



***Glimpses: An Exclusive Interview with R J Muna***  
**By Jennifer Sauer, Managing Editor**

Walking into RJ Muna's new 24,000 square foot compound of studio suites, the Left Space, is an experience. Something fun and unusual is brewing or perhaps has just happened and you might have missed it. Rules will be broken. Time will slightly tilt. The absurd and the sublime will commune. Promise.

Large framed photographs, several feet high and wide, are well placed in the sparse, clean rooms: A missile; a shy young woman striking her first, awkward, "come hither" pose; a few ducks swim in the water; an old restaurant stands in time.

But these are not photos taken by RJ, one of San Francisco's most prolific and successful advertising and fine art photographers. These are vintage "found" photos, blown up and printed on cotton rag paper to span a respectable portion of each wall. They beckon like fine invitations to any photographer seeking an inspiring workspace or to any client seeking a photographer who understands the essence of creativity and visual media.

The Left Space is a place to be shared with visiting photographers. With four large shooting spaces designed to fit any photographer's needs, a full line of state-of-the-art lighting and grip equipment, digital cameras, and capture and work stations, The Left Space will no doubt set a special standard for creative workplaces in San Francisco.

Enter RJ Muna, a soft-spoken, unusually humble guy in his early fifties. Eager. Awake. Thoughtful. And, lucky for us, generous with his words and time.

What follows are the results of a 90-minute interview with RJ, detailing his views on the creative process, how he has avoided mid-career burnout, and other musings on photography and epiphany. Enjoy!

**How did you start your career?**

I have been a photographer since I was 13. Like with most hobbies, you don't think you can ever make a living at them, So, I eventually went to art school and did a fine art degree with a concentration in design. At that time the art department didn't have any photography. So I started out designing brochures and logos and all the things designers do, and eventually started taking pictures for the projects I was working on. Pretty soon, one just rolled into the other and I did less and less design. Over time, I got out of design and just did more and more photography.

**Did you have any mentors?**

I had many more mentors in the design and fine art side; painters, other designers. They really taught me a lot more about photography than design because it really is a lot about composition, thinking, and creating a concept to work around. Not necessarily just a visual look or technique. Techniques will come and go as time goes on, but a good idea is always going to be around. So if you can figure out a way to really develop a good idea and make that part of the basis of the work, that's pretty key. The people I was drawn to were people who created great ideas along the way, and somehow in their own medium were able to execute them.

**So you start with an idea and apply techniques that will help you manifest them?**

Essentially. Photographers tend to see things in the world that affect them, and then that changes something for them. A lot of my series are based on glimpses or just fragments of information. So once I become interested in a concept, then I begin to build on how I can put that on a piece of paper. I kind of work back and forth between something I'm interested in and something that visually intrigues me. I ask myself, "Why does it intrigue you?" "What's the concept at the heart of it?" I

have a tendency to deconstruct ideas down to their most elemental level, and then build them back up to something I can actually create. So, a lot of times it really is just something I'm very interested in, and then I question why I am interested in it. When I figure it out, that's where the base idea is.

**You've been making pictures for about 40 years now. Have you experienced burn out?**

Just the opposite. Part of the rationale for building this (23,000 square foot, 4-shooting space rental) studio is to get back to my own personal work, which has been a parallel career that's been constantly put on a back burner for commercial work or other projects. I'm actually looking towards a growth period. The idea of retirement doesn't appeal to me. I'll probably be taking pictures until the last.

I try as often as I can to pick up and go to places that I'm not familiar with at all or where I'm out of my element--and shoot. For instance, going to the rodeo and shooting that as an experience. My beginning experiences with dance were like that. Going to Burning Man--that's one of the places I used as an exercise to not get my thinking too structured. Or I'd go to Mardi Gras or to the Rodeo to experience something that's not within my control, and that helped me.

Go and get out of your element. Go some place where you have no control and just go and photograph and experience it that way.

**Do you think that's why you don't experience burnout?**

I think that's part of it, but some of my commercial projects have sent me to places where I never could have gone any other way. I don't know that I would have gotten on a plane to Bombay, had I not gotten a job there. It was one of the greatest experiences I've ever had. Talk about being in a place where you have no control. That was fantastic, and I would go back in a second.

My work has introduced me to things and opened up horizons for me that I don't think I ever would have thought to do. I'd need three lives to do everything I want to do. I've got that many ideas that just sit and ferment. I'm very excited still about picking up cameras and making images, and coming up with ideas and threading things together so that they're cohesive concepts.

