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A PHOTOGRAPHY JOURNAL

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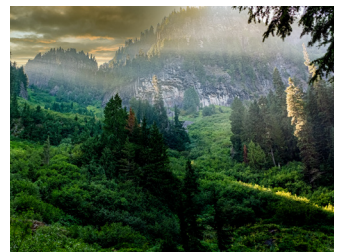
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AMONG THE FLOWERS



I stood in a 5-acre field of sunflowers on a Saturday afternoon in late August. I hadn't been on a day trip since the Covid "shelter-in-place" order began in March 2020. I was itchy to travel. I started searching for something - anything - to get me outside for several hours with my camera. It was too early for apple orchards, pumpkin patches or fall colors but research uncovered two farms of interest: one with sunflowers; the other with lavender. Sunflowers won.

It was perfect! I saw sunflowers from buds to blooms on this beautiful breezy day and the subtle sweetness of the flowers hung in the air. If I suspended reality for just a few minutes, I could pretend the field was as large as the ones I once drove past in Kansas that went on and on as far as the eye could see. This one did, too, but only when viewed from within and among the tall stems of flowers, of course.



I spent a delightful and unforgettable afternoon wandering through row after row discovering there were five different colors of sunflowers at this farm. I took pictures of buds, blooms, and bees. Oh! So many bees! I had seen so few all summer! I was in heaven! Along the way, I cut as many blooms as would fit in a small bucket provided because I planned to spend a day in the studio. (My pickings filled a 5-gallon bucket once home!)

I could see shots I wanted to capture as I cut flowers: macros of some and arrangements of others. Subsequently, I spent not one but two days joyfully making photos to my heart's content. I could see pollen grains clinging to the petals, the intricate curl of leaves and stems, and the wonder of the center of the flower as oil, literally, beaded on the surface. These amazements of nature were stunning to see zoomed in - up close and personal. As I finished photographing arrangements, I understood, on a cellular level, why sunflowers have held the attention of artists for hundreds of years. They are incredibly invitational; pulling you into their beauty, encouraging you to create.

I smile every time I look at these photos - instantly transported back to this remarkable experience I fashioned for myself in order to get out of the house and escape Covid for a time.



















Photographed by Jean Hess
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She Got Swag!

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Mid-May 2020, post-confinement, I was beat. disappointed in myself, ready to quit.

I had seen her walking quietly through the old streets of Antibes. Dressed elegantly but at times, inappropriately, for say - a Tuesday morning, more suiting a Saturday night. I so wanted to photograph her but couldn't bring myself to spit out my request in broken French. Among the English speakers, there were rumors about who she was, a mystery woman. Among the locals, she was a character.

On that day I overcame my self-consciousness. Her black flapper-style dress was caught in the buckle of her shoe. She struggled. I bent down to help and politely asked, describing my studio location. She came the next day. That was the start of a 5-month collaborative journey.

Pre-second lockdown we've had 39 sessions and 4300 images. In that time, when she came to my studio, my answer was always yes. Rarely did we pick a preset time. I never knew when she would come.

Some mornings, while I was still in bed, I would hear her unique raspy voice call my name. "Carmen. Carmen." (heavy French accent) While opening the shutters, I could see she had yet another amazing outfit to share. "Give me 15 minutes" I'd skip my shower, my coffee, brush my teeth, get dressed, and get my gear. I made the time when she came.

Where shall we go today? The answer - never more than 500m from my rue Vial studio. Fortunately, our streets are filled with character, colorful nooks, and crannies. I tried to compliment her outfit with the local setting and at times we just went right outside my studio. Sometimes we had a 10-minute session sometimes an hour Each outfit was a unique combination of what she owns. I never knew ahead of time what she was going to wear.

She wrote for me a short biography, which is how I know she worked for a high-end clothing boutique at one point in her accounting career.

She is my muse, my breath of inspiration. For her birthday, I gave her a purse-friendly album so she could carry it with her. As she paged through it, she quietly said to herself "I am so proud."

Her name is Leaticia and that lady's got swag.



























