

Photography

A Week in Photography

April 1, 2018 | Charles T. Low, Photographer

Recent Events in One Photographer's Life

As the dust settles on a wonderful week (or three), I do wonder sometimes how it all fits in.

I find it really nice since I retired from medical practice that the telephone doesn't go off anymore at 2 a.m. We in acute healthcare often get tremendous satisfaction from the critical problems with which we help, at those hours, undeniable brutality on our own physiology notwithstanding. But as I say, after 40,000 anesthetics, I no longer deserve that kind of satisfaction!



Busy days now seem completely manageable when I can sleep at night.

Selling Prints

So, this week actually started further back, when I got a request for three large prints. Someone I had known years ago became aware of my work, said some very nice things about it (always welcome!), and added that she had a space at her place of work needing some artwork. After some discussion, she chose three images from my [Gallery](#), and said that she would like them simply matted, to hang as they had been at the [Hang Ups](#) exhibition last year.



[Hang Ups Exhibit March 2017](#)

I have a printing service, and after re-editing the photographs to optimize them for the large size which the client wanted, I set the printing process in motion.

Featured Posts



Instructional Photography Walk

December 12, 2017

Recent Posts



A Week in Photography

April 1, 2018



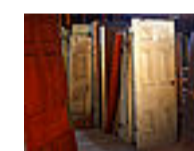
Photographic Light

March 24, 2018



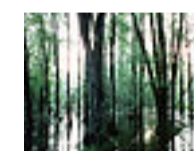
Depth of Field

March 10, 2018



Not Just Any Barn Photography

March 4, 2018



Film-Photography Renaissance

February 24, 2018



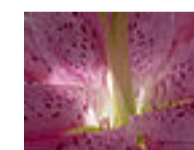
Photography While Downhill Skiing

February 18, 2018



Got Up and Went ... Photographing!

February 8, 2018



Seeing versus Looking

February 2, 2018



Photography Equipment

January 25, 2018



Photography Practice

January 17, 2018

Archive

[April 2018 \(1\)](#)

[March 2018 \(3\)](#)



[This was one of the three she bought.](#)

On the appointed day, the printer called me up with a few clarification questions, which delayed the prints for another day or two.

Fine. We were not in the middle of any wee-hours emergency, and this would keep.

Eventually, prints in hand, I trudged off to [Hang Ups](#), and explained what I wanted. Anne and Jessica's jaws dropped in horror, as they explained to me that matting under cellophane was only temporary, and eventually would shrink and yellow, damaging the prints.

I hadn't known that! Framing properly, under glass, seals the art and matting and preserves the materials.

They patiently discussed options. This was of course going to raise the cost. I contacted the client, who, luckily for me, rolled with all of this very gracefully.

We decided on lamination, rather than framing, and that was going to require some time.



[Another of the fine-art photography purchases.](#)

(Waiting ... life carrying on, writing another blog, doing more art photography ...)

Lamination means mounting the art on a board - and some boards perform better than others, so discussion ensued - and then sealing it with an applied substance which lets the art show through wonderfully but protects it from the atmosphere.

All modesty aside, when, after some weeks if you total it all up, I picked up the laminated photographs at [Hang Ups](#), I simply felt very pleased with them. (It helps when the framers spontaneously ooh and aah too.)

February 2018 (4)

January 2018 (3)

December 2017 (2)

November 2017 (2)

October 2017 (1)

Search By Tags

Balleycanoe Christmas
aperture architecture art
assignment camera commision
composition depth depth of field
digital downhill equipment field
filme gallery gift impromptu
instruction iris lens life light
looking outdoors photo
photography portrait practice
prowl rules salvage seeing
seminar shoot skiing tools
walk week wrinkles

Follow ctLow Photography



Two of the three photographs had arisen during the course of other activities ... when however I had a camera with me.



The third print sold in this transaction.

Now, to think about delivery. The client lives an hour away to the west and works another half-hour further away than that. Hmm. Well, I have a car!

However, as it turned out, we both planned on attending the same meeting, related to another photographic topic (stills photography for an upcoming healthcare engagement conference, Health City), so we had a convenient drop-off place.

(And she had a cheque with her. I took it!)

Health City, by the way, ran for the first time in 2016, and over a thousand people attended, much to the delight of the organizers. For those who desire better dialogue between healthcare providers, patients, politicians and administrators - you can start [here](#)! Bookmark Tuesday May 15.

It felt good to get those prints delivered. And then, about halfway home on the hour-long drive, I remembered the hanging hardware, safely sitting in a bag on the floor in the back seat.

Drats!

Fortunately, the next day, I was heading west again, to spend a few days in Toronto on our third annual brothers getaway, so I got to have a little coffee break while I dropped off the hardware. Fortunately, I arrived at a rare quiet moment in her work-flow, so got a short tour of the unit. We discussed where in the room to hang the photographs, although the assumption that my artistic side extends to interior decorating might not warrant as much credence as one might think.

That really did end that. It had taken some weeks. I almost felt sad. I had enjoyed the process, and I, quite frankly, myself loved the prints; a part of me wanted to keep them.

