

Portrait of the Artist

Squillante photos reflect river as muse

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Editor's note: Portrait of the Artist is a regular feature in Enjoy! that spotlights artists with exhibits in the Hudson Valley. If you are an artist in a current or upcoming exhibit and would like to be included in this feature, email bfarrell@poughkeepsiejournal.com. This week's Portrait of the Artist features photographer Joseph Squillante, whose work will be exhibited at Madison's Gallery at Greig Farm in Red Hook June 11-July 21.

Tell us about the photographs in "Hudson Heritage" and why you selected them for the exhibit.

'Hudson Heritage' brings new focus to my Hudson River portfolio created more than 40 years ago. The selected photographs in the exhibit offer a slice of the bounty of the river and valley. With a tribute to Claude Potts, 94-year-old Tivoli apple farmer, plus shad fisherman Everett Nack, I decided to expand on this idea by adding new photographs of barns, orchards, a vineyard and organic beef farming. Greig Farm is a place where people come to pick fruit and vegetables, eat and be in the countryside so I saw this as an opportunity to complement that experience with an inside look at how this food is provided.

What is the importance of documenting the Hudson Valley's farms and fishermen?

Protection of our land and water is necessary in order to preserve our way of life. As photography stops time, it has an inherent ability to preserve moments for posterity, documenting our traditions and thereby protecting our future. An unnoticed life along the Hudson takes place, and through these photographs I hope to bring these lives to light.

What do you hope viewers come away with after seeing your work?

My mission is to raise awareness of the beauty of the Hudson River through photography. I would hope that people come away with a closer look and a greater understanding of the importance of the Hudson River — its people, places and things. I also hope that viewers will better appreciate the power and



Audrey Wyman, left to right, Smokey Schools and Everett Nack are shown shad fishing off Germantown, 1994. If you wanted to know the state of the Hudson River, especially between Poughkeepsie to just south of Albany, you just needed to ask commercial fisherman Nack, a vocal supporter of his beloved river. PHOTO

BY JOSEPH SQUILLANTE



Joseph Squillante has been making photographs of the Hudson River since 1975. COURTESY PHOTO

beauty of photography. And lastly, I would hope that those who see my photographs would recognize them as a melding of art and the document.

What is your personal vision for your work?

My vision is charged by light upon a

Andre Kertesz and Edward Weston.

My father, Frank Squillante, enjoyed photography, and early on I got to play with his two Kodak cameras. Optics, too, has always fascinated me; I loved using a magnifying glass in my boyhood.

How do your photographs resonate with viewers?

During my exhibits and lectures people will say to me, 'Joseph I had no idea that the Hudson River is so beautiful.' In these remarks my mission comes alive. Some say that my photographs are reminiscent of the Hudson River School of painters — Cropsey, Durand and Cole. My photographs create an awareness of the magnificence of our great Hudson River and Valley and move people to do their best to preserve what we have as our own. The river belongs to us all.

What excites you about photography, keeps you interested?

Through photography all subjects and fields of interest can be investigated, while spanning art, science and business. The constant change of light, subjects, ideas for new projects, challenges of learning and embracing the new technologies keep me engaged. Photography has continuously evolved since its invention in 1839, with new cameras, processes, films and more. The camera enables me to see things unseen by the eye, beyond the retinal image. I just love holding the camera, and I am blessed to still enjoy using it as much today as when I first began. As life changes, so do I.

If your photographs could talk, what would they say?

Our world is a beautiful place. See it, feel it, know it, understand it, cherish it and protect it. And when you go down to the Hudson River bring your camera and you will see for yourself its beauty, ever-changing light and sense of place. There is stillness and quiet in my photographs — stop and look, stay for a moment where you are, stand still and just be — then make a photograph.

Joseph Squillante's work is in the permanent collections of the New-York Historical Society, the Museum of the City of New York, the Albany Institute of History and Art, and many private collections. He has traveled the entire 316-mile length of the Hudson. Visit hudsonriverphotography.com.

If you go

An opening reception for "Hudson Heritage; Joseph Squillante Photographs" will be 4-6 p.m., June 16 at Marion's Gallery at Greig Farm, 227 Pitcher Lane, Red Hook. Visit www.greigfarm.com for more information.

subject, exciting my mind's eye and inspiring me to make a photograph, a drawing made with light. To capture this fascinating and fleeting light in a split-second is the real thrill of using the camera. I am moved by my feelings and I strive to capture what I see in the moment.

How does your background contribute to your process as a photographer?

I had the privilege of studying with master photographers, especially Philippe Halsman to learn "Psychological Portraiture," and George Tice in "Making the Fine Photographic Print." I worked with Ron Galella from whom I learned what it is to live and breathe your work. My two main influences are