**Where do you get the inspiration? You seem to do dramatically different types of work from very stylized advertising images to somewhat abstract dance pieces.**

The main thing is--and I have to go back to my education or upbringing in art school rather than photography school--I think photography can become sort of narcissistic in a sense, and kind of circle back on itself. I've always enjoyed painting, sculpture and design and anything that doesn't have anything to do with photography. So when I go to see dance, I'm not thinking about how I would photograph it. I'm not looking at it solely as a photographer, but I'm looking at it as an experience. And from all of those experiences that I'm very interested in, the photography comes out. It just happens to be photography, it happens to be my medium. But my interests go way beyond that.

I'm interested in the way machines work. I'm very fascinated by how things work. I'll look at the way a bridge is designed and kind of marvel at how it's put together and how the engineering works on that. And that comes back in some form here in the studio or in a photograph. So I don't necessarily think in terms of photography first. I guess if you were to give it a metaphor, photography is the language, but it's not the thought, so maybe I express myself through photography, but I'm thinking through means of whatever I can come up with.

**Do you like to improvise when you are working or are you more structured?**

It's a delicate balance. My approach is more to gather up people, circumstances, and ideas, go off in a general direction, and then allow that (improvisation) to happen. In my own personal work, because my commercial work is very structured, I tend to try to remove some of that structure. It's not so much a reaction to that structure, but it's more of a balancing act, trying to balance the structure.

With photography, you have to pick up a camera, you have to point it, you have to consider the light, so there is a mechanical process involved in photography that might not be involved in painting. Painting is still much more free form. (With photography) there are machines to deal with. There's technology. So you are still ordering things to a certain degree, but to what level you order those things is really the key. You have to set up the stage, but then anything that happens on that stage is the improvisation. But you still have to set up the stage.

**What's going through your mind when you're taking pictures? What questions do you ask yourself?**

The basic question that always runs through my mind-- especially with commercial work and with the more structured fine art series that I show in galleries--is really 'Why am I taking this picture?' And if I have that (answer) very clear in my mind, then there's a distinct direction. Everything can be tested against that idea. So if the idea is, for instance to sell a car, then that's the very basic idea--to sell a car. If the idea is that it's a new model car and nobody's ever seen it before and how we are trying to show it, those (ideas) are all thought about and discussed. And so every time we put a light up, every time I create an angle on the car, every time I point the camera at it from some particular direction, it has to fulfill those requirements. If somebody says 'Why?' Well, I can tell them 'This is why.' It's always got to be there.

With the fine art work it's a bit more based on a feeling that you can always click back to. The commercial work is more structured, we are trying to accomplish THIS, and the fine art work is essentially the same, but we are trying to accomplish this feeling or this emotion that comes out of this overriding concept. So if I take a picture and it doesn't make me feel that when I look at it, then it's an unsuccessful picture in that context. So these are the essential questions I'm asking myself: "Why am I taking this picture" or "Why did I take this picture?" And if the answer is to get a certain feeling out of it and I did get that feeling out of it, well then I did okay.

### **What's your process in creating a concept?**

I think in the beginning, it's really something that I want to keep fluid. I don't write it down. Because it does slightly change or it hardens or shifts. It's hard to tell exactly what happens to those ideas. I have a lot of them all of the time. If an idea sticks to my mind, if it really stays there and won't leave, then it's eventually something I have to pursue. Then as I start to execute it, I begin to write it down more, to explain it more, to hold it more, to begin to have it in a particular way that can work. So you do have to write about it and think about it. And in the middle of the process when I write it down, it sort of solidifies it and allows me to go further. It is something that's built sometimes on a couple of images that I try, and they're not quite right, but once I look at them, I think 'Well there's an essence there that I like,' and then I go back and try something else, and then eventually, after two or three of those. But if I wrote it down and said, 'Okay, this is what I 'm doing,' I think I would get stuck there.

Shooting the rodeo, for example, is an exercise for me. In the instance when I'm trying to construct a piece for a gallery show, it's a little more structured, but the discoveries from those exercises teach me something about a sense of movement, an attitude that I might pick up on.

When you're in your day-to-day life, your surroundings become familiar and you stop seeing peripherally. You don't see what's going on "out there". I find that I see better "out there" when I'm in a place that I'm unfamiliar with. And what's "out there " is what is interesting to me. And it's that process that's really interesting to me. That idea that you get a fragment of something and your mind fills in the blanks, and it becomes something else. I want to create that experience (for the viewer). A good example is a series (of mine) called Glimpses, which is based on the idea of trying to slow a glimpse down enough to stare at, which is, I realize, an oxymoron. With the slightest fragment of an idea, you build the rest.

