

As I sit in front of a machine with its soft glow, I marvel at its contradictions. As with life, it can bring joy, pain, and art, yet it is nothing but a tool. However, it allows me to express the depths of my soul allowing the uniqueness of me to bubble closer to the surface. As my maker molded me, I, as well, use my gifts to mold and shape my creations until they also come to life. Something brought to life totally unique never to be duplicated.

I feed the machine slices of time. Some single moments, others a series of moments that were given to me at that exact moment in man's existence. What do I do with these slices of time? How do I interpret the light, sound, shapes, lines, and movement they convey? The slices of time can transform into and transport one into a new reality. What part of me can decipher the message that is hidden?

When I abandon my own reality and understanding and rely on my gifts shaped over a lifetime it allows my subconscious to create. My inner voice shouts at the world creating a new reality from its dark hidden depths in the form of abstract art.

I realize there are no guarantees, just that I exist. What do I do with the time given me or the slices captured? How do I interpret my life and share a slice of it? I take the puzzle pieces of my life and put them together, each unique. Some, as with all life can attest, are beautiful, some terrifying, and others make no sense except to the creator. What puzzle I create will define me, moment by moment, forever captured in life's slices of time.

Some of my puzzle pieces are just now showing what a significant part they played in my growth as an artist. The lines, colors, depth, and form of my work can be attributed to the land where I grew up in my early years. The eastern Badlands of Montana influenced my voice with its graphic forms etched over millions of years, wide open vistas, vivid sunsets, with no barriers to my exploration of the land. In my teens I relocated to Minnesota. The color pallet and the forms that this land provided were vastly different. Sharp angular lines shot into the sky, grays and more muted colors dominated the landscape. No longer did the land provide the open vistas and spaces. It was a more confined, congested landscape.

I found my life's calling at the University of Minnesota where I noticed photos on a hallway wall. Instantly I knew the way my voice could express the art within. I began a journey to be the best. Graduating with a BFA I knew about art expression. However, I lacked the technical ability to put my creations out into the world. After much research I decided to enroll at Brooks Institute of Photography in California. They were known worldwide as the finest school for technical aspects of photography. This training added a valuable puzzle piece which furthered my vocabulary in the development of my inner voice.

As my growth as an artist grew, I moved to Hawaii then to Washington State. Each provided a different experience, that when I look back, have shaped my inner voice. Mountains, oceans, deserts, volcanos each had their hand in shaping the land and my expressions as an artist.

I can see the bold colors and abstract shapes of the Montana Badlands; the desolate contours of the desert in California; the grandeur of the forest and streams of Washington State; the power of nature, its bold statement of giant waves and Volcanos of Hawaii; and the architectural shapes and colors of my home in Minnesota.

Still and motion photographic images are my chosen mediums. I take the image that the tool provides and treat the slice of time as beginning, a negative, the start of the creative process. My chosen editing tool is Photoshop. It ingests the millions of slices of time that I have captured over my life as a photographer. It helps me harvest all the puzzle pieces of life's experiences and transform them into a new reality for me, as well as my art.

At this point in my timeline the puzzle pieces are arranged in such a way that I see the shapes, color, forms, and assemble those seemingly disjointed pieces into an abstraction. It conveys my inner voice and its personal struggle with being human with all its shortcomings. Trying to be relevant and use the gifts that I was given to make a difference not just for me but for others as well. The struggle with the inner and outer self, will one overcome the other? Will my inner voice continue to create, or my outer self, get caught up in the current of life's distractions and drown out my inner voice. My struggle to create as a man, husband, father is the creator's gift to me. My struggles are expanding my puzzle into a refined piece where every piece of my puzzle has its place, until the last piece is inserted and my puzzle is finished.

Understanding who I am and how I express myself was a big part of my chosen career path. Some express through words. I express and process the world through pictures. Line, texture, color, light, movement, and their meaning are my vocabulary. I identify with the photo as a way to share myself with the world. My panoramic view where color talks, lines reveal their meaning, texture and the way light adds depth and its symbolic meaning and movement, where it takes all these ingredients and unifies them into a coherent statement.

What a journey it would be, to be able to master all the artistic and technical aspects of the craft to meld my vision into an artistic statement. Starting with the artistic side came easy for me. Being able to put that vision into the world was very difficult. It was if I had two separate puzzle pieces that didn't belong in the same puzzle. Trying to understand color, light, composition, and tools (cameras and computers) each had their own voice and impact. How to meld these elements into to a single voice took many years. I can finally meld these pieces seamlessly into my narrative as an artist. It's as if these separate pieces became one when I mastered these technical aspects.

My tools and education have allowed me the freedom to create and express myself in a deep and profound way. I am now complete as a person and an artist. Expressing my views from deep within with no boundaries, being able to take the puzzle pieces and be confident that out of the midst of chaos I can create art that was meant to be.