

STEPHEN SWARTZ



These works are summarily entitled Emergent Images. They originate from the thin intangible areas I often drift through as I am about to be overtaken by unconsciousness. The haze of partial figures and scenes emerge from the darkness in a spiral of surreality. Depth, time, movement and emotion become one for mere moments. I record a sense of this time visually, by distilling it through the photographic process.

These images are deeply rooted in my subconscious and serve as reminders of many aspects of my life. They reveal their stories with their own unique voices, yet share a common origin. Speaking about ourselves in a language that is familiar to us, to me, is the very essence of artistic expression.

EMERGENT ANALOG PHOTOGRAPHY IMAGES

Diese Arbeiten sind zusammengefasst unter dem Titel Emergent Images. Sie entstanden aus dünnen, nicht greifbaren Bereichen, durch welche ich oftmals treibe, wenn ich von Unkenntnis überrollt werde. Die Unklarheiten von teilweisen Figuren und Szenen streben aus der Dunkelheit in einer Spirale aus Unvernunft hervor. Tiefe, Zeit, Bewegung und Emotionen vereinen sich in nichts als Momente. Ich nehme diese Sinne der Zeit visuell auf, in dem ich sie durch den Prozess der Photographie langsam heraustropfen lasse.

Diese Images sind tief verwurzelt in meinem Unterbewusstsein, und dienen der Erinnerung an viele Aspekte meines Lebens. Sie enthüllen ihre Geschichten mit ihren einzigartigen Stimmen, und teilen doch einen gemeinsamen Ursprung. Über uns selbst in einer uns bekannten Sprache zu sprechen, ist für mich die Essenz der künstlerischen Darstellung.

STEPHEN SWARTZ

b.1973 Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A.

*Graduate of the Columbus College of Art and Design
1997 with a B.F.A. in Media Studies.*

Stephen works predominantly with analogue photographic processes to translate the chaos behind his eyes into tangible art. He is known for his photographic abstractions which are based on the juxtaposition of structure and human form. Due to film photography becoming more of a rarity today, Stephen tends to value quality over quantity of work. Some of his influences which are worth mentioning include, but are not limited to, Man Ray, Salvador Dali, Jerry Uelsmann, Helmut Newton and William Mortensen.

In 2005 he moved to Germany with his wife and began to explore the creative possibilities the old world had to offer. Prior to that point his art had always been personal and introspective, but he has since discovered several new social constructs to visually and conceptually explore. He currently has several series of work in simultaneous development. Most notably his *Faces of Germany* series which is an ongoing commentary on societal perception and cultural differences.

Stephen's work is held by various private collectors both in the United States and in Europe.





Revel in stillness.

Moments have momentum – eventually momentum dies – the laws of physics dictate that this is a normal occurrence regardless of the direction of the movement. An incline will peak and begin to descend. A descent will bottom out and leave only one possible direction for new movement: upward (which requires tremendous effort).

I have discovered through my artistic endeavors that this principle holds true for, or at least runs parallel with, multiple aspects of my creative process.

When projects begin to move through the natural progressive stages, regardless of how complicated they are or amount of time they consume, the peak (goal/outcome) is destined to draw ever nearer, creating in its wake a certain momentum. When the process enters the apex the momentum reduces greatly. The process begins to solidify within the outcome. Time seems to stop. Creation hangs at a point of complete stillness. But only for a fraction of the time it took to get there in the first place. Then the momentum of descent violently takes over. Though the rate of descent varies, the result is the same; bottoming out. This theory has been applied to various aspects of my experience.

The amount of outsider interest follows a similar curve. Things only seem to be interesting to others when they are in the works, growing, increasing, or when they have reached the split seconds of weightlessness in the apex of completion. Art in this respect, as it pertains to outsiders, is only interesting when it is new, freshly conceived or completed. After that, the momentum quickly saps the interest from the viewers/participants minds as it begins the descent.

As an artist I attempt to create things that have the potential to be surprising again and again. It is a great compliment to me and what I have created when new things can be continually discovered in something I have completed.

Quick and efficient digestion of information has become the way of our modern world. We are bombarded with images thousands of times over every minute of day (selling or showing and seeding our sensibilities and short attention spans). This “way of the world” makes it tremendously difficult to capture a concentrated interest with an image, to create something visual which isn’t a split second assault but a rewarding and comfortable visual experience.

