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# SOUTHCOAST Artists Index

*This story was collected through our partnership with the SouthCoast Artist Index, led by Ron Fortier.*

*These transcripts were produced using the Zoom transcription feature.*

## Interviewer Name: Ron Fortier

## Storyteller Name: Michael Morris

Ron Fortier

Hi, this is Ron Forte with another episode of the In Focus Podcast brought to you by the. Artists index. And sponsored by Heavenly Spirits. And as per usual, we're going to ask our guests to introduce themselves and spell their name and. We'll take it from there.

Michael Morris

Hello, my name is Michael. Michael Morris photography, miche. AELT. MORIS. PHOT OGR A. But yeah, my name is Michael's been doing photography for about past seven years now professionally. I do everything from Mark real estate architecture to family portraits, doing commercial work, doing product work, pretty much anything under the Sun. I like to challenge myself. And and you know. Some people say, you know, can you do this? I usually say yes, I just make it happen and I make it work. It's just the whole point. Of being a photographer. So I try to make myself a niche kind of thing, but I always get taken into another direction and then I end up doing it anyway, so I try sticking with the real estate and architecture, but now I'm just doing everything so you know.

Speaker

Right.

Michael Morris

It's kind of big.

Ron Fortier

Well, it also comes in handy for lean times. I mean, you know, you may not want to do weddings cause a lot of I know a lot of photographers don't want to do it, not because it's, well, something. It's the meaning. Some of them just don't want to deal with the emotions, you know, going on and there's a. Lot of pressure because you really. Have to be ahead of everybody. You know there's a. There's a routine, right? You got to follow. And then yeah, you try to specialize, and then people like. Ohh, who only does houses. He doesn't do family portraits. And you're like, yeah, I do. And then if you say, well, I do family portraits or you can't do architecture, it's.

Michael Morris

Yeah, sure. Yes. Yeah.



Ron Fortier

You're screwed no matter what.

Michael Morris

It's tough.

Ron Fortier

You need to.

Michael Morris

I just think it works.

Ron Fortier

A unique selling proposition is, you know, Michael T Morris photography for all needs. Yeah. You know, have camera will travel that kind of thing. Yeah. Well. How did you get into? It I mean is this. Something you into school for or?

Michael Morris

Well, I would say probably like great grandfather Mal Olivera. He was a a pretty well known artist in the. Area and I.

Ron Fortier

Yes, he was. I'm sorry. My jaw just dropped. Yeah.

Michael Morris

Grew up side by side with him in his studio, watching him paint, watching him do stuff with his photos. His, I mean, I pretty much shouted him as a child and as I got older, I. I you know, in high school I just blew through everything and and like by time I was a junior. I finished all the classes, you know. And I had like plans to go to college and all the other stuff. And it just sucked. This didn't work out. And, you know, years later, I have children and. He just kind of picks stuff up again. I picked up a camera, so I taking photos of my daughter and. I was back into it. And it just kind of like sucked me right in. So I saw it with portraits and and people saw what I was doing and then they asked me, hey, can you come over and do this? And I said. Well, yeah, yeah, I can. I can. I can do it and then it just took. Off from there and so I've always kind of done our. I've always done drawings. I've always done things. It's just.

Speaker

It's just.

Michael Morris

Which is kind of funny how? Something in your life will just take you in the direction of me. It was my children. It just like, suck me. Right, right down this hole where I was like, I just want to capture everything. And it just led me to learn more and discover more and just keep growing and growing and growing. But it all started with my children, so they were pretty good inspiration.

Ron Fortier

Right. I I I'm. I'm sorry. I talked over you, but I I I my jaw dropped and then I. Mean. Oh, my God. Mel Olivera was my first private painting instructor. I still remember him fondly, and I still remember every time there's a horizon line I think of. Him he was. He was phenomenal. He was, he was encouraging. He had the biggest damn problems I've ever. Seen in my life.



