

A River Romance

Photographs by
Joseph Squillante

Joseph Squillante remembers his first “date” with the Hudson River. “It was 1975,” says the Peekskill resident. “I was helping a friend work on his new house on the riverfront in Tivoli. I was a novice photographer; I had a Honeywell Spotmatic camera.” During work breaks, he shot some black-and-white photos of the watery landscape, and was awed by the results. “The Hudson offered me these intense, majestic, grand images. That’s what connected me to the river.”

Soon the Bronx native found himself in a full-fledged love affair with the Hudson, its towns, and their inhabitants. Since then, it has been his “mission,” he says, to “raise awareness of the beauty of the Hudson River through photography.” With images taken from towering mountains and quiet coves, aboard ships and alongside factories, he offers a view of the region that is both romantic and timeless.

Several museums are showcasing these evocative photos during this Quadricentennial year. *Life Along the Hudson: Photographs by Joseph Squillante*, on view at the Albany Institute of History and Art, features 30 of the lensman’s pictures (through Jan. 3). And several of his works are included in *Dutch New York: The Roots of Hudson Valley Culture* at the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers (through Jan. 10).

The following pages offer a sampling of Squillante’s life’s work; the photographer’s comments regarding each image are included in accompanying captions. His passion for his subject is plainly evident in both words and pictures. “As much as I enjoy doing other types of photography, the river has enveloped me. I can’t give it up, no matter what.”

Highlands Nook, Town of Highland Falls (2000)

“This is across the railroad tracks, just south of West Point. It’s morning, about 11 a.m., in summer. My desire is to be as close to the water as possible. That’s where the energy is, where the water meets the land. That’s the real connection for me.”





(top left)

**Clearwater Bow and Libertad (Argentina),
July 4, 2000, Parade of Tall Ships**

“This was taken south of the George Washington Bridge. The *Clearwater* was the escort ship for the *Libertad* in the parade. It was dawn, and the tall ships were coming in from the ocean in the fog. There was nothing else but the ships; it felt like a scene from the 1600s. I was like a kid in a candy store.”

(top right)

**Biologist Craig Thompson
with immature bald eagle K68 (2000)**

Squillante accompanied Thompson as he caught and banded bald eagles for tracking by the state DEC. For the photographer, the image is “almost like one of a madonna and child. Thompson took the glove off his right hand; it shows such tenderness.”

(right)

View South from Anthony’s Nose (2001)

“Photography is not a thinking but a feeling process. The camera is an extension of what I’m seeing and feeling at the moment. The fact that this is such a beautiful sky — the clouds are so intense — complements the lower half of the picture.”

