

Encounters



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This summary covers the material of my past exhibitions in public and private galleries. I re-organized it as visually narrated presentations of processes in places you might never have a chance to see and contemplate. The challenge was to prove their relevance, emphasizing their importance and still to attract by their visual appeal. And the needs to resonate within self referencing practice of our culture, a world for itself. A world by now detached from a biophysical world that has sustained livable conditions of both. While this invisible support approaching the breaking point, it will take efforts of many to change our population's mindset. I took a quite transparent approach to it.

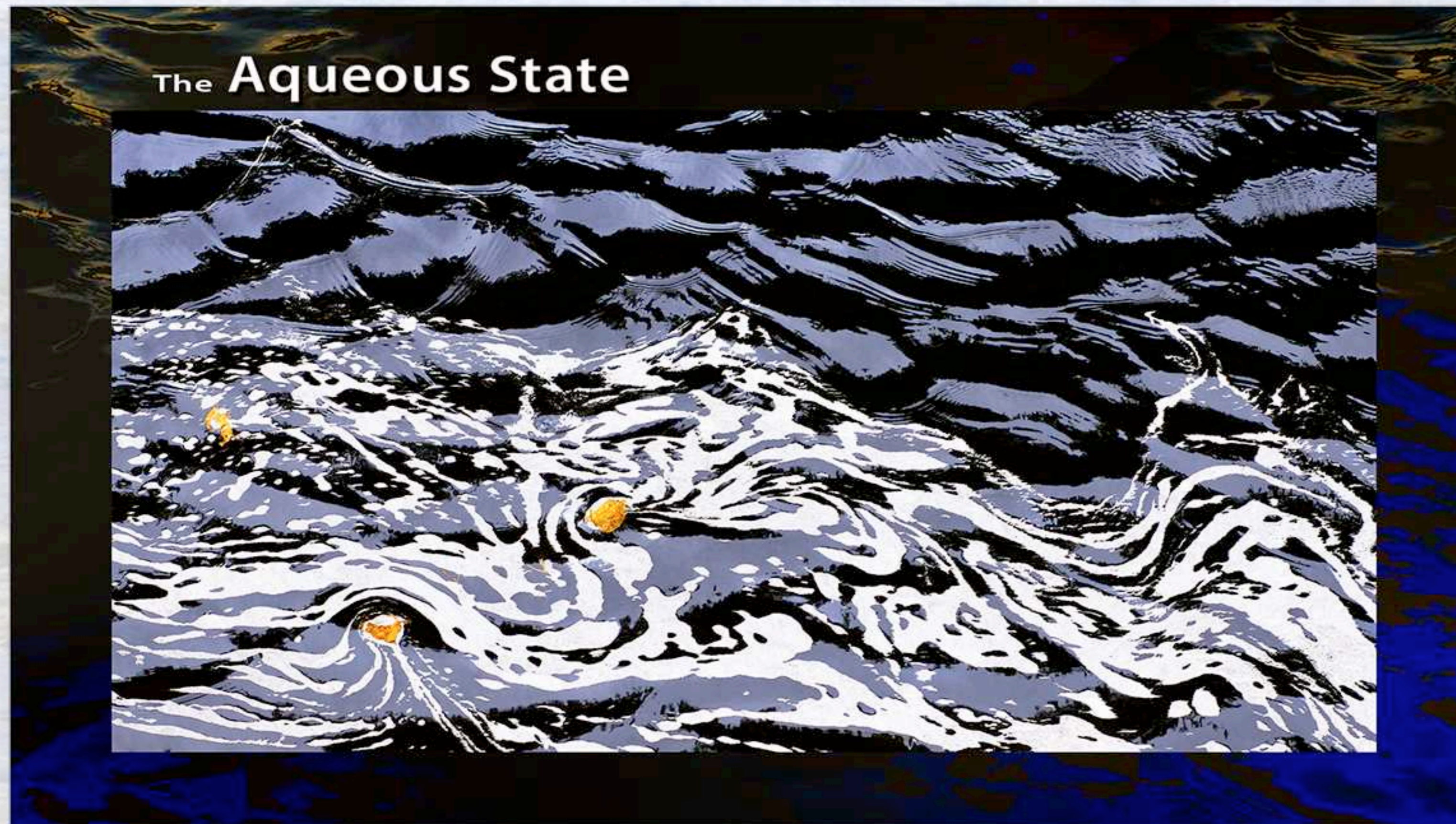
I might notice an object, scene, or a process unfolding in front of me, and I know it is just the beginning. Too many unconnected things to ignore or forget. Curiosity is a powerful drive. It could guide us to dead ends, or into meaningful connections and insights. Life has many dimensions, as has the world it inhabits. Taking a chance of seeing and experiencing them is worth living it.

