

The Anesthesiologist and the Arts

Lens on Life: Photographs by California Anesthesiologists

By Audrey Shafer, M.D., Associate Editor

Anesthesiologists by nature do not shy from knobs, dials and technical apparatus. Furthermore, anesthesiologists simultaneously attend to detail while they maintain a view of “the big picture.” Hence it may come as no surprise that anesthesiologists are also photographers. Here we sample but a few. The anesthesiologists represented here have all exhibited at the ASA Annual Meeting Art Exhibit. Many have won awards, prizes and top honors.

We thank these artists for generously contributing photographs, brief biographies and notes about their photography to this column. Permission to reproduce the photographs both here and online was obtained from each photographer. Note that each photograph, whether shown here or on the web, is owned and copyrighted by the photographer. Reproduction or download, in any form, of any of the photographs requires permission of the individual photographer. Color photographs frequently do not translate well to a black-and-white medium. *The photographs by Drs. Antognini, Cozen, Garman, Gyermek and Eng are originally in color and are best viewed online. Please visit the photo exhibit at the CSA website: < www.csa.hq.org > .*

We welcome artistic and literary contributions to this column. Please consider this column a forum for your literary and artistic gifts. Feel free to contact Audrey Shafer, M.D., at ashafer@stanford.edu.

Joseph Antognini, M.D.

This is a photograph of a camellia in the artist’s front yard. The plant has been very generous, yielding beautiful flowers during the winter and spring. It has also been very forgiving, as little maintenance has been required. The photo was taken with a Canon Power G2 digital camera.

I am a native of California and a Professor of Anesthesiology at the University of California, Davis.

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“Camellia”
by Joseph Antognini, M.D.

Harry Cozen, M.D.

I took the photograph in late April 2003 when I noticed the profusion of colorful wildflowers on the hillsides while driving through the Tejon Pass on California Interstate 5 near the town of Gorman. I used a Canon Power Shot S40 digital camera.

I am a native of Los Angeles and completed my residency in Anesthesiology at UCLA, where I later served as an Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology. I am in private practice in Thousand Oaks, California.

“Wildflowers in the Tejon Pass”
by Harry Cozen, M.D.

J. Kent Garman, M.D., M.S., F.A.C.C.

This photograph was taken in Burano, Italy, a small island off the coast of Venice. It was a lucky, single image picture of a very weathered window. I scanned the 4 x 6 cm negative and manipulated it in Photoshop. The manipulations consisted solely of changing contrast and intensifying the colors. I printed it as a 12” x 16” print on Epson Colorlife photo paper using an Epson 1280 ink jet printer.

I began taking pictures as a teenager with a Rolleiflex. I did a lot of both black and white and color darkroom work. My guiding principles as a photographer were obtained from Ansel Adams. To this day, I use the “Zone System”¹ which guides the photographer in lighting, contrast, and saturation of photographs. Now I have largely switched from film to digital images because of the ease of storing, editing, and printing. I use a Nikon D-100 single lens reflex camera. I enjoy shooting close-ups of faces and architectural details. Digital images are manipulated in Photoshop, a program that I am still trying to learn.

I am a cardiovascular anesthesiologist on the faculty of the Stanford University School of Medicine, and President-Elect, Stanford Hospital and Clinics Medical Staff.

“Window” by J. Kent Garman, M.D., M.S., F.A.C.C.

¹ <http://www.cicada.com/pub/photo/zs/>

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Laszlo Gyermek, M.D., Ph.D.

I was always fascinated by nature and with its unlimited expressions of light, colors and forms. That’s why I do photography and painting. Sometimes overwhelmed by the routine and frustrating aspects of this profession, when “passing the gas,” “fiddling with the needle” and “arguing with the surgeons” became less than inspiring, I have escaped and traveled to far away places. With my camera I visited Tahiti, Tasmania and the southern tips of America and Africa. A souvenir from the last one is this photograph, depicting the shiny and rarely calm surface of the ocean at the Cape of South Africa. With digital photography you don’t have to travel so far to get such “special effects.” Some of my colleagues, mastering this new photography, create amazing results harnessing the beauty of form and color, hidden in nature but rediscovered by modern technology, close to home. I encourage everyone to take those cameras, look around and shoot! Should you persevere, both you and your friends will be richly rewarded.

