

Background & Bio – Jeff Knowles

Am I An Artist? It is an exciting and challenging time to be a photographer. The technical possibilities available today are amazing -- it is easier and more affordable than ever before for just about anyone to take sharp, adequately-exposed photos with just the touch of a button. Digital editing and printing technology have become commonplace, and are no longer limited to the domain of commercial labs and professional photographers. We are in the midst of a revolution in image-making.

This revolution also poses this challenge: if anyone can take pictures, and "art" is of course a subjective term, what gives me the right to call myself an "artist" ... or for that matter, a "professional"?

In my case, I became comfortable with those labels only when I reflected on the factors that motivate me to constantly try new things and take photography to higher creative levels. For me it isn't just about pushing a button and hoping to capture a nice smile.



It's about...

... creating images that steal a little something back from the relentless march of time – carrying forward the look of someone or something, from just one special moment

...recognizing the unique package of human beauty and energy found in every individual at every stage of life – and the privilege of rendering and preserving that beauty

...the challenge of uniting still and video imagery with the passion of other art forms -- especially dance and music, creating a result that is greater than the sum of its parts

...the joy of capturing even a tiny fraction of the visual wonders found everywhere in our surroundings, and the humbling task of learning to harness the almost magical nature of light

...the creative satisfaction in bringing a new aesthetic vision from imagination to concept to tangible image – whether it is a personal exploration for the client only, or a wall sized portrait or artwork for enjoyment by many

I deliberately avoid becoming limited to one particular approach to image making. I believe a photographic artist should be versatile and open-minded, and know the "rules" but also know when to go beyond them to create something new. I enjoy

working in the fine art black & white realm because of its unique look and creative possibilities, but I am equally comfortable working with color, toning, and digital artwork. Whatever the medium, my goal is the same: to create images with timeless appeal and emotional impact. Not every photograph can fully reach that goal, but that is what drives my photography.

Personal Background I grew up mostly in Connecticut, before moving to Maryland in the late 1980's to begin a career of public service in the U.S. Government. I reside in Arden-On-The-Severn, Maryland (Crownsville/Annapolis area of Anne Arundel County), with my wife and two daughters. My full time work responsibilities are still with the government, where I also try to apply my visual skills to help transform information sharing technology. My creative interest in photography began when I was about 10, grew to be a more serious hobby by college, and evolved into an artistic endeavor and professional business by 2000. That formed the foundation for what is now Ardent Images, LLC.

Professional Background

- Interest & informal training in photography since high school & college (1970s/80s)
- Completed comprehensive formal training program, New York Institute of Photography (1993)
- Began photographing weddings & portraits non-professionally (mid-1990s)
- Attained professional level work and skills (about 1996)
- Established Jeff Knowles Photography as a sole proprietorship in Maryland (2000)
- Attend continuing education seminars & courses in photographic art (2000-present)
- Member, Maryland Professional Photographers' Association
- Member, Professional Photographers of Greater Annapolis (2004 - present)

Guiding Principles & Goals:

- Strive to create interesting images with enduring aesthetic appeal
- Know traditional "rules" of photography - and when to bend or break them
- Offer styles not found elsewhere, and only high-quality products and services
- Establish collaborative relationship with clients, and work with their ideas
- Conduct photo sessions in a private, relaxing, enjoyable atmosphere for clients
- Respect and protect clients' and models' privacy, and avoid high-pressure marketing
- Support and collaborate with other artists and art forms such as dance
- Conduct business transactions professionally, reliably, and ethically