Michael Morris

Yeah, he was. He was a. It was nice. He was good to. Me, you know.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, there's a book conference her at the Concordia and a couple of doors down was my my. Guitar teacher Lyle source, who I was probably the worst student he ever had, but there was a lot of interesting people on our street and but. But well, Mel, I mean, you are going to have to. Come back on the show. Please, please, please. You know, because we've been trying to do this now since we started this, I want people. Who have relatives? Acquaintances. Whatever in the family or they have, they have knowledge of these people experienced with these people, photographs, whatever to resurrect them again, to to, you know, I mean I. Think Mel should. Be up there and there's so many other artists. You know, there's Louis just in the Portuguese. Is now this. Luis Soros is Francisco Raposa. I mean, the list goes on and wow. I gotta I gotta slow down.

Michael Morris

Just like just like him too. They people. When people ask me about him and they're like, well, what did he paint or what did he do? I said everything he did pottery. He did screenshot, he did watercolor. I mean, you name it. He did it. And it's kind of funny because I'm kind of like the same way it says he is. But it's. Different in photography, but.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah. And when most people say painting on Velvet, they're like, oh, you know, Elvis and and matadors. I'm like, you've never seen it. Now all. And he and he used. To talk about that. And he said. But there's. Just something really, really kind of cool and he. Used to do these strawberries like fruits these little tiny. Velvet paintings that I just wonder. Whatever happened to them? They they were. They were. They're absolutely gorgeous.

Michael Morris

He got a couple of his photos, his stills and yeah, I probably gotta. I think there's probably about like maybe like 7. He so there's some really cool ones of him. Like, you know, he the old paint near him. And then like, obviously the work he did on a boat, he had it up and then he put it. I mean, just a lot of history, you know, all over the place and a lot of those places were probably gone too.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean. There was a judson's. Cleaners down in the village. There was a donut shop I forgot the. Name of the. Donut shop. But that was like where if you? Wanted to know. What was going? On or what happened? You went there?

Michael Morris

Yeah, yeah, he he had. He had a lot of stories, he told me in, in some funny ones and. But yeah, it's it. I I think it really it. All stems from from him as a child, and I was just, you know, his go over his house as a kid, always just being there. And the guy did every he cooked just like, you know, it's the guy did everything. It's just he was a monstrance man.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, he was. He was. A phenomenal, phenomenal man, quite so many members, studio and. And his gentleness was another thing. And and he told. Me, you know. A lot of you know a lot. Of painting is is. Is observation you have. To have to observe. He says, but a lot of it is tricks. And you've gotta know these tricks because you can't paint realistically, because there's really no such thing. It's an illusion. So he would tell me things like, OK, the edges of. Your camera should. Always be a little out of focus. You know, blend blend it very, very gently around the edges because that's how your eye sees. Your eyes don't see. Rectangles and squares you know in perfect



focus and then along the edge of the water. And every time I look at the ocean, I think about. Him and my stepfather was. A fisherman but now would be like, OK, when the ocean is angry, it's dark. And the sky is light. When the sky is angry and dark, the ocean is light. And there's little little things, you know, those I still you know. It's been 50 years I. Still remember and.

Michael Morris

Yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

Well, well, let's get back to you then. But please promise you are going to come back. I'll send you a form to fill out with all of his biographical data, because that would be fantastic. He would.

Michael Morris

Sure. Yeah.

Ron Fortier

Be the the. Yeah, he, he he would be the first person that we've, you know, been able to get. People to talk. About, you know, yeah. So of all the photography. That you do. Which do you like the? Most and which is. I don't say profitable, but the most well you like. If you like it for two reasons. One.

Michael Morris

Yeah, the most profitable.

Ron Fortier

Cause it's in. And out done. Or you can like it.

Michael Morris

Yeah, the most.

Ron Fortier

Because you know. That would be all you would do. If you were given a choice, kind of.

Michael Morris

Thing. Yeah, I mean. Most profitable is that any kind of commercial work in, in, in architecture I mean weddings are profitable too but. I like architecture. I like homes like I get to go into million dollar homes and multi \$1,000,000 homes and I think the biggest home I've been in was 12,000 square feet and it's just to see. I don't know. I love it. You know, I like to see those things and I like to see how things are made and and joinery and how they just build the home, you know? So I get to go into these amazing places and they're on the water and you get to see the amazing view. So that's just like a plus because if you enjoy architecture, you enjoy looking at these things and then you go to the best of the best and it's like, oh, man, I don't even know this place. Kiss it. It's beautiful and it's great. And you get to see all these new things and then you get portraits. And then you get to look at home. I mean, I'm looking through a little viewfinder. You know, and and then I get home and I see. I really sometimes sometimes I capture something that just is like wow. Like I capture like the kids and the father hugging or or just like them having a conversation and laughing. And it's like that magic. It's like, almost like a hi. It's like bang, you know, I I I got it these these people are going to love it I love. But you know, and so it's tough it you know the architecture I like to because I like to go in places and take a look at and actually explore and and look how light is and then we meet with families and do portraits. It's like so personal and candid that's that's also like another like man that's this is this is going to be forever. You know this is a good thing.



