

CAMERA *Arts*

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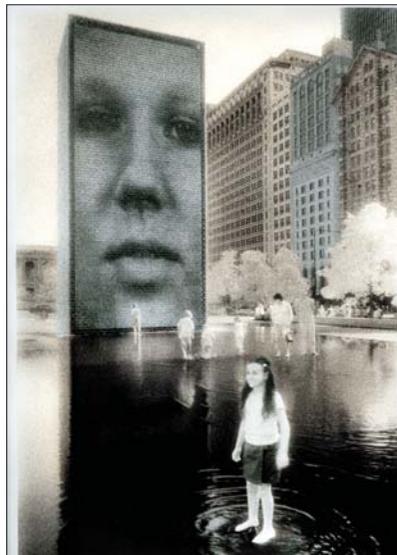


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MARC MALIN PHOTOGRAPHY



Ripples in the Pond, Chicago 2007. © Marc Malin

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Bonaparte's Garden.

Conceived in Darkness

photographs and text by Marc Malin

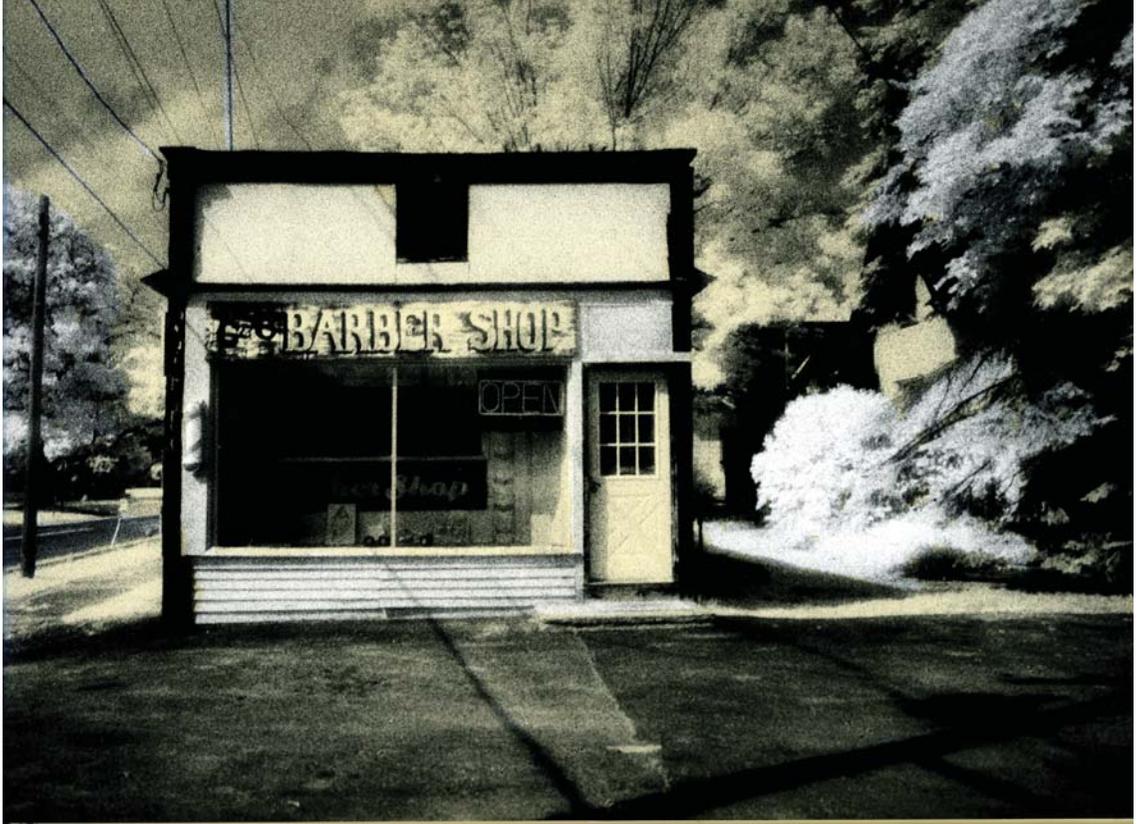
It has been almost 40 years since I started doing photography. I was 15 years old when I got my first camera (a Minolta 101). By the age of 16, I had built a makeshift darkroom in the basement of our house, and started to develop and print my own film.

I was living in Rochester, New York, and in that time period between the late 60s and early 70s I was swept up in the world of self exploration and self expression. Looking back, I can now see how I have continued to align with the first things that attracted me to photography.

My earliest memories were rooted then, as they are now, in a mixture of intrigue with the look of 19th century photographic processes and what was, at the time, cutting-edge contemporary photography. I

would often visit the George Eastman House to view their amazing historical and contemporary photo collection.