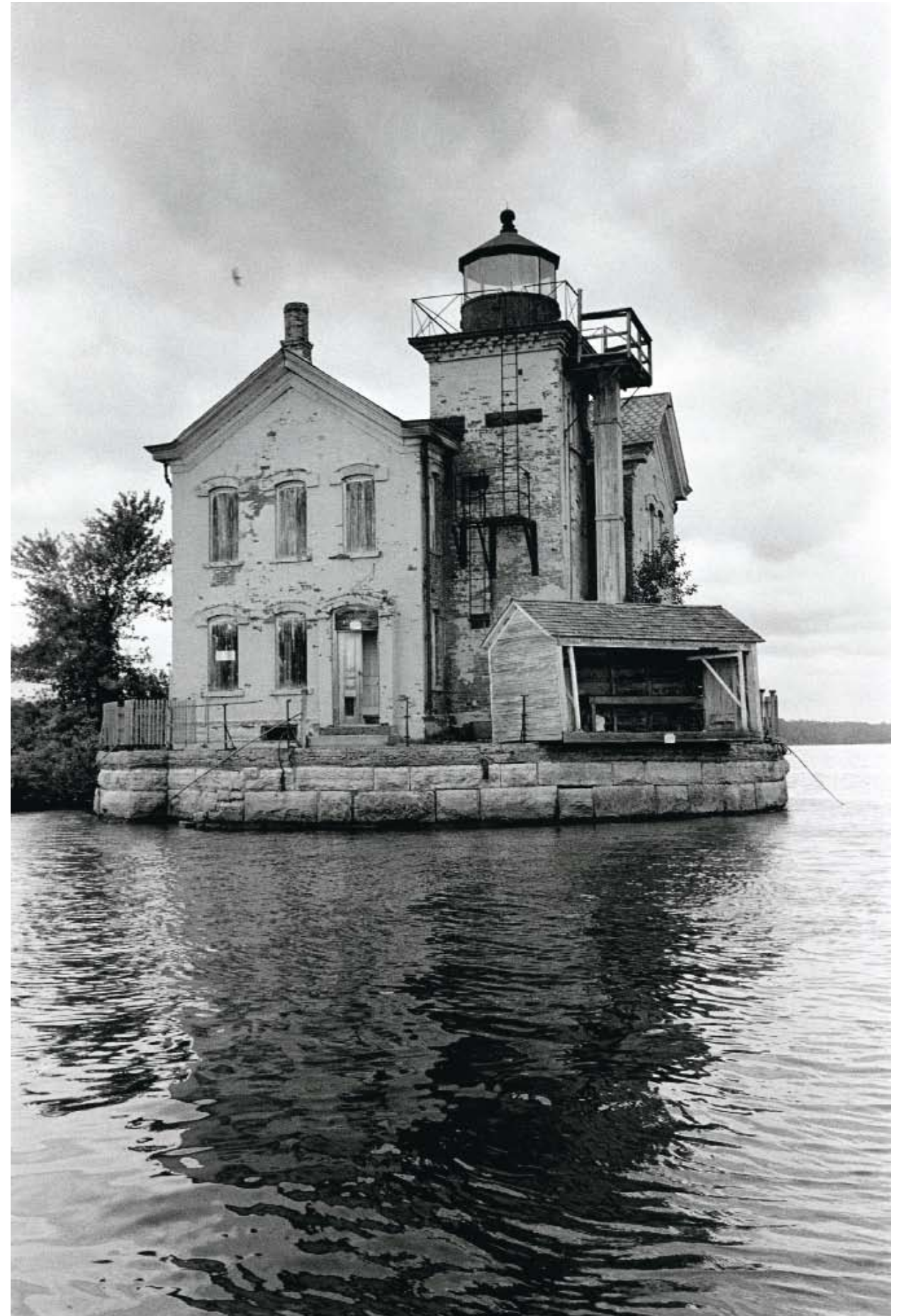
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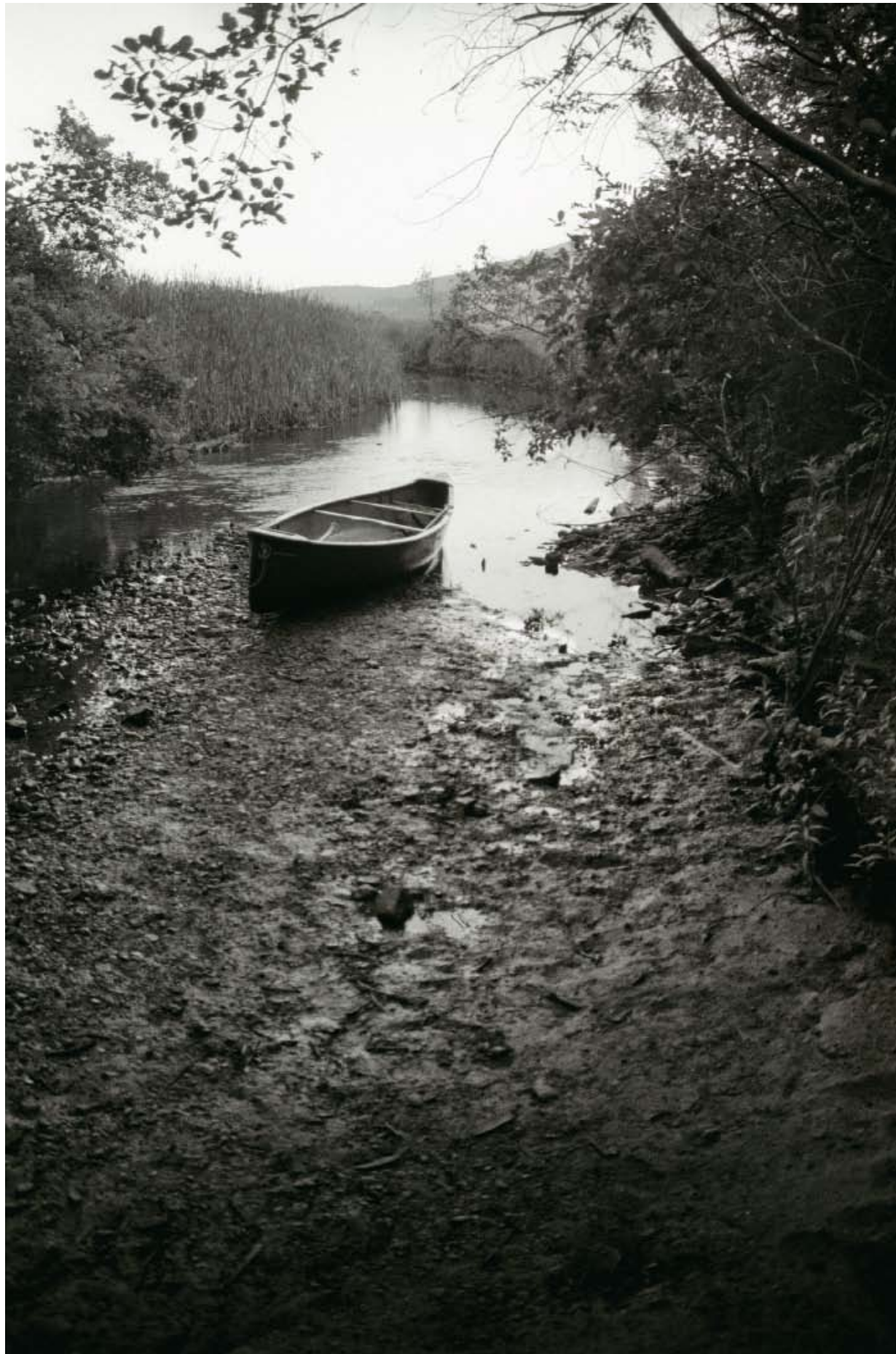
Old Saugerties Light (1980)

“I was out on the river with two friends in a Sunfish, it was in the morning in summer. I take photos because of the visual effect that the subject has on me — it’s not a journalistic view. The pictures are not meant to tell a certain story — although they often do.”



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(opposite page)

Canoe, Constitution Marsh, Garrison (2000)

“My wife Carol and I were paddling around the marsh when I pre-visualized this photo. I hurried her out of the boat through the mud so I could take the picture; she still kids me about that. The marsh is an Audubon sanctuary.”

(above)

Half Moon south of Newburgh (2008)

“The Hudson River Museum was interested in getting some photos of the *Half Moon*. I contacted [Captain] Chip Reynolds, and arranged with him to get some pictures.

For this one, I was lowered into the river on an inflatable raft, and took the picture as the boat was in transit up to Newburgh.”

(left)

Piermont Marsh (1985)

“Piermont is one of five marshes along the Hudson. They are important as natural filtration for the river. The plants are phragmites [also known as the common reed], an invasive species. Environmentalists may not like them, but I think they’re beautiful.”

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