

Richard Alan Cohen

Artist Statement

Having transitioned to fine art photography from a 40 year career in biomedical research, I have come to realize that I approach photography exactly the way I approached my scientific work. Photography provides the most important elements that stimulated me in my previous career – exploration, discovery, imagination, and creativity – only the subject matter, tools, and location have changed. Like my work in science, I am motivated to share my work and vision with others. Over time, I have become more of an image maker than a straight photographer. My process begins with the discovery and exploration of a subject, and then moves on to an imagining of what the image could become. Using the raw image I experiment with light, contrast, color, sharpening, compositing, and editing - all processes which have become explorations in and of themselves.

My images are often inspired by elements of the landscape; I painted them as a teenager, encouraged by my artist mother. But now I see landscape as an invitation to the viewer to enter imaginary worlds, ones which may suggest past or future visions, offshoots of the moment that the shutter clicked. Abstract patterns on boat hulls or dying agave fronds have suggested to me that imprints of surrounding vistas from the perspective of these inanimate surfaces are etched upon them. I imagine “what if” a withered agave frond were to record evidence on its surface of the climate change that has contributed to its demise as it folds to the ground. While it’s not my purpose to dwell on it here, developing a scientific idea to the point of publishing a research paper was a very similar process for me.

Artist Biography

Richard Alan Cohen attended Bowdoin College in Brunswick where he co-majored in art and science. Having always maintained an interest in art, he has now transitioned from a 40-year career in cardiovascular research to being a full-time fine art photographer. Richard has exhibited his photographs in numerous solo and group shows at venues including 555 Gallery, Panopticon Gallery, the Griffin Museum of Photography, Galatea Gallery, and Sohn Fine Art.