I am recently retired and formerly Professor of Anesthesia at Harbor UCLA Medical Center. I have two sons and live with my wife Emilia on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, California. A native of Hungary, I am both a pharmacologist and an anesthesiologist and author of over 270 research publications. I have

been active in anesthesia-related drug developments and described new anticholinergic and antiserotonin drugs, as well as hypnotics and muscle relaxants. In recent years, after having published a book on “Antimuscarinic Agents,” I have been writing travelogues and finishing a large scale oil painting study that will represent the entire, celebrated series of thirty works by Monet, depicting the Rouen Cathedral.

“The Southern Tip of Africa” by Laszlo Gyermek, M.D.”

Gordon Haddow, M.B.

These photographs were all taken in Point Reye’s National Park in the fall of 2002. All were taken with an Agfa Scala (an unusual black and white transparency film) using a red filter to increase contrast. The photographs were then scanned into a computer and various controls applied much as one does in a traditional darkroom when printing.

Photography is for me connecting with and expressing the creative spark that lies within all of us. It has required that I learn to become very still inside and focus on the emotions that a scene generates. I always try to remember “A good photograph is never ‘about light.’ Good photographs are about feelings.”

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(From “Things I’ve Learned about Photography” by Brooks Jensen (Lensworks #50)).

I was born in South Africa where I did my medical and anesthesia training. I came to America in 1988 and was a professor at Stanford University for 12 years. My major areas of specialty at Stanford were cardiovascular anesthesia and liver transplantation. I am at present a cardiovascular anesthesiologist at Kaiser Permanente in San Francisco. I have dabbled in photography since high school but really took it up in a serious fashion about 12 years ago when I discovered large format (4 x 5) photography. I do mostly black and white work and do most of my own printing.

“Water on Leaves” by Gordon Haddow, M.B.

“Path” by Gordon Haddow, M.B.

“Forest Mist” by Gordon Haddow, M.B.

Eng Ng, M.D.

The following photo was created by putting together three different digital photographs. Two years ago after the birth of our first grandson, my husband bought me a digital camera and I also took an introductory class in Adobe Photoshop which got me more interested in photography with image editing, graphic design and creating original artwork.

I was born in Burma (now called Myanmar), and obtained my medical degree in 1966 from Institute of Medicine 1, Rangoon, Burma. After a year of internship at Rangoon General Hospital, I immigrated to the U.S.A. in 1968 and completed a rotating internship at Washington Sanitarium and Hospital (Washington Adventist Hospital) in Maryland. My residency in anesthesiology was at George Washington University Hospital, Washington, D.C., from 1969-1971. My husband and I decided to spend a year as Fellows in Critical Care Medicine at University of Pittsburgh Health Center Hospital, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and after that continued to stay on as attending anesthesiologists. We moved to San Francisco in 1976 and I later joined the Anesthesia Department at the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital, San Francisco, as assistant Chief and later Chief of Anesthesia Service until it closed in 1981. I entered private practice and was a staff anesthesiologist at Pacific Coast Hospital (formerly, California Podiatry Hospital). In 1998, after being diagnosed with thyroid cancer requiring radical surgery, my perspective on life changed. I decided to retire from practice at the end of 1999, and I started the millennium with new interests and projects. I was computer illiterate, and so I took computer classes

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and found interest in computer graphics and creating artwork. My passion for traveling led to photography. I also enjoy spending time with my two-year-old grandson, Andrew.

My husband, Thien, is Clinical Professor of Anesthesiology, UCSF. We are blessed with two sons. Our older son Matthew is an Attorney for Oracle Corporation at Redwood Shores. Our younger son Michael is an ER physician currently practicing in Albany, New York. I am very thankful that with God’s blessing, I am now cancer free.

“Twins on Champignons” by Eng Ng, M.D.

David Ruderman, M.D.

My first experience with photography dates back to 1969 when I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in India. Just before leaving, I had a friend get me a 35 mm Pentax Spotmatic camera. This photo dates back to that experience. In anesthesia residency training I got my first medium format camera, a 120 film Pentax 6 x 7 model, a newer version of which is still my favorite camera. Recently I have been struggling with producing high quality photographs captured digitally and printed with an inkjet printer.

I have been in the practice of anesthesiology at Mercy Hospital of Sacramento since 1978. Many of our vacations over the years have been centered around photographic possibilities. My wife who used to be my “Gofer,” as in “go for this and go for that,” now does her own Polaroid manipulation photography—a completely different style of art. We are delighted that we share this interest and can work and play together in this art form.

“Bicycle Wallah, Hazaribagh, India,” by David Ruderman, M.D.