I seek to create moments of personal meaning held still and displayed for the purpose of study and the hope of connection and relation - a bridge between the intent of a creative thought and acceptance of inspiration through self analysis.



45

KODAK T1

TMY 4

50



TMY 6



44

KODAK TMY 6053

TMY 3

KODAK TMY 6053

49



TMY 7



43

KODAK TMY 6053

TMY 3

KODAK TMY 6053

46



TMY 7



KODAK TMY 6053

54

TMY 12



KODAK TMY 6053

TMY 11



53

Y 6053

1998 *Untitled*
Cherry's H. Cole Co.
October - November : Group Show
Columbus, Ohio

1999 *Emergent Images*
Union Station Video Cafe
December - February : Columbus, Ohio

2000 *Emergent Images*
GLOW Niteclub + Lounge
October - February : Columbus, Ohio

2001 *Emergent Images*
Waldo's On High
October - November : Columbus, Ohio

2002 *Acme Art Co. Auction 12*
Global Living Gallery
September : Columbus, Ohio

2002 *Emergent Images*
Gallery 750
December - January : Powell, Ohio
(show cancelled/censored)

2003 *One Night Stand*
Ohio Art League
Benefit Auction : Member Donation
Columbus, Ohio

2004 *This Show Sucks*
Studio 16
March - April : Group Show
Columbus, Ohio

2004 *Stephen Swartz : VALUE*
Studio 16
May : Columbus, Ohio

2004 *Stephen Swartz : CHROMA*
Warehouse Gallery
June : Columbus, Ohio

2004 *One Night A Go-Go*
Ohio Art League
Benefit Auction : Member Donation
Columbus, Ohio

2005 *AWonder [an abstract allegory]*
Barcelona
February - April : Columbus, Ohio

2005 *Ausstellung 14*
Villabar
October - January: Altenburg, Germany

2006 *Emergent Images*
Übersinnlich
April - June : Leipzig, Germany

2007 *Details*
Galerie im Rathaus
March - May : Altenburg, Germany

2008 *Art Domain Gallery Palm Art Award*
February - March : Group Show
Leipzig, Germany
Excellence Award

2009 *Schichten des Lebens*
Layers of Life
Villabar
May - June : with Matthias Wenzel
Altenburg, Germany

2010 *SCRAP*
Villabar
November - February
Altenburg, Germany

2011 *siXray*
Elektroanschlag 12
April : Altenburg, Germany

2012 *Emergent Images*
Leutzscher KunstRasen e.V.
August : Leipzig, Germany

2013 *Profiles and Portico*
Gnadenkapelle
September : Altenburg, Germany

2014 *Wasserwerk*
August : Group Show
Windischleuba, Germany

2014 *Kunst ist Tacheles*
Palais Reichenbach
September : Group Show
Altenburg, Germany

2015 *(D)ARCHITECTURE*
The Table
August : Columbus, Ohio

2015 *Wasserwerk2*
August : Group Show
Windischleuba, Germany

2015 *AKT (nicht) EROTIK*
Nude (not) Erotic
Teehaus Altenburg
September : Altenburg, Germany

2016 *IBUG 2016*
Industriebrachen Umgestaltung
August : with Frank Berauer, Kai Uwe
Hoffmann and Megan Mosholder
Limbach-Oberfrohna, Germany

2016 *(D)ARCHITECTURE*
Wasserwerk
September : Windischleuba, Germany

2016 *Wäscheleine Geschichten*
December : with Kai Uwe Hoffmann and
Micha Kaleita
Altenburg, Germany



"Nach 13 Jahren der Erschaffung von Images entschied ich mich zurückzublicken. Dabei habe ich viele vergessene Momente wiederentdeckt, die auf Film gebannt und somit nicht berücksichtigt wurden, weil sie zu diesem Zeitpunkt nicht in meine Bestimmung oder Portfolio passten. Diesen "scrap images" wird nun ein neuer Zweck als Schwerpunkt dieser Ausstellung gewährt. Aus den Augen bedeutet nicht immer aus dem Sinn."

scrap (skrap) sub. - ein kleines Fragment von etwas Ganzem abgebrochen



Der amerikanische Künstler Stephen Swartz lebt seit 2008 in Altenburg. Trotz kreativer Schwierigkeiten in seiner neuen Heimat hat er kontinuierlich an seiner künstlerischen Laufbahn gearbeitet. Die Art Domain Galerie in Leipzig verlieh ihm ein "Certificate of Excellence", und er wird nun in der Ausgabe "Who is Who in Visual Art - 100 Kunst-Fotografen" Vol. 2011-2012 veröffentlicht. Seine neueste Ausstellung ist ein kleiner Blick in seine ungesehene Vergangenheit.