Ron Fortier

Right.

Michael Morris

In this photo right here, just this is just. It's the family, you know, you can't bring it back, you know.

Ron Fortier

No, that, that's that's a moment in time that well, you know, we talked about the database, you know, with the Wing museum. Now imagine you know you doing a show about Mel. And all of the photos and images that you that you you have of his that go in there and say there's a family photograph of which you know, you're like sitting on his lap or. Whatever that that is like, it's. Timeless. Yeah, it is absolutely timeless, you know.

Michael Morris

Yeah. So it's it's, it's it, it's, there's a lot, you know, so it's tough.

Ron Fortier

I used to art direct a lot of architectural shoots because our clients were like some. The biggest design builders in the area and people don't realize how difficult it is. Ohh it's a bright sunny day.

Speaker

Why aren't you?

Ron Fortier

Coming over like.

Speaker

No, gotta.

Michael Morris

Yeah, it's a full day.

Ron Fortier

Be. Yeah, yeah. I mean back in. Those days, I. Used to work with a photographer named George Lavoie. Who was very, very pedantic, and sometimes we would do one or two rooms back in those days after shooting, you know, 15. Lloyds, as they used to call them Polaroids, getting all the slaves set up and then so it's 8 hours for one shot, you know, and it's like.

Michael Morris

Yeah, lighting is very important.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. And then, you know, the idea of not coming. On a sunny day. Was because you wanted an overcast day. We had more even lighting you. Know especially if. It was like the shooting runs kind. Of things where it wasn't a studio. Kind of a setup. So it is difficult and and it's frustrating and and it's frustrating because obviously the clients like you know rolling. Drumming their fingers or tapping their feet and it's like dude, you know, this is, this is what it takes, you know? Yeah. Beautiful pictures. That's it. But the family stuff. I guess it's all over. The place the the. The the history of family photography has ranged from the casual to the stiff, you know, informal to.

Speaker

That created inventor.



Ron Fortier

Than you think some of these newer photographs. Photographers who are doing these family things, they were like you. Know pregnant Mommy and. All this other stuff that they're so. Clever, but I've gone back and looked. Into the history of photography and it's. Like wow. People were doing some really cool things, you know. Only a few years. After photography was invented, you know.

Michael Morris

I'm a huge fan of Slim Aaron's like I'm I'm a super fan of, I would say of slim errands and Tony Vaccaro with he was. He was a World War 2 photographer, turns fashion photographer. He's still alive, but I have a couple of autographs of his books and stuff like that. So Tony Picaro and Slim Aaron's. Like I always go back and I look at them and the stuff that they captured was. It was a jet set. It was a time where you can never get to. But how he captured it, you know, he didn't accept there with the studio. He wasn't there with a bunch of. Makeup artists and just like myself, I'm like you know what? He's gonna go there with the camera. He's gonna capture what he can. He's gonna do the best he can. And so I look at those things, I look at the lights, look, the cues, he. Did I mean some of those photographers back in the 50s and 60s? The the work that they produced? Without any digital things, but just. Pretty, pretty incredible. Pretty incredible.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, they knew that they had an eye. And they knew what how to. Operate on a lens on a on a set. Of lens, which is one of. The things that. Kept me from ever really getting into it because it was a little too technical for me. Plus he started doing pinhole photography and I felt madly in love with that, and I think I'm. Gonna try that. Again, and I heard you can do. Digital pinhole, which is kind of cool.