**A TREK
MOUNT
PHOTOGRAPHED**

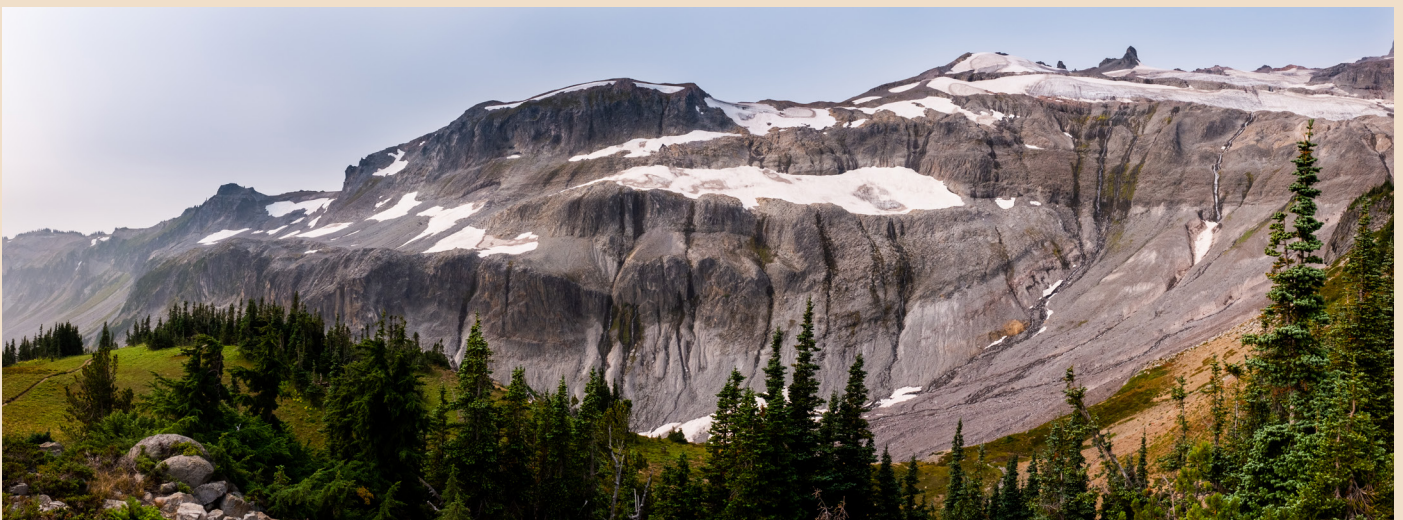


AROUND RAINIER

BY MARK MANNE



Hiking the Wonderland Trail around Mount Rainier in Washington state was the hardest thing I have ever done both physically and mentally. The stamina and endurance of doing 12-16 miles a day with an average elevation gain of 2000 feet was a lot. Going up (which i called, the work) i had to pace myself and try not to suck wind, while on the downhills i had to be hyper vigilant with my foot placement. I know it doesn't sound like much but going downhill for 4-6 miles like this becomes taxing.



