

# Joe Ziolkowski

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## *Alone: A State of Being*

As we walk, we often fall, trusting we will catch ourselves; falling, trusting, catching, over and over as we move forward. Over the past five years I have made the conscious choice to spend long periods of time alone, traveling and walking to populated and very remote locations around the world. This journey has brought me a new awareness of my place in our society. I have challenged myself to trust myself to reach what I thought would be unattainable destinations. During these times of solace I have focused pent up energy and photographed these environments, knowing I would someday exhibit these works of art. I was never really alone.

The work selected for this collection of photographs have been culled from thousands of photographs and videos generated during this time. There is an ongoing relationship with the various portfolios created on different formats that give each viewer a different perspective from the same location.

Photographic self-portraiture maximizes the tension between photographer, subject, and viewer inherent in all artwork. In a world filled with the effortless “selfie,” my work realizes great effort. I use multiple formats of photography, video and sound, then exhibit these parallel portfolios to convey a complex message.

My portfolios include photographs generated with 35mm analog black and white film, 4 x 5 inch pinhole film, DSLR, mirror-less & iPhone digital cameras. I also document many of these locations with video in short clips. Ultimately, many of the photographs are self-portraits, however I also exhibit photographs viewed from the camera’s perspective. Concurrently, I use multiple platforms to relay images of myself located within the landscape. I combine the latest technology with standard 4 x 5 inch film pinhole process to encourage the viewer to consider the passage of time present in the evolution of the photographic process.

As the artist, I select the vantage point and compose the frame, making my lens the viewers’ eye. As subject, I place myself within the frame and guide the viewer through the frame with my own gaze.

Within this gaze, I join the viewer, experiencing the joy of gazing myself. This effort serves as a performance component both within and around the final photographs themselves.

Time is omnipresent in the self-portrait process. Although I have control of many variables as the object maker, I am also limited as subject. As I move into the frame, I must consider the constraints of time, terrain and my own physical stamina.

I can only travel as far from the lens of the camera as I can manage before the delay of the electronic 30 second timer activates the shutter. This distance changes depending on the topography of the location as well as my ability to overcome the terrain before me. I must leave time to compose myself and construct the composition of the final image.

The fragmented frame of the final digital panorama of each image also recalls both the time and effort of this process. Each shift of the exterior plane indicates a shift in the camera, and as a result suggests a shift for the viewer. The single print is a progression spanning across the field of vision and reflecting the subtle shift in perspective inherent in such a span of time.

Lastly, as I take the time to experience the landscape into which I have placed myself. I become the conduit of time and place. In this way I carry both the image and the experience with me into the studio and onto the final print or video.

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