The early photographs of Eugene Atget and Alvin Langdon Colburn were among the first that moved me with their mysterious, almost surreal quality of warmth and timelessness. The first contemporary photographers to make a strong impression on me were Jerry Uelsmann and Minor White. The work of both Uelsmann and White gave me the sense that what I was viewing was both of this world and not of this world. There was a visible image that was there on paper and an energetic component that was dream-like and seemed to represent what was going on under the surface. I recall a Minor White photograph taken



Barbershop.

with infrared film. It was of a barn in upstate New York, and it had this surreal quality about it. My first photography teacher had been a student of Minor White, and he often talked about Minor's attempt to capture the deeper spiritual aspect of our existence. These were themes that I resonated with then and still do in my work.

In the early 80s I moved to Boston to study photography at the Boston Museum School. After graduating, I worked as an archival printer for my former teacher/mentor Jim Dow. The project was printing photos of early masters like Fox-Talbot, Roger Fenton, Le Gray and many more for a book by the Canadian Center for Architecture called "Photography and Architecture 1839-1939." This project furthered my interest in both the style and approach of these early works as evidenced in pictures "Barber Shop" and "Love Doctor."

THE PROCESS:

I started developing my toning technique because

I felt that there was something missing. My images felt like they wanted another layer to assist them in conveying this idea that there are many levels and layers to our physical experience. I had been using sepia and selenium toners for years when one day I was in an art supply store and a bottle of Graphic Artist Masking Fluid caught my eye. I suddenly remembered my Grandfather Louis. He was one of the last of a dying breed of sign painters that did everything by hand. He painted signs for department stores like Macy's and Bamberger's in the New York and New Jersey area. I recalled that he used to use rubber cement to mask off areas that he didn't want painted. I decided to try that technique using photographic toners instead of paint.

First I print, wash, and dry the image I am going to use. I always use fresh developer and fixer and wash the print fully to avoid unwanted staining. When the print is dried, I then apply the masking

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Fishing on Highway 61.

opposite: *Strolling Along.*

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fluid. I have experimented with a variety of tools to apply the fluid, a lot of times I will use wooden pottery tools, other times the stick part of a Q-Tip does the job. I have found brushes difficult because the masking fluid dries up on the brush and then you need a new brush. This part is quite time-consuming and requires patience and experimentation. I make my choices on what areas to mask on an intuitive level.

This allows every piece to be a unique one-of-a-kind piece.

As I progressed in my abilities I started to take advantage of the varied qualities of different papers and toners. Sometimes, I will use a cold-tone paper like Seagull that has a nice blue-black tone and combine it with a warm Kodak Sepia Toner.

For other images, I will start with a warm-tone paper like Ilford's and then add a sepia toner for a rich brown tonality. If I know that I will be using sepia toner, I start with a slightly darker print because the Kodak Sepia starts with a bleaching bath that will lighten the print. The sepia affects primarily the highlights while the selenium affects and darkens the shadow area.

Many times I will use multiple toners on one print to allow for interesting alchemy to occur with the various toners. This is a time-consuming process because you must do a wash in between each toning bath, and more often than not you will have to dry the print and re-apply the mask before toning again. CAUTION, never combine toners in one tray or eliminate the washing to save time. By doing so you may accidentally release poisonous gas if the toners are combined in an inappropriate manner.

A Few Examples:

"The Barber Shop" is an example of where I



Love Doctor.

have started with a cold-tone paper and used a very diluted Berg yellow toner for contrast. With "Bonaparte's Garden" I started with a warm-tone paper then used a concentrated selenium toner for the purplish hue and a sepia toner that gave the highlights a slight yellowish tint. With "Strolling Along" I combined Ilford's cold-tone paper with Kodak Sepia toner.

Equipment: I use a Bronica SQA for my medium-format work and a Nikon F3 for the 35mm with a 25 red filter for the infrared. My exposures vary, but they are usually between 1/4 of a second and a 1/15th of a second. I develop in Dektol straight for eight minutes, and use a variety of lenses, all Bronica or Nikon, but heavily favor wide-angle 24 and 28mm lenses for my infrared work. For films, I use Kodak HIE infrared film and Ilford Delta 100 for my medium-format work. CA

Marc Malin is represented by the Calvin Charles Gallery in Scottsdale AZ, and is online at the Artist Showcase at the Center for Fine Art Photography (www.c4fap.org) and also online at LimitedEditions.com. He will have a solo show at The Darkroom in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in February and will be the featured artist on the Limited Editions web site (January) as well. Marc Malin can be contacted through www.marcmalinphoto.com.