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Artist

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Marty Hulsebos



All photos courtesy of Marty Hulsebos Photography

The visual variety and emotional allure of America's landscape has been the source of inspiration for artists across the centuries. Walt Whitman praised it in poems, Woody Guthrie harmonized about it in his classic songs, and artist Marty Hulsebos has chronicled it with his photography. Born in Ridgewood, N.J., Hulsebos has made a career out of his wanderlust. Accompanied by his trusty camera, the photographer has trekked across the United States, always finding a new slice of terrain or a new segment of sky to immortalize. Learning to function within, recognize, and preserve the wonders of the great outdoors is a major component of his success. "I like getting out in nature, and seeing how really nice light transforms a scene," says Hulsebos. "Ordinary subjects can become extraordinary if the light is great. Long ago, I heard someone say there are three stages to becoming a photographic artist. The first is when one's attention is mainly on the camera. The second is when one focuses mainly on the subject. In the third stage, light is the predominant focus. I often wait for good light, and then go out to find a scene in which to photograph it."

A Journey of Discovery

Traveling across the nation is second nature to Hulsebos. He has resided in the Garden State, in upstate New York, in Arizona, and in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. His current address is in Iowa, but he will soon be packing up and heading to Naples, Fla. The change in venue will give him more gallery opportunities as well as a whole new landscape to explore and memorialize. Hitting the road is an integral part of being a photographic artist — it's essential for both the inspirational aspect and for the commercial necessities. "I am on the road half the time, either doing art shows or photographing. I carry my business with me wherever I go. I do a lot on my laptop; adjusting and organizing photos, updating my website, doing accounting, applying to shows, communicating with customers, uploading orders to my photo lab, and

f o c u s e d o n w h a t m a t t e r s

By Stephanie Finnegan

much more." Since there are no walls to confine him, Hulsebos has had to rely on an inherent sense of discipline to adhere to a schedule. He has created a format and a routine that has served him well. "I exhibit at about two dozen art shows a year. I travel across the country, picking the best shows. At the shows, I collect as many e-mail addresses as possible for my newsletter. The newsletter goes out about once a month, with new pictures, my show schedule, and sometimes the story of our photo treks," Hulsebos explains. "I am increasing my reach with social media, but my goal in this area is to get people onto my e-mail newsletter list, which

marketing consultants tell me is the most successful electronic marketing strategy. My newsletter always links to my website."

Framing His Success

It is fascinating how a modern-day artist strikes a balance between answering his personal muse and also fanning the flames for potential fame and positive word-of-mouth. Having one's work rewarded is a way to help spread the news of ongoing accomplishments. Hulsebos has garnered many acknowledgments: "It's always nice to receive recognition for your work through awards. It shows that people who are

knowledgeable in the arts hold your work in high regard. I have received numerous awards at art shows over the years."

He has been feted by such shows as Main Street, (Fort Worth, Texas), Iowa Arts Festival, Tempe Festival of the Arts, Chicago Botanic Garden Art Festival, Salem Art Festival (Oregon), and Lincolnshire Art Festival (Illinois), to name but a few of the events where he has garnered awards. His photographs are recognized and applauded because of the technical expertise and also their emotional pull. It's not possible to look at his work and remain untouched. He has the ability to focus on an image and then make it far greater than just what has

been framed. His subjects expand past these visual boundaries. "I firmly believe that everyone has a talent in one or more areas of life, which they can offer to the world. Some people are good organizers, others good speakers, and yet others are good caregivers. In the case of photography, I suppose it is people's willingness to buy your work that is a good test to measure one's talent," he observes.

"Photography, like other art forms, goes well beyond knowing how to use the tools of the trade. The eye of the artist creates images that are compelling and intriguing. What the artwork invokes in the viewer is the decisive element that separates artists from skilled craftsmen."

— Marty Hulsebos

Much of what Hulsebos is able to capture with his photography stems from his own interior mind-set. How he sees the world guides him in his appraisal and shooting of it. He explains, "Even if a person buys the most expensive camera, takes a lot of training, and pursues photography vigorously, there is an element that cannot be taught. It is the eye of the artist."

The Tools of Achievement

One of the hallmarks of being a productive and prolific artist is the capability of understanding and acclimating to the changes in one's chosen field. It can be a matter of purchasing new equipment, enrolling in advanced workshops, or learning and mastering brand-new skills



and expectations. "I try to keep abreast of the latest developments in my field. The more tools I have at my disposal, the more I can fine-tune my creative expression. In the digital age, many of the tools are in software," Hulsebos notes. "Ansel Adams worked a lot of his magic in the darkroom. I understand that before he passed away in 1984, he predicted that the work he did would be done on computers someday — how prophetic." The advancements in the field of photography have

tempted some folks into thinking that their pocket-sized digital camera or their handy iPhone can transport them into the well-worn shoes of a seasoned professional. Hulsebos is aware of that mistaken belief and counters it with patience and understanding: "As the digital age arose, photography became much easier to get into, and many people considered the possibility of making money from their images. However, when people compare their now-large collection of easily taken digital pictures with those that are shot by experienced photographers and adjusted to look their best, they appreciate how hard it is to end up with a really good fine-art image. If people followed a pro around over the course of several months, they would see just how much time is involved, how much travel, how much expense, and how many missed photos that all go along with the opportunities to capture a few really compelling images." Many times, when rookie photographers get their very first camera and want to experiment, they are told to go outside (unless they already know they're into stuff that doesn't move and that can be easily controlled). The truth is that the outdoors holds many pleasant surprises for those in pursuit of a great shot because the wonders of our natural





habitat are simply endless. And so, if you're a landscape enthusiast, or in love with the wildlife, or plants, or all of it together, you're bound to engage in nature photography, one of the medium's most beautiful, but also most challenging genres. While it does involve landscape shots, nature photography mostly refers to all the breathtaking images of animals and plants you keep seeing in the National Geographic magazine or the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition exhibitions. What's instantly clear from seeing them is the fact they require a lot of preparation, both physical and mental endurance, patience and attention, which is exactly what makes them so valuable – it is not a coincidence that this type of photography is among the most popular ones among art collectors as well.

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Making of Nature Photography

Much of nature photography is made for scientific, travel and cultural publications, but many times, they are considered the finest examples of fine art photography, where aesthetics become a picture's main value. Their aim is to transmit the splendor of our most magnificent natural environments, nature and national parks, and the creatures who live in them. For wildlife or nature photographers, it takes a great understanding of different factors, in order to capture these moments the way they intended to. Apart from pretty heavy professional photographic equipment, which includes tripods, protective camera cases, in case they're going underwater, and different types of lenses (from macro to wide angle, depending on the "subject"), they need to

learn a lot about the landscape or an animal species they are about to photograph. Certain locations require special permits, and every animal leads a specific kind of life that a nature photographer is obliged to respect. They also often need to spend days in a single spot waiting for their right moment to occur, meaning their gear bag will also contain things like a tent, some food, and lots of warm (and camouflage) clothes. But then, from the winning combination of luck and skills, there comes that perfect shot we've all been waiting for, ready to evoke all kinds of emotions in its gazing beauty.

As a little more "relaxed" type of nature photography, we have macro imagery of plants or insects, where it's all about close-ups and details. As some of these creatures are too small for the naked human eye to see, these macro takes let us appreciate their tiny particulars on a larger scale, introducing us to a whole new world we couldn't have known so well before.

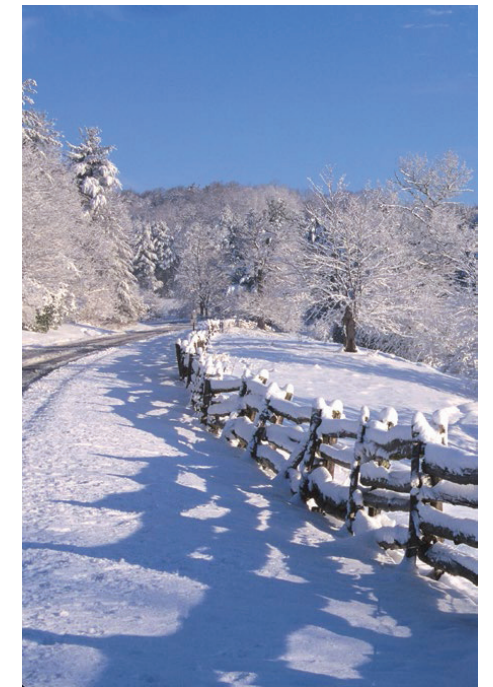
Finding Inner and Outer Peace

Hulsebos has approached his career with both an aura of equanimity and an undeniable determined resolve. His outlook is bolstered by his wife, whose

keen eye and judgment he trusts implicitly. "My wife is the best judge of art I know. If she says, 'This picture is the best in the batch,' it helps shortcut the process of creating prints and seeing what sells," Hulsebos says. He also credits his success to his decades-old commitment to practicing meditation. It is quite remarkable that by turning inward, Hulsebos has been better able to perceive, interact, and document the outer world. "There is a certain restfulness and rejuvenation I experience when I am out in nature. I like to convey that in my images. About forty years ago I learned to meditate.

It allowed me to get rid of stress and rejuvenate my creativity. I still do it every day and it gives me a fresh perspective. Many people comment that my images have a peaceful quality to them and I think meditating has contributed," he affirms. "My view of the natural world is that it is rich. It is richly textured, full of fascinating compositions, richly colored with subtle tones, and rich with the impression of light. Connecting with that and conveying it uplifts me and others who are open to that experience of wealth and richness."

For more information, visit martyhulsebos.com



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