Michael Morris

That's different.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. Yeah. So, you know, we also have in in this area we really haven't touched on. I've been trying to get John Robson on the show forever. I've known him since he before he was born. I like to say because. I knew his parents before he was. Born and his dad and my dad were roommates. And but there's so many good photographers have come out of this area and one of them international is Anthony Barbosa, who I'd love to get onto this show as well. But yeah, there are. Those those photographers from the. Let's call it old school. That could shoot from the hip. There was one one guy that I hired years ago when I had my ad agency. His name was Bruno Linz and he was Brazilian. Yeah. So what's the German guy doing in Brazil? Don't. Don't don't ask.

Speaker

You know.

Ron Fortier

It was just more like his father because. He had been. Too young for that, but this guy? Would shoot and you never even see him lift his camera up. He would he would, he would. Fire on the fly.

Michael Morris

That's good, yeah.

Ron Fortier

There's no lighting or anything, and the blacks, Oh my God, it was so velvety. And the Grays were just, you know, like it with delicious photographs. And he photographed women especially. Because that was his thing. He could take. You know, an average person that he would see in the crowd and shoot her and she would look like a fashion model. And he said it's all the light. It's all. About the lighting you. Know it's all the with with a a couple of,



well, Michael Lopez from the Whaling Museum is started off as a photographer. As a digital manager for. Digital archive manager for the Whaling Museum. But we've spoken about this about photographers. I guess the neck is knowing that something's gonna happen before it happens, because obviously knowing it's gonna happen when it happens, unless you get that that camera in your hand into your eye. Your seconds count, right?

Michael Morris

I think we're fortunate today that we have cell phones that sometimes we can capture stuff, but it's not. The same, but yeah, sometimes I'm looking at like if I want to get a sunset, I look to see if the day's like humid. Damp and then it gets still warm at night. So then I know it's it's still warm at night. It's a little humid. It's probably going to be a sunset. That's gonna be a cotton candy or. It's things that. You kind of learn and there's also things that I kind of learn, like if I'm doing a a forfeit for somebody this night and. Like I just have this weather is not going to work for us, you know? So it's. I've become so different and so in tune with the weather now too, to try to find it. And I could, if I have some photos that I've tried to take for five years and then finally this summer. Like a couple of weeks ago, I got it. It was just like everything bloomed this year and it bloomed in the way I haven't seen. But for so it just goes to show you that sometimes it, I don't know. It's all about timing. You have to wait for that perfect moment.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, and and sometimes those perfect moments come, and if you're not ready for them, you know, I mean, I'm I'm a painter and. And, you know, I've always been mesmerized with.

Michael Morris

That's the worst.

Ron Fortier

That, let's call it the second before something happens, or the second it does happen, or the second immediately following. In fact, there's a Japanese director. He he's a. Really well known. And you know the serious work. But I guess most people would only know his work for the ramen noodles commercial. Where the dinosaurs found some little caveman. But he, in an interview, said something about it's not the frames in. In motion photography, it's in between the frames. That's, you know, the most important. How competitive is this marketplace for a photographer?

Michael Morris

It it's the worst it is. It's extremely competitive. That's why I kind of it's tough to match people who do portraits and do family photographs because they're everywhere, yeah. So that's why usually when people come out to me and ask me, it's kind of just like. Word of mouth they they understand my work. They understand what I can do for them. But it's that's why I figure like, well, maybe I could do architecture in real estate because that's something that really I I'm enjoying. So I I did that and then like, you know, so the portraits and stuff, I'll still do and other things I'll still do and I'll do commercial work. But I figured if I can. Really get myself as a commercial and portraiture you on the 2nd and then do like the real estate architecture. It's a little bit more of a niche than having with doing what everybody else does. It's tough, it's very, very competitive especially. Weddings. I mean now with Instagram, you just look on Instagram. You got like, just probably 100 in the area it's it's it's it's, it's that much, it's a lot.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah. Prices to let them. Come down but.

Michael Morris

Yeah, I tried to stick to. You know, like specific areas, if I'm doing photography now like like 90% of my works in paint aim or South Dartmouth and I'm people say, well, you know, you gotta get outside. I'm like, well, that's OK,



but. You know this gonna be a day when someone needs something and. They're gonna come to. Me, because that's what I do.

Ron Fortier

Oh yeah. Plus, because you know. The area better than anybody else. And it's you. You always have like a Plan B or even probably a plan C Well, Smith next not gonna be. Working, you know. This isn't gonna work, so let's Go here. You know that kind.

