

# Michael Scarbrough

Photographer

Bainbridge Island, Washington  
mdscarbrough1@icloud.com



## **SPOTLIGHT: "Quiet Storm Over Tsulh-Mut (S'Klallam)"**

*This image is released as a Limited Edition of 20, printed on Canson Edition Etching Rag paper with a split-tone of warm shadows and cool highlights. Contact artist for pricing or inquiry.*

After a night of rain while camped on the Sol Duc River, I drove the 15 or so miles down to Lake Crescent, hoping to find mist and fog on a quiet lake. Looking eastward, I witnessed a magnificent and unusual display of a back-lit, turbulent sky churning above a nearly motionless lake with intermittent, gently falling rain. The shoreline site from where I photographed is represented on a S'Klallam map as "cə' imət", an ancient village site. Tsulh-Mut is the ancient S'Klallam name for Lake Crescent, passed down by oral tradition. The legend describes an angry mountain (Mt. Storm King) casting giant boulders downward between the S'Klallam and Quileute people to stop their fighting, dividing the lake in two. The geologic record indicates that the smaller Lake Sutherland was once part of Lake Crescent, and became separated from it by a massive earthquake and landslide, diverting the outflow of Lake Crescent to a new channel.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

As an artist, it is my responsibility to create meaningful visual representations of my observations - "to see". The image distills my experience, encapsulating it within the container of my camera's frame. But the true subject of my photograph lies beyond the frame - a world we inhabit, but might never see. As one of my favorite 20th-century photographers, Dorothea Lange, liked to quote, "the eyes are blind to what the mind does not see". When I am successful, what lies within the frame provides a key for the viewer that unlocks its boundaries, awakening within them an emotive response of collective memory and shared vision. The experience becomes theirs, expanding the image beyond its frame within the cinema of the mind.

My photographic approach is necessarily solitary, with a mindful intensity of observation. Walking with my camera, I open my eyes that I may hear, intently listening for nature's voice, that I might see. Among the shapes and shadows along my path, I find uncommon beauty revealed in common places. Tracing line and form within the etched grain of space, I dip my lens into this stream of recognition, capturing harmony within chaos, or perhaps chaos within order - all reverberations of life in constant motion. Curiosity leads me, and my sensibility of beauty draws me to the image.

Landscape holds my attention perhaps more than any other subject, affixed to me like the grip of a Red Hawk's talons in the place I grew up, the Ozark Mountains of rural northwest Arkansas. This primitive land of oak and flint, even with its indifference and sometime harsh cruelties, showed me beauty in countless ways, elevating my sense of well-being and inspiring hope. It also revealed scars of exploitation left behind by opportunistic settlers of Manifest Destiny, as they displaced the Osage hunter-gatherers whose flint points were scattered along our creek banks and fields. These observations taught me respect for the natural order and reverence for all life that shared the land with me. This immersive experience imprinted upon me an abiding sense of place, forging an inextricable bond with nature that informs my artistic practice today. Most importantly, this place provided refuge for me in times of personal struggle. Climbing upward on the deer trail to my ridge of oak and white pines while surrounded with birdsong, I found solace and respite as I looked below onto the dancing, amber-colored waters of Weddington Creek. Nature became my spiritual center that grounds me still. While there are many approaches to art in the landscape today, it is this feature I find most compelling and relevant to my practice.

With my landscape photography, I call attention to the astounding beauty surrounding us, that my artwork might ignite engagement with nature, inspire gratitude, and encourage acceptance of the spiritual well-being nature offers. A growing body of biophilia research demonstrates a universal positive response in our mental, physical and spiritual health with exposure to flora and fauna, gardens and wilderness. It follows that this response to wildness should occur, considering our DNA is inscribed with the evolution of 500 generations of hunter-gatherers before we separated ourselves from the land. When accessed, our engagement with nature becomes a source of joy and meaning in our modern world.

### CURRENT PRACTICE

I work primarily with high-resolution medium format technical cameras, allowing me to produce large prints with astonishing details at a scale that conveys a sense of

immediacy and presence not possible otherwise, and refined tonality in smaller prints. I print my own work using high resolution inkjet printers with archival pigment inks on fine-art paper, both in color and monochrome. For monochrome work, I have customized a 44" Epson P9000 printer, replacing its original color inks with 10 custom shades of archival gray and black carbon-based inks. This approach provides an unrivaled smoothness of tonal gradations and detail, and allows greater expressiveness by applying shades of warm and cool grays with a split-toned technique. These carbon-based inks have been tested to greater than 150 years longevity. In addition, I have recently added photopolymer gravure to my printmaking practice, using a traditional intaglio press and printmaking technique for selected images.



### BIO / RESUME HIGHLIGHTS

b. 1954, Charleston, SC; 1977 - B.A., Pre-Seminary Concentration - Theology, Andrews University  
1982 - M.D., Loma Linda University School of Medicine  
Self-taught in photography, Master Printer, Photopolymer Gravure Printmaker

After medical school, I completed a residency in anesthesiology, a fellowship in cardiovascular and pediatric anesthesiology, and subsequently served in the National Health Service Corps at Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage, Alaska for four years. While living in Alaska, I became a Center Artist at the Visual Arts Center of Alaska and established their photography darkroom.

SOLO EXHIBITS - Invitation: 2001 - Glazer's Camera, Seattle; 2000 - Westlake Center, Seattle - Sponsored by Ivey Seright, Inc.; 2000 - Charles Wright Academy, Tacoma

GROUP EXHIBITS - Juried: 2001 - Northwest Exhibition of Environmental Photography, Seattle; 2000 - American Society of Anesthesiologists, San Francisco; 1991 - Rarefied Light, Anchorage; 1991 - Visual Arts Center of Alaska, Anchorage; 1990 - Visual Arts Center of Alaska, Anchorage

PUBLICATIONS: 2000 - *Anderson Anderson, Architecture and Construction*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, NY; 1998 - *PhotoMedia Magazine*, "Noted Northwest Photographers Who Kept Their Day Jobs"; 1993 - *Fly Patterns of Alaska*, Frank Amato Publications, Portland, Oregon; 1991 - *Alaska's Wildlife Magazine*, Jan. - Feb. 1991 (Front Cover)