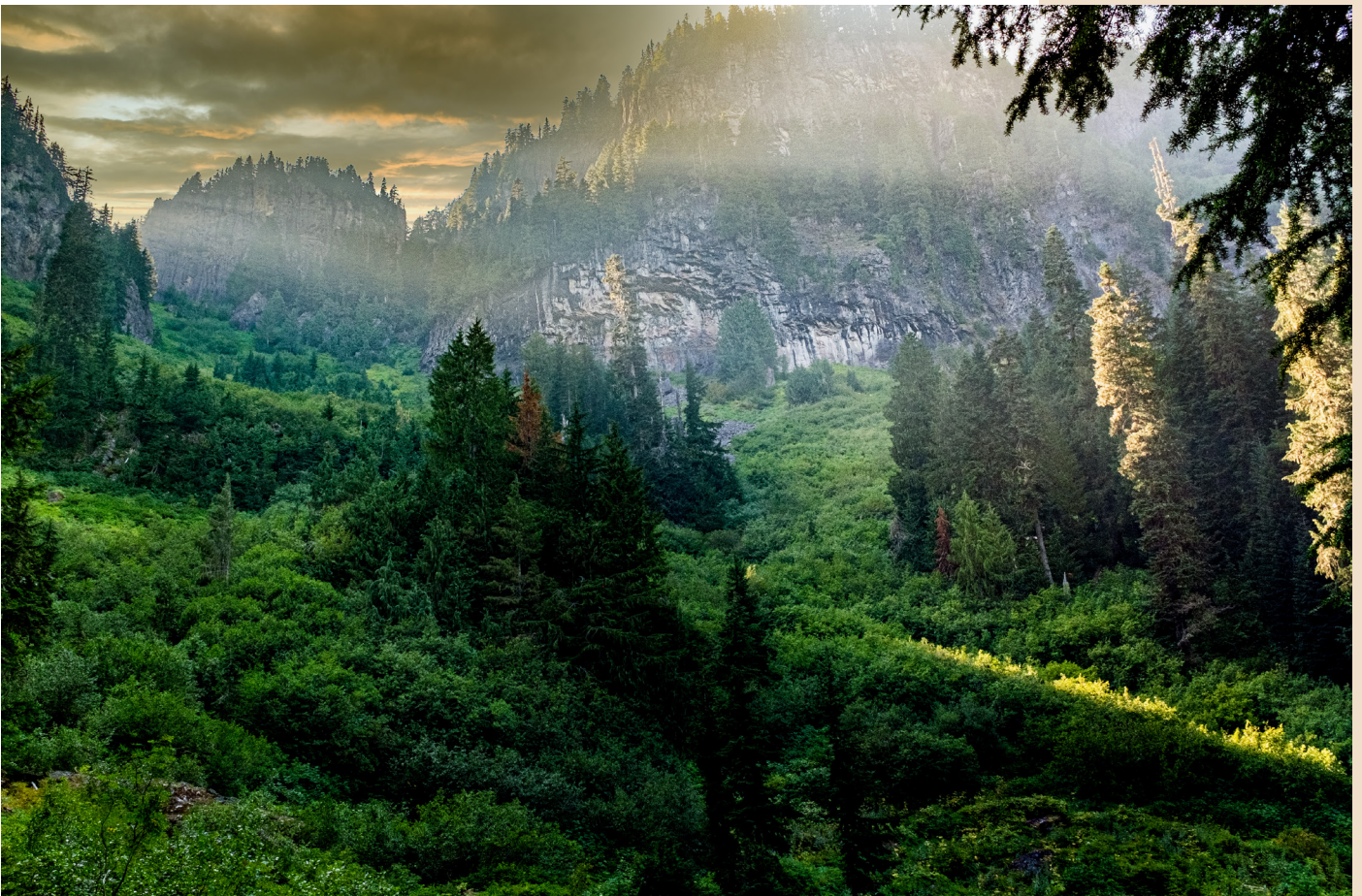
I was treated to stunning views of the mountains, being surrounded by ancient woods, i swam in a lake of water from a glacier, went over countless bridges made of logs across roaring rivers, a suspension bridge, and walked along what can only be considered goat paths on shale and silt. While all of it wasn't hard, none of it was easy.







The day that stuck out to me was day six. It was going to be a 14 mile hike with 1800 feet of going up and 4700 of going down. We started the day with amazing views from our camping site. The first part of the day we had a 900 foot elevation to do over 1.4 miles to the Panhandle Gap (pretty steep). This was over some of the most foreign terrain I have ever seen. Red and blue rock, shale, and sand. We were at our highest elevation of around 6800 feet, it was cold and a wind was blowing. The west coast fires filled the air with smoke blocking the sun and making everything smell burnt.



It was hard going, and the trail was difficult to follow (blessed be the rock stackers, as they guide the way), but near the top we came upon a lake that was a shade of turquoise I have never seen. It was alien, and amazing.



As we reached the the peak and went over, everything changed. Suddenly, the barren alien world became a sweeping green meadow teeming with life. Flowers, Fischers, goats, birds...the hills were alive and beautiful.







We made our way down 1800 feet to Indian Bar, refilled our water and ate some lunch. We ran into a much older hiker. This was his 32 time doing the trail....and he was doing it in three days!!!!

I know I am supposed to only talk about how amazing it all was, but in truth the second part of the day was a slough. It was an additional seven miles (900 feet up, then 2100 down) through some average woods. Maybe we were immune to the natural beauty (and overdosed earlier in the day on it), but we just had to keep moving our feet to get to camp...which seemed to never be around the next bend.

That is life when hiking 93 miles though, a lot of amazing, a fair amount of work, and gratitude that I got to do any of it.



Photographed by Mark Manne
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THE PONY



RIDE

When you have the great outdoors, children and horses you have the three ingredients needed for a fun session.

As always the incorrect mix can lead to disaster. These sessions that we did with a local company were a joy to work on.

This local company trains ponies for families so they have a trusting companion for their children as they learn the responsibilities of having a horse. They also provide riding and roping lessons for youth and adults.



Their goal with this project was to showcase their ponies temperaments and the gentleness they had with children.

The hard work, love and care they put into their horses and children was evident the moment I started working with them on the project.



