Toronto!

However, I didn't have time for nostalgia, as I hit the highway to continue on to the quaint little village of Toronto, Ontario, to spend a few days with my two brothers. We had a great time in a vacation rental for three nights, and some of the highlights, at our ages, included sleeping in a bit and going to bed at a reasonable time, all topped off with afternoon naps! Man, do we know how to party!

At one point, one afternoon, one brother was snoring in one room, another in another room, and I of course dozed much more delicately (on the couch), and if you think it wasteful to devote the time and money to go to Toronto and then to spend it sleeping, then let me just assure you that none of us brooked any such reservations.

Sleep: beautiful.

Good food fits into our celebrations, and on this occasion, we did no food preparation at the condo of any kind. We didn't buy milk, or snacks, or beer - nothing. We never discussed it - it all just happened

(or didn't happen) organically. Toronto does seem to have the occasional place to eat ... well!

So that worked out fine.

However, I am a photographer, and it seems that, over time, my brothers accommodate to that a bit more willingly. I understand about not holding everybody up when we're doing something else (such as walking to lunch), but this time they seemed more engaged, suggesting things to photograph, looking at angles, commenting and opining later back at the hacienda as I did some editing. I think it quite natural that it takes some time (i.e. years) for people to see the value, and I think it helped that they got into it and participated in their own ways.



Thanks to a lightning-reflex brother, this is me, clearly in my element.

The first morning, in a terrible, flat light from a deeply overcast sky (see my recent blog about [Light](#)), I mounted the camera on a tripod in the feeble dawn, as the brothers slept, and did some vertiginous work from the balcony.





The brothers weren't wild about this one, but I like the bicyclist.

Over the next days, the photography ended up more simply working in to our activities, just hand-held, and that went fine as well.



The Flatiron ([Goderham](#)) Building, against modern high-rises. Not only am I not the first

photographer (by any long stretch) to photograph this iconic Toronto building, but they were all around me, actively taking pictures, on their phones, with expensive cameras on tripods - it just didn't stop. Nonetheless, this is mine.

I said to the boys, "Boys," (we never actually call each other that), "I don't want to interfere with our other activities", (yes I did), "but ... we are in Toronto, and they have photography galleries here such as smaller cities do not provide. It seems a shame to come all of this way and then for me not to see what's going on in the world of art photography. If that interests you, let me know. I will go along with whatever you wish."

No immediate reply. The next morning, a brother said, "Have you chosen your galleries?" And we were off.

We first stopped at Ryerson University, chosen partly for its attributes and partly because we could walk there. The Ryerson Image Centre ("RIC") had five exhibitions on, and I don't mind admitting that I struggled with them all.

- Rich and Poor
- Karachi Circular Railway
- Collaboration
- Soon We Were En Route Again (a diplomat's personal photo albums)
- A Labour of Love (Serbian peasants)



The Ryerson Image Centre

Both of the brothers found it more interesting and engrossing than I did, and we talked it all over at some length later. I would love to get into all of the details of our experience there, but I think it too much just now. I summarized it by saying that in the voluminous documentation and captioning of the five exhibits, nowhere did we see any reference to the concept of beauty.

My own photographic art, at this stage of my life, strives - as it has for decades, with rare exceptions - towards beauty.

I realize that art and/or photography has many uses, creating beauty in and of itself being only one of them.

From there (after lunch!), we found the Bau-Xi gallery. Although advertised as a photography gallery, we found nothing but paintings and sculptures. Still, we had come this far, so we had a look around. Interesting. We just found next to nothing there which I might call "representational", again not that anyone has a rule about that, but I hadn't expected that pretty well everything would have such large components of abstraction.

Puzzled by the complete absence of any photographs, we bopped briefly across the road to the Art Gallery of Ontario. Don't ask why; we didn't go to see any art (although we had done that very happily the previous year).

Upon emerging a few minutes later, with a bit more of a spring in our steps, we espied across the way, the Bau-Xi gallery - except not the one which we had just visited. We checked it out, and found ... photographs! The Bau-Xi houses *two* galleries, about three buildings apart, one for paintings, one for photographs, and both of them simply say "Bau-Xi" on the signs outside. Once you ... you know.



This is the one you want (for photographs).

So, wanting to investigate the commercial fine-art photography scene, for reasons of my own business promotion, we had found the place we needed. Sort of. At least, compared with the more documentary or societally-themed work at Ryerson, here we discerned, without question, a quest for beauty.

Now ... beauty will mean different things to different people in different cultures in different epochs. When I view these more modern types of art, photographic or otherwise, I often feel - and this represents nothing more than my personal reaction - how wonderfully they might suit a corporate building's lobby, or board-room.

I accept as my own limitation that I don't feel quite ready to have that sort of thing hanging in my home (especially the \$6,000 works).

It goes without saying that all of these works demonstrate an impressive mastery of the media, both in terms of vision and technique.

All of that said, I have noted that if I have a style at all, I do seem drawn repeatedly to reflections ... abstracts, in other words. They never look quite like the actual scene, and if a mirror-like surface reflected the subject without any distortion, then it wouldn't interest me.



I have this photograph of mine - a reflection, large abstract elements - hanging in my home, and have also sold one (for display in a business setting).

So I do get that nothing *purely* represents the original scene, and the question we ask concerns not *whether* we accept abstraction, but *how much*. That applies to Rembrandt as much as to me as much as to the works on display at Ryerson and at Bau-Xi.

Still, I do get the feeling that more modern art aims at doing something new and experimental, rather than something beautiful ... acknowledging all of the internal contradictions and qualifiers and personal limitations which must accompany such a dogmatic statement.

I have nothing against newness and experiment, but in art, I personally do not favour them as *primary* goals. I favour the image. (But what does even *that* mean? See the blog about a [Proper Photograph](#).)

The Bau-Xi, by the way, was founded many decades ago by a man whose first name was ... Bau-Xi. The helpful associate in the photography gallery explained to us that they sell major works with astonishing (to me) regularity, e.g. daily. Wow. Good for them! That's how they pay the rent.

A brother said, "If I were to buy one of these, I couldn't get it home."

"They ship," I explained.

"I don't think so," he objected.

So, I asked how we might get a work home.

"Oh, we ship," she said. All the time.

Apart from gallery-hopping (to two places), the rest of the brother-time I grabbed the odd photograph where I could.



Commerce Court, Toronto, monochrome



A clock-tower, high-rises backgrounding it, and mist.



My brothers engaged in earnest conversation with a garrulous local ([St. Lawrence Market](#)). Note the bench-illusion - there is no bench other than one painted into the scene; the brothers simply leaned against the wall.

For more, check out the Toronto [album](#).

Photo-walk

The week hadn't ended yet! Back home, I had arranged a [Photo-Walk](#) - what I call "real-time, small-group, individualized, outdoor, photography coaching". These have gone well, and on this occasion, due to circumstances (e.g. emergency surgery), the number of attendees had dwindled from three to one.

Fine, I thought, I love offering these, and the client expressed fervent enthusiasm, so off we went, allocating about two hours just to see where she was and whether I could help advance her art.

I can tell you this, that one-on-one presented no difficulties, and we had a great time, this time on the streets of downtown Brockville, making photographs constantly for close to two hours. In other words, the time did not drag, and we never found ourselves short of visual inspiration.

I had a small camera with me, but barely used it, recognizing that the student needs to be using her own camera, finding the controls, adjusting the settings, and most importantly, i) composing the scenes and ii) evaluating the light.

The overcast skies meant that we had to adapt our compositions to reduce their presence (or think about multiple exposures to combine later in editing). The sun poked out once right above a rooftop gable she was lining up, which didn't help, although we overcame it.

The learner expressed great satisfaction with the process, and felt that she had made significant progress.

In all humility, I do firmly believe that the trial-and-error method, value though it undoubtedly does contribute, takes a long time. A [coach](#) can quickly cut through all sorts of mental detritus, and that has worked for me, and it seems to work for my students.

This learner kindly has allowed me to present some of her work from that morning.



It's amazing what's up there, which I only ever see with camera-in-hand, prompting me to look up.



You see: who ever notices the roof of the entranceway to the Sheridan Mews? I think that this is Beth's personal favourite from our session.



© 2018 by ctLow Photography, Brockville, Ontario

We enjoyed the pattern of these Winter vines on a brick wall - although making them pop, visually, did require a little editing!

Then we spent half an hour in a coffee shop, uploading her work to my computer, and talking through some of the things we had covered (the effect of aperture being a big one, and exposure-compensation - and much more) - and having coffee. Ready access to coffee shops distinguishes urban from rural photo-walks, but rural seems more popular and the local area provides some great places with lots to photograph.

The next session might be in May, and if this interests you at all, then please let me know and I'll get to work on finding a date. For now, the introductory rate remains at the rock-bottom price of \$50 per person.

In the middle of all of the above, I have a personal life to lead, friends, and we are in the middle of Easter weekend so of course we have the joy of family visiting.

But the company has left, and to cap off my week(s) in photography, I wrote this blog. They all take time - sometimes the better part of a day. I like writing them, and I hope that you find them enjoyable and edifying.

As I often say, "Back to real life (and what is that again?!)"

Now I might actually take a day of rest.

While you're here:

Remember that I make photographs and that I sell photographs.

Almost everything which you see on this web site is for sale. Prices at the time of writing, for example, for an 11x14" fine-art print with a generous white border would start at about \$40, and you can go up or down from there. Check the [rates](#) page. More importantly, check out my [gallery](#).

Book a portrait-sitting - the right frequency with which to commission formal [portraits](#) is a bit more often.

Remember also to leave a comment, or to [contact](#) me. Note that on the main [blog](#) page you can sign up for new-blog notifications. I am very careful and respectful with your privacy.

Thank you so much for reading.

Charles T. Low
Photographer



Tags: photography week life art gallery

