

Life Lit Up

Life is amazing with beauty and fascination to be found around every corner. Much of this, however, is 'quiet' in nature; situated in moments of stillness and contemplation. Rather than being bold or 'in our face', much of 'the stuff of life' exists on the periphery of our senses and so is either considered banal or overlooked entirely. Wonder, however, remains - for those who have eyes to see it.

One role of visual art is to facilitate an awareness of the world. Whether focusing on the mundane, the magnificent, the tragic or the triumphant, many artists seek to present the world - its objects, events, and human elements - to the viewer. In doing so they aim to make the viewer cognizant of such things and affect their perceptions regarding what is depicted.

Until the mid 1800s these roles of art - to present the world and affect the viewer's perceptions of it - were primarily the domain of drawing and painting. The advent of photography introduced a new and stimulating player to this field. Many painters believed that photography's ability to 'capture the real world' made aspects of their work superfluous and this view helped provide impetus to the development of new painting styles and aims.

While photography tested painting, however, it also challenged itself. Almost from the beginning of its invention a philosophical debate concerning its use developed amongst its practitioners with many photographers believing that photography should aspire to the artistic. They alleged that if their work was to be taken seriously as a new art form, rather than just some technological marvel, photography had to compete with painting and adopt its methodologies.

Two painterly techniques which influenced the art of photography are those of *chiaroscuro* and *tenebrism*. Developed in the early seventeenth century, these practices were of supreme importance to the works of the Italian artist Caravaggio and the Dutch master, Rembrandt. *Chiaroscuro* is a method of modelling where gradual transitions from light to dark are used to give two-dimensional objects a sense of volume. *Tenebrism*, on the other hand, is a dark-light compositional device where some areas of a painting are kept totally dark, allowing one or two areas to be strongly illuminated by comparison. This technique is used for purely dramatic effect, providing focus to a scene or object and emotionally 'elevating' what is portrayed.

Featuring works from the collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the exhibition **Life Lit Up** explores the influence of *chiaroscuro* and *tenebrism* on photographers in Alberta. Through their works these artists ...take the crust of familiarity off...the everyday, exposing the wonder of the ordinary and the beauty found in 'stillness'.

The exhibition **Life Lit Up** was curated by Shane Golby and organized by the Art Gallery of Alberta for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. The AFA Travelling Exhibition program is supported by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

The Art Gallery of Alberta is pleased to present this travelling exhibition to venues throughout Alberta. Currently the Art Gallery of Alberta serves over 60 venues in approximately 35 communities. Exhibitions on tour from the Art Gallery of Alberta easily adapt to space requirements of smaller venues: schools, libraries, museums, health care centres and other community facilities. The exhibitions are organized in such a manner as to make unpacking, packing, hanging and shipping as easy as possible. Along with the exhibition, each venue receives an Educational Interpretive Guide. These materials enable teachers to use the exhibition within the school curriculum.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Collection is the primary source of works featured in the travelling exhibitions. Other sources for exhibitions may include community partners, archives, private collections and loans from artists. Each year we welcome new venues to enrich their community art through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program.

Our Thanks

The artists
The Alberta Foundation for the Arts

and to the many individuals, organizations and communities who contribute to the success of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program each year.

FRONT COVER IMAGES:

Top right image: James Daubney, *Mill Bay, B.C.*, 1974, Silver gelatin print
Middle right image: Tim Van Horn, *Viewing Coronation from Kitchen*, 1995, Silver gelatin print
Bottom right image: Jacques Rioux, *My Reflection with a White Horse*, 1989, Silver gelatin print
Top left image: John Fukushima, *Mr. Kobayashi, Neijin Preparing the Shrine, Raymond, AB.*, 1977, Silver gelatin print
Bottom left image: George Webber, *Joseph Prive, Forget, Saskatchewan*, 1993, Silver gelatin print, selenium toned
All works the collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Contact

Shane Golby, Manager/Curator
AFA Travelling Exhibition Program
Region 2
Art Gallery of Alberta/CSF
10550-107 Street
Edmonton, AB T5H 2Y6
T: 780.428.3830
F: 780.445.0130
shane.golby@youraga.ca



The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Life Lit Up

Essentially what photography is is life lit up.
Sam Abell, 1945 -
American Photographer



Tim Van Horn
Illegal Television in Fort, 1995
Silver gelatin on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

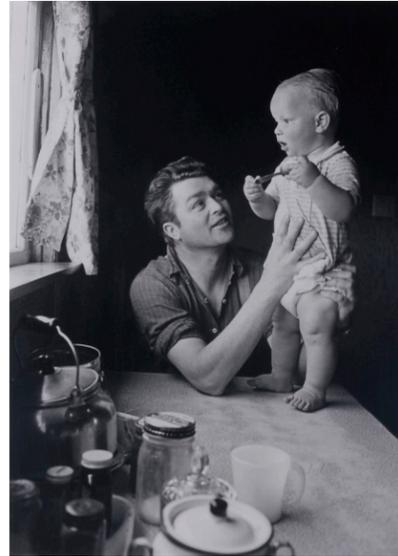
Tim Van Horn was born in 1969 and resides in Red Deer. He graduated from the Alberta College of Art and Design with a major in Photography in 1992. Since graduating he has participated in a number of Solo Exhibitions in Calgary and Edmonton, group Exhibitions in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Toronto and New York, and in Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibitions. Major photographic projects Van Horn has been involved in include 'To Be Hutterite' in 1996 and 'I Am Albertan' from 2002 to 2006.

Artist Statement (condensed from Alberta Foundation for the Arts archives)

At age four I had already shot my first roll of film and had decided on a life career as a 'cameraman'. On my fifteenth birthday I received my first 35 mm camera, my dream - then as it is now - is to create powerful and monumental photographs and photo documentaries. Growing up and travelling around Canada and around the work in the Canadian Military, I developed a sense of duty for my country and a craving for cultural experiences. It became obvious to me at an early age that my life calling was to document the world around me with a camera.

The subject matter I have chosen is limited to the unlimited possibilities of the people and places of Canada to capture the diverse and distinct environmental drama. Searching to make the ordinary, extraordinary. The real, the surreal.

At the same time special attention being paid to each frame in achieving the most geometrically correct interplay of planes and proportions. Each photograph tells a true-life story on to its own; together they produce a much-needed look into cultural identity on both a national and region proportion. Not to be confused with the 'day in the life' photographic approach, these images are complex in both approach and delivery yet being rooted in a traditional documentary manner.



Edward Spiteri
Man and Baby, 1974
Silver gelatin on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Edward Spiteri was born in Calgary in 1939 and studied photographic arts at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary, where he graduated with honors in 1966.

Spiteri's works are included in many permanent collections at such institutions as the Glenbow Alberta Institute, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Alberta House in London, England, the National Film Board of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Photographic Collection of the Government of Canada, Public Archives.

Spiteri has been a recipient of the "Master of the Leica" award, a professional German award meaning "Master of the Camera", as well as a recipient of two gold medals from the National Association of Photographic Arts, one for excellence in Black and White and one for colour photography.

Artist Statement

The old argument about whether photography is an art form or not, I like to boil down this way. Michelangelo was a stone mason. He used a chisel. A chisel is a tool. So is a camera. Tools don't create. Men's minds and souls do.

I believe that I attempt to inform and educate the viewer on the subject provided without imposing my viewpoint too strongly in the photograph, leaving the viewer to their own conclusion.

I generally work for intensive periods of time on specific subjects that have personal appeal to me. I initially got into photography under the misconception that it was easy. Since that time I have been attempting to perfect my craft...and refine my vision.



George Webber
Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta, 1993
Silver gelatin on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Alberta born **George Webber** has been photographing the people and landscape of the Canadian prairies for over 30 years. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Alberta in 1973 and a Bachelor of Journalism from Carleton University in 1974. He has been a professional photographer since 1980. Inducted into the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1999, Webber also received the Alberta Centennial Medal in 2005 'in recognition of outstanding service to the people and province of Alberta'.

Webber has published five photographic books since 1995. These are Requiem: The Vanishing Face of the Canadian Prairie (1995); Footprints On The Land: Tracing The Path of The Athabasca Chipweyan First Nation (2003); A World Within: An Intimate Portrait of the Little Bow Hutterite Colony (2005); People of the Blood: A Decade Long Journey on a Canadian Reserve (2006); and Last Call (2010).

Artist Statement:

Documentary photographers have always sought out people and places with important true stories to tell. We need those stories to provide us with a sense of wonder, to help us learn courage and compassion, to affirm and connect us to life.

A photographer has to find an aspect of himself in what he photographs.

My photography is about looking back at what formed me, the people, towns and landscape of the prairies. I am continually seeking to touch and understand the traditions and spirituality of this place.