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RAW

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SAM BREACH

When challenged to create a set of images straight out of camera, with no editing, no post-processing, no filters, no cropping, no tweaks, no anything at all, the gut reaction of self-portraitist Sam Breach was to fear facing the world with every one of her aging blemishes on display. But as all women past the age of fifty know, for every extra humiliation of middle age they endure, they are rewarded in kind with increased wisdom. Women at this juncture finally understand the freedom of truly not caring what other people think about them.

“I felt myself rising into my power as I created these self portraits, I experienced acceptance of myself. I realised that not only did I have the technical chops to achieve visual feats that would normally be considered to require tools like Photoshop, I worked out how not to lose my unique style and aesthetic in the process. Color is very important to me in my work and I was curious to explore how to achieve the look and feel I aspire to by using only practical means. This experience will definitely change my work moving forward. I’ve always believed I should do as much as possible ‘in camera’, but before this project I hadn’t really pushed or challenged myself to adhere wholeheartedly to that notion. I’ll never abandon photo editing tools, but I will be more mindful moving forward to hold them in a more balanced perspective.”























Sam Breach (she/her) is a British artist, photographer, retoucher and curator based in Oakland California.

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Root vegetables
straight from the farmers' market
Raw, crisp, nutritious



arket

THE ISOLATION AND SOLITUDE OF COVID-19

left me wondering how to fill my days. Not one to spend time in front of the television, I dove head first into books, photography and a writing class. The class had a segment on haiku and I was hooked. I began thinking 5-7-5 syllable thoughts, which is a bit odd I have to admit. But I was having fun making up short poems as I encountered every day objects, adding a short word here and taking one away there to ensure I had just the right number of syllables.

At the same time, I was looking for some inspiration for my photography. Because of the food shortages during the pandemic, I wanted to focus my photography on food. With the not-so-subtle suggestion from my doctor that I start to eat a bit better, I started exploring more healthy foods. One day while eating avocado with breakfast, I observed its texture and thought about how I might light it to bring that texture out in a photograph. [Cue the light bulb moment] A haiku started to form...Before I knew it, I was flooded with ideas for haiku-photo combinations.

I found this definition of haiku and it seemed apropos: “a haiku focuses on one brief moment in time, employs provocative, colorful imagery, and provides a sudden moment of illumination.”

Here’s a little tribute to that brief moment in time last spring:
Virus closes in.

I feel myself unravel

Wash hands, distance, breathe



*Crack that shell and find
A quite mundane nut makes for
A healthy stomach*


Sarah Flannery is a Food, Beverage and
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*Straight from the oven
Wistful reminder of home
Mom's banana bread*

Picked fresh from the field
Blueberries in summertime
Make pancakes divine



A photograph of four bright red tomatoes resting on a rustic wooden surface. The tomatoes are fresh, with some showing water droplets on their skin. They are arranged in a cluster, with one tomato in the foreground and three others behind it. The wooden surface has a prominent grain and some knots. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Bright red tomato
You create some tasty things:
Soup, salsa, and sauce



Sautéed in garlic
You make a steak delicious
White button mushrooms

No doubt I should eat
More radishes, turnips, beets
Packed full of fiber





The stuff of legends
Wards off vampires, insects, colds
Eat garlic daily

With a bunch of grapes
One can create many treats:
Wine, Jam, Pies, Raisins





Juicy Tangerine
Loaded with Vitamin C
Bursting with flavor



Strawberries and cream
So simple, yet delightful
Treasured summer treat

Delicate, sweet, soft
Memories of Grandma's backyard
Pears picked from the tree



Crisp asparagus

Light drizzle of oil, salt, grill

Dust with parmesan







“Strive for perfection, yet embrace the imperfections”

...is a mantra I like to repeat when creating my images.

When creating imagery using the wet plate collodion process, you will inevitably run into imperfections. It is those imperfections that make the final photograph so perfect. Seeing actual silver deposited so perfectly across the surface of black glass is akin to witnessing a miracle, every time I view it. It is almost a religious experience. From mixing the collodion, to pouring it on a plate, exposure, development, and finally display. Everything must be carefully controlled by the photographer. There is an inherent satisfaction and feeling of accomplishment knowing that my hand is in every part of my creations.

While the goal is always the perfect plate - one without developer lines, iodizer spots, or any of the other possible afflictions wet plates are so commonly known for - it's always seems like those very things we strive to eliminate are the very things that give ambrotypes and tin-types their character. It is those imperfections we come to love.

