

# THE LIPKA JOURNAL

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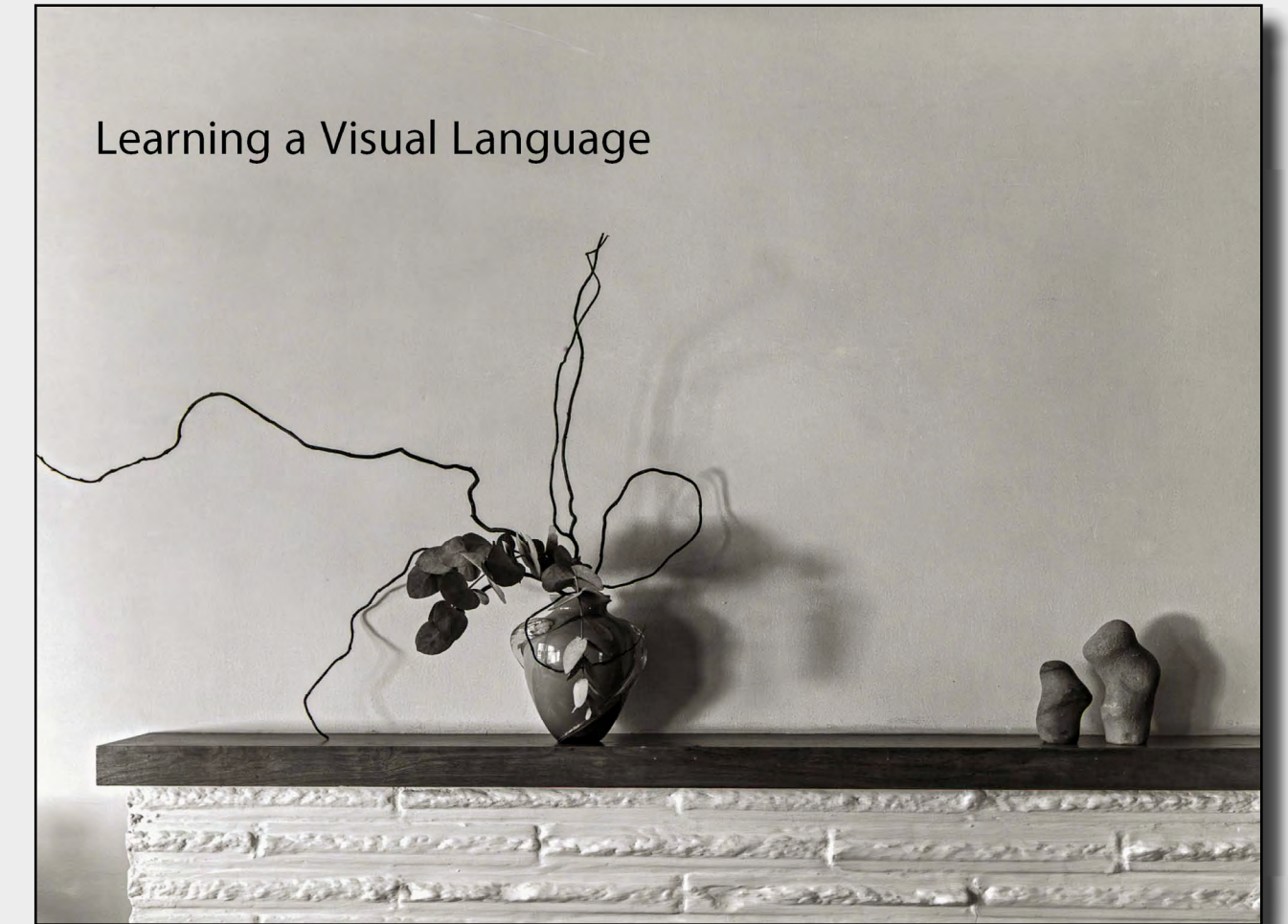
PHOTOGRAPHS / STORIES / OBSERVATIONS

NUMBER 070 JANUARY 2026





# WELCOME TO THE LIPKA JOURNAL JANUARY 2026



January's namesake is the Roman god, Janus. He was given two faces so he could simultaneously look back on the past and look forward to the future. As mortals we can only look back. Another installment of the More Memories than Dreams Project appears as I look back thirty years or so to the time when I was learning a visual language. I continue my fascination with small hand crafts as practiced in Williamsburg, Virginia. Finally, I am awed by the beauty of God and Man as I wander through a Cathedral of Aspens and remember the great Cathedrals of Europe.



