

creative chat
 Describe and answer with Lockport 777

Getting to know Michael Veltman

Veltman is a photographer and a member of The Artist Guild of Lockport



Veltman

What media do you work with the most?
 Photography

How did you first get into photography?

Many years ago, when I was in architecture school, part of the program was to take classes in a bunch of different art disciplines and one of those was photography. They taught us how to do the old-school dark room, develop your own film, print images in a dark room, and those type of things. I really liked the process, and I liked the idea of photography, and I kind of got into it that way. I took a lot of time off, and then five years ago I started back up with it digitally.

Do you do photography full-time?

I have another job. I work as an architect, and so photography is more of a hobby.

What local artists/photographers do you admire?

Really everyone in the guild. Their work is really impressive, and it's great to experience them and their art. If I had to single out two people, I would probably say Mary Carnahan and Amanda Grabenhofer. Mary is a wonderful character and her pieces are really sensational. Her photography is really beautiful as well. Amanda's photography has a depth to it that is incredibly interesting.



Many of Veltman's pieces are cityscapes, particularly of Chicago.

What is the hardest part of photography for you?

Probably finding the time to do it. It's always a struggle, and it's the thing I struggle with the most.

What are your future goals for your photography?

I think it's more of a process for me, so I'm not sure quite what the end goal is. I think maybe I'd like to do it full time. Right now, I'm just experimenting with it, and starting to work to get a website up and running. I'm just enjoying the process.

What will you feature on your website?

It's going to be organized around different shows. Cityscapes is one, some particular styles like blur, and some other technique type of sections. I just finished a "Walk in the Rain" series that I used a technique that I had never used before.

How would you describe your style?

I would say it's a reflection of life. I think what I try to do with it is to kind of connect with people. Hopefully the work itself is incomplete, so when people look at it they bring a piece of themselves to it to kind of form that connection.

What types of subjects do you usually photograph?

I do a lot of cityscapes because my job brings me to a lot of unusual places and perspectives. I've been starting to shoot more candid street photography. Probably what is emerging as my style is more blur type of imagery. That includes being out of focus and intentional camera movement and things like that.

What has led you to the blur style?

When I first heard about it and started following people that do that style, I didn't

really get it at first. Out of focus work, it didn't quite make sense to me. But, the more that I get into it and when I talk to people that see a piece, a lot of times, everybody's interpretation is much different and it helps to reach out to the viewer and connect with them and allow them to have their own, personal interpretation of the work. When you do things like studio portraits or landscapes or detailed macro work, there's a lot of people out there that do that type of work, and your work has to be exceptional and the top percent to be able to succeed in that way. So, to develop your own style and move in a new direction, and one that's a little bit more artistic, I think gives you the opportunity to stand alone as an artist.

What is your favorite part of photography?

The connections with people that I have met, that I have with the pieces,



Michael Veltman has recently been exploring a technique called "blur." This piece is called "Tuesday." PHOTOS SUBMITTED

and that they have with the pieces. I think that's always something that I've found interesting, [and] it's always something that I find rewarding, and when I finish a project and I start looking at a new one or start working on a new one, I always look forward to that.

What are your favorite photographs you've taken?

One of those is this piece I did, "Wavebreaker," and it's really what started me off years ago. Technically, the photo is not very good, but I posted it online and I got a lot of comments about it, about the color, how it was minimalism. I never really thought of my work as art before, and that piece kind of changed the way that I

look at my work. Then, I started looking at it as art. And then, I would say a lot of my cityscapes are favorites of mine. I have another piece that's part of the new series I'm working on called "Tuesday."

Are most of your cityscapes of Chicago?

Most of it, yes. I would say my work is predominantly Chicago, because I have such easy access to it. I work downtown, so I'm there every day. Some of the other series I'm working on are New Orleans, New York, Tokyo and Jakarta. I try to start to develop an album whenever I go to these cities.

Interview by Editor Max Lapthorne