Michael Morris

Yeah. Yeah. And I mean, I don't. I don't mind that. I mean, it's it's kind of like a specialty. So there's going to be one point where someone's gonna say.

Ron Fortier

Of thing a little bit.

Michael Morris

Hey, I know that guy that does something something and that's perfect with me cause that's a niche. That's something that's gonna stand out versus what everybody else. Is doing so.

Ron Fortier

I I just. Just thinking now, I mean, you know how things have evolved so much, product photography, food. Everybody thinks they can shoot food. It's food is. My jewelry. I I guess you could say and I'm not a \*\*\*\*\*. I only know that some from hiring and working with photographers. If you can shoot food, you can shoot. Jewelry and and and. Vice versa, it's all about reflections, you know like yeah, the lighting, you know, the lack of reflection.

Michael Morris

Yeah, lighting. Yeah.

Ron Fortier

Let's put it. That way. And but yeah, people still think that they can. They can, you know, shoot their own food or try to shoot their own handiwork and. It it doesn't work.

Speaker

It doesn't.

Michael Morris

No, it it's tough and it and even like the phones nowadays. Yeah, they're powerful, but they're not like a DSLR. They're not like the miralis. There's nothing that that there really isn't. They can only process so much. They're meant to be a phone. And the camera is secondary. But, you know, you know, everyone thinks was telling me, too, that like, Oh well. You know, no one's gonna have photographers anymore because everybody has a cell phone like, well, go print that cell phone photo out for me, and then we'll talk when it's printed out. You'll see. It looks great on the phone. That's all it's meant to be. It's a phone. Just like when you go buy a a television at a Best Buy. It looks great in the store because he got it all pumped up to what it should look like, you know?

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, they got it totally calibrated. Yeah, yeah.

Michael Morris

So it's it's, you know, it's different.





Ron Fortier

Yeah. So. Best thing you've ever done so far.

Michael Morris

This year or just? In my life.

Ron Fortier

This year and and up until this year.

Michael Morris

I would. I would definitely say this year was uh. I would I would actually. I would go back to last year like last year because of COVID and stuff. You know there wasn't too much business and there wasn't too much going on. So it I was. Able to be. Myself and just have fun. So what I did was I went back to looking at. Impressionism in the painters and I really learned a lot from them because I was always in the painting and I've always loved professionalism. And and it realized how close it would precisionism as we are today in modern times, because when the Impressionist came around. And you know and and you know, like around 1850s, they developed that flat brush. It was never a flat brush. It was always round. So they were able to, you know, capture that one, just strike and it was flat. It wasn't rounded. There was a training. So people can go travel now and go across the country and go capture something that was that's. Huge. That was never like that before.

Ron Fortier

In tube paint, that was another big, another big thing.

Michael Morris

Yeah. And bring all your easel on on. You know, that's a lot of stuff. That they have to bring in now. You know it's it's different. They want to capture light and they want to capture an impression. And it's kind of just like a just like, a mono photographer would do today, you know. So I went back and I studied, and I looked at those things, and I changed the way I edit. Which helped me out a lot and then I was driving around one day and I remember a place that I used to visit, so I took. A picture. Of the street sign, and then as soon as I took a photo of the street sign, I thought. Well, maybe I'll go do more in the area. Maybe these places that people understand and people know because you never know, people could be searching and they say, oh, I grew up there and, you know, and I grew up on that street. So I went around and I took photos a bunch of street sign. And all this other thing is that just interest me, I wouldn't do normally because I didn't have time. So and then I went out and I did some other shots that I wouldn't do and. But you know, I was able to last year I started doing. I found out by mistake that you know, as I'm going out and taking these photos, some of these photos were blurry, but I still. And it just wasn't up to what I wanted it to be, but it was still nice photo. So I decided that I'll Start learning how to digital paint them. So then I started like, it's almost like a reverse paint. You just add layers on them and then you remove the layers. And then on the layer you just paint, so you use your in Photoshop, you literally paint back in the layers and you can do it like. Like a lot of color, you can do it like digital like. Yeah, but it. Made me not get rid of the photo that I liked because it just wasn't shown. I made it into a painting which worked out perfectly because it's not supposed to be sharp. So I said last year was a year that really turned the. Corner for me.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. You know, it's funny because I I was just thinking about Norman, 40 of my cousin, you know, he had a studio in the village and. He was a a world renowned marine photographer and then he started doing watercolors. And I'm wondering, I know he was older, but I'm wondering if the technology at some point. Where he's like hey. You know, let's see if I can merge these two things together, but the the regardless of of the media. Whether it was photography or whether it was watercolor it. Was the eye. In that sense of composition which a lot of. People still don't quite get yeah. Which is kind of interesting. You've got people who? A totally symmetrical



