Eleven by Six

Jack Curran
Alien Architecture
Editor’s Introduction

Clearly, Jack Curran has the extraordinary ability to apply his photographic vision to a sweeping range of subjects. There is such a thing as “natural vision” in photography — the kind of seeing that (if we are lucky) seems to come easily to us, somewhat effortlessly, almost without thinking. It is rare to find a photographer whose natural vision is so versatile.

In this new millennium of photography, the ease of making images (by the wheelbarrow full) does not necessarily imply depth of connection or understanding. Mere volume does not make art better. Volume does, however, afford us the opportunity to experiment more — and that can help our photography grow and mature. In previous generations, a stunning, singular image was an accomplishment of merit. In our generation, that can still be true — but we are less limited by the single image than our photographic predecessors.

Thinking in “sixes” (or fives, or eights, etc.) opens the doors of perception and creativity that we are just now beginning to recognize: where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The images are still the stars of the show, but what we read between the images adds new meaning and threads of understanding.

In 2016, Jack submitted eleven entries for our first LensWork Community book project: Seeing in SIXES. Prolific and focused, his tightly edited entries made it very difficult for us to choose which to publish. We selected two, but would have been happy to publish every one of them — but we could only accept 50 entries out of nearly 1,900 hopefuls.

Then again, in 2017, Jack sent in work for consideration for the second volume of Seeing in SIXES. We published just one, although they were all deserving of ink. Undoubtedly, the six-image concept fits comfortably with Jack’s way of seeing, photographing, and editing.

Jack’s project, Alien Architecture (facing the title page), appeared in Seeing in SIXES 2016. This group illustrates the fine balance between exploring a subject more deeply, and mere repetition. When a six-image project is done well, each image contributes to the whole and adds to our understanding; eliminate any one image, and the project is diminished.

With so much good work to choose from, we were left wondering: “What do we do with it all?” In this LensWork Monograph, we are presenting eleven of Jack’s six-image projects; nine of them are previously unpublished.

Jack Curran is embracing this new photographic language with a talent that is worthy of our study — not just for what his six images show us, but for what they say as a group and in the interstices between the images.
You might say there was a natural collision of circumstances between my nearly lifelong love of nature, and that of photography. My wondrous journey into nature began when I attended an Outward Bound month-long wilderness course at age 16. Not only did I learn to deal with the internal struggles of youth, but I also learned to respect and appreciate the power and beauty of nature.

A couple of years later I discovered photography when I took an Introduction to Black-and-White Photography course. I soon combined my deep appreciation of the outdoors with my passion for photography. It didn’t take long to discover and find influence from some of the early masters, like Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, and Minor White. I discovered this multi-layered, alternative world-view in black-and-white — and have now been hooked for more than 40 years. I’ve been very fortunate to have my photographs win numerous international awards, exhibited internationally, held in private and public collections and published in a variety of media.

Over the years, I’ve developed a passion for the natural world, and express this deep relationship through my genuine love of black-and-white photography. For me, it’s all about the “Lure of Light”: whether chasing the extreme light of a mountain storm or weathering the chill of a winter snow event, it’s all about chasing the light. I prefer to use a simple, straightforward approach — whether I’m photographing mountains, skies, waterfall, slot canyons, or botanical abstracts. Today, I continue to look through the lens with an eye toward discovery. It is this discovery that I hope to translate to you through my photographs.
Botanical Studies #1
Death Valley Light
Individuality of Trees
Iceland Explorations
Outside the Art Museum
The Boneyard, Botany Bay
Light of the Mountain
Botanical Studies #2
Morning Light into the Dunes
Winter White
Monograph #13 – *Eleven by Six* by Jack Curran
Monograph #12 – *Indians at Work: Cultural Portraits* by Louis Montrose
Monograph #11 – *China: Land of My Heart* by Dalang Shao
Monograph #10 – *Peripheral Vision* by Chuck Kimmerle
Monograph #9 – *The Least Impossible Way* by Guy Tal
Monograph #8 – *Sand, Stone, and Sandstone* by Bruce Barnbaum
Monograph #6 – *Building Blocks* by Barbara Bender
Monograph #5 – *Florilegium* by Kim Kauffman
Monograph #4 – *Chariots of Desire* by Huntington Witherill
Monograph #3 – *Mexico: The Light and The Warmth* by Michael Reichmann
Monograph #2 – *Photographs 1979–2013* by Stu Levy
Monograph #1 – *Made of Steel* by Brooks Jensen
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