The camera serves as my reference tool, allowing me to revisit what I saw or missed. It helps me return with a wiser tools and perspective. This process uncovers stories and outlines that need further exploration. It draws me into relationships with subjects and their environments, revealing the wisdom of human civilizations summed up as "I am because we are". Yet, it raises the question: why does our world become less livable despite our progress and best intentions? Can one alone, then, to find answers in the modern world filled with passive expectations?

All the above led to inevitable questions about relationships in my life. Like me and Life, something as indefinable as I could be, and yet I am a part of. Or am I not? In between lies a vast range of meanings that can propel human aspirations, relationships, loves, and our failures. And the future of those we leave behind.

"The painter constructs, the photographer discloses." Susan Sontag





The captivating water fluidity of my childhood on riverbanks is still edged in my memories. It led me later to a decade of studies that included calculations of molecular bond energies and their subatomic scales. Back then, I didn't see it, absorbed by the constant demands of adaptation to the necessities of living. Family responsibilities, new sociopolitical frameworks, countries, cities, languages, homes, children, professions, managing teams of employees, and more. During my break times, I paddled the wild country rivers. My unintentional ignorance had no chance to be sustained forever.

And there it was, one day, the enlightening awareness of harmonious unity in coexistence between all living cells in my body, a water vessel of sort. Keeping it in the very narrow margins of safe temperature, empowered by the sun's captured energy. The elusive miracle of Life, hidden from my consciousness, with all its evolutionary wisdoms, in the world where minutes define the margins of human attention.

That is how I found myself in a need to rethink my worldviews and adapt a different lens to my reasoning and sense making. If maturity comes with age, so do the responsibilities of the generational change.

I began seeing the policies getting stretched to satisfy my delusions and politician's electability prospects, tolerating the accumulation of deferred risks. The results of "winning strategies," "first-mover advantages," and the economic fallacy of internalizing profits while externalizing costs in the world of consequences "growth". Humanity's addiction to use of the sun's energy stored in fuels at rates millions of times faster than their sequestration. The growing level of heat in world's ocean endangering prospect of the oxygen supply. And the byproducts of these fuels, like plastics, in Life cycles of every living being, redistributed by water fluidity.

At the water's edge, I ponder how Life has lost the control over processes it managed for billions of years. Or, how I've lost my understanding of Life, regardless of my personal anxieties I had. How could this happen?

As the era of machines approaches, I long for the wisdoms exchange in human relationships. Or days with the full spectrum of accepted values.

My brain is 80% water. Despite having the highest evolutionary and security guards in my body, more artificial impurities get into it at no time. None of them was created by the natural world processes. None of nature's processes could deal with what's in my brain, either.



"The real problem of humanity is we have Paleolithic emotions, medieval institutions and godlike technology".

Edward O. Wilson

For decades, I walk daily among trees. It stimulates my mind and evokes reflections. Questions and hints of answers emerge there, and better grasps of realities while being screened from daily noise. To ponder "Tree of Life" or "Tree of Knowledge" wisdoms. And how they came about.

It is where I trust my senses and reasoning. Where I have a safe distance from realities curated by the "information networks". Where I control my emotions. I like when the truth sprouts from within, instead of arriving on the wings of algorithms fracturing my cognition, and therefore the world around me. It bothers my mind to be a tradable commodity.

It would be utopian to expect the harmonious world of relationships and common values living within modern info tech ecology. We live in planted woodlands while life stories originate in natural ones. Walk in a park, as doctors recommended, with someone of a shared background and sense making, might be an eye opener to more than unconditional relationships. Besides, a simple info query about trees might reveal a multitude of their essential functions in forming relationships within living environments.

So, even a walk in woods might bring back currencies, once used in peoples' lives. Over the years, I found many reasons to escape the dark woods of hidden predations into the world of transparent relationships.

Since birth, I am in a world of relationships, acknowledged ones, or not. Felt, visible, growing or not. It takes time to realize that Life is not singularity of being but an encrypted history of all interactions.

