

Artist Bio

Finding a way to combine her two passions, Avery Marshall is a pet photographer avidly working to capture the expressions and liveliness of her pets. She has what some people may say is a zoo of sorts at her house with over twenty pets. These pets are a wide variety of species, from dogs to a five-foot-long black and white Tegu lizard. This “zoo” has greatly inspired her work in photographing her pets in unique ways for everyone to experience. Her main goal in all of this is to preserve her pets likeness forever, in order to prevent her from forgetting what they look like. She also uses her photos as a way for someone to fully view an animal they’ve never met before, making sure their interesting textures, patterns, and expressions are present. She focuses on the eyes of her subjects, as she believes that the eyes are the way to the soul. In doing this, she uses a mix of indoor studio setups with three-point lighting as well as outdoor, natural lighting shots.

She started out by taking goofy pictures of her pets at home, went on to join the yearbook club at her highschool, and then decided to pursue photography as her career. Avery was born in Missouri, but grew up in Pennsylvania, studying photography at Penn West Edinboro University. In college she has navigated her way around lighting studios, learning a lot about lighting setups, backgrounds, and more, as well as getting lessons in editing and marketing her work.



Artist Statement-Pet Photography

One constant in my life is that I've always been around, and had a love for, animals and cameras. They are two things that have consistently given me a sense of comfort and happiness. What I love about animals is the way that they reassure me. I am someone with social anxiety, so I relish the quiet social break that spending time with my pets gives me. I can just sit in silence and cuddle them when I need, and it makes me feel a lot better. I guess some people would say that I prefer animals over people.

What I greatly appreciate about photography is that it allows me to freeze a specific moment in time, capturing a timeless memory that I can always look back on. It helps me to overcome my fear of losing someone, or something, and forgetting all of the little specific details of what they look like. I'm afraid that without photos, I won't remember what my loved ones looked like or what expressions they made; the imperfections of their face, their wrinkles, their eyes, etc. Because of this fear, I've always wanted to combine these two constants of my life in order to memorialize my beloved pets forever. I want to always be able to look back at pictures to remember exactly what my pets looked like while alive and well and be able to feel their essence when they're not around. That's exactly what I've done with this series.

Here, I've used a mix of studio and on location shots to capture my subjects, which are all mine and my family's pets. The studio photos all have different three-point lighting setups while my on location shots are all natural lighting. I've found it very interesting and enjoyable to work with my pets for this series. It was exhilarating to get to play with my pets while simultaneously getting to take photos, the best of both worlds in my eyes. Working with animals, however, was very challenging at times. Some animals were very well-behaved and were able to sit still for me for a while. Others didn't care to sit still, they wanted to run around and do their own thing. It was difficult to know if I had gotten any good shots during certain sessions with how much a subject was moving. This was mainly a problem with my reptilian pets, as they aren't trained to sit and stay. My pet photography series is one that can be very thought-provoking in a way, as it has a wide range of species and expressions found within it. You can truly see the expressiveness and emotion within these animals' eyes. I find the range of expression in these photos to be very powerful and moving, allowing you to create your own narrative of who this animal is or what they might be thinking and feeling. Your narratives may be influenced slightly by the lighting or backgrounds used. For example, the more cool-toned

lighting and spotlight on Sandy the lizard helps influence how you see her and her personality. Some photos have an alluring and graceful feel, with a calm and eloquent animal, acting as if they were born to pose, such as the photo of Sandy. Others are more unconventional and silly, where the subject is running away from the camera or sticking their tongue out. This wide range makes these photos very dynamic and interactive for the people who view them. They allow you to grasp the tiny details of an animal and experience their liveliness, especially if it's a species you've never dealt with in person before.