### **Have you ever felt dead-ended with an idea, when you didn't know how to proceed?**

Yeah, actually I do quite often. As soon as the images become solid, they put limitations on themselves. And what I have to do very consciously is to rise above the limitations of what I've seen from the first go round. 'Is it enough?' 'Is it really what I'm trying to say?' It's very difficult sometimes to get past those first images that I've created. Whether they're right or wrong, it's sometimes difficult not to get stuck there. So it is a big effort every time to pick it up and continue it on and say, 'Okay, this really is saying what I'm trying to say.'

You have to let go of the beginning of the process so the project can continue on with its own power.

### **You seem to welcome mistakes; you're looking for anomalies, not what is consistent and perfect.**

It's twofold. Sometimes I very much like things that are extremely structured and designed. But the more you study design, it isn't about balance, it's about imbalance, It's about a slight imbalance. The imbalance is what draws you to the balance. So in a sense, even with my most structured work-- and some of it is--the sense of imbalance is always there. And that goes from greater or lesser degrees. You can start out with a great imbalance and have it refer to balance. Some of my images are not as freeform as they may appear, and the things that are very structured in some of my other work are not as structured as they may appear. So, one is always created with the other in mind. You take a position and then you work from that position and it doesn't matter which position it is, you are always having to go towards some other position. It's essentially a point of view that you look out to the rest of the world or the rest of the body of work from, and that creates reference for the particular work.

### **How do you know when you're done with a project?**

It's more of a feeling. You just say, 'I don't have any more to say about this.' You explore something until you feel you've said everything there is to say, or the project tells you in a sense. It says 'You're being redundant now.' And that's a very difficult thing for anybody who creates work--To know when it's enough. It's very, very, very hard.

### **Do you sometimes still shoot film or are you committed to digital?**

I'm pretty committed to digital. We've gotten pretty comfortable with it now. It was a difficult transition, but luckily on the commercial side of my work, the demand was there for it for many practical reasons, and so once I became familiar with it because of that, it wasn't that difficult to go out and shoot digitally. And some of the work I do is on digital video as well. So I don't really have any limitations. I don't think the camera and the film are really. I'm not really concerned about them. To me, if I have that idea, the idea determines the best way for me to produce the work and what the medium is going to be, whether it's color or black and white or on video or whatever it happens to be.

### **The economic landscape has changed for a lot of photographers. Has it changed for you?**

It has. Our projects tend to be larger projects and (there are) fewer of them. Rather than a project that's a few days here

and a few days there, we'll get a project that will take three weeks, and those are more rare, but that tends to be when somebody wants a large, cohesive, pulled together body of work rather than, say, just one shot.

I think stock has changed a lot of that. I think the pricing structure of stock and what people are willing to do to compete with that has changed. There are a bunch of things on the business end, on the commercial side, that have really changed recently, and I can't say that it's a trend. Right now the work that is being produced out there is very conservative in its visual concept--it's not very heavy on concept. And that just may be the political times we're in right now. It's hard to tell. I've always believed that everything weaves back into itself. So the political climate is one of those things that is very much on people's subconscious when they're creating. They won't take the same chances. When chances are being taken then it goes back to a good solid concept, a great idea. And that great idea is something that can be pursued. When you pull back on those ideas, when you don't allow those ideas to come out, you take a safer route. And sometimes a safer route can be found in stock or there are easier ways to do it than pursuing those great ideas. They're chances. They really are chances. It's risk-taking for a client to go that far.

### **And how have you changed your business because of all this?**

We've created an independent business (the Left Space studio and equipment rental), and that business will really run on its own. It doesn't run so much because of me. My business will run sort of parallel, and I will use the facility, but the facility is really set up here so that it's more of a public space for other photographers to use. We have a full rental department so it's just like a traditional rental studio anywhere in the country. And if that begins to generate some income for me, that'll balance out my need to go and finish up some of these fine art projects that I have which don't pay very well. It's more of a general shift, I wanted to do this while I still had the desire to shoot, while I still had the energy and the vision for what I wanted to do. I know that you were talking about burnout and I have seen it in a lot of people, and I don't expect it to happen to me, but realistically who knows? It could happen to me any day (laughs).