There were human relationships I endured or enjoyed, remember or forget, loving or indifferent, contributing to or hindering my and other lives. All it takes is to reflect upon my experiences. The extent of control I exercise over my relationships can determine the quality of my life. However, it is not straightforward in a world of interconnected consequences, such as the family codependency, the workplace and a function in social structure. Or in unconditional relationships, such as parenthood.

Human brain wiring developed within tide codependences of the social and ecological relationships. I long suspected that the most primordial, somewhat subconscious relationship we all have is with trees.



To think about Life, was like venturing beyond my sensory system limitation, into a realm of the time-space abstractions. A relationship with Life was to understand first the stretched trajectories and intersections of its processes. But how otherwise was possible to grasp its evolutionary progressions, adaptations, and a myriad of outcomes? Solitude in remote places was a chance to gage interactions of the biophysical world.

The ambiguous phrase, the "living conditions" used in political debates appeared even more abstract than the meaning of Life. A token of scoring points that took away all attention from the primordial meaning of it as the essentials to maintain Life as we know it. Used also in scientific debates along data-based arguments and their interpretations was hard to understand for people. That allowed the uninterrupted profit taking at the expense of its meaning to go farther. And hubris like the "planet's colonization".

One might wonder then about the future, and whether our life-sustaining processes remain secure.

Indeed, I found the sparsely populated landscapes of northern Ontario as the transparent Petri Dish of nature processes on many scales. The vastness of the Great Canadian Shield living environments might be gaged only through travelling there. The beauty of them emerges from understanding their impact on all Life cycle processes. Anyone must grow up to it connecting them with the energy, water, and carbon cycles that define all of Life's processes on the living planet.

I might have what it takes to analyze the spectroscopy data of all atmospheric components. But seeing scales of carbon stores in wetlands and permafrost's is different, an emotional level of comprehension. And getting it why the positive feedback loops changed already this giant chunk of my country from being the carbon sink to the carbon emitter. The global warming is beyond anyone to grasp the complex, ever changing, reinforcing factors. But the realistic estimation of the scale of risks, and the cost-benefits analyses of its consequences, is. And so, all pollutants, physical or not, we put into our life cycles without accountability. This is how to realize that reality already surpassed anyone's ideas about it.



The first space photograph of our planet is etched in my memory. A globe floating in dark emptiness, glowing in radiation from a distant fission reactor. An unforgettable sphere draped in blue mist, still evoking powerful emotions. Seeing images from Mars helps to visualize the Earth's surface throughout most of its history. The inner workings of Life have been shaped and tested in the ocean's safety for aeons before coming ashore.

Is Life a result of chance or purposeful evolutionary adaptation? What and where is my place in it?

The physiochemical laws we discovered and had proved already in practice when I studied them. I had some deficiencies in dynamically changing knowledge of the biological world. But I founded fascinating seeing the adaptation of these laws by processes of the living world. That stimulated my enduring interests. In science scope is everything measurable and verifiable. The human world is the sphere of interpretations. Interactions within the biophysical world, and human changing perception of them, are in focus of my lens.

The human cognition must navigate the world of apparent and hidden values, often beyond common sense or understanding. A tree, fish or bird, have no tangible value alive. They do as a furniture and food on it. The oxygen in air I need in every breath is worth nothing in our matrix of values. Can I, and my unaware descendants, afford to wait for real valuation of the "commons" while they are being depleted for the benefit of a few, or polluted at a cost to the rest of us?

