

HORIZON NEWS #66

IMAGES, THOUGHTS AND NEWS FROM HORIZON PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

“Being successful in selling fine art photography is not related to your level of motivation or to the quality of your artwork. Rather, it is related, and in fact absolutely dependent, on knowing how fine art is marketed.”

Alain Briot, author, *Marketing Fine Art Photography*

The Fine Art Photography Market: Sense or Nonsense?

Steve Gottlieb

This year’s annual Horizon Western Adventure will take us to southern Utah and northern Arizona. One notable stop will be Antelope Canyon, a “slot canyon” near Page, AZ. This legendary location for photographers is so visually dazzling that you could take beautiful pictures there with your eyes closed.

When I visited the canyon in 1986, I had the place virtually to myself—few footprints were visible on the canyon floor. In the years since, the canyon has become a photographic mecca. It’s so popular that the Navajo Tribe, which now exercises control over the area and charges a hefty fee for taking visitors there, has imposed limitations on the number of visitors allowed. Despite the bustle (and the footprints), photographers come like moths to the proverbial flame.

Here are two photographers’ Antelope efforts. The first is mine. The second is Peter Lik’s. Question: What would you have to pay for a print of each? *Before reading on, please venture a guess!*

I’ve never formally marketed my picture, but for \$200—\$400 (depending on print size), you’d own it. Lik’s print, titled “Phantom,” cost a tad more: \$6.5 million. This shattered the world’s record for most expensive photo. (If I want to sell my image, I guess I should give it a title and convert to B&W.)

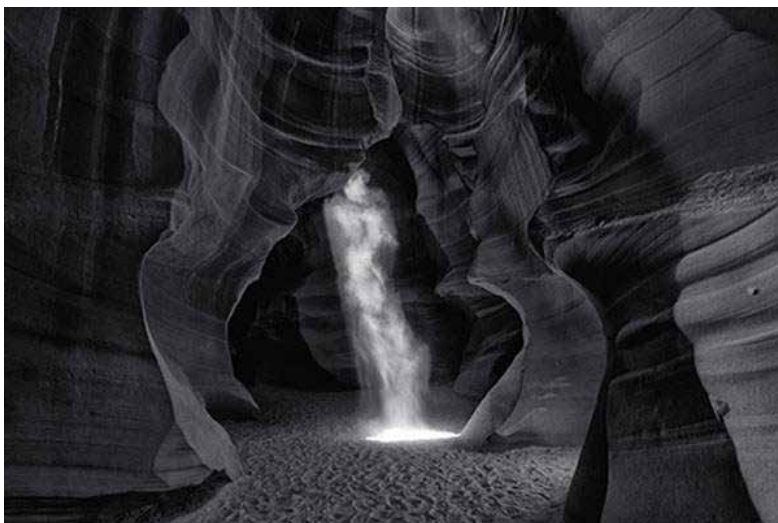
[To see the 10 Most Expensive Photos *before* Lik’s: <http://gizmodo.com/the-10-most-expensive-photographs-in-the-world-866891077>.]

Back in 1978-1979, I opened a photography gallery in D.C. (That was my first—and decidedly unsuccessful—attempt to escape from practicing law; in 1985, I successfully/permanently left law to become a photographer.) From that relatively brief gallery experience, the most essential thing I learned about the fine art photography market was that it was, and still is, absolutely inscrutable. Or perhaps, more accurately, it makes no rational sense to me.

Making sense of the photo art world and making money in it are very different things, of course...so if you want to generate income as a fine art photographer, you’ll need to appreciate the profound wisdom of Alain Briot’s observation (quoted above): success is more about marketing savvy than image quality.



Photos: Steve Gottlieb (top) Peter Lik (bottom)



2015 Horizon Photography Summit

Looking Back ... and Ahead

The third annual Horizon Summit in Wilmington, DE, from Feb. 27 — March 1, is now history. It was another great occasion for 16 top pros to share their knowledge and experience with photo enthusiasts in an intimate, friendly environment.

Unfortunately, an ice and snow event hampered travel on Sunday, which impacted many people. Next year, to reduce the likelihood of a weather problem, we'll push the date to later in March. We're also planning a few other changes. What won't change is our commitment to offer the highest quality instructors speaking on a broad range of interesting and timely topics, making the Summit one of the premier photo events in the region.

Here are a few photos that captured some Summit action (photos by John Lauritsen and Steve Gottlieb). Thanks to all who attended. See you in 2016.



FINAL FRAME

Vanelli took this shot of Summit organizer Steve Gottlieb during his "Sports (and other) Portrait" class. This "semi-grunge" look is very popular these days with young athletes, Vanelli explained. Using a relatively simple lighting set-up, he takes the shot and then applies Lightroom presets. This brings a consistent look, for example, to all members of a team...and it reduces production time dramatically. Vanelli offers tons of valuable advice in this arena at: <http://photofocus.com/author/mrvanelli/> .