in the head for some weird reason, everything's got a balance. My stepmother was that that way. God bless her. Yeah. Heavy couch. Sofa painting, painting over over sofa. The couch end table, end table, lamp, coffee table and then even what was all the coffee table had to be balanced. Chair chair like you know. And there are other. People who just. Have like a chaotic sense of composition. And then it it comes I think. For some people, completely natural. And then I. Think culturally there's a big difference too, because. I mean, you talked about the the. Impressionists, when they started seeing those Japanese wood. Wood block prints that they. Were using to wrap wrap pottery in. They were like. Whoa. Because they're, they're their sense of composition. So totally different, you know.

Michael Morris

Yeah, gotta be quick too.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah. Because you know that that, that kind. Of of, of work. Go. Let's go back to you know those. Those things cause. Are you? Do you know Karl Simmons? These the artisan residents currently at the museum. I've been trying to get him on the show forever, friend of his said he would help. Me plot kidnap him? And get him into A to A to. Him to a. A podcast studio or something, but.

Speaker

He's a.

Ron Fortier

Younger you know. Younger than myself. But he has this incredible sense of history. You know, there are those little things. That you take. For granted every single day until they're not there anymore. And then what happens is. Wish somebody would have recorded. This because, as mundane as it was. It's valuable sometimes the background. Is the most important element of a of a photograph. When you're doing some.

Michael Morris

Yeah. Reese, the story behind it.

Ron Fortier

Sort of. Research. Yeah, yeah. Where do you want to go from this point? I mean, now that we're coming out of the pandemic. Which is historic in more ways than one because it's changed so many.

Michael Morris

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

People you know.

Michael Morris

It it changed me. It changed the way I add it, changed the way I looked at photos. I mean complete, like even before, stupidly not even realizing I was editing my photos for Instagram when I posted. So I had a photo that was done. But then when I posted on Instagram, I would change it because it's on a small little surface they're looking at and I wanted it to pop more and I just got the last year. I was like, what am I doing? It kind of just like. It is what it is like, you know, and I stopped doing all that stuff and I saw. I just started doing what I wanted to do instead of like what it should people think. I think people should what it would look like versus what I want. So. You know, I went back and I studied old photographers. I studied the Impressionisme's and all the things that I enjoyed. And I hope from this forward on that I could learn a lot from those things and just keep going forward because you do learn a lot from those paintings that people don't realize the light that comes through and people don't realize



how tough it was to do. I mean, people weren't doing those things back then. They were inventing it as it was happening, you know, and you, when you're making your own. Paint on the site like colors like we're so spoiled nowadays, we only realize how lucky we have it. It's it's, it's so it's important. So I hope just now I can take those cues from the old Masters, move forward, take some slim errands and see how we just capture the good life and and and made it possible that you could see a sneak peek into a world where we didn't know existed, but yet it looks so glamorous and then just move forward with being. Always evolving and always the open door. Always trying to get better, learning new things and I hate you know, if you don't look at YouTube and you don't learn things from YouTube, you're missing out because it's a whole opportunity out there that teaches you things and people are on there to help you. It's insane. I I taught myself so much. Just by watching on YouTube it's it's it's a great, great asset that we have nowadays. So I just want to keep growing and keep going in direction. Yeah, it's great.

Ron Fortier

YouTube university. My my. That's what my grandson calls a YouTube universe. Yeah, but the.

Michael Morris

That's great.

