

## About Krish Mandal's Photography

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Krish Mandal's photographic vision leans towards fine art, realistic impressions. He creates two distinct types of photography: fine art nature and travel, and portraiture.

I've been creating travel and landscape images since about 1998 and portraiture for nearly as long. However, I've been photographing on-and-off since childhood, and was initially introduced to a 35mm camera by my father, who owned a Pentax K1000 at the time, and instructed me in the basic inter-connectivity of aperture, shutter speed, film speed and metering. Eventually I became the family photographer by default. Without knowing it, I started a love affair with images of all kinds, not just still photos, but moving images too, all types of realistic art including trompe l'oeil; anything that dazzles the eye, engages the mind, and shows the hidden beauties of our planet. I love beautiful things. But what may be beautiful to me may not be beautiful to you, as in my infatuation with old and dilapidated subjects.

In college I had a part-time job as a campus fraternity and sorority photographer. After my college years I learned the intricacies of lighting and composition simply because I was curious and creative (a combination that gets many people into lots of trouble), and the necessary manipulation of technical camera functions for creating artistic imagery. I quickly learned that one must internalize the technical so as to be able concentrate more on the artistic vision. I'm largely a self-taught photographer, having earned (not learned) my skills by a variety of methods including "burning film," experimentation, a personal library of photographic books, a home-study course from NYIP, a single college darkroom course, ad-hoc traveling seminars; and, of course, surfing all the magnificent web sites that are out there on the Net.

My images mainly revolve around lonely and desolate places — peaceful places really — and aging structures; I seek to create meditative and calming imagery through highly designed, graphically engaging composition. My professional career in the publishing industry and my informal training in the graphic arts lend structure and design to my photographs.

Like others, I looked to learn from past masters like Ansel Adams, and Edward Weston. But the list of current-day heroes is much longer: William Neil, Clyde Butcher, Franz Lanting, Marc and David Muench, and Michael Fatali to name a few.

I constantly try to learn new things, so while I started shooting with a Pentax 35mm camera (a K1000, P30T, and then the PZ-1P) I quickly got the medium format bug, experimenting with a Russian 6x6 Kiev camera because it was affordable. Sometime thereafter in search of ever-higher image resolution, I bought a Wisner 4x5 Technical view camera. I use three lenses with my 4x5: a 90mm, 150mm, and a 210mm. I later added my first "real" 35mm digital SLR to my arsenal — a Canon 20D — which I used 90 percent of the time. The 20D was great, but I began to yearn for the higher resolution that most cameras brought in the last few years. So in 2008, I sold the Canon, and switched back to Pentax. I now use a Pentax K20D with a wide assortment of lenses, and the BG2 Grip which helps balance the camera in my hands.

While 4x5 is still my primary "wow" and "high resolution" camera, and I love the slow working speeds needed for it, digital capture has proven itself to be of very good quality since about 2004; enough so that I can produce sharp 16x20s from it, not to mention that I don't have to fuss with scanning and film dust; of course a CCD collects its share of dust too; I suppose it's all about the devil you care to dance with. For my digital work now with the Pentax K20D, I use a Pentax 10-17mm Fisheye, 28-105mm zoom, a 20mm rectilinear wide angle, a 50mm f/1.4 with superb bokeh, and a 70-300mm tele zoom with image stabilization. Ninety-nine percent of my image making uses either a polarizer, a neutral density, or neutral gradient on my lenses, and a Manfrotto 3021 tripod with a ball head. I never have used any specialty, solid colored, or color-gradient filters to create my fine art images.

The portraits I create have a deep focus on the person, and I often use a romantic blur to create Hollywood-like styling without the appearance of an obvious time period. I adapt each image and its stylings to the needs of each subject, so that each final image is uniquely flavored and subject-appropriate.

All the fine art images I produce are first transformed into a digital master. That is, the original capture may have been either film or digital, but I use Photoshop to create a highly precise, color-corrected, digital "negative" and send the image to my digital lab for printing on real photographic paper with high-end imaging equipment. I have never tried to manipulate color to make sub-par images into sellable ones or to replace large sections of sky or land to create a more pleasing composition. However, I have removed small trash objects and wires in digital post production, when it was impossible to remove them before taking the shot. I use digital versions of traditional techniques like dust removal (spotting), dodging and burning, and selective masking, for color correction; I have stitched an image or five to create panoramic images (none of which are on this site as of this writing). Truth be told, I do manipulate framing, and do digital toning or duotones of black and white images; and create black and white images from color originals by the various methods I know of; and I do use digital sharpening methods because the nature of a digital image requires it for final output. However, I do not try to composite images to try to trick or please my viewers, but I have long considered Jerry Uelsmann a preeminent traditional hero for his masking and compositing techniques. I hope to someday learn the kind of

previsualizaion he exhibits in his images.

I get excellent results from this workflow. I believe in the importance of color calibration, but I don't over-fuss about it. Instead, I rely on the precision of ICC profiles and generally go for pleasing but accurate reproduction of color in the final print. If the color is not what I expected, I request a reprint.

I currently live in Queens and work in Manhattan as a "senior creative consultant" in a technology company. This is the first job in my career not within a publishing company. My work entails front-end coding for web sites and software applications (i.e., "putting on a pretty face," or as some say, "putting the lipstick on the chicken"). My wife, my daughters, and my two cockatoos get what's left of my time at the end of the day. And then, after everyone is asleep, I can get to my photography or writing if I have the energy. With God's help I am working to reorder these priorities.

And though this has nothing to do with anything whatsoever, I do a pretty good Kermit the Frog impression. And Miss Piggy. And Fozzy the Bear, and ...

Seriously though, please feel free to contact me for any reason whatsoever, especially if you wish to purchase a print for your private collection or to license images for commercial needs. Or if you just want to hear my Kermit impression. Thank you.