

# It Takes More Than Optics...

## It Takes Vision

by Joe Farace

*If indeed you must be candid, be candid beautifully.*—Kahlil Gibran

The Candid Frame (<http://thecandidframe.blogspot.com/index.html>) is an online podcast where you can meet image-makers from the world of photojournalism, fashion, landscape, documentary, sports, wildlife, travel, and commercial photography. Some of the photographers interviewed include fine art photographer John Siskin, photographic genius Pete Turner, and nature shooter William Neill, among others. Recently *Jefe* Ibarionex R. Perello interviewed me for The Candid Frame and if you've already heard me jabber about photographing cars the interview may be old news. If not, check it out if you have the time.

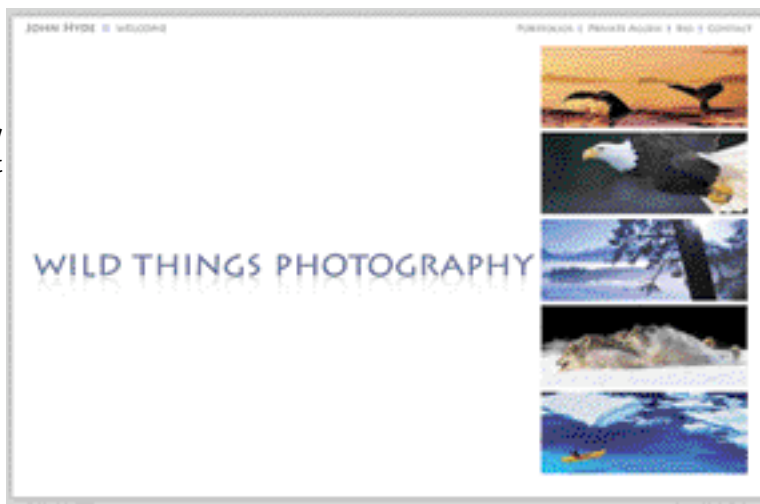


[www.wildthingsphotography.com](http://www.wildthingsphotography.com)

Lovers of nature photography will find nirvana at John Hyde's website. The splash page says it all; this is a showcase for Hyde's 20 years experience in still and motion picture photography. The site's classic design includes translucent drop-down menus that, on the Portfolios menu, can occasionally be difficult to read, depending on what's in the background, but you should be able to see a list that includes 15 collections, ranging from bears to whales. Clicking on a collection opens a large window with a scrolling column of thumbnails on the right-hand side.

All of the bears, even the cubs, are real-life carnivores—not *Yogi*—and are captured in sharp focus with Hyde's striking compositions. One black and white shot of a brown bear in a driving rainstorm that was originally shot on film is especially notable. There is only one word to describe the "Whales" collection—Wow! Want to see more beautiful seagoing mammals in all kinds of spectacular lighting and scenery? Check out the sequel, "Whales 2." Here you'll also find some remarkable monochrome images. Unlike most sequels this is better than the original, if that's possible. There's even a partially submerged shot showing an Orca swimming with mountains visible in the frame above the waterline.

Hyde is not only a great photographer but he is also ready to go above and beyond to get the shot, and not just *any* shot. Just when you think you've seen everything, click on the "Eagles" collection and be prepared to be amazed. His photo of two eagles, one sitting on an ice flow and the other just taking off, left me speechless and out of superlative to describe it. While exploring this site, look, learn, and enjoy wildlife photography created by Hyde, a modern master of this oh-so-difficult discipline.



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www.christianstepien.com

Christian Stepien is a renaissance man. He is a musician, poet, filmmaker, and photographer with an emphasis on black and white landscapes. His well stocked website offers five photography collections, including nature and manmade landscapes. Before you go there, check out some of Stepien's short films, including *Day Trippin'*. (Remember skateboarding is *not* a crime.) What you'll discover in Stepien's still photography is just the opposite of his loosey-goosey filmmaking style. His architectural photography in the "Buildings" gallery is tight, controlled, and elegantly formal. Surprised, huh? Similarly, "Objects" that revolve around architecture and buildings are an important component of images such as "La Porte et la Bicyclette."

What is striking about Stepien's landscape photography is his sense of space and a *Last Year at Marienbad* sensibility that shows somebody or something was just there, but now they're not. Proving that great photographs are often made in bad weather, his foggy landscapes are extremely powerful and a lack of detail emphasizes the overwhelming sense of emptiness or loneliness. The "Nature" and "Animals" collections, while occasionally displaying an interesting and even color photograph, lack the power of Stepien's other work, but include "audio comments" on how some of the images were made. I can't be too hard on the guy about these other collections; he's only been making still photographs for a short time. In 2006 he entered his first photography contest and won the top prize. Big surprise, huh?

CHRISTIAN STEPIEN



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www.chadmoss.com

I admire Chad Moss not only because of his great-looking website but that he also finds time to maintain an active blog. One measure of a photographer is what kind of photographs he or she has of their family, and Moss shows the way with a stylishly casual portrait of his wife and kids made in what looks like an alley. This is the first indication that he's not your father's wedding photographer. Moss is a Tulsa-based wedding shooter whose work is displayed in a fun, contemporarily designed site that reflects the joie de vivre that's ever present in his work.

His wedding photographs are full of images of spontaneous joy and can be viewed in a thumbnail grid with rollovers that enlarge a specific image or as a slide show. There's no "smile for the birdie" imagery here; his monochrome and color photojournalistic photography captures the wedding day without the kind of line 'em up and shoot 'em shots that used to pass for wedding photography. (I think, because nobody knew what else to do.) But Moss knows what to do and captures weddings in memorable photographs that you'll want to pass on to your kids and won't be embarrassed about. OK, maybe some of the hairstyles. His high school senior portraits, while somewhat formulaic, manage to break free from a form dictated by students, their schools and parents to show originality, including a web page design different than his weddings that clearly acknowledges he's pitching a different client base and moving the frame to fit the picture.



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www.jenniferhogan.com

Jennifer Hogan is another photographer with an active blog, although she calls it "News." No matter what you call it, blogging is an ideal way for portrait and commercial photographers to keep in touch with their clients by showing and sharing their thoughts and latest images. Her classy-looking site includes sections called Lifestyle, Interiors, Corporate, and Stories. "Lifestyle" consists mostly of color portraits of kids but these are not your "Kodak Moment" children but real-world kids smiling at their birthday party or crying in their crib when they should be taking a nap, but don't want to. "Interiors" is the exact opposite, featuring carefully composed and crafted moments in sometimes lavish home interiors that are skillfully executed with an eye for detail that separates good interior photography from also-rans.

Her "Corporate" images, mostly portraits of people at work or executive portraiture, are created with the same crisp professionalism found in "Interiors." The lone monochrome shot in a sea of color is notable in its drama and while black and white may be hard to sell to clients, this portrait makes a solid argument about monochrome's power. In "Stories" you'll find "Building a Western Tradition" that essentially takes you to another website with photographs of the ghosts of five generations of "life space" high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. These impressive examples of Hogan's fine art photography show that no matter what the genre, she is one talented photographer.



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