Ron Fortier

The thing with the the Impressionist as well as in and another thing I learned from from Mel Olivera was like he said. Especially painting plain air. People don't. Realize you have to move like crazy because. It's not like capturing a photograph it. The It's everything is moving. It's not just the. Clouds that are moving across so the light starts changing. And if you're not paying attention, you won't notice that. And then when you do pay attention, you realize, oh God, you know the the sky is now totally different in color.

Michael Morris

Yeah. And the whole point was to capture that moment, yeah.

Ron Fortier

From what was on your. Exactly. Exactly. Alla prima. It's it's the what the Italians call it. Painting alla prima. No sketches, nothing. You just slapping paint on, you know, right onto the canvas and and doing it. That way, and you know the effects are incredible. And then we've got a. Guy like Vincent van Gogh or Van Gogh is or but. Now it's it's cool to say. And go and. But his. Sense of color which. Perplexed a lot of people and they asked them mode. You don't really see that that you know those colors. Do you and he's like. Yeah, I I do. So I guess that's something they've been debating for years. Whether he had some thing. That where he really did perceive color that way or or his sense of color was so totally different. Some sort of reverse reverse color blindness kind of.

Michael Morris

I forgot one of those. Thing. Yeah, he was a an impressionist. And he colored with dots. Do you know that he colored those?

Ron Fortier

Although George, Sarah George Scott.

Michael Morris

Yes, he colored with these dots, and if you put these dots together like these different hues, your eye picked up a shadow. An eye picked your. I pick up a different color, but when you go. Close to it. So I mean.

Ron Fortier

Oh yeah, developed offset the the the concept. Of color of. Printing, you know CMYK or or IV. And yeah, I mean



colors, hours that, that, that, that, that, that, that that and you know something in the park with George. In the majority of you know that his most well known piece, but the the figures were kind of rounded it. It's kind of, you know odd they were the. The contours were were very rounded. There's there's no other. Way around it and. But don't forget too at the same time. Photography came in around. 1849 a lot of the painters thought it was over for them, the academic kind of painters, it was the. It was the. The impression is coupled with with the Japanese woodblock prints, where the they're they're cropping or composition was so totally not traditional. In other words, you didn't have just kind of a person hanging off of painting, you know, everybody had to be in frame. And these guys didn't they had a head popping up from the bottom. They had, you know, all kinds of things and it made it made for, for made for some incredibly beautiful work, whereas the, the the academicians were trying to paint this reality that really just didn't exist at all, you know. Looking into the crystal ball, what do you think the next big thing is going to be?

Michael Morris

With photography. I I think it's going to an age of being mirrorless and and changing and it's not that I haven't, I'm not completely mirrorless yet, but I do like a lens because it gives you contour. It gives you uh. Stupid as it is, it gives you like a sense of emotion when you look at the photo. It's not just like a flat image, you know. So I mean, it's not architecture and architecture, it's the lines and that's important. But when you take in a portrait. You know your eye isn't flat. You know your eye bends, so it gives you a little contour around it, gives you a little vignette. You know what I mean? What we what would see? So I do see a lot is going to the mirror lists and stages but. I I see it getting bigger. And and also harder for people to separate themselves because it's everybody's on Instagram and everybody's doing, you know, YouTube and trying to be a creator. Unfortunately, big tech controls of who you are, what you see and and stuff. So I think it's just going to be just a little bit more harder than it is now to produce some good things that get noticed, you know. So it's just gonna. It's gonna move forward, but it's gonna be harder.

Ron Fortier

One of the things that's interesting is is as advanced as photography has become. One thing that really hasn't changed is is the lens. You know from the earliest from camera obscura. When they were. Using it, you know like with the Vermeer and and. And the other payments of his day. And age were. Using that and even when it transferred over from film to digital the lenses. Was still the same. So that's going to be interesting to see what kind of technology can be. And then what's amazing is the. Lenses on the phone are so small.

Michael Morris

Yeah. My, my go to is a 50mm prime. That's for me. That's my sweet spot and I like that one. It's small, it's easy and it captures some pretty great things you know.

Ron Fortier

Right. And you don't have to walk around.

Michael Morris

Another 50mm is pretty good. It's pretty good.

Ron Fortier

Yeah. And you don't have to. Walk around with lenses.

