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LENSWORK

Photography and the Creative Process • Articles • Interviews • Portfolios • Fine Art Special Editions

No. 50 Dec 03 - Jan 04

10th Anniversary Issue



Interview with
Michael Kenna

Portfolios
Cosmin Bumbutz
Michael Kenna
Bradford Washburn

EndNotes
by **Bill Jay**

LENSWORK

50
DEC — JAN
2003 - 2004

Photography and the Creative Process
Articles • Interviews • Portfolios

Editors

Brooks Jensen
Maureen Gallagher

Assistant to the Editors

Lisa Kuhnlein

In this issue

Article by

Brooks Jensen

Interview with

Michael Kenna

Portfolios by

Cosmin Bumbutz
Michael Kenna
Bradford Washburn

EndNotes by **Bill Jay**

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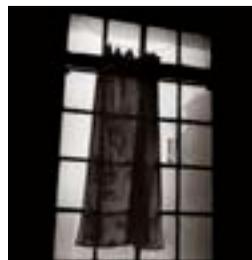
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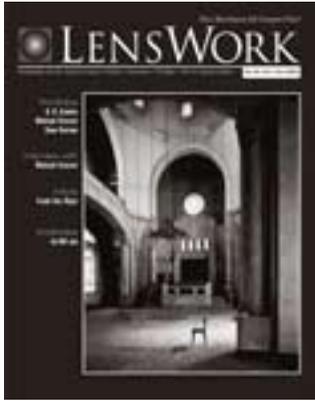
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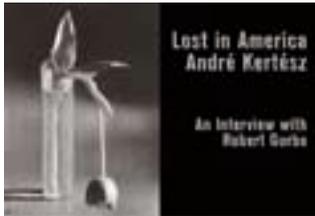
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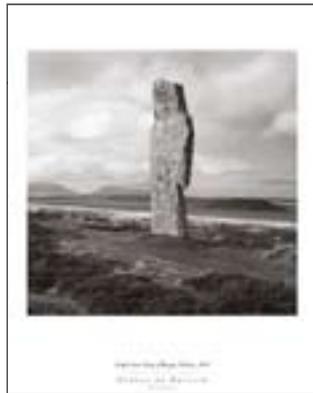
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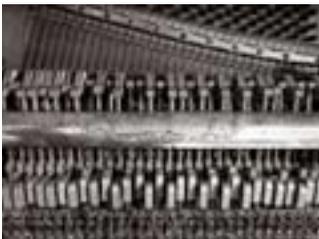
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The LensWork Interviews
Starting at \$12.95



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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

A Look Back And A Big Thanks

LensWork Number Fifty. Ten years ...
What an amazing trip it's been.

Now that we're here, publishing issue #50 of *LensWork*, we can't help but look back with a bit of nostalgia and tremendous gratitude to our readers, customers, and advertisers, for all of their support. In ten years, *LensWork* has grown to much more than a magazine. *LensWork* has become a community of creative individuals who recognize the artistic and expressive potential in photography, and who embrace the notion that equipment and technology are merely tools. It is because there is such a community of committed and dedicated, creative individuals, that *LensWork* thrives.

With your indulgence, we'd like to look back and reminisce a bit about *LensWork's* humble beginnings.

We (Brooks and Maureen) met and married in 1992. We are both photographers and our passion for photography led to many discussions about our mutual interest. Very quickly, we discovered that neither of us (surprise!) subscribed to any photography magazines. We both

felt there were no publications that fed our *creative* efforts. There was simply too much emphasis on cameras and darkroom tricks, and not nearly enough emphasis on the parts of photography that fascinated us – the creative path. Brooks had been writing some articles about this for a local photography group, and even editing their newsletter. After some consideration, it seemed an easy and natural leap to expand that project into a commercial venture – to publish a magazine that discussed the creative issues in photography (ahh, the virtues of naiveté!). We like to joke that only eleven months after our marriage in 1992 we birthed the first issue of *LensWork*. It was truly the proverbial “garage operation,” but in our case it was



*Maureen and mailbags
in living room office. 1995*

also a *living room operation*, a *dining room operation*, and a *bathroom operation*. In the

first year of existence, *LensWork* took over our modest suburban home in Portland, Oregon. Office space, production and shipping areas occupied the spaces where normal people usually eat, relax and sleep.