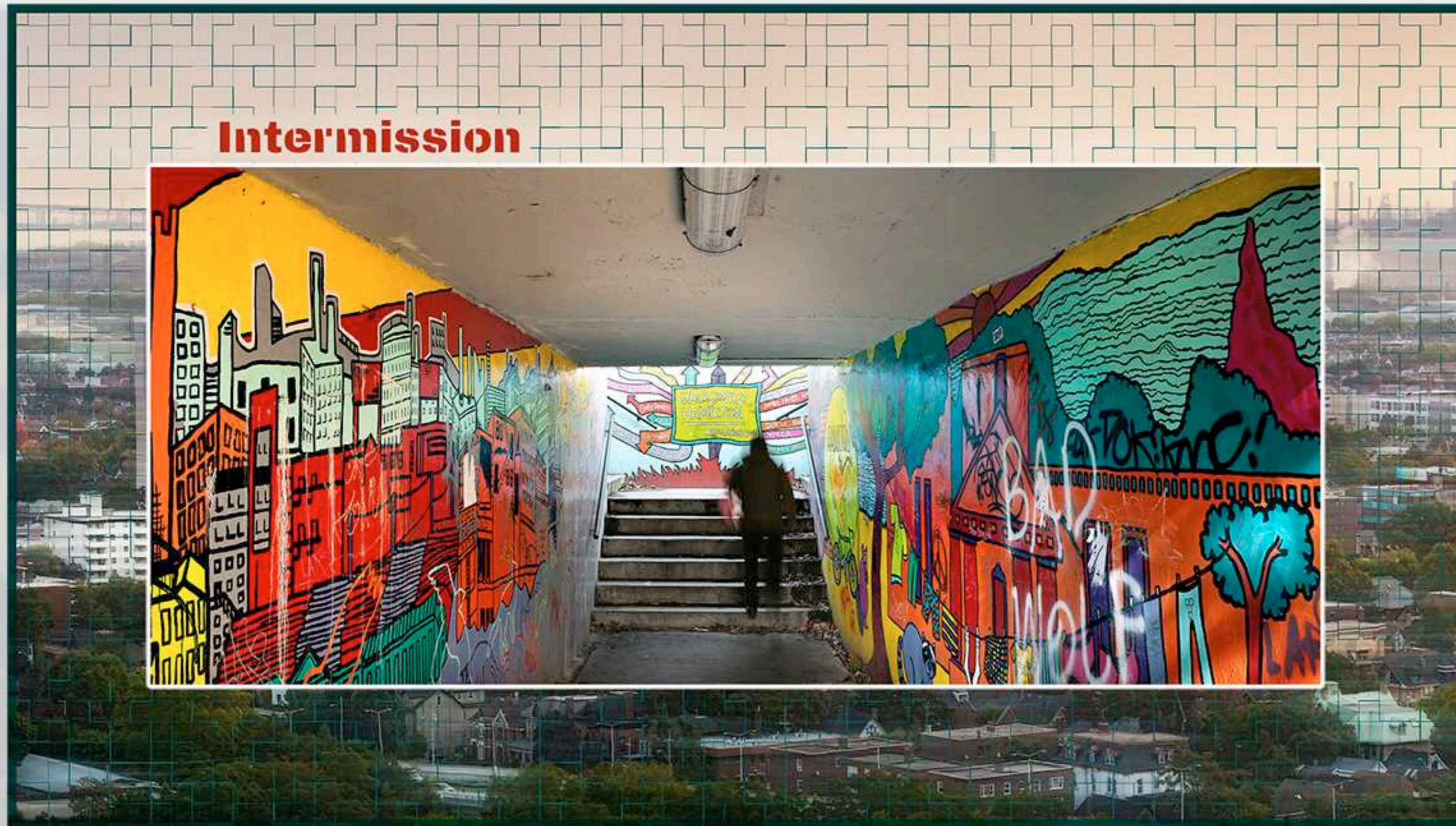
Although reliable data supports conclusions in the world of science, they seem to be irrelevant within the social and political frameworks of our lives. "Our" lands remain to be the blind spot on a map of human consciousness.

Being alone in the vast stretches of Nature at work was not a solitude. It was a chance for a soul to inhabit my mind. A time of thinking about reasons all past, once great civilization, ultimately collapsed. Trumpeted glories never last long in human history. Life processes have. Since my "Flow" exhibition in 2008, though, I know that the growing scale of risk is global. The warming ocean's water is not safe harbour, as it was.

The collected scoring cards might mean nothing.

It's time to choose a side of the history, or to risk not having history at all.

While we all are trying to reassure ourselves within the status quo, keeping our heads on planets resting in the palms of our hands.



Photography as a credible documentary has been used since its inception. Used as a reference for rebuilding cities after war's destruction, to supply viable material for sociologic and anthropologic studies of evolving populations. To chart a future, understanding the past could be indispensable. For generations of photographers, the documenting has been a call of duty. There are some blank spots, like decades of documents faded away a result of excessive faith in the marketing plot, "Kodak for Life."

