

Albyn Davis



Albyn Davis is one of the newest members of the Shelburne Arts Cooperative; his photographs were juried in this past spring. No stranger to West County, Albyn has lived in Charlemont for over 20 years although he splits his time between there and NYC where he and his art historian wife Betsy maintain an apartment.

Albyn has maintained an artistic presence at photo-sharing sites on the internet for several years now. His personal statement on the Flickr photo site displays a bit of his wry self-deprecation: “Amateur photographer tempting humiliation. My approach: I see something that could become something.”

Becoming a member at the Shelburne gallery “was a big step for me. It was just really pleasing to make it through the jury process in June or July.” It hasn’t been long, but a few sales have already confirmed his new status as professional photographer.

He tries to select gallery pieces that might appeal to certain audiences: locals, artists, and so on. “I had a couple of pictures on the wall for the Bridge show: one of the falls, and one of a closeup of a rock at the falls. I had a couple up for the green theme: one was black and white with a cloud of green smoke taken at a rally in Milan – it sold in two days. Another one sold to some people from Colorado, artists who were passing through: it was a close up of an artist’s bench with some pails and brushes and bent oil paintings on the table. It was one that I made kind of ‘painterly.’”



Albyn retired from teaching at UMass about seven years ago. He was in the field of communications disorders, teaching a specialized form of rehabilitation from brain injuries that affect language. A shelf of books on aphasiology with his byline in the living room of his Charlemont home attest to this dimension of his academic life as a published professor. Since retiring, he and Betsy go to NYC during the week and return to Massachusetts for the weekend, instead of spending weekends there as they did when he was teaching. In NYC. They are frequent gallery and museum goers. "I am influenced by artists in general. The first step is to see something, then take the picture using the camera, and then the processing that makes it a picture. I sort of have a sense for composition from artists of all kinds whether abstract or realistic."

Photosharing online brought him into a community of camera buffs who freely shared techniques and tips. At first, he now admits, he was a little overzealous in the application of some of the many special effects available through digital processing of images. He has refined his techniques using the Photoshop Elements program to add the right amount of painterly effect, or tune up or down certain colors in a composition. In some scenes he has dropped out all color but one to make certain objects stand out, such as a yellow umbrella in a rainy street scene.



He has taken many streetscapes, in bustling NYC as well as European cities: "people in Times Square, people at night on the streets..." He prefers to get a candid image of people by zooming in on them from a distance.

Even when he is inside, he looks for the interesting point of view around him, and has found a theme of sorts in abstract photos of restaurant lighting. "If there is an interesting light on the ceiling, I will take a close up shot and turn it into an abstract, like a Georgia O'Keefe type of thing. I have pictures of fancy lighting taken up close, and work with it a little, and it becomes something else."

Albyn uses a technique called High Dynamic Range photography, which layers three images taken at different shutter speeds into one to achieve the fullest range of light density and detail. He has also used this technique to create "ghosts"— people walking across Broadway, for instance, in a

snowstorm— by photographing people in one of the three images so that they faintly appear in the



scene.

“I do have a lot of images from this area, too. I do various things, the farmhouse down the road, and closeups of flowers in different seasons.” The couple travels a lot too, and a post card company has purchased the rights to several of Albyn’s images after spotting them on Flickr. He now looks for that “special image of something typical, a unique angle on it, a way of seeing something like people haven’t seen it before” when he is out and about. The company, which is based in the Netherlands, also purchased a holiday scene from him of a black and white wreath with a colorful bow. Keep an eye out for Albyn’s work on the wall of the Co-op and in the print bins. He’s also scheduled for a solo show next spring.

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