### **I kind of doubt it.**

It's not something I can say, why am I immune to that and everyone else may not be? Though there are plenty of examples of photographers and artists who go their entire lives and are as inspired all the way through. So it could go either way. What I'm trying to do with this (studio) is to create as much time as I can so that I can pursue some of these other projects. I've always done best in my commercial career when I've had active fine art projects going. I think the energy somehow feeds off of itself. I just look back historically about when I was creating the most work on the fine art side, and somehow my commercial work was always significant at that time also. So, I'm hoping they'll continue to energize each other. It's not a business plan. This isn't something that someone sits down and says, "Okay, this many months at this many dollars." It can't be about that. These images that somehow haunt me and that I'm compelled to try to create, they really don't have anything to do with anything concrete. And the more they're floating around in my head, the more I'm basically trying to find ways to get to them. Once I begin to get to them, other things tend to open up.

### **Where do you see the most opportunity for photographers in this economy?**

That's a difficult question because we're sort of in transition on that. I think the paradigm is changing and it hasn't changed to what it will change into. So the cake is half-baked at this point, and it's hard to say where everything is going to settle down. I think that no matter what-- and this is my hope more than a prediction-- no matter what, people who think well will always survive. A visual technique will come and go. It's easy to duplicate. I mean, people are very smart out there and they can look at a picture and say 'Here's the lighting.' and figure it out. So to come up with a technique and make that your signature is temporary. To come up really strong ideas and concepts and really well thought out compositions-- those I think are going to be the things that last. So, I think for anybody going into this business, strong ideas are kind of "it".

You look at the people you admire, and it's not just because of the way they Photoshop a picture, it's more what's in the picture, the subject and what it says back to you. So those are the things I think that if people were to work on rather than their technique they would do much better at.

The photographers that I admire are all very good thinkers. Everyone from Irving Penn to Nadav Kander; they're all great thinkers. Their work is not static. Even though it's still, it's not static. They (produce) images that evoke something, and it's generally the idea that they put behind it. And it's not shallow. Raw technique is shallow. We used to laugh about Polaroid transfers because anything looks good as a Polaroid transfer, Of course everybody did them then, and nobody cared. Start with the idea and develop your skills at conceiving, and thinking, and trying to pull the emotion out of whatever you're shooting . And that will guide your technique rather than the other way around. I think that's how creative people will survive.

I can't help but think that more and more people are going to start shooting for stock. And as that happens, I think more and more people are going to make less of a living out of it. Some of that is business, with the Getty's and Corbis' sort of taking over that world, and wanting more and more rights from photographers, and dealing with photography as a commodity. That's working right now, because, as I said before, there's a conservative sort of pull back in taking chances with work. So it's fairly easy now to sort of predict what somebody will like so you can go out and shoot a stock picture of it. When people begin to want to go out and create their own images again, they're going to be unique and it's not something you can predict. It's going to be brought out of discussions and concepts and ideas like "Why we are trying to say these things?" And then that image will grow out of that rather than (a client) going to a (stock) library and looking to be able to tack a headline onto a photograph that you see online.

There's a current campaign out there for Kaiser, which looks entirely like it was done with stock images. None of the images look consistent or within a campaign that is at all unique. But they tag a headline to them and make them their own. It works for that campaign, but pretty soon I think advertisers are going to begin to understand that that's not their own identity, that people aren't going to be able to say, "Oh that was a Kaiser campaign", and they're not going to know, because pictures just look generic out there and people aren't paying attention that much. It's images that are created to give the advertiser an identity that last. Apple, for example, has done a great job of that. And a few others have a certain visual identity that people remember. That's where advertisers need to be. That's where they're really going to get the most out of their money. But it's hard work.

### **What about future dreams and projects?**

I am working on a video project relating to dance, and I have a couple of other fine art projects that are sitting there waiting, because they also haven't gone away, they are still floating around my head, and they're changing a little bit as I try to mentally hold onto them. I have two or three projects that I haven't finished completely. The construction of this building (studio) put a lot of things on hold, and what I'm really excited about is that these images are starting to really come back, they're starting to float back now that I feel I've gotten most of the building done. I think when I was in the middle of this, we talked about having a dry spell. I was so involved in the construction of this building --the quantitative work of doing this--that a lot of those images kind of disappeared, they weren't with me all the time, and I'm very happy that they're actually coming back. It's given me a lot of energy to go out and do them and to create more work. Time is the enemy.