# The Curiosity of Craft





## The Curiosity of Craft

We admire what we cannot do. Middle school football players mimic the celebration dances and hang their gloves from their face masks in the same manner as their athletic heroes. As we grow older, we internalize the admiration of those that do what we cannot.

I am enamored with craft and manual dexterity. Men that can turn a hunk of wood into something both useful and beautiful, and those that can bend any form of metal into something useful are my adult heroes.

How do they do what they do? I am curious. The best I can do is take my camera into their world and compose images of their handiwork to satisfy my curiosity.

























## A Mostly True Story

Buster got loose on that snowy morning long ago. The door opened and it was like he was shot out of a gun. Momma sent Lester, Billy and I out in the cold and snow to get that darn dog back. Lester and Billy were so much faster than me, and I couldn't keep up with them. We had just enough snow on the ground so I could follow their tracks. We spent most of the morning trying to find Buster because he thought it was a great day to play hide and seek.

It wasn't until I became a parent that I figured out that Momma let Buster out on purpose just to get three rambunctious boys out of the house for a couple hours on a snowy day.





# Cathedral of Aspens





## Cathedral of Aspens

There are times when it is good to be humbled. As humans we tend to overestimate our importance in the world. When taken out of our little bubble and are moved to a place far away from our comfort zone we are reminded of our insignificance when experiencing true greatness.

It was a Forest Service Road in the San Juan National Forest. No one around us, the quiet all-enveloping, beautiful golden aspens rising to the sky. I felt the same when entering Gothic Cathedrals in Europe. It was a humbling, spiritual experience.







