ctLow Photography ★ Jun 17 · 5 min read

River Photographer Branching Out

Updated: Jul 17

-meaning, now moving inland ... a bit

Spring has sprung, and it's time to reopen the gallery, so we can once again commandeer touring and selling art.

The gallery is virtual, in this case, and as pandemic restrictions are easing, my personal assessment is that this could be a very dangerous time—a time to remain highly vigilant.

Pretty well anything you find in the gallery is for sale. You know where to page2 me. Any purchases will be couriered or delivered, in any combination of size, quality, matting and framing. If the myriad options feel in any way daunting, then allow me to guide you through them.

My own favourite photograph usually lies somewhere between the most recent, and the next. For the former, read on.

For the latter:

- sign on for new blog notifications (see me if you need);
- follow me on social media:
- Facebook;
- Twitter;
- Instagram;
- LinkedIn;
- SmugMugcolle;

Please refer your friends and colleagues. I am and need to be in a networking push phase of the work. If you can think right now of two people, then thank you.

Thousand Islands Island, St Lawrence River

My theme remains largely "river", the mighty St Lawrence River, to be precise. The pandemic lockdown has kept me closer to home, and artistically that has been both confining and liberating.

Now, I only show things which I myself like, and you are always should form your own opinion, but the more I gazed into my hard drift of the island above, the more I wanted something a little which ... well ... which "breathed" more deeply and I found it like this:

Thousand Islands Island, "oil painting" version

This digital conversion pleases me more. It has again viewed the very valid point with some of my friends and (constructive) critics, a point much discussed and hotly debated over centuries, of what a photograph should look like. Faithful readers of this blog will by now know what I think about it, and that pies back to long 81, or late 2017.

That day, I ke-by-hopped along the Thousand Islands Parkway, starting at Gananoque and pulling over at pull-overs as I headed back east towards Brockville. (There are more lay-bys than I had previously known.) So, this also happened:

Mute Swan and cygnets—mainly monochromatic conversion

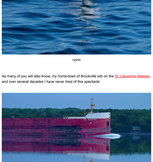
The nature photography literature often advises to learn everything one can about one's subject, for several reasons but including that you'll simply increase your chances of getting good photographs if you understand better what's going on.

I know roughly nothing however about Mute Swans, but have since learned that:

- there are not mute;
- they are very, very, very protective;
- adults hold their wings up as shown when swimming;
- they make a lot of distinctive wing-noise when flying;
- males and females look quite similar, but males have a bigger knobs on their bills;
- swan youngsters are called "cygnets".

I understand the importance of not stressing the animals, and they seemed quite relaxed about my presence, and I was able to maintain distance by using a telephoto lens.

A few days later, I revisited the scene, and noticed this little cutie:



cygnet

As many of you will also know, my home-town of Brockville sits on the St Lawrence Seaway, and over several decades I have never tired of this spectacle:

CN, Niagara, dawn

Sometimes, however, the Fates smile upon me, and that morning, around sunrise, the river was a flat calm, and I found the reflections particularly compelling:

CN, Niagara, reflection

CN, Niagara, supersaturation, reflection

The segue from that adorable little cygnet to these massive mechanical marvels starlies even me. Therefore, my artistic style is ... well ...
... let me get back to you.

Often, I know that a longshot is coming, but naturally I try to arrive on location a little early, and then might find myself with nothing to do for a while. On this occasion—and I know it had to do with the stillness of the water and I suspect it had something to do with the sky—I found a reflection night in front of me which I had not noticed before, despite dozens of photographic sessions on that very spot.

And sometimes I know, and sometimes I do not, but that time I already knew: the photograph would be only the starting point. What eventually emerged from the digital darkroom was this:

river tame, reflection, "oil painting"

Now, I did mention "inland".

Nepal's Cemetery

Again, I had driven by many times, partly discouraged by no safe place to park. Working there shortly after 5:00 a.m. reduced the traffic, but not to zero. A short Wikipedia page explains how it came to be, in about 1950, in the middle of farm fields.

Continuing the theme of a mid-river, end of it several recent explorations of the Moon, I did this, realizing what was then fairly obvious, that a half-moon, losing half is compensated by better detail due to side-lighting. This is not the time for an exposition about light, but other than for zone-of-Angel-style work, a straight-on light—such as is provided with a full Moon (which is why it's full)—is generally much less interesting.

waning half-moon, monochrome

For the photo-geeks amongst you (hey, sisters and brothers!), I recently learned of and found useful this Lunarie (1) Rule.

And after that brief land-based diversion, I must return to The River. Recently, I have been working on Fine Light photographs. (I find that I have been using the term incorrectly, for years, but I'm not going to change now, because I like the sound of it and it's my blog, dammit!) Capt. Sabbat, for not achieving a certain goal by sunrise, by saying, "Hey, that's just Fine light", as the sun peaked over the horizon.)

lateral sunrise, St Lawrence River

I need not (but will) point out the red accent along the top of the cloud-bank, much beloved by the foreigners on here at ctLow Photography Studios (HQ).

Incidentally, a very knowledgeable and skilled photographer friend and mentor recently engaged me in a debate, which he was having with other friends, about the appropriate "Photoshop" treatment of the sunset of the day, and of the night, in the short-side. My answer was my usual answer: "It's all about the image." Each individual image will tell you what aspect ratio it needs. (This one is 10.7.)

I'm glad to have settled that!

Anyway, this brings us up to yesterday-morning, when, rolling over in bed at 4:00 a.m., I noted just a hint of light creeping into the sky, and so was on station, camera and tripod ready, watching the light change as sunrise (or just prior to 5:20 a.m.) grew nearer, and this occurred:

Dawn, Prescott Harbour Beacon, Johnstown Bridge

I am accruing quite a collection of orange-dawn photographs.

I don't think I'm done yet.

Thank you so much to my many supporters—you mean more to me than you know.

Oh, and ... **this is blog #50!** That's got to mean something! I think that I will raise a glass.

Please be in touch. And I hope to see many of you again soon.

Charles T. Low
Photographer

Photography > Brockville > Prescott

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