



ABSTRACT TO CONCRETE:  
FORT WORDEN GRAFFITI  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOE LIPKA

As an engineer I understand that the inspiration to innovate can arrive at any time and come from any direction. Being unable to recognize an opportunity which causes the stimulation to create something new is generally a product of the unprepared mind. The key to successfully using inspiration to innovate is to recognize and embrace the opportunity when it arrives. The most obvious opportunity to encourage the development of an innovation is to accept a challenge. A clearly stated problem in the form of a challenge is something the creative mind cannot resist. The freedom of accepting this challenge is exhilarating because the path forward is not known and success is not assured.

Accepting the challenge offers the opportunity to use new tools or materials or to fundamentally reshape existing approaches to subject matter. Because the final body of work is not known until completion, the outcome can be perceived in many ways. The results may act as a bridge to a completely new vision or interpretation. The results may not be immediately apparent but could manifest in a future project. The results may also be inferior or unsatisfactory. The complete unpredictability and outcome of the challenge is the source of the exhilaration. It is the unknown and the need for exploration which fuels this journey towards innovation.





IN FLIGHT





PAS DE DEUX





READY TO LEAP





DAMSHA BUA





BREAKING SURFACE





FLOATING





IN THE CLOUDS





OVER THE HORIZON





SUNSET



These images were made during my most recent photographic safari to Fort Worden in Port Townsend, Washington with my photographic compatriot, Brooks Jensen. He has produced hundreds of abstract paint photographs of this fort. While there, he challenged me to create some abstract paint photographs of my own.

During the process of making these photographs I found myself working in new ways. I moved closer to the walls upon which the brush strokes had been painted. Initially I felt uncomfortable being so close to the subject matter though over time I recognized a shift within which opened up a new awareness in me. As I worked I became more in tune with the new vision which was being formed. By way of example, I became more clearly observant of the edges of the frames of the images constantly considering cropping and other technical aspects of this new process. Later, with the prints in hand, I discovered a new found joy in creating the titles for each piece of art. I opened up further and allowed myself no boundaries as the clever play on the words “abstract” and “concrete” in the title of the portfolio came into my mind.

The most rewarding aspect of this exercise was completing this body of work. It is one thing to complete a challenge in one’s mind and another thing to see the project to its full, material end. I was given a challenge which I accepted. I applied the zeal and passion that I have had with all of my photographic work. I faced new ways of thinking and perceiving. I rediscovered the feeling of delight which is inclusive in the newness of a first time experience and reaped the rewards of concluding the challenge. Where this all will lead me, I know not. However, I can feel and see the growth that taking on this challenge has brought to my artwork and I am already eagerly immersed in my next project.



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