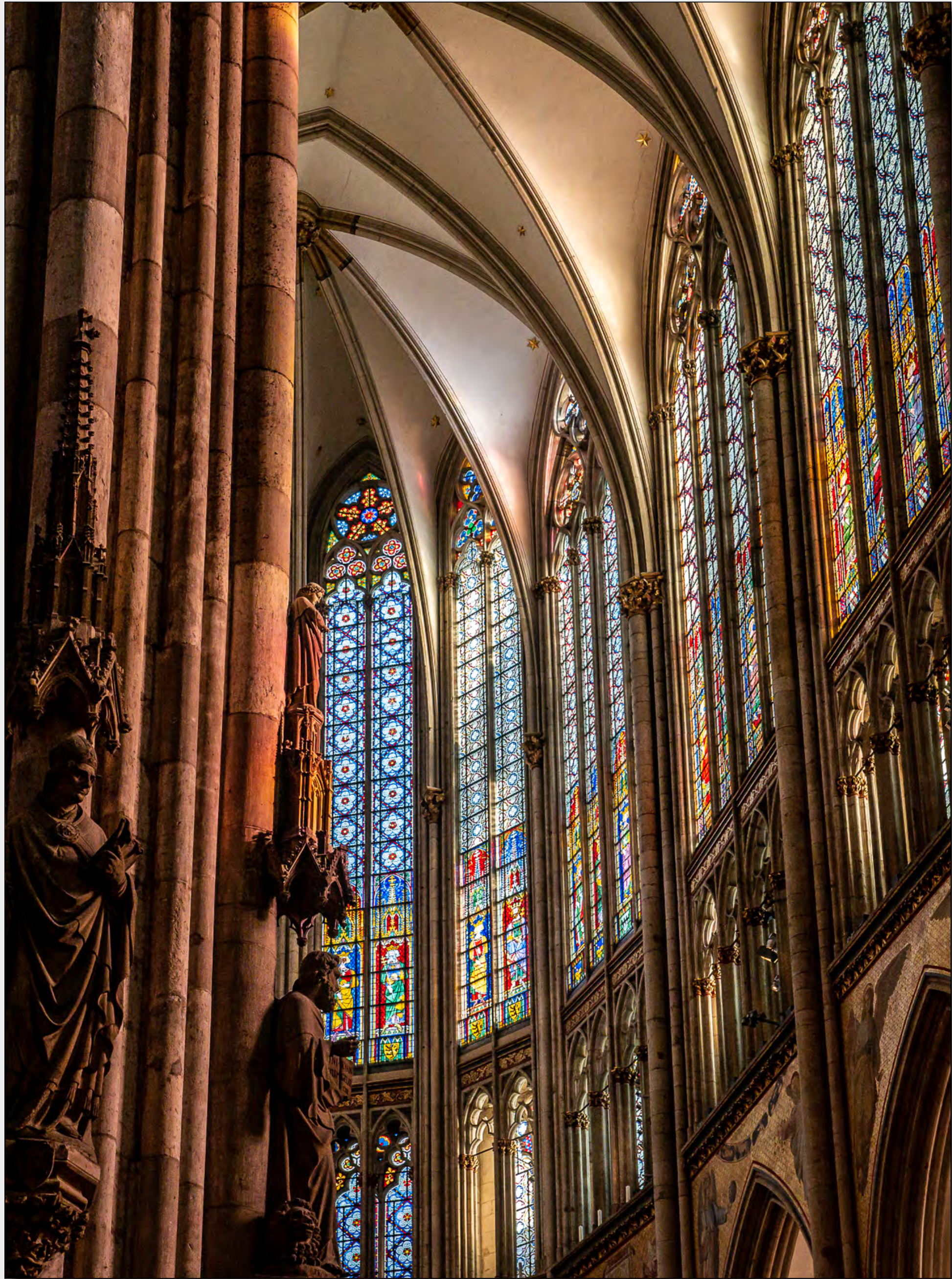












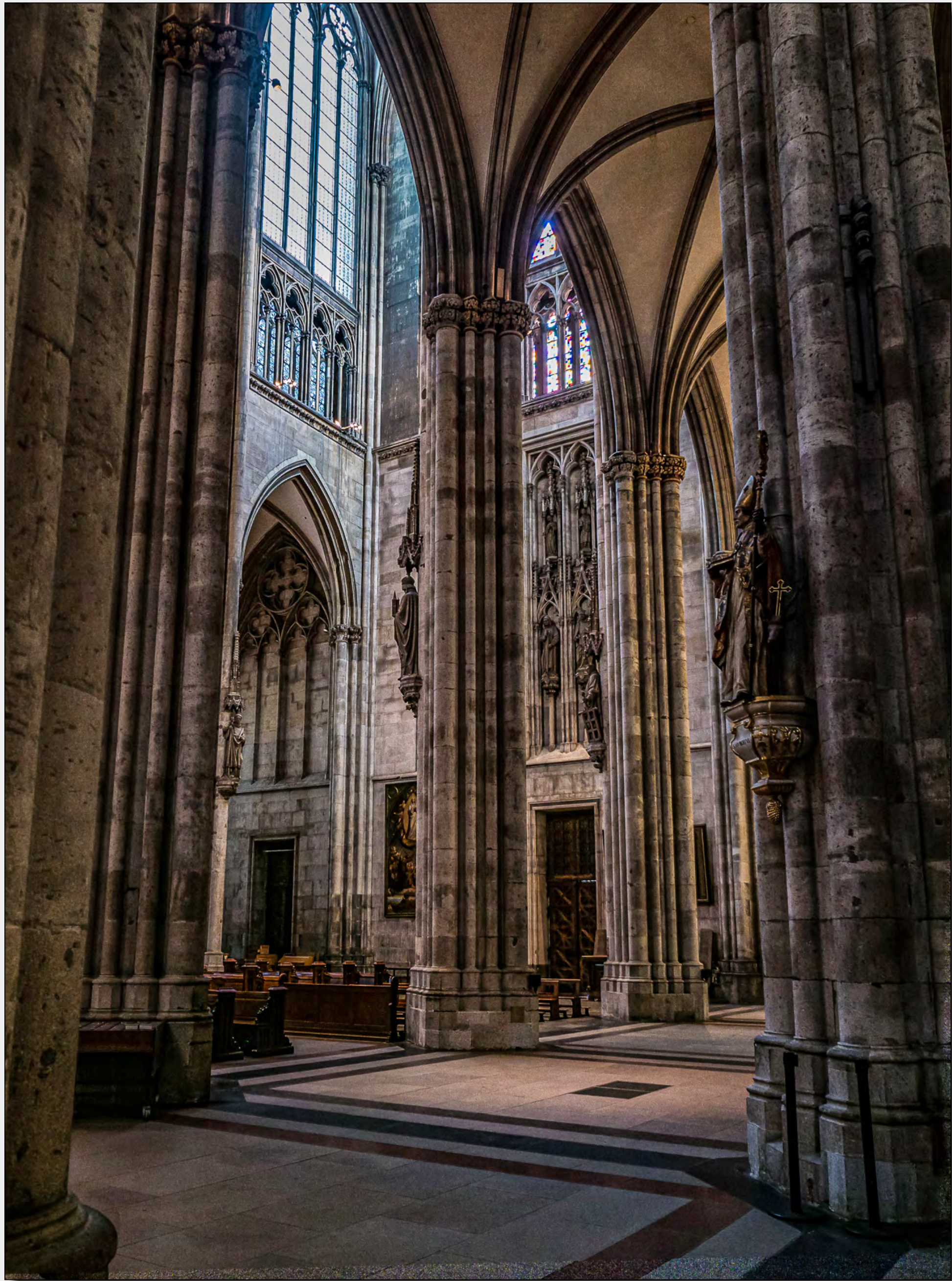


