BALANCE / DUALITY / DICHOTOMY

TWO

has always been a sacred number to me.

My lucky number. My day of birth.

The minimum required for partnership
Person vs. Persona

BALANCE : Emotional and Rational

Images filled with unbridled emotion balanced by the concrete nature of words:
Passion and Rationale

Words acting as commentary or contradiction of what is being visually portrayed : minimal and poetic. They illicit the rational flavors of the irrational image.

Some individuals need words to derive meaning based on spoon-fed society standards. Images come first. The words are then based on intro/retrospection resulting in complete emotional purging - visual and verbal.

Balance is the ultimate lesson/answer/truth. There is satisfaction and ease in balance. The quest for balance is often subconscious. It moves us to act or remain at rest

Masculine portraying feminine. My need to experience and explore the gender which is unfamiliar to me yet represents my other self, the emotional self.

Nudity is a common human denominator. Sharing the physical self is often easier than sharing the emotional self.

DUALITY : Public and Private

The face we put forward vs. the private real nature of who we are exists within everyone. Shared to different degrees by and between individuals. Some people unaware of the separation of public and private. Public persona is based on internalized private dialogues.

Darkness and light - good and bad - motion and stillness - silence and noise - action and passivism - freedom and restraint - heaven and hell - desires and responsibility.

Juxtaposition of these elements creating visual balance as well as emotional balance for me.

I seek to share my experiences relating to this aspect of the human condition. Telling stories of my own experiences intertwined with the stories of those around me. Speaking of my experiences in a language I am familiar with : my visual voice.
Observation and Participation

DICHOTOMY : Geometric and Organic

A combination of design and technique is the basic foundation. Obvious awareness of the complications of creating visual balance within a square. Introducing soft figurative forms into hard linear spaces and thereby attempting to create sensitive mixtures.

Rigidity and Flexibility

The best part about art is that it is wide open – meaning it is different things to different people. Art is even better when the observer's experience was not the artist's intention. The observer will make his own assumptions about what the artist might have been thinking or feeling at the time that a particular piece was created. These assumptions can be nothing like what the artist intended for the observer to understand. But that's what's so good about it: creating a unique experience for unique individuals. Many worlds are created by each person's perception of the combination of color and shapes. These worlds are often times hidden from the artist himself during the creation process. Once complete, the piece takes on a life of its own. An artist is like a parent watching a child, his art, develop into a unique individual with his or her own stories to share.

An artist's entire body of work, however, can be more telling than just an individual piece. A complete representation of an artist's work will give the observer chances to catch glimmers of the artist's psyche. His personal thoughts and statements become visible over many pieces. Over time, one can sense the artist honing his craft, becoming more comfortable in his work and growing as an individual and as an artist. Through viewing an artist's work, one can, in a sense, become acquainted with the artist in a way more telling and intimate than merely having a conversation with or reading a book about him. One gets the opportunity to see the artist's most private, and possibly even unknown, emotions revealed. The cumulative effect of viewing an artist's body of work is the ability to know about that person's world view and understanding and interpretation of life itself.

Another great thing about art is that you don't have to be an artist to appreciate it. One does not have to know the rules of color or line or lighting to view and contemplate art. One's experience is his own, not that of the person standing next to him, and that is truly the beauty of art.

I have the good fortune of knowing Stephen Swartz personally. I've been able to have conversations with him about his work, as well as witness him practice his craft. My perceptions of Stephen's work are biased – but remember, my experience is mine, yours is yours.

I find Stephen's work fun to view. I use fun not in the „ha-ha“ sense, but fun in the feeling one gets when they happen upon something new and refreshing. The elements that work together to make Stephen's pieces are quite intentional – the colors, the non-colors, the models, their markings and poses each have significance and serve specific purpose in communication of Stephen's vision. I see his style as precise and clean. Sometimes, even, it can be cold and calculated. The presentation of his subject matter is sensitive and personal. It is powerful and pertinent. Each of Stephen's pieces has its own unique expression of purpose. When viewing his body of work as a whole, however, one can witness each piece flowing together, working with one another to give the observer a glimpse of the person Stephen Swartz.

- Constantine Hondroulis



