

Featured Artist: Eddie Soloway

For Eddie Soloway, life doesn't get any better than being out in the natural world.

He's made his living as photographer, writer and teacher for many years. They're all deeply engaging activities for him. But all remain secondary to the living experience of woods and water, sky and sea, dawn and dusk.

"My deepest path was the natural world," Soloway says, "first being a Boy Scout, then studying ecology at the University of Wisconsin, then teaching at the Audubon Society teacher education camps, and finally as a photographer."

Like so many photographers, he learned the mechanics of photography with a garage sale camera while in junior high school. From a family friend he learned camera basics and the mysteries of the darkroom.

"Those two things came together so wonderfully, someone who could explain the technical side of photography and my love of being outdoors," he remembers.

Soloway took his photography seriously. "A camera was always with me," he says, "but I was a postcard photographer, at best."

Then while out shooting off the coast of the Everglades, Soloway dropped his camera into the salt water of Florida Bay. However, what most photographers would consider a catastrophe, turned out to be an opportunity for him.

"At the time I was working with a nature education program. They were coming up with all these cool, creative ways to get kids to see the world. I think photography had become more or less a burden, having to haul all that stuff along. I couldn't afford to replace the camera and I found I was kind of free without it," he says.

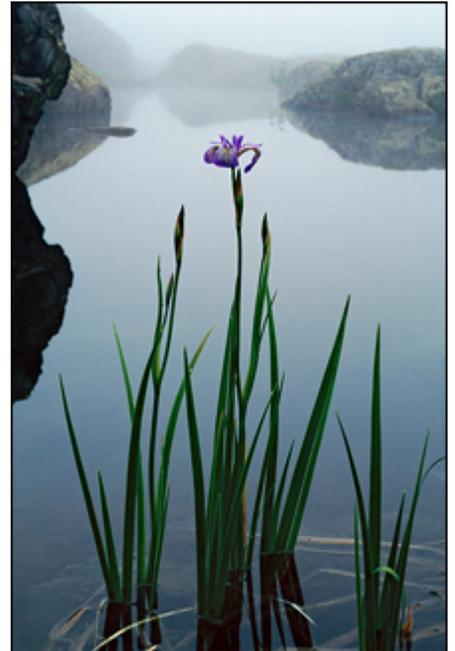
Although he wasn't photographing, in the ensuing years he continued to explore the natural world, to teach, and simply to see.

"It seems that in those years, without knowing it, but having spent countless months living in and close to the natural world, I had honed my natural eye. And my images showed it. Something fundamental had changed. I like to think that I let go of photographing objects and things in favor of capturing the essence of places and the magic of moments," Soloway says on his website.

Since that time, Soloway's photos have become increasingly less literal and more impressionistic. Galleries on his website, www.eddiesoloway.com such as "The Edge of Light" and "Forest Abstracts" and "Water Impressions" offer fine examples of how his photography has evolved.

Soloway says these images represent a return to how he thought about the natural world when he first began teaching.

"My heroes at the time were authors like Barry Lopez and Annie Dillard, and their



interpretation of the natural world resonated with me," he says.

"I began photographing a very literal translation of what I saw, and I have been moving back to a more heartfelt interpretation. It has taken a while to know what to do and to get the skills under my belt to know how to do it," he says.

Today Soloway remains immersed in teaching and writing, as well as photography. In a given year he will typically teach week-long workshops at Maine Media Workshop and Santa Fe Photographic Workshops, participate in the National Geographic seminar series, teach a number of workshops at regional photo centers, and since 1995, conduct several of his own "A Natural Eye" workshops.

Amid all this activity, it can be hard to make time to get out in the field and take pictures.

"Ten years ago I was bad at blocking out time for photography, but now I'm good at saying no. With this and other art forms there is a sense of having to connect with the thing itself. I have to do that, go out and make photographs," he says.

Last month, he participated in "[The Power of the Image](#)," an international exhibition and seminars in Beijing. His "Edge of Light" series was featured last month in a [New Yorker magazine slide show](#).

For some 20 years, Soloway has turned to AutumnColor for fine art prints of his work. Most recently Mark Doyle prepared his files for the Beijing show.

"I trusted Mark to take these files to a huge size and exercise his usual care with them," Soloway says. "Mark has an awesome eye. He sees color incredibly well and knows how to take a print to a beautiful point. There are only a handful of people that really know digital printing well and Mark is one of them."

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