The migrations and establishing new relationships are an integral part of our history. As an immigrant, I had an interest in tracing the records of integration by various small communities of different European nationalities. In Hamilton, an industrial Canadian city, there were still visible records of their integration and adaptation. I was intrigued by what caused the disintegration of these relationships' generations later.

Our lives are the outcomes of the complex social structure we form to coexist. They are interpretational, unlike in the natural world, where they are formed, codified and forged into DNA's molecular framework.

In Hamilton, I found preserved, fragmented relics of the last century, remnants of small, tribal like communities, centred around ethnicity, temples of faith, stores and watering holes. The mosaics of city block with traces of a distinctive character and identities. Being born in a small town, I knew where nobody on the street could do wrong or stupid things. The industrial neighbourhoods that bred social movements and unions. In what I saw, I sensed the evidence of past social coherence and integrity. The affluence progressed south, away from industrial parts, toward the "Mountain".

The divisions in social structure grew with the unequal access to better tools and capital that could effort them. Capital is fluid, always in search of better returns. Forged human relationships less so. The Americanisation of lifestyles, suburbs, a first mall in the city's heart, starved established city merchants. The neighbourhood stores, the hubs of the local wisdom exchange, followed. Along with it, the social cohesion in self identified interests of each community. More industry plants closures sped up by cheap labour found abroad, exposed a lack of the long-term policies in market economies.

The "virtual communities" further eroded the social cohesion, and I focused on of all above tracing processes in the city. In a single image, I captured city issue raised in public media. Like the relocation city's stadium, "LRT project", "revitalization" of a particular community, "Art on James Street", etc. Then I use some finished to gallery standards, in the interactive public engagement projects "I Take Back My City." The comments written on their surfaces testify the depth of public reaction to issues of their living communities, reflecting the state of public consciousness, and its prospect of democratic resolutions.

Full Disclosure

The "Encounters" project was intended and formatted as visual narrated stories for my Natural Disclosures website project, which I closed this year. I had started it a year earlier, six years after I withdrew my work from galleries. I was re-motivated yet again, experiencing traumatic silence in visited nature sites once timing with wildlife. As a web-based project, it had no chance to accomplish anything as a solitary endeavour in this crowded world of white noise voices.

I wouldn't return to visual arts if I didn't see in human interactions with our lives supporting systems the evident symptoms of systemic self-termination.

I always believed for the art to be relevant, it must keep repurposing the realities of people's lives. As it always was, by framing multi-dimensions of our relationship with these realities, using forms of expression inherent to and adequate for each chosen medium. The disconnect from them, however, has already impacted the attendance of art institutions and might further deteriorate the public willingness to continue funding them. Along with it went the perception of the art's value contribution to human culture.

Project Navigation

Each project was conceived a decade and a half ago as a recorded evolution of my relationships with distinct living environments. The selected images were organized, along my recorded thoughts and reflections, like visual monologues. They could be parts of dialogues or conversations with different media and thoughts, forming more inclusive, dynamic representations of subject matters.

The cooperation within the working group amplifies and validates individual creative ideas, using better the scarce resources, a symptomatic reality of an artistic profession today.

In a world of ambiguity and concealed intentions, the clarity of purpose might be the platform to form thoughtful cooperations within creative professions. So is a declaration of binding principles of any collaboration. The value of human activity, and its contribution, is always contextualized.

I view the "culture" as the accessible pool of the human life reality's interpretations. The value of science and arts contribution is drawn from their continuous actualization of these realities in the changing world.

Facilitating escapes from them have been a domain of the entertainment industry. The racing it proved to be fatal for arts.

With my relevant views outlined, I can disclose the multipurpose of my project's presentation. Intended as an open call for collaboration, material for use and inspiration, ideas for enhancements and refinements in the world at the crossroads with no clear road signs. Reliable as a mirror, immune to the on-demand illusions and premises.

A challenge to creative professions is to dismantle our world of delusions and to restore our common sense of purpose.

Each page of my project shows image titles and the edition size. The dates I deem irrelevant as each was the outcome of multiple location visits across years, revising an image while maintaining integrity of its edition.

The image sizes are between 80-300 Mega Pixels. Some are at over Giga Pixels generated at camera level. To summarize, they are suitable for a very broad range of scales presentation, if needed. They are also available cropped for 4K, 8K, 12K multiple large screen screens presentation along a sizable collection of framed images left from my previous exhibitions. Please inquire for details.