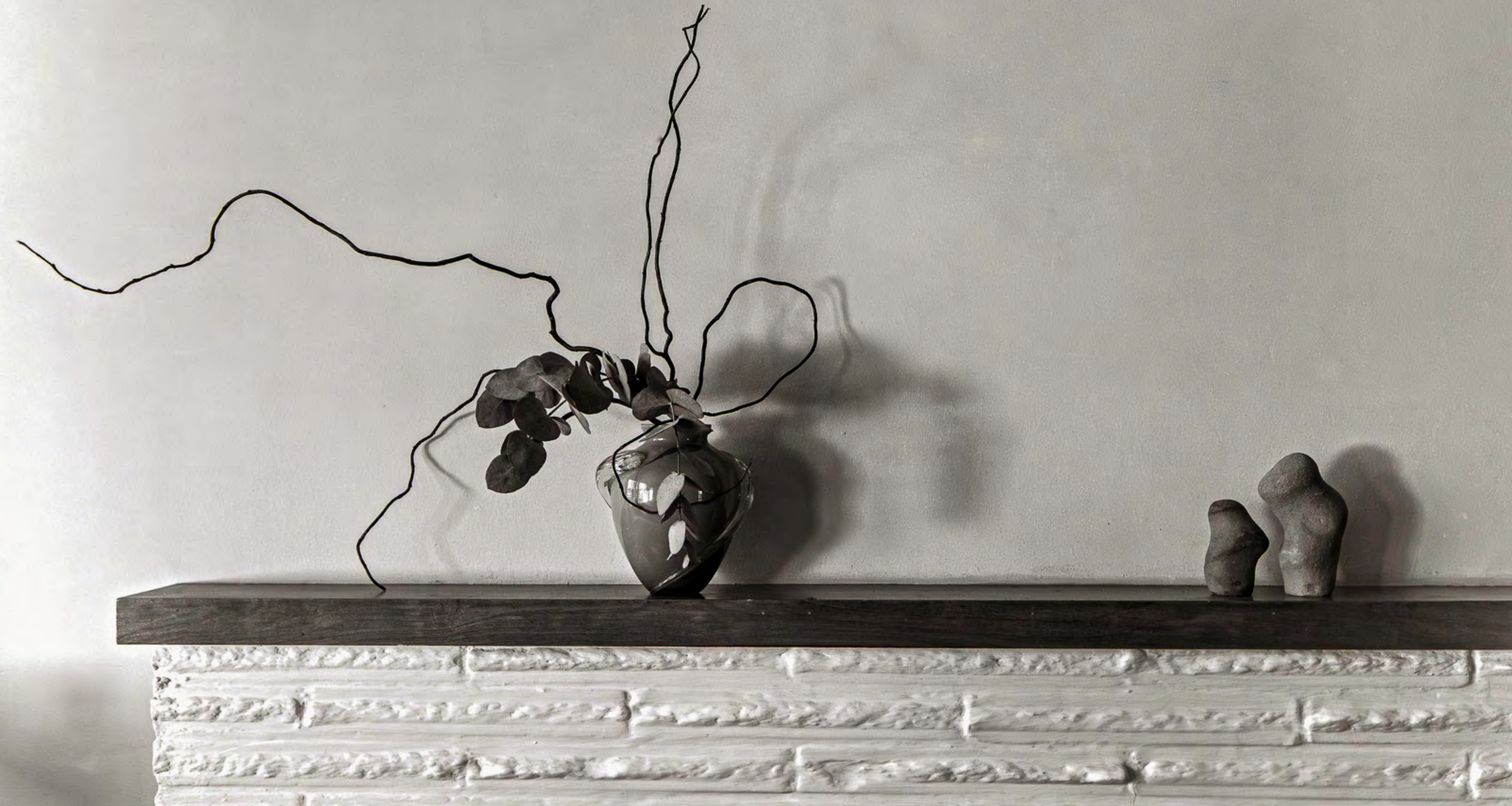
Turn right after the wagon wheel.

