

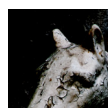
Matthew **Dereinzksi - Bio**



Photography has been a passion of mine for over 20 years. As a kid growing up in Kansas, I always enjoyed taking pictures of events, as well as of friends and family. During high school I took a photography class as one of my art classes. The photography course was a traditional film-based class, so black-and-white photographs were the focus. My dad took me down to local pawnshop to buy my own camera to use for the photography class. How excited I was to have my own Nikon camera. I must say it served me well for over ten years, from high school to undergraduate to graduate school and beyond.

Once I was enrolled in college at Kansas State University, I took more photo classes but my focus was on becoming a graphic designer. Photography, which always came easily to me, was a consistent source of comfort and understanding. I was able to take some photography classes for some of my electives and one was an independent study, but it was still traditional film-based course. After a few years passed, I felt I needed to good back to college and better myself in the area of graphic design so I enrolled in the MFA program at Kansas State University. During this time my camera and I collaborated in photo sessions to help me communicate the message I wanted as a designer. Also during this time a revolution in photography was taking place: digital cameras. Digital files had, of course, replaced the more traditional film. This was also a time when I became aware of what Photoshop could really do. It allowed me to blend and manipulate multiple images to create something entirely new. Most of the photographic manipulation I was doing was focused on graphic design- (visual communications-) based work, so not much in the way of self-exploration and investigation this changed in the next few years.

I finished my graduate degree 2002 and I got my first teaching position at Emporia State University, as the Head of Graphic Design. Although this is no longer my process, at this time, I was still shooting film-based images, scanning the images in, and manipulating them in Photoshop. For a faculty show, I did my first self-expressive, narrative piece called Crossroad (2005). I didn't see the potential of the work, but one of my colleagues at the time mentioned to me how impressive the work was and stated I should do more. Crossroad blends different background textures with telephones poles, birds hanging on telephone lines, and a railroad sign. I deleted all the words in the source material except "Cross Road". Around this time I created two works--Forgotten (2006) and 02 Trapped



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(2006)-- which became my therapy in a way and helped my work to evolve to what it is today. They are also typical of the kinds of images I make and of the process I use in making them. Around the time that I began this body of work, I was walking through the Biology Department on Emporia State's campus. The Department had on display exhibits which included different taxidermied birds, mounted on limbs, as well as a display case with just wings. I went back later with my camera and photographed all the birds on display and their wings. One of the instructors showed me more of the animals they had in storage: a nest from birds, wasp nests, and other taxidermied animals. This photo shoot is where I got a lot of my pictures of birds and wings that I used for *Forgotten* and *02 Trapped*. I found this to be the easiest way to shoot birds because the living ones don't tend like human interaction. I go to museums, wilderness conservation areas and, when possible, shoot birds in their natural environment. I still continue to use birds as a reoccurring symbol in my work, as well as trees, textures and decaying architecture that is incorporated in my work. I have always been intrigued by creatures of flight, real or imagined, how they must see the world in such a different way and that they have the freedom to fly anywhere at any time.

In terms of process, each final digital image is composed of anywhere from 20 to almost 100 original source images. I shoot a lot of textures as well as man-made and organic forms that I integrate into the background of my pieces. I also photograph abandoned buildings because of the stories they leave behind. I always have my camera in my car when I am going to events, or home for the weekend. Sometimes I will even just go down a road to see where it takes me to shoot.

So how do I sum up my work? It incorporates layers of textural and organic imagery that draws upon my interest in decaying architecture, nature, and the landscape in which I live. This imagery, rich in personally derived symbolism, is organized into imaginary, mystical, and mysterious landscapes. While the stories created in the work are not explicit, I incorporate symbols that, like signposts, encourage the viewer to

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