

Pieces of the Planet

The work of
Allan Hayes

Today's society is a culture of extremes. We are obsessed with tomorrow and to hell with yesterday, and we often have a maudlin attachment to ideals or objects that cannot sustain the intellect, let alone the spirit. For insight and grounding, we turn to the artist, the shaman of the 21st century. But in our age of glitz, special effects and short attention spans, all too often idiosyncrasy is confused with insight and shock value with revelation.

Throughout history cultures have called upon prescient individuals to make sense of the dramatic gulf between the artifice of culture and our deeper natures. Blake spoke passionately to this deeper spiritual connection where "every sand becomes a Gem, Reflected in the beams divine." Though deeply valued in all early cultures, this spiritual connection with nature was lost with the quest for empirical knowledge and profit. But, as the hermetic bubble of modern society now envelopes us from the cradle to the grave, it is surely time to reacquaint ourselves with the infinite and the eternal.

Allan Hayes' photographic works are a tonic for our information rich, meaning poor culture. Each image is both a grand and subtle record of the beauty of our planet and the deeper union between ourselves and the natural world. We find ourselves confronted by images of striking complexity and beauty that have been chosen for their almost iconic stature. A weathered erratic, a mesmerizing piece of stream bottom, a jagged volcanic fissure. Every piece of art awakens recognition and makes us look into our deeper selves.

To achieve this impact, each photograph has been carefully manipulated over the course of literally hundreds of hours. Technology allows the artist to work colors and the relationship of forms to draw out the artist's deepest experience. It also enables the artist to enhance painterly qualities in the piece to express beauty that might not be immediately sensed. As in all art, the artist reaches through the medium to communicate with us.

This 'Supra-Photography' helps us experience the landscape in a new way. We can then enjoy the finished piece, not as an abstract concept, but as an accurate document of what the artist wanted us to witness. With the artist's help we can feel our natural reverence for nature through the work of art.

Technology can aid the artist in his quest for the grandness and subtlety of nature, but Allan Hayes's work provokes a deeper understanding of our connection with the natural environment. It acknowledges the essential enigma of creation and reacquaints us with the power and majesty of things far beyond our control.

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The beauty of the things themselves