

# Hasselblad: Reflections Vol. 3 No. 1

## DESTINED TO EXPLORE THE EMOTIONAL NUANCES OF MOVEMENT

### GREENFIELD'S IMAGES ARE A PARADOX

Neatly and with unerring precision: serenity and tension, freedom and confinement, purity and complexity are all captured and held within the borders of a 2 1/4-inch frame. Provocative yet conclusive, the images are a dual visual play between the three-dimensional movement of dancers hurtling and gliding through space and the two-dimensional picture plane.

"The frame creates a dynamic tension between the dancers and the photograph," says Greenfield. The white background provided by the 25-foot cyclorama, in her studio, creates the illusion that the dancers are floating in infinite space. Her use of the film's border as a frame offers a conceptual limit to that space. "If there were a colored background, there would be a fusion between subject and background that would not allow the subject to float," says Greenfield.

While "gravity defying" may be the catchphrase to describe Greenfield's work, she offers a broader perspective on it. "It is not really about the jump, but about the nuances of the different split seconds of a particular moment that lend a different emotional connotation to the action," says Greenfield. "I ask the dancers to improvise rather than to perform choreography. This allows the dancers to take risks, because no one sees the moment after."

### GREENFIELD FRAMED

Working exclusively with the Hasselblad 500C/M, Greenfield uses the square format as a compositional device. "The square is a restriction that is aesthetically challenging," she says. "It creates a problem that I relish solving. It forces me to approach composition in a new and different way, because the eye naturally sees in a horizontal/ rectangular mode, and images tend to be center-bottom-weighted. That is what seems natural to us."

"Working with a group poses a challenge because it forces me to arrange the dancers in an unnatural formation. It is unnatural in the sense that they could not dance in that space. The square frame forces me to put people on the top and along the sides of that square."

Greenfield started working with the Hasselblad system and her shooting through changes. “I only think in a square now. It’s like thinking in a different language.”

Her favorite lenses are the 120mm CF Makro-Planar f/4 and in particular the 150mm CFi Sonnar f/4, because she likes the way it compresses space. The 150mm also allows her to work from further away and gives her a tremendous depth-of-field, even at f/5.6. Greenfield does not enhance her images with any digital manipulation. They are all single exposures captured in a split second, much faster than the eye can see. “That is why it looks surreal to people,” she says. “The viewer assumes the time they spend looking at the photo is the same as the duration of the actual event in the photo.”

Having inadvertently stumbled on her signature style, it has become a constant challenge to her to keep things new, “to see differently.” Greenfield’s work has evolved from the pure acrobatic freedom/tension on the pages of *Breaking Bounds* (by Chronical Books) to a more textural tension—clearly illustrated in her latest book, *Airborne*. “The book was a departure for me. *Breaking Bounds* gave me closure on athletically improvisational movements. I started working more with textures. I like the transformational quality elements such as fabric or even flour. It is almost like your eyes are deceiving you. It works with the imagination. It becomes more of a narrative situation, dealing with issues of identity, such as when fabric looks like it is supporting someone when it is not.”

The many facets of Greenfield’s images have given her work an amazing amount of commercial viability. “Commercial clients have picked up on my look and have been able to adapt it to their product,” says Greenfield, who recently did a campaign for Remy Martin in France. “There were couples jumping: It was very festive,” she adds. “I am given a lot of freedom. Clients see *Airborne* and then they tell me the concept they would like to express, and give me total freedom.” Other commercial clients buy stock from Greenfield and put their own tag lines on the images. “In those cases, I insist the artistic integrity of the image is preserved and the viewer is just given another way of perceiving my images through their tag line,” explains Greenfield. An extensive list of high-profile clients includes Adidas, Cutty Sark, Disney, DuPont, Oscar de la Renta, Sony, and Seagrams.

## CREDIT LINEUP

Greenfield's lineup of photographic credits includes the most popular selection of magazines on any newsstand, including Sports Illustrated, Life, Vogue, Vanity Fair, Elle, Rolling Stone, Time, Newsweek, and Esquire-to name but a few.

Greenfield is currently showing at the David Scott Gallery in Toronto. One- woman exhibitions by Greenfield span the globe from Boca Raton, Florida, and Chicago to Istanbul, France, Sweden, London, and Tokyo.

Greenfield is also a renowned teacher and will be teaching in Tuscany this summer. She has worked for almost a dozen photographic workshops, including the International Center of Photography in New York City, the Santa Fe Photographic Workshop in New Mexico, and venues in Indonesia, Australia, and Tuscany. Lectures and appearances include the Guggenheim Museum, as well as NBC's The Today Show, ABC's New York Views, CNBC's Talk of Asia, and PBS's Eye on Dance.

While the Renaissance of the 14th century is verily defined as the humanistic revival of classical art, literature, and learning, Lois Greenfield-artist, teacher, and lecturer- has revived dance imagery by redefining it and then prompting a resurgence of this genre of fine-art photography.

[www.LoisGreenfield.com](http://www.LoisGreenfield.com)