Prologue: A photo and six words.





# Learning a Visual Language





## More Memories than Dreams: Learning a Visual Language

The parallels between writing and photographing can be seen in the progression of learning. We learn, sounds, letters, words and then arrange the words in coherent fashion to express an idea.

After learning photographic skills over the first decade, I moved from learning the phonics and grammar of photography to express thoughts in a visual language.

As I look back, I can see the beginnings of a visual style and stories I wanted to tell.





















STANDARD OIL PRODUCTS

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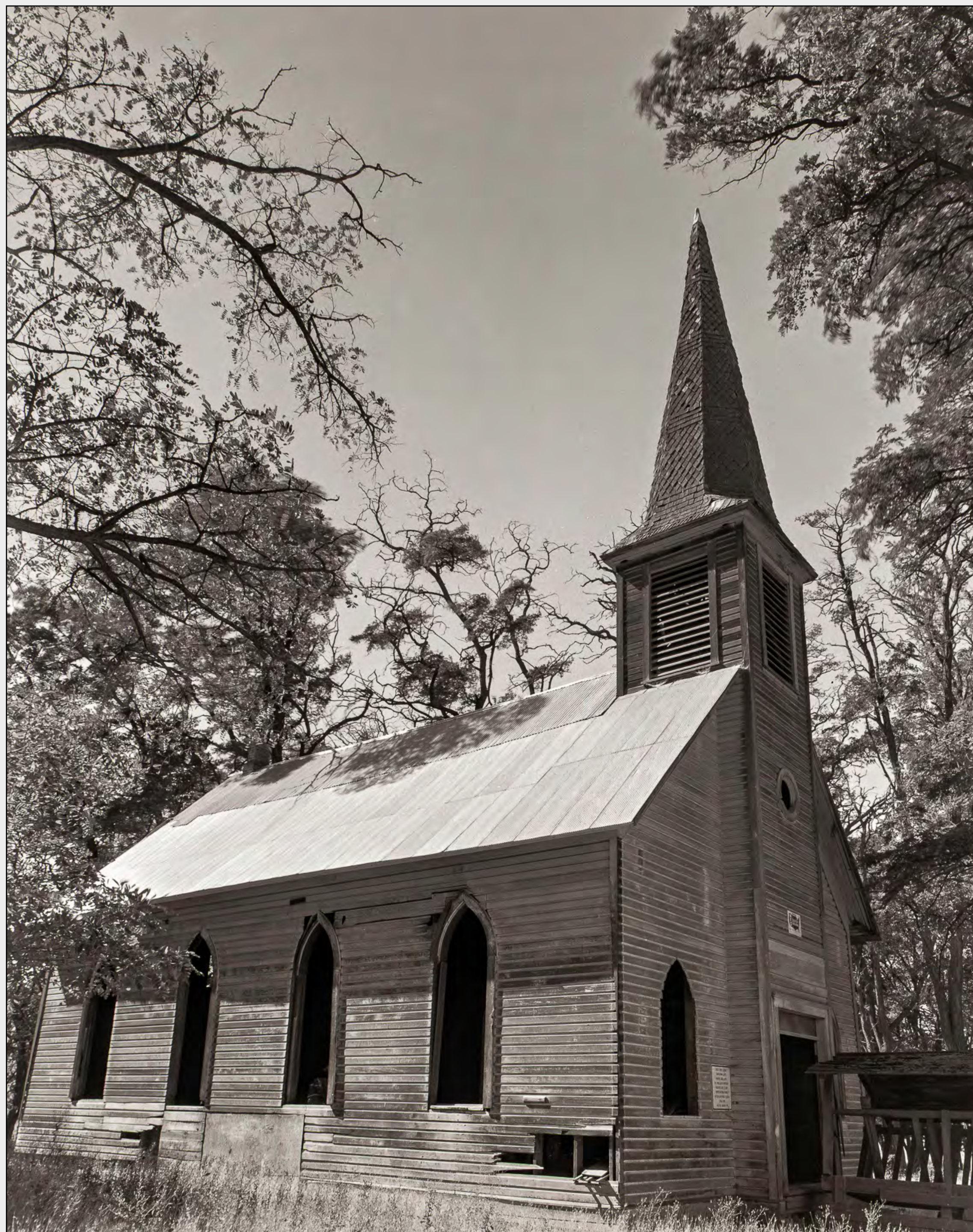


