viewing gloves – are best sent to

galleries. It's worth repeating: publishers want *work* prints.

### *Web sites as submissions*

Using web sites and email to solicit the interest of publishers may be convenient for the photographer, but are often-times ignored. Plainly said, other photographers who are doing their homework and carefully preparing a physical submission stand a far greater chance to be considered. While web sites are useful for promotional purposes, you are better served to send digital files on a disposable CD, and include a handful of prints to show your printing abilities. These prints will also serve to demonstrate proper tonalities in spite of monitor variances or computer incompatibility.

What publishers are looking for are submissions that bring more than your education or technique to the work; include a part of *yourself* in your photography. And if you want to package your submission in a Fruit Loop box that may be okay; you just might want to think twice before using those darned packing peanuts.



# Limited Offer! New Hand-pulled Photogravure



© Ryuijie

*Two Tulips* by Ryuijie

Hand-pulled photogravure (not inkjet!)  
(See our website for a description of this process)

11"x14" image

Signed, numbered

Warm-tone palette

On deckle-edged etching paper

Release date: August 1, 2001

Item # LPG-006

Special Pre-Release Offer  
Order by July 31, 2001  
Pre-release price \$39\*

Publication price  
as of August 1st will be \$99

---

Optional matting add \$25  
Framed 16x20" with mat add \$59

\* Limit 10 per customer, plus shipping & handling  
No discount coupons on pre-release images

# Limited Offer! New Photogravures by Ryuijie

Special Pre-Release Offer • Order by July 31, 2001

Release date: August 1, 2001

## *Three Sunflowers*

16x20 photogravure, #LPG-008

Pre-release price \$79\*

Publication price \$199

## *Orchids*

8x10 photogravure, #LPG-007

Pre-release price \$29\*

Publication price \$79



© Ryuijie



© Ryuijie

Hand-pulled photogravures (not inkjet!)  
(See our website for a description of this process)

Signed, numbered  
Warm-tone palette  
On deckle-edged etching paper

\* Limit 10 per customer  
No discount coupons on pre-release images  
Optional matting add \$25  
Optional framing add \$59 for 16x20  
or add \$89 for 20x24  
Plus shipping & handling  
See the order form at the back of this issue  
or visit our website for online ordering  
[www.lenswork.com](http://www.lenswork.com)

The LensWork Special Editions

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# PHOTOGRAVURES

Limited or Numbered Editions

Signed and numbered

Framing optional



*Adobe Storm* by Russ Dodd • 9¾" x 12¼" • numbered and signed • publication price \$99 plus shipping and handling • No. LPG-005



*Descending Angel* by John Wimberley • 14½" x 16½" • limited to 250 • signed • publication price \$225 plus shipping and handling • No. LPG-001



*Suspended* by Maureen Gallagher • 7¾" x 9¾" • limited to 250 • signed • publication price \$99 plus shipping and handling • No. LPG-003



*Bixby Creek Bridge, Big Sur, CA, 1996* by Larry Wiese • 9" x 16" • limited to 250 • signed • publication price \$175 plus shipping and handling • No. LPG-002

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If you are unfamiliar with photogravures, our sample print, *Driver, U.P. 3895* by Russ Dodd includes a \$25-off coupon that can be applied to your next photogravure. See our website for details, [www.lenswork.com](http://www.lenswork.com).

# Limited Offer!

## New Gelatin Silver Special Editions

Release date: August 1, 2001

**Special Pre-Release Offers**

Order by July 31, 2001

*Cactus, Carmel Mission, 1982*  
by Ryuijie

11x14 gelatin silver, #LWS-135

Pre-release price **\$39\***

Publication price \$99



*Fuchsia & branches, 1983*  
by Ryuijie

11x14 gelatin silver, #LWS-136

Pre-release price **\$39\***

Publication price \$99



Hand-printed in a wet darkroom (not inkjet!)

Archival gelatin silver

Signed, numbered

Traditional selenium-toned

On Ilford MultiGrade photographic paper

\* Limit 10 per customer

No discount coupons on pre-release images

Optional matting add \$25

Optional framing add \$59 for 16x20

or add \$89 for 20x24

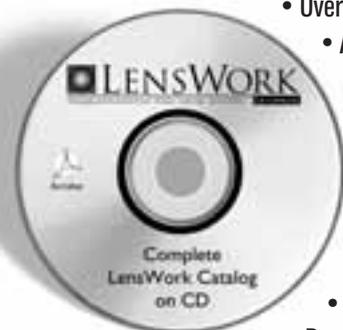
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- All LensWork Photogravures
- All 135 Special Editions Silver Series Images
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- Previews and audio clips of the MultiMedia titles
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- Complete Back Issues Index
- Submission Guidelines
- Dozens of world wide web links



## 135 Special Editions Silver Collection!

Each *Special Editions Silver Series* image is presented in a higher resolution than is possible on the web.

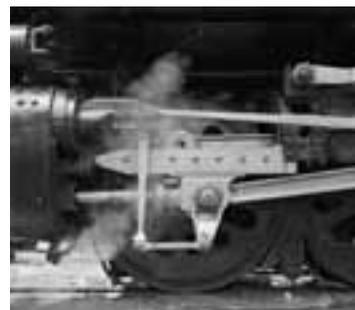
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The LensWork Photogravures offer a spectacular introduction to this long-revered image technology.

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# VIETNAM

*Living in the Landscape*



*by*



Peter Steinhauer





# WHAT IS ART?

*Schools, Critics, Counterfeits and True Works of Art*

*by*

Leo Tolstoy

*[Editor's note: This article is an excerpt from a larger essay originally published in 1898 by the great Russian novelist. This is Chapter XII from his book-length essay. It is remarkable that his comments, published 103 years ago, can still ring so true today. That his thoughts on artist's income, art criticism and art education pre-date the rise of photography as a respected art medium matter not. The same issues that perplex us today are age-old, and it is both comforting and disturbing that his comments are so appropriate now in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Of course, writing styles have changed and selected passages from Tolstoy's essay should be considered in the context of his times. Nonetheless, there is a great deal in this essay that still speaks to our times, whether as photographers, enthusiasts, critics or educators.]*

In our society three conditions cooperate to cause the production of objects of counterfeit art. They are (1) the considerable remuneration of artists for their productions and the professionalism which this has produced among artists, (2) art criticism, and (3) schools of art.

While art was as yet undivided, and only religious art was valued and rewarded while indiscriminate art was left unrewarded, there were no counterfeits of art or, if any existed, being exposed to the criticism of the whole people they quickly disappeared. But as soon as that division occurred and the upper



# DOORS

*Portals of Time*



*by*

*C. Joseph Gough*

C. Joseph Gough





# WHAT SIZE IS THE EDITION?

*by*

Brooks Jensen

Every time I'm involved in a workshop, there is a predictable series of debates that crop up. *Is it better to meter for Zone 2 or Zone 3? Can a decent print be made on RC paper? Is photography really art?* and one of my favorites, *Who was the greatest photographer of all time – Ansel Adams or Edward Weston?* To workshop students who've never endured these debates, such topics, I'm sure, seem exciting and full of mystery, worthy of monopolizing the valuable time in a workshop. To anyone who has been around workshops for a while, these questions immediately inspire a yawn and the need to get away for a walk on the beach. There is, however, one question that I believe is worthy of discussion because it's a practical question that influences the photographer's entire career – *How many prints should be made of a given negative, and, should they be limited and numbered?*

Thorny issues, like roses, are often best handled with protective gloves. The problem with gloves, of course, is that they both protect and numb. I stand accused and guilty of being numb about the issue of edition sizes – at least numb to the point where I was unwilling to take a stand based on some underlying principle. In truth, I've struggled with the question of edition size for quite some time. I have politely avoided the issue because I was not certain of my own position. Having thought about it a great deal now for more than 25 years (!) my position on edition sizes has clarified. I am now prepared to take off my gloves (fully aware of the combative double-meaning in such a phrase) and take a stand. In short, I've decided I am against limiting an edition. Period. Let me be specific: *I am against a predetermined limit imposed as a strategy to make the artwork scarce.* I am now prepared to say that "1/250" is a bunch of bull.



# HAUNTED BY A PAINTER'S GHOST



*by*

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dominic Rouse". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Dominic Rouse



*Magritte My Foot!*

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