Michael Morris

Yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

Right on your neck and anything like that. Yeah, let's talk about your black and white color, one of the. Things



that's come up in the last couple of years has been that. They're now releasing photographs of World War 2 that are in color and people like what? And they've always existed in color. It's just that the newspapers weren't able to print them in color. So we only saw them in black and white and so on and so forth. But there's also this weird psychological thing with black and white and color. I remember doing a. For a company. That had a security issue and so we set up this fake thing where this this. Organizations being surveilled by, like, uh, like detectives and the the building is going to. Get raided and when? We did it in color. It was like. All we did was just like. Switch it to black and white and and and. Then showed it as like. Ohh Now, that's a surveillance photo.

Michael Morris

Yeah, yeah.

Ron Fortier

You know, it's kind of weird. So it's there's. That thing. And then there's the other thing about there's just something about black and white, is it you think because your brain likes to put things together?

Michael Morris

All the all the pictures of my family and my children in my home are all black and white.

Ron Fortier

They're all black and white.

Michael Morris

All black and white, black and white is. Emotion feeling. It's different. I mean, just like we like warmth of the our eyes like warmth and and we don't like really cool. The black and white. It's almost like a calming effect. Like you don't get distracted by what's in the background or you don't get distracted by it. You just, like, pulled into an image because it's mono tone, you know, it's black, it's black, it's. White. That's it. Versus you know, if you have an image that has a sunset and all this other stuff, then you're going on might not notice that person at the bottom of the. Walking, you know, there was intentionally supposed to be there to catch your. Eye. But then you can go black and white. You're like, wow, this subject just. Pops. You know, I just think even like it, it gives. Skin tones a different color it. You know, makes them softer. It makes it more appealing. Like I think it's it's great, you know, like, even like the old shots of the Kennedys that are in the black and white and and if you shoot it in color, I mean, you're going to want to see him in black and white. You're not. Going to. Want to see him in color because it's just. It's different. It's a different feeling.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, this is, you know. Maybe it's not the right. Word but. Authentic Ness. There's something that's authentic about black and white, whereas with color it just seems sometimes fake or it's a pastiche of something. You know, my dad was a pretty good photographer. And all of the photographs you know of of me and and the family, when we go up into. Canada every year. They were phenomenally composed. I mean, he had this. He had a natural eye and looking at the, you know, from the time I was born, all the way up until when. The colors started to. Become available to the average show I guess extra. They were still good but. There's just something about, especially those. Snapshots cause he was one of the first first around here to buy the Polaroid. Yeah, he made an investment in it to photograph him. Nightclubs. And but he brought it with him everywhere and. Some of those things were were just. You know. And then there's some technical things, too. The lights, the lights when you're shooting interiors with the with the, the Polaroids, they, they have these light trees that that could shrivel your skin. I mean, you could burn yourself on these things. They they were kind of funny, but I've. I've also heard too, that a lot of. The younger photographers. Choosing black and white over color. And another weird thing is there seems to be a demand for darkrooms people going back to film, just like they went back to. Vinyl for for records. What are you? What are you talking about?



Michael Morris

I I think I think maybe I think digital almost brings it to a level of being too sharp. And two. 22 Perfects you know too perfect and I I think maybe the film even black and white, dumb it, not doesn't dumb it down, but it takes it down to a level. Of it doesn't have to, it just doesn't have to be like that. You know, like film is not that it's grainy, but film is very soft. It's a soft like. It's like a velvety. It's it's it's not a pure like, you know, you can zoom, you can't zoom in on film. Basically, you know, but it it's it's on the image, it's there. Whereas you know you're on your screen, on phone you can zoom in on to something. It's it's insane. It's got so much, but on film. It's just, that's it. You know the details are there where they have to be and that's it.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, you can only push so. Yeah. Yeah, that, that's that's interesting. So now looking into the, the, the future, one more time, you know post pandemic. There have been four artists. There's been some interesting situations, artists who have never been represented by a gallery before. All of a sudden started selling work on the on the Internet, and they didn't even solicit the work. People found them. Artists who had galleries stopped selling because the galleries closed down, so they had no representation. So there's been a lot of like crazy shifts going on and as far as selling work commercially, like you know, prints and such, I I've know I've seen a lot of photographers printing on aluminum glass. And a canvas, a stretch canvas? What? Are your thoughts on that?

Michