

## Lens Culture B&W Entry Review

Hello Dana. I chose your untitled portfolio of images to review because it's visually interesting. I have taken some time to study the images you provided, looking for visual clues that communicate your ideas about your photography. You are obviously a skilled photographer with a strong sense of how you want to approach your image making process. You provided a brief statement that explains that you, "realized I have always been fascinated by details. The camera allows me to frame and save images that would normally be fleeting." What I get from this statement is your curiosity about and interest with details inspired you to make these abstract photos.

I know that a statement wasn't required for this entry but it would be helpful for you and the viewer if you could further develop your statement, telling the viewer about your inspiration for the photos you make. It's important to be able to express those ideas in an artist statement because it will help you grow as a photographer. An artist statement will help orient the viewer to what you are interested in regarding your photography and what you feel is happening with the photography. Thinking about your approach and what you are trying to accomplish will help shed some light on how to continue to formulate a unique style. It will help bring more depth to the viewer's understanding of the photos and more understanding about your own creative process. I will make some suggestions at the end of the review.

Your collection of photographs appears to be images from a macro view with the subjects being almost unidentifiable to the viewer. There is a lot of ambiguity as to what these subjects are yet they are elegant compositions of light, shadow, and form. At the same time, this is a selection of photographs that communicate emotionally. It's a certain dark mood they convey. I can see in the images that you like contrast, in both tonality and drama! Your images bring a kind of magical light to dark, mysterious situation. By the way you composed your images you certainly create a dramatic experience for the viewer. It appears that you are working on making photos in a unique, artistic, and interesting way. You use these technical qualities to speak about your concepts.

The photos in your series appear to be studies of what you see and a creative, imaginative process of interpreting these objects. The documentary-style photos offer clues to the ideas that are beneath the surface of the physical object and maybe even the human psyche. You discover these schemes and your images capture qualities of their innermost meaning and information about their

histories. This collection of photos is unified by a similar photographic style that points toward a cohesive story about your creative journey.

In these photos I see that your camera reaches out and explores these subjects in a way that presents them as artifacts from contemporary life, myths and timeless ideas. You move in close to compose images that remove these subjects from their environments, giving them a whole new context by removing their context. Your images appear to be objects with time worn histories and surface erosion that appear in the form of shapes, textures, light, and darks. There is collaboration between visual textures and the surrounding environments that leave their marks. Your photos investigate mundane scenes to bring out the moody, extraordinary qualities that you discover. You highlight those interesting qualities that no one else, likely, ever noticed.

Because your images isolate the subjects in the frame, they address the impulse of the viewer to become obsessively focused by the need to figure out what they are looking at. For example, each image is a unique interpretation of a scene that pulls the viewer in and asks them to imagine what it is they see. It would be easy to imagine all of these images as part of a larger narrative from which these are scenes.

The images spark ideas in the viewer's imagination. In doing so, viewer's become engaged in the richness and meaningfulness of what they are seeing! But then again, maybe the images can be seen as purely abstract compositions without having to classify, categorize, and identify what they must be. I think that on a broad level, the ideas and observations these photos represent are fascinating. Some photos may represent artifacts from every day human life, or they may be remnants of buried treasures, and still others may be treasures of light and shadow.

There are strong visual threads that clearly run through your portfolio and the first one is "black and white". Your photography seeks to capture the magic that light and shadow can communicate. I think the way you use black and white to speak about your ideas and your observations are perceptive. I think you recognize that beauty exists everywhere if we have the awareness and eyes to find it and see it. You find beauty in mundane objects, every day situations, and mysterious shapes...all in the microcosms of your environment, all within dark vignettes.

You use light and shadow as a transformational, alchemical tool to transmute what you see into what you would like others to see. You, as a photographer, make conscious choices to include shadows,

shapes, and textures that communicate your non-objective vision. In this way the photos seem designed to be very affective tools for a journey of internal, self-exploration and self-discovery.

The second thread that runs through your photos is a moody, mysterious narrative. These photos are deeply mysterious because several photos are connected by some imaginative, story. The abstract forms seem to relate to each other. You capture images that go straight to the viewer's imagination. Because you suspend objects in a background of darkness, every single photo is dramatic and rich with possibility. This portfolio evokes feelings of curiosity. The photos are interesting because they blur the line between fine art photography and compositional, poetic design. These visual compositions are clearly important characters in your stories. I think you are also asking that the viewer be sensitive enough to look deeply at your images, to see the details you have included in the frame and to consider the issues you talk about in your statement.

On the surface these images have a type of visual complexity that concentrates on rich tonality and the way the artifacts become ornaments in imaginary environments. You challenge the viewer to look deeply and consider the possibilities! In all the photos there is a kind of ambience that is vibrant, mysterious, and full of drama. The images also function in a way that communicates your experience to the viewer. Anyone that is willing to set aside their compulsion to identify what they are looking at will relate to the feelings and emotions your images communicate.

These investigative depictions remove the viewer from their commonly understood vantage points. By the way you compositionally crop the photos, you create compositions that promote feelings of uncertainty and disorder. By moving and removing the context of the subjects the images become very abstract. You put the viewer in a position to speculate what (or where) it is they are seeing. Because of this, the images evoke ideas around vantage point, perception, and imagination.

I can imagine these photos printed very large, to inspire feelings of awe by creating a sense of scale for the viewer. Large-scale presentation could prompt the viewer to feel small when confronted by the ideas of standing in front of these mysterious, abstract compositions. Viewers would feel confronted with the feeling of being immersed in unexpected perspectives, leaving them to contemplate the possibility of not recognizing and connecting with what they see.

A second observation/suggestion also has to do with presentation. I suggest that the photos would be effective in a book. I think your

ideas, combined with the photos will make a more cohesive presentation. Also with a book, the viewer can hold the images, making the interaction more personal.

Your images prove that if one has the awareness and curiosity, they can discover new worlds among the mundane reality we live in. It is very exciting and who knows where it will lead. Also, don't feel like you need to be married to the photography world. My advice is that you enter juried art exhibitions and/or show your work within art communities. I think that your images would do well in an "art" environment. Your photos really do cross a lot of boundaries, which is highly encouraged in the art world. I suggest you keep an eye on [www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org) for themed calls for artists.

Your photos exhibit a high degree of talent and creative vision. It is clear that photography is one of your passions! Your images and your project are very thought provoking and creative. They are full of stories waiting to be told! I would strongly encourage you to keep pursuing your ideas. But, look at lots of portfolios and really challenge yourself to keep growing as a photographer and doing something unique, that you haven't ever seen. I very much enjoyed looking at your photos and I appreciate the way your images are masterfully considered and carefully designed. I hope this review is helpful and I look forward to seeing what you will do next!