



Sean Carran
Hasselblad 200 CM 100mm F/8 1/500 ISO20



World-renowned photographer **Lois Greenfield** has been photographing dance for over 40 years. Starting her career as a photojournalist, she became drawn to the graphics potential of dance. On assignment for newspapers and magazines, she developed a unique photographic style that was not based on capturing choreographed moments. Instead, Lois inspired the dancers to improvise expressly for the camera. With her split-second timing, Lois revealed moments beneath the threshold of perception. Radically redefining the dance photography genre, her award-winning work has influenced a generation. Based in NYC, she gives workshops in her NYC studio.

You have developed a signature style of photographing and freezing moments in dance. How did you come about such a unique concept?

My style of photographing dance began in the 1980's. Working in my studio instead of in the theater, I asked the dancers to avoid choreographed movements and just improvise for the camera. These unpremeditated moments happened so fast, allowing me to capture moments beneath the threshold of perception – moments that could only be seen as a photograph. The results were considered radical at the time as people weren't used to see dancers literally floating in mid-air, in seemingly impossible positions, or cropped by film's black border.

While some photographers are meticulous about making a pre-visualized photograph, controlling every detail to realize their vision, others are more spontaneous and like to go with the flow. What is the method to your madness?

My method is rather old-fashioned: I pre-focus the camera on where I ask the dancer to be, then I shoot one frame at a time on my manual Hasselblad 500CM camera that I have had since the 1980's. My Broncolor strobes allow me to capture the very thin slices of time I require. I don't previsualize the picture. If I knew what the finished photo would look like, I wouldn't bother to make the picture, as my interest in this process is to get beyond my imagination, not to document an already-formulated idea. All my pictures are taken as single image, in-camera photographs. I never recombine or rearrange the figures within my images. Their veracity as documents gives the photographs their mystery, and the surrealism of the imagery comes from the

fact that our brains can't register split seconds of movement. I am interested in the poetics of a visual language rather than in its literalness. I want my images to defy rational explanation. There is no "solution" to the questions posed by my photographs- they are meant to frame contradictions, present the impossible, and find coherence within chaos. The point is not to have the viewer figure out what is going on in the photo, but just to be present at the mystery of that instant. What has kept my interest in this obsessive inquiry for over 40 years is that each time I invite dancer into the studio, I have no idea what

the resulting images will look like. Working without forethought, and often with dancers I have never met, nor seen perform, allows me to create images that are beyond what I could have imagined.

Your artist statement says, "The ostensible subject of my photographs may be motion, but the subtext is time." Can you please elaborate for our readers?

The continuum of a dancer's movements illustrates the passage of time, giving it a substance, materiality, and space. I don't ever "see" the moment that I capture on film, because I have to click the shutter on the instinct that the



Tatiana Ivanova
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subsequent moment will resolve itself into a miraculous moment. I shoot only one photo at a time, often asking the dancer to repeat the same movement many times. That way the dancer can also experiment with variations, as well as allowing me to capture different split seconds each time. The camera's ability to "stop" the flow allows the viewer to extract otherwise imperceptible moments created by the dancer. The laws of logic are replaced by the paradox of inversion - the moving elements solidify, and what appears immobile is in flux. A split second becomes an eternity, and an ephemeral moment is solid as sculpture.

We see glimpses of Michelangelo, Bernini and Renaissance-like artistic expression in your work. How does the work of contemporary artists inspire you, if at all?

The two photographers that influenced me the most are Duane Michals and Max Waldman. Duane was an iconoclast, always wanting to push the envelope. I was inspired by his determination not just to take photographs, but to create images that would not have existed had he not set them up. I followed his lead. And yes there is definitely the influence of the Michelangelo and the Bernini, among others. I hadn't realized it at the time, but the semester I spent in Florence my junior year of college unconsciously influenced my photography, either by alluding to biblical scenes or Greek mythology. All these themes can be found in my two early monographs, "Breaking Bounds" and "Airborne", as well as in my latest collection "Lois Greenfield: Moving Still" published by Thames & Hudson LTD, UK.

You are known for pioneering the use of live photography. Please share your experience with this concept.

From 2003 to 2007, I collaborated on the creation and performances of the Australian Dance Theatre's "HELD", a dance based on my photographs. I created photographic moments for the dancers to perform on the stage as part of the choreography. The premise was the live capture and instantaneous transmission of the images I shot on the stage. As the dancers performed, I shot hundreds of images, and each photo went up, unedited, instantly on two large screens on the stage. The audience could see the live event and my photos simultaneously. The dance debuted at the Sydney Opera House, and toured in Europe, the USA, and Japan. I was intrigued by the fact that I would pluck these photos out of a continuum, they would appear on the screen for 5 seconds, and disappear. It was quite an experience - I



Jordan Isadore
Hasselblad 202 CU 100mm F/8 1/500 ISO20



Natalia Dargn Johnson
Hasselblad 202 CU 100mm F/8 1/500 ISO20



Paul Green-Patt
Hasselblad 202 CU 100mm F/8 1/500 ISO20



Tatiana Marthel
Hasselblad 202 CU 100mm F/8 1/500 ISO20

felt like I was catching a fish, and then throwing it back in the water!

What advice would you give to the aspiring photographers regarding the nuances of 'MOVING STILL'?

I never go into a photo shoot with a pre-conceived idea. But if photographers feel more secure with a game plan they should follow it. I would still suggest that the photographers try different lighting, lenses, and camera angles, and not just rely on what they are used to. If the photographer is too controlling, the result might look stiff, as opposed to spontaneous. It's good to allow plenty of time for the shoot, so that the dancer can get used to being photographed. Invite them over to the computer so they can see the photos and make the corrections they need to make. If you treat them as a collaborator instead of just a model, you will get the benefit of their creativity, rather than stifling it.



Prjyoshi Nagi
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Twirling in the top of the hills through the leaf paths and between pine is nothing short of paradise for Prjyoshi. Swirls and gusts are her refuge. She is a female at heart and seems to be blessed with a special touch (prajyoshi@nikon.com) and a love for all things anime (pajminton.com).



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Paul Zanker
Hauptstadt 200 Obj. 100mm F/8 1/500 (2002)



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