We first decided we would publish the newly named *LensWork* on a monthly basis. The first four were modest productions finished to 8½x11, folded and stapled in the middle, with a nice art paper cover. We had the noble idea of funding the publication with advertising dollars, then sending it out free to photographers. These first four issues were given away in the Pacific Northwest, and in retrospect what they lacked in press-run they made up for in the effusive use of oddball fonts. Looking back at them now we can't help but laugh at our early efforts in the practicalities of layout and design.

After the first four issues (whose *articles* were actually very good) we decided that continuing a monthly publication was likely to bury us – literally. Common sense prevailed, and we immediately changed the format from monthly to quarterly and renamed it *LensWork Quarterly*. The early issues were created using a 386x PC and a primitive graphics program called *Publish It!* (which must be spoken s-l-o-w-l-y). At that time, Windows 3.1 had just replaced DOS, and while we had desktop publishing capabilities, speed was an elusive theory. For proofs, we would send a print

command to the Lazerjet and go to lunch. Everything was *slow*. Email had just been invented, but the Internet was still in gestation. Our world has changed so much in ten years!

At the same time we slowed down the publishing schedule we bulked up the content from 24 to 96 pages. We also scaled the size down to 8½ x 7 – which is the size you have in your hands. We did so for the most revolutionary of reasons: We calculated that in order for the magazine to survive we would need to reduce costs by printing it ourselves – disregarding the fact that neither of us knew how to operate a printing press. We purchased a Multilith 1250 duplicator press with all



Maureen & Brooks with "Elvis" 1994

the enthusiasm of new parents. Neither of us knew how to operate a printing press, but

we decided to teach ourselves; just another step in the creative process! Installing the press in our newly converted garage, we quickly discovered how easy it was to place ink on things – namely *us*, our clothes, the walls, our printing press – but precious little of it on the paper! With the help of a 1950's *Navy Lithographers Manual* (which advised us to “Treat your press as



That's ink, not amidol stains. 1994

you would a girl on the first date, with gentleness and care”) we eventually learned to operate the press successfully. We then printed *LensWork* #5 through #11 with this press, which we affectionately named “Elvis” – as in *Elvis Presley*. There were no photographs in those early issues of *LensWork*, but there were some wonderful articles and a tremendous amount of growing support from friends and readers.

We really did use the entire house. We processed our own legal size printing plates in the 16 x 20 developing trays in our darkroom and hung them to dry in our bathroom shower. The reason, by the way, that *LensWork* is 8½ x 7 is because these duplicator presses take a maximum sheet size of legal paper – which is 8½ x 14. We printed those early issues of *LensWork* in our garage, “2-up” (2 pages per sheet) on a single sheet of paper. We would then slice them in half with a wonderful old 300-pound cast iron guillotine cutter (which we still use!). Years later we were complimented on our marketing savvy; how clever we were to make a smaller publication that would demand to be in front of the larger magazines at the bookstore. Of course, we didn’t ruin

the myth by admitting that it had more to do with the limitations of Elvis.

In those early days, the survival of *LensWork* was, to a large degree, a labor of love. It was a labor of love on our part, but it was also a labor of love from our friends and fellow travelers in photography. Morrie Camhi, our very good friend watched our early struggles and prompted us to seek non-profit status and financial contributions.

We didn’t, and no one was more pleased that *LensWork* succeeded than Morrie. He contributed numerous articles and moral support in those early years.



Morrie Camhi and Brooks in Morrie's studio, 1996

A turning point in *LensWork* Publishing’s history occurred in 1995 when Raphael Shevelev and his wife Karine Schomer, came to town with a box of prints. The prints, he said, were the elements of a book he was working on. He then announced to us that we would be his publisher. We explained that we didn’t know how to publish a book; that we didn’t know how to print images; that we didn’t have the right tools – computers, scanners, printing press – to do a photography book. He said, “You don’t under-



Maureen at the press check for *Liberating the Ghosts*. 1995

stand. I'm not *asking* you to be my publisher. I'm *telling* you that you are." How could we argue? We purchased a scanner, a new computer, all kinds of new software – all of which was delivered on December 15th. Eleven days later we were at a rented cabin on the Oregon coast for the week between Christmas and New Years, where the four of us converted their materials into a book layout – our first book-length publication with images, *Liberating The Ghosts: The March of The Living*. His insistence and unfailing confidence forced us to begin the process of learning how to print images – how to scan, how to prepare sophisticated image files, and how to work with *real* printers. His and Karine's unfailing faith and lasting friendship are treasured to this day. Their book, by the way, was named as a "Best Book For Young Adults" by the American Library Association. It was a proud and happy moment for all of us.

Where Raphael forced us to ask a lot of questions, it was Russ Dodd who answered them. Brooks had met Russ at a local photo-group meeting in Portland,

Oregon, and developed a friendship that was to influence *LensWork* in totally unexpected ways. A graduate of RIT, his range of printmaking abilities as a watercolorist, photographer and photogravurist, alongside his exceptional pre-press knowledge served to resolve many a frustrating technical glitch. In his methodical and clear-minded manner, Russ would answer our questions with clarity and precision. Patient and generous with his time, his influence is seen in the technical excellence of

LensWork. Later, Russ became an integral part of *LensWork* when he developed his extraordinary method



Dan Burkholder, Russ Dodd, Ray Carofano looking at Ray's prints at our office in Portland, OR. 2000

of producing beautiful photogravures. Together we offered and sold over 2,500 photogravures in the last three years.

Starting with *LensWork* #12 we changed the format of the magazine to include images. The first eleven issues of *LensWork* focused strictly on articles on the creative process. We didn't want to include images unless they had a meaningful purpose; we weren't satisfied to simply publish another magazine that offered the ubiquitous "best shots" of a given photographer. Then it

occurred to us that at every workshop we'd ever attended someone always arrived with a portfolio – a completed body of work that consisted of ten or twenty images – preciously stored in a clamshell box and intended to be seen as a *body of work*. These portfolios were never quite enough images to be a book, and clearly too many to be a typical wall display. As orphans in the photographic art world, they mostly exist in Light Impressions boxes stored in photographers' closets, rarely seen. We realized that *this* was an opportunity that *LensWork* could explore. It was the service we could provide to the photographic community. We could present work in ways that no other publication did – as little “books” of photographs contained inside our magazine. With the decision to publish portfolios of images, we switched to a higher quality coated paper to facilitate better printing of the images – and haven't changed since. At the same time we let go of the idea of printing *LensWork* ourselves, and began to work with commercial printers.

Mac Kieffer at Ash Creek Press (Portland, OR) printed the first issues of *LensWork* to include images. Later, we worked with Premier Press (Portland, OR), and our rep there, Annette Hadaway, worked with us to grow *LensWork* from a regional to an international publication. More recently, Grant Forrest and the wonderful folks at Hemlock Printing (Vancouver, B.C.,

Canada) have improved *LensWork* to true museum quality book printing with their extraordinary technical expertise.

Along the way there have been numerous milestones, and it's amazing how many of these involve, in one way or another, the generosity of others. In 1998, Brooks was working on a method to create digital negatives so that he could print his images in a traditional wet darkroom after he had prepared them in Photoshop. Perfecting this hybrid technology for his personal work, it occurred to him that there might be a commercial application. The first supporter of this idea came in a generous offer from our good friend, David Grant Best, who loaned us the reproduction rights to his image, *Ship Rock, New Mexico*, to



David Grant Best signs Ship Rock, New Mexico prints. 2002

create a sample print as a demonstration of this technology. In fact, David has been a

constant source of inspiration and counsel from the very earliest days of *LensWork*. In 1992, it was David we went to with our idea for a new magazine. We talked with him over breakfast one Sunday in the little town of Duval, Washington, and told him of our idea for a photography magazine

that would have no photographs. Because he didn't laugh we knew this idea had potential. David has been a friend for 25 years. Without him *LensWork* would certainly not be, period.

We sent one of David's prints down to Barbara Bullock-Wilson to see if she might be interested in allowing us to create reproduction prints of her father's work – the master photographer Wynn Bullock, who passed away in 1974. A long time admirer of Wynn Bullock's work, Brooks was hopeful that Barbara would be interested in adding her father's work to the *LensWork Special Editions*. Barbara was enthusiastic. We immediately set to work to create reproductions of her father's most famous and compelling photographs, including *Child In Forest* and *Let There Be Light* (which was selected to open the historical and famous *Family of Man* exhibit). Barbara and her husband, Gene Bullock-Wilson, have been tireless advocates for *LensWork*. We owe a debt of gratitude to them for the countless new subscribers whom they have proselytized into the fold.

Bill Jay will cringe if we call him “the inspirational grandfather” of *LensWork*, but he is. Author of one of our favorite books, *Occam's Razor*, Bill has been generous and helpful to our cause from the very early days. His British charm and wit now permeate the final pages of *LensWork* in his column, *EndNotes*. There is no better

writer on photography – even though there are more *famous* ones – than Bill. He is, without a doubt, the most lucid and clear-thinking advocate of photography, perhaps in its history.

And we can't stop short of mentioning our special relationship with Huntington Witherill and Tracy Morrison. Hunter honored us with the privilege of publishing his two books – *Orchestrating Icons* and *Botanical Dances* – both of which have won prestigious

awards for their outstanding printing quality. Hunter's patience and willingness



Hunter and Brooks check press sheets for Orchestrating Icons. 2000

to pursue that last elusive one percent of quality was both an inspiration and a lesson we will value always.

The problem with thanking people in print like this, is the fact that there are so many who deserve acknowledgement and there is precious little space to do so. How could we possibly express our full gratitude to the photographers who have worked with us over the years? There have been so many creative artists who have allowed us to publish their work – both in *LensWork* and our *Special Editions*

Collection. There are photographers who have generously sat with us and candidly talked about their creative process – and allowed themselves to be recorded so that others could benefit from their experience and wisdom. When we talk about *LensWork* as a community of creative people, we don't use that word lightly. *LensWork* is not just the thousands who have subscribed or purchased our products. It's also the hundreds of photographers who have allowed us to publish their work, and the countless hours required of creative artists, production staff, distribution people, and technologists who have helped make *LensWork* an important part of so many peoples' creative lives.

And speaking of the creative life, the process of publishing *LensWork* itself has been a creative path that has taught us *so* many lessons. We have a joke around here, that it takes us two times before we get it right. *LensWork*, as you hold it in your hands, is literally in its fourth iteration since we began. Our original multimedia morphed into our current *LensWork Interviews* programs. At first, we thought we'd maintain an inventory of *LensWork Special Edition* prints, then we discovered that it was much more practical to offer them as one-time releases. It's not that we continue to get things *wrong*, it's that we continue to learn how to do things *better*. That's not a bad lesson for those of us who are trying to be creative in our lives.

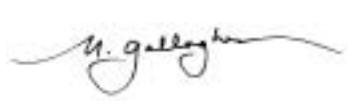
And, of course, we can not sufficiently express our gratitude to our capable and creative staff over the years, who have worked so diligently to make *LensWork* what it is. Heartfelt thanks to Dave Witt, Eugenia Vasquez, Lorrie Singleton, Meshell Whittaker, Don Johnson, Lisa Kuhnlein, Peter Kuhnlein, Aaron Flint Jamison and Charles "C.J." Smith.

So here we are – ten years and fifty issues later. Brooks' hair is thinner, Maureen's dark hair has gone gray, and Elvis was sold long ago. But the adventure continues, and as we step into the next decade we do so knowing that photography – as a creative and expressive force – is alive and well. Having worked with so many inspiring people during the last ten years assures us that it is so.

Our many thanks to all of you who share this path. Our greatest hope is that *LensWork* has been meaningful in your creative efforts.



Brooks Jensen



Maureen Gallagher

More photos at www.lenswork.com/50

TRANSIT

Rail Travel in the Romanian Winter



by

Bumbut

Cosmin Bumbuț



THINGS I'VE LEARNED ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY

Revisited, 10 Years Later

by

Brooks Jensen

[Editors' Note: In December 1993, this article was published in *LensWork #4* - to an audience, back then, of only a couple hundred readers. Since then, we've received scores of request to reprint it. While some equipment and materials have changed considerably, it is amazing how the creative challenges remain the same. After an additional ten years of photographing, writing, and thinking about photography, Brooks has updated these random thoughts about photography and the creative life.]

I've been involved in photography for 24 [now 34 years!] years, since I developed my first roll of film in junior high school. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think about or do photography. Certainly in all that time I must have learned something of value! Here are 131 tidbits I've learned about photography from my experience. They are personal, experiential and may not be true for everyone. If so, you might ask, why publish them? Well, even if they are not true for all, perhaps they may stimulate thought. In itself, this must be of some small value.