## More Memories than Dreams: A Continuing Project

It started as a brainstorming session on how to describe the “mature volunteers” at a local museum. One of my (rejected) suggestions was “People with More Memories than Dreams.” When you are young you have a lot of dreams and few memories. When you reach a certain age, the balance changes and you have more memories than dreams. I’m beyond that point right now. It’s time to look back and take joy in the memories of a photographic life.

More than a few years ago I created the “[Fifty Project](#),” a collection of fifty photographs to celebrate my Fiftieth birthday. As I continued to age, I considered adding my contribution to the “Fifty Years of Photography” shelf of books. A quick Google search revealed 193 MILLION results based on that search term. I saw no reason to add to the congestion.

Rather than publishing a book, these early images began to appear in The Lipka Journal as a semi-regular feature entitled *More Memories than Dreams*. This is the latest installment of this long-term project. These images are from the era when I began to evolve from single to groups of images.





## Postcards from the Creative Journey



Dear James,

Inspiration comes from odd places. I was watching Ken Burns' documentary on the American Revolution and noticed the "pan and scan" of historical photographs wasn't part of the program because there were no photographs of the American Revolution.

The pan and scan of photographs were replaced by video clips of historical locations composed as still images. Stylistically, these images were very close to what I have done in many different locations.

A recent trip to Colonial Williamsburg gave me the opportunity to pursue the same idea, but this time using a still camera.

JOE



James Madison

11407 Constitution

Orange, VA



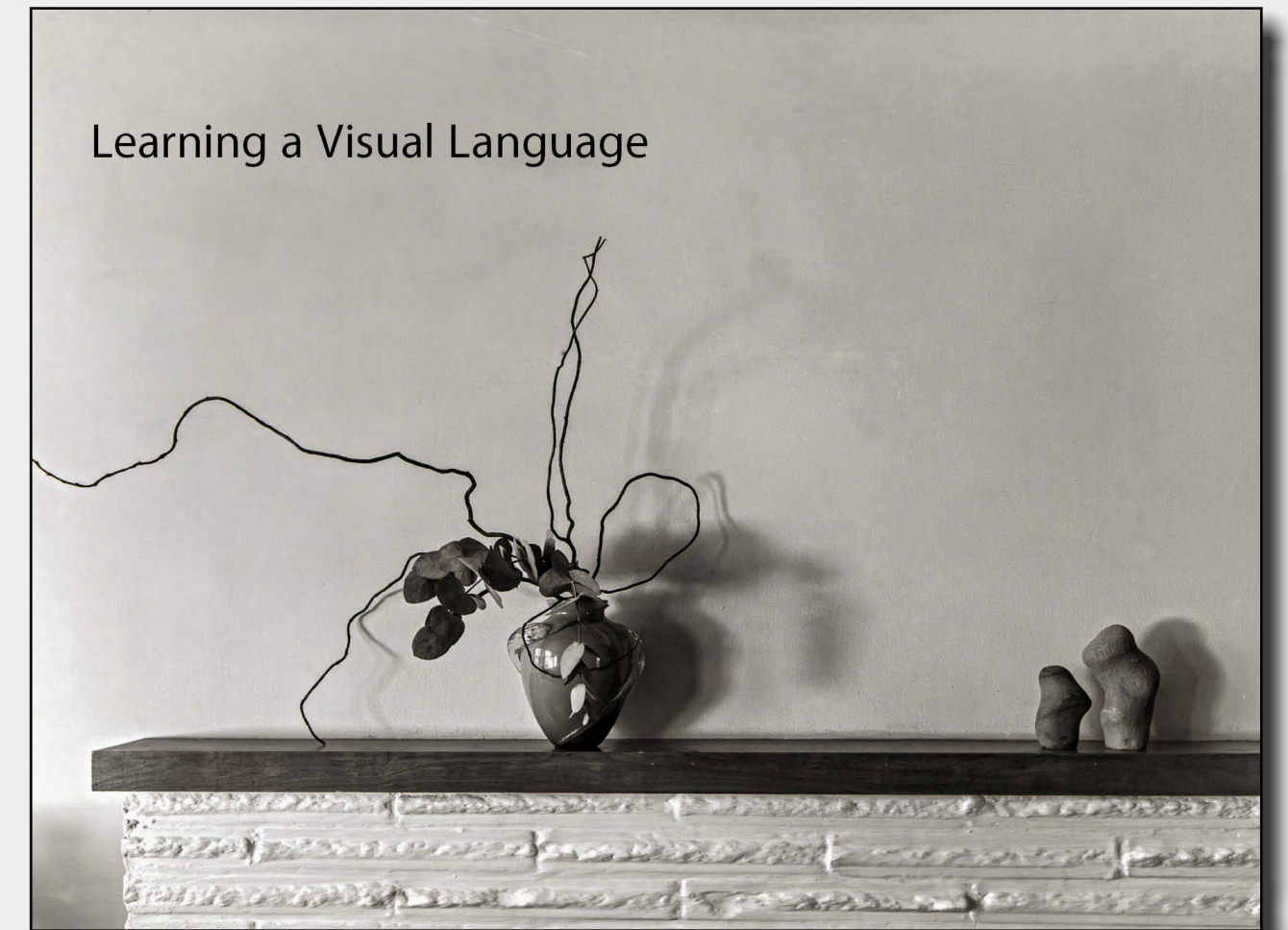
# A FEW WORDS AT THE END OF THE JOURNAL



The Curiosity of Craft



Cathedral of Aspens



Learning a Visual Language

## The Curiosity of Craft

If you read the Postcard from the Creative Journey, you know the story behind these images. I genuinely love to visit Williamsburg, Virginia, especially at Christmas time. This year we arrived the day before the snow did, so it was just a little bit more magical than normal. I continue to marvel and the magic the craftsmen (and women) can do with simple hand tools, skills and time.

Trivia note: The images in this suite were made with an Apple iPhone 12. Other than removing a few photo-bombing tourists, the images went straight from the phone into this publication. Ain't technology grand?

## Cathedral of Aspens

Wandering around in the world, trying to avoid the hordes of photographers and leaf peepers sometimes you wander into something that is truly visually spectacular.

I immediately felt like entering a cathedral and I photographed with the appropriate level of reverence. Upon looking at the resulting images two months later I felt deflated because I could not immediately realize my vision. I remembered my experience in the medieval cathedrals of Europe and felt that juxtaposition of both locations would convey my feelings about that afternoon in Colorado.

## Learning a Visual Language

Another entry from More Memories than Dreams, a reflection on Fifty Years of Photography. Some single images from the eighties and early nineties, that begin to show some coherent thought and approaches to subject and style. My photographs of Interiors, the land and architecture began to coalesce once I learned my visual language.





Joe Lipka has shared his vision since he began photographing.

In the last forty years, his photographs have appeared in over one hundred and twenty-five juried exhibitions, and twenty five solo exhibitions. His images have been published in *LensWork*, *Black & White Photography* (UK) and *F-Stop Magazines*. His recent book project, *Mostly True Stories*, was featured as a LensWork Bonus Edition Publication in February 2024.

His website [www.joelipkaphoto.com](http://www.joelipkaphoto.com) has continuously evolved since it was launched in 2004. His blog *Postcards from the Creative Journey*, published weekly since 2010, is now part of *The Lipka Journal*.

His newest blog, *The Daily Photograph*, has migrated to Instagram. Don't forget to follow him on this new platform linked below.

## The Lipka Journal, Number 070, January, 2026

*Joe Lipka*

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Web site: [www.joelipkaphoto.com](http://www.joelipkaphoto.com)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/dailyphoto7375](https://www.instagram.com/dailyphoto7375)

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