

Bret Culp Artist Statement 2007

Roots creep over rock searching for refuge and nourishment, neglected bricks and mortar crumble under the elements and return to the earth, a mountain is slowly devoured by the sea forming a precipice – these are photographs of matter governed by time chosen to illustrate the relentless determination of nature, the beauty in impermanence, and the eternal cycle of creation out of destruction.

The medium and techniques that I work with are chosen to strengthen the sensory aspects of the photograph in order for the viewer to feel more directly connected to the world within it. I believe that the authenticity of the final image should not be based on how loyal it is to reality but how well it conveys its message.

I have a natural inclination toward black and white photography as its inherent qualities of abstraction grant it the power to intensify the emotional impact of a place while leaving space for mystery. It's in the shadows that you find the true nature of the subject. Grain is one of the creative tools that I like to employ to further my expression, like a painter's brushstrokes. I particularly like the additional level of atmosphere that grain can bring to a photograph when artfully used.

I primarily use medium format, as there is a nice balance between being able to push abundant grain out of the film and retaining a high level of detail. Prints are made using pigment on cold pressed archival cotton rag producing an extraordinarily rich tonal quality, excellent sharpness and archival permanence.

As a Director, Visual Effects Supervisor, and head of visual effects at C.O.R.E. Digital Pictures, I scrutinize the framing, lighting, and intent of images from minute details to the comprehensive overview. I apply the same filmic sensibilities to my photography, requiring that everything within the composition be necessary and as well crafted as possible in order to strongly and clearly communicate the story.

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