The wet plate process is a mirror reflection of life, both literally and figuratively. The images you see are reversed due to the optical effect of convex lenses. Also, through the imperfect nature of wet plate we get a glimpse into the relationships we share with our fellow man. We do not love our friends and family because they are perfect. We love them in spite of, and for their imperfections.

Please enjoy these selections from two of my series. Flowers, and Music.

Photographed by Mike Thomson

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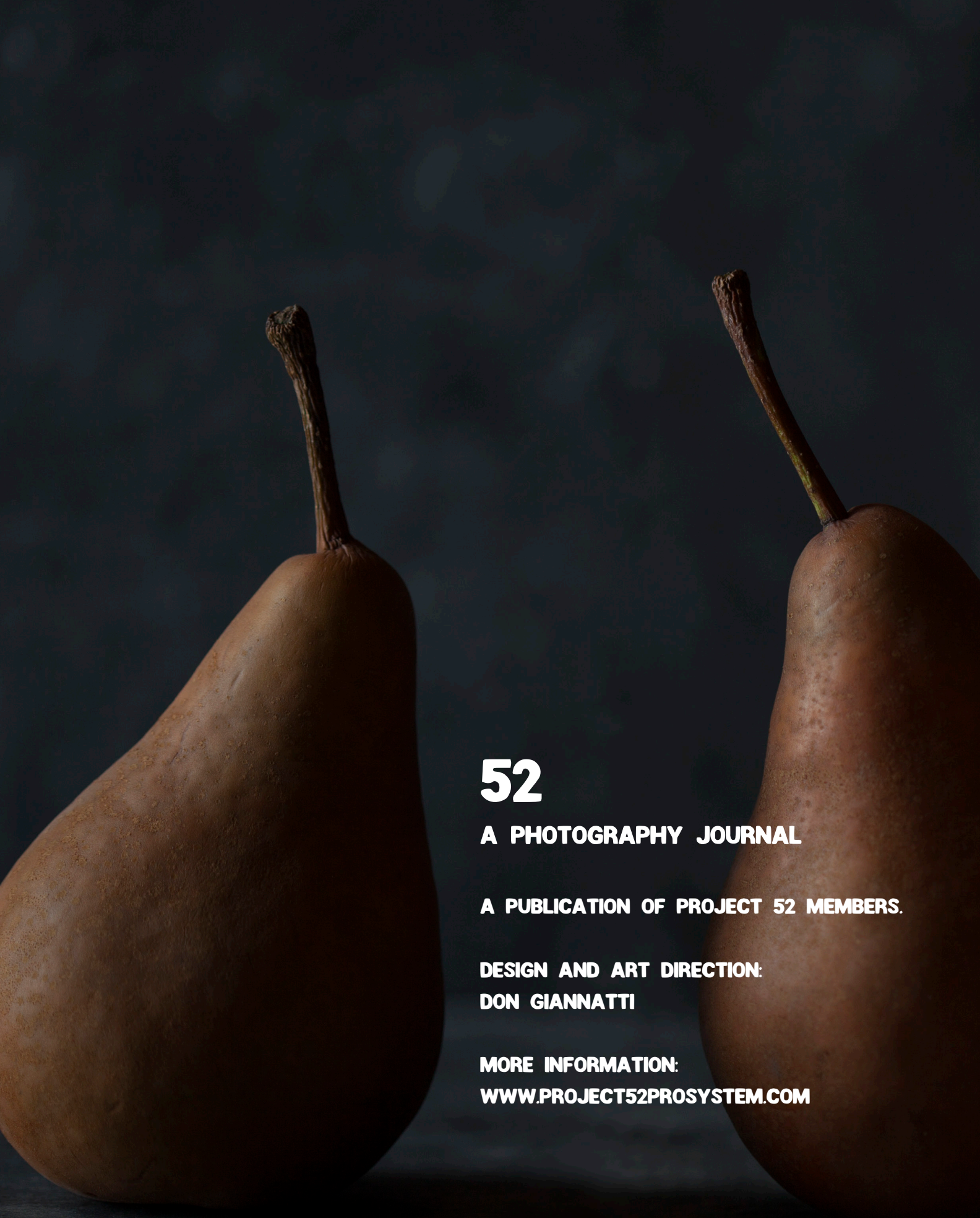
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A PUBLICATION OF PROJECT 52 MEMBERS.

**DESIGN AND ART DIRECTION:
DON GIANNATTI**

**MORE INFORMATION:
WWW.PROJECT52PROSYSTEM.COM**



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