

In my work as a fine art social documentary photographer, I reject the false dichotomy that is widely accepted to exist between fine art and documentary photography, seeking instead to create imagery that is simultaneously aesthetically, emotionally, and intellectually compelling. I adhere to a strict documentary ethic, capturing images exactly as I find them in life without any interference with the representation of reality; however, I do not maintain a photojournalist's clinical distance from my subject, but instead I immerse myself in my subject, becoming a participant-observer in the culture at the heart of my photographic study in order to create a more resonant, enduring, and differentiated portrait than is typical of journalists who arrive, snap photos, and depart in a single day.

I seek to create visual metaphors in which the facts of a situation are accurately portrayed yet the essential human drama unfolds before the viewer. Because I position myself within the community as a participant-observer, I can create a body of work that graphically portrays the reality of life yet moves beyond mere factuality, revealing depths of empathy and the intrinsic dignity of the persons I photograph.

I respect the truthfulness that remains inherent in the documentary tradition, but I also strive to create photographs that hint at the mythic, the iconic, and the transcendent. Indeed, many of my works to date portray opposite ends along the spectrum of human experience: life and death, light and darkness, struggle and triumph, crime and compassion. My photographs provide a visual lyric that stirs the hearts of those who view the images as well as informing their intellects.

I work in both digital and traditional analog formats depending on which choice would render the subject best aesthetically. I appreciate black and white silver gelatin prints because of the timeless aura they lend to the imagery, but the versatility, malleability, and immediacy of digital photography is also compelling. Prints are usually rendered in sizes averaging 16 by 24 inches, although the final dimensions vary depending on the content of the image. I am equally at home in digital and analog modalities, many times photographing a single subject with both types of camera. For me, though, the choice of medium, mode, and method is ultimately just one aspect of the final images I create, which exist as both works of art and accurate documentary representations of reality.