### **What about postproduction? You seem to have an able staff. How much are you involved in the process of digital postproduction?**

I do quite a bit of it. There's a lot of basic stuff that I try to pass off for reasons of time, but when it comes to the general look of the thing, I'm very involved. I'll sit down and do the work myself. I think I'm pretty good at Photoshop. I can get done what I need to get done and I have a couple of really good people who help me if I bump up against a wall.

### **Do you do your own prints or do you give that to your staff?**

Sometimes, on the larger commercial projects, I'll do the first one or two prints and then my staff can take it from there. Color is subjective, how dark something is is subjective, the amount of contrast is subjective. All of those things are subjective, and it's so much easier if I just sit down and do it than if I try to hand it off and wait to see if it's okay.

### **What questions do you ask yourself or clients before estimating a job?**

I ask them how they see the job going. I ask them how many days they think it should take. Because they all come to me at a certain place in the concept process that's fairly late. I don't often get involved in stuff that hasn't been sold off. So usually I want to see what they're thinking. And if they have ideas like "Oh, I think we should shoot here," or "I was thinking we should shoot at this time of day." Just to be sure we're on the same page. They usually have pretty strong ideas. I mean, art directors are pretty visually oriented and they can talk about what they want. The better ones will give you that information and then listen to what you have to say. And quite often it will be some kind of a nice melding of those two concepts. So that's the main question I ask.

### **Have you had any personal or professional experiences that were turning points in the way you view your work?**

I guess the two main things that really changed my work was, one, the beginning of shooting cars and then the other was the beginning of shooting dance. When I started shooting dance, that changed my perspective on a lot of things. As did shooting cars. It's a different way of seeing. And dance is a different way of seeing. They're not dissimilar in a sense, but they're really visually quite different. And so some of the aesthetics or some of the ways to shoot those things I've brought from one to the other. So these two main areas are what changed.

When I started shooting cars, I had to think about lighting in a different way, lighting something that large, and how the reflections are seen by the car. So the scale of everything got really big, and that began to open up my thinking of how to see other things out there, to see them as larger and apply a larger lighting sensibility to many things.

### **Did it improve the quality of your lighting?**

I think one of the reasons I got my first couple of car jobs was because I was lighting things differently than they were used to. So, my original challenge was to bring what I was normally doing, to cars, which couldn't be done 100 percent. So with everything I do, whether I light a body, whether it's a dancer whether it's a car, all of those things tend to cross pollinate and conceptually they're all there. Certainly with the certain kinds of light that I use, whether it's hard or soft or open. I decide if I am adding or subtracting light. These are different lighting concepts. In subtracting light, you might take a dark room and then add a little bit of light to that area. And then the other is where you have a very open light and you would darken areas by various means. So that sense of addition or subtraction is always part of a lighting concept. And yeah, it very much goes from one to the other, back and forth. I can probably dig out a couple of examples of a car that I lit in exactly the same way that I lit a dancer. So they do work (together).

If you only search within the discipline of photography, you don't look at how painters "lit" things, or how filmmakers work,

or how people who stage plays light things, or how a sculptor built things so that light will fall on them. And if you don't look at all those areas, you can't bring it back to your own work. If all you're looking at are photography magazines all the time, it does tend to just feed back in on itself. So I would advise photographers to look outside their discipline. And try to read books where people describe things in words because you're (mentally) filling in all the blanks when they describe a kind of light. Some of the best people that are lighting today are filmmakers. The quality of the light in filmmaking is stunning. And especially some of the big Hollywood guys who have absolutely no limitations on what they can do with light combined with what they do in a computer. It's mind-boggling. I look at some of these frames of movies and there's light coming from places where it just can't exist that way. And it's for one fleeting moment of a scene. It's pretty remarkable. You can study a lot from that. You can see a lot from that.

But just in general, you just have to stay awake. I hate to say that, but it's just being aware of those things. You'll see them if you're aware of them, just being conscious of them. They'll show themselves. And the lighting. What you do with lighting. You know it when you see it. You just have to make the effort to sort of deconstruct it to the point where there is essentially a lighting concept behind it, and then build it up from there. And that usually works. It's kind of a cinematic technique, but it works well for everything. Is it blue? How is it blue? Is it still light? Is it light that holds still and things move in and out of it? Or is it a light that people can move around inside of? All of those (kinds of lighting) have different qualities and characters.

