

Artist's statement

All of my photographic work is based on my feeling that people relate their surroundings to their own and other, perhaps imagined, human dramas.

I use the still life venue much as a stage, and objects, natural, machine-made or handmade as metaphors for nature and human form. I think the still life painters in seventeenth century Europe, especially the Spanish Vanitas school, used still lifes the same way I do. In some cases those paintings were outright political or cultural statements.

In many of my photographs I particularly like to use chiaroscuro: strong, dramatic light and dark, which also adds an element of mystery to the scene. The pure beauty and sensuality of fruit, vegetables, fabrics, vessels, rocks, vines, any small piece of nature is usable on my stage.

It is necessary to use a photographic technique that emphasizes texture and detail, so I use large format scanned negatives and transparencies, as well as high resolution digital camera files. I process my images as inkjet prints on archival 100% rag, acid free paper. The inks themselves are archival pigment inks.

Howard Nathenson