This list is composed of some original thoughts mixed with some thoughts I *think* are original (but undoubtedly are not) because I've forgotten where and from whom I first learned them. There are also a few whose author I am delighted to thank and credit and from whom I hope I may receive some license if I don't remember the quotation exactly. Where I quote another, I do so because I have found their wisdom to be true from my own experience, too; they've said it better than I can. There is no particular order to these thoughts other than the order they occurred to me in the few weeks I took to write them.

MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHS



by

Bradford Washburn

Bradford Washburn

All images copyright Bradford Washburn, courtesy of Panopticon Gallery, Boston, MA



Late Afternoon, Mount Fairweather, Alaska, 1979

INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL KENNA

Brooks Jensen: Your 20th book is about to be published – this one entitled *Calais Lace*. It was previously published in French, but will be published in English by Nazraeli later this year. You’ve obviously been a busy fellow!

Michael Kenna: (laughing) I’d like to think so. It’s been a wonderful journey. I’ve been doing photography now for almost thirty years. Many projects; many interesting things to do along the way.

BJ: You must have started photography right after high school?

MK: No, after high school I went to an art school for a bit. Then I went to photography school for three years. I started my first professional work when I was around twenty years old.

BJ: Most of the book projects you’ve done, like this current new book, are *project work* as opposed to *greatest hits* collections. It appears you tend to throw yourself into a project that results in an extensive body of work. How do you decide to pursue a project?

MK: Most of these projects come up naturally somehow. In a sense, I *started* in the way you were talking about – the “greatest hits” work. I just tried everything I could think of, but one naturally tends towards certain areas that eventually really interest you, that resonate with you. For me, those areas are varied – from studies of concentration camps in Europe to nuclear power stations, from steelworks to interiors of kindergarten classes,

CALAIS LACE



by
Michael Kenna
Michael Kenna



The LensWork Folios



Great Langdale, Cumbria, 1998
STONES OF BRITAIN
FAY GODWIN

What is better than a book of photographs? LensWork *Folios* are a collection of photographs printed on real silver photographic paper to archival museum standards! No ink-on-paper compromises! Nothing can replace the depth of tonality or presence of fiberbase silver photographic paper.

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In contrast to today's gallery obsession with the *bigger-is-better* philosophy, we believe small and intimate photographs have a magical quality all their own. There is a tangible joy in holding in one's hands a finely crafted and beautifully seen photograph. Also, there is an experience in viewing a set of related images that cannot be duplicated with a single image on the wall.

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View our web movie of a
finished folio set at:
www.lenswork.com

STONES OF BRITAIN by Fay Godwin

10 Image Folio Set



See these images in greater detail at www.lenswork.com

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LSS-024 Piano Workings #1, Alkabo School, North Dakota, 2003



LSS-025 Piano Workings #2, Alkabo School, North Dakota, 2003



LSS-026 Piano Workings #3, Alkabo School, North Dakota, 2003

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All three for \$49

plus shipping & handling

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January 31, 2004 on these images
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- **Archival, selenium toned**
- **Gelatin silver** (we use Ilford or Forte Fiber Base Paper) processed in a traditional wet darkroom.
- 6³/₄x9¹/₂ approx. image area on 11x14 paper, optionally matted 16x20". See the order form in the back of this issue.

The *LensWork Special Editions* Program is unique and unparalleled. Because our gelatin silver *Special Editions* use a hybrid darkroom technique pioneered by *LensWork*, we know how important it is for the quality, silver fidelity and tonal range of our prints to pass the test of discriminating photographers. Our *Sample Prints* allow you to see, firsthand, the stunning quality of our images.

In addition, this group of images is a special example that is worth seeing because they were photographed with a digital camera. If you have been interested to see what is possible with the combined hybrid technologies of digital photography with traditional wet darkroom printing, there is no better example than these three sample prints!

* Discount coupons may not be applied to the purchase of other sample prints.

All images © Brooks Jensen

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LensWork Publishing
909 Third Street
Anacortes, WA 98221-1502 U.S.A.

USA TOLL FREE 1-800-659-2130

Voice 360-588-1343 FAX 503-905-6111

Email editor@lenswork.com

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