### **Who have been your favorite clients?**

I've shot for Lexus over the years and they've been great for me. They've been really good in terms of allowing me enough headroom to do some interesting things and just really consistently, the way we work together. They've been great. Some of my dance companies are--we just get along so well and there's a synergy there that's fantastic. I did a great job last year for Nautilus Fitness in which we shot athletes and bodies. I had one project that took me to New York, Spain, Bombay, and Tokyo, and that was for a hi tech company, and they were just trying to show technology around the world, but not in normal situations. We shot the fruit market in Bombay to show technology. The idea was that whether people realize it or not, there's a microchip in everything. And this company made some of the processes that make microchips. And essentially, the headline was "We have something to do with every chip on the face of the earth." So, one of their processes or patents was involved with every chip that's out there. So you know, you can show a produce market in Bombay and people will be wearing a watch, or on a cell phone, there'll be a scale or a television up in a corner and just something you would never expect. And there were little points of light on the images where they (chips) were. We shot at one of the big (public) squares in Tokyo, which was covered with the dots showing where the technology was. And I had people in the pictures talking on two cell phones at once, going back and forth, etc.

### **So did you create the images on the spot?**

Pretty much. It was a combination. It had to look like the place, like Tokyo or India, because they wanted (the viewer) to know that they were in different parts of the world. There had to be a certain amount of technology in it. There were parameters. But it goes back to "Why are we taking this picture?" And it's to show that there are chips in everything around the world.



### **Is your personal work in your portfolio?**

Not so much, although there are some projects that are hybrid. I would never show the three cities project in a gallery. But it's a good stretch in one direction. If I have a project in mind I know I'll probably never use it in a gallery and it's probably not particularly commercially viable, but I'll still do it if I think it's something interesting.

### **So do you keep those parts of your career separate?**

Pretty much. The sensibilities are separate. The sensibilities are quite different. It's a different way of seeing things. Essentially advertising seeks to sell something. You're basically featuring something, and almost always in a positive light. You're trying to evoke a feeling or an emotion about something specific, and it's usually a product or a service. Generally speaking, in fine art, the thing that you're trying to evoke is nothing tangible, nothing you can put a price tag on, it's usually an emotion or feeling or a lack of a feeling or something that's very intangible, and that's kind of different. At the bottom of it all, advertising or commercial work is really about that thing that has a price tag and somebody pays for it.

### **You're trying to manipulate the viewer in a way?**

Oh, I think fine art is far more manipulative. That's okay. I'm not saying it's bad. I'm saying, the word 'manipulation' has kind of a negative connotation, but the reality is, fine art is really trying to pull something out of you. Some emotion. Some feeling. Some banality. Even more so than advertising. In advertising, the ideas are simple: "We want you to feel good about our product." That's pretty basic. Or they're trying to say, "Now we have this new model of this and we're introducing this". Quite often the ads are just about information. "We have a new car or a new ipod out." It's not as manipulative as people think it is. I just suppose it's your perspective. I mean a good writer can twist you around their finger without trying very hard. Is that manipulative or is that just beautiful writing? When you look at advertising, 95 percent of the time you know it's an ad. No one's trying to fool you that it's not an ad. Whenever people think it might be mistaken, they put "Advertisement" at the top of the page. When it's that open, I don't consider it manipulation.

Fine art has always been the most subversive insidious form of communication and it always will be, and I hope it always is. Subversives have always used art to get out their points.

### **Do you have a subversive side to you, RJ?**

Sure, but not so much politically. For my fine art work, the things that are most important to me are things that I consider to be human universals. I don't deal too much with politics, but I think there are things that are a consistent thread throughout humanity, and not just in this culture, but in other cultures. And how we sort of deal with our existence and how we deal with the way we think. That process of thinking seems to be somewhat, down to the core, universal to the species. And the more I can get close to that universal element, the more true the work is for me and it's more interesting to me. I try to find something that everyone out there has, even if they don't relate to it visually, I think that idea I was talking about, about the glimpse, I think that occurs to everyone in every culture, everywhere. I don't think that's unique to us, I think the brain just works that way. So, those are the things that are most interesting to me: finding those human universals. Quite often it's the way something is thought, but maybe it's more the spark of that thought. It is a process, but the process is the second step. First there is a sense of realization. And then out of that realization, out of that sort of small epiphany, we build a process upon it.

### **So you want to capture the epiphany?**

Well I'm trying to. I'm trying to always worm down to that place. If I can figure out a way to capture that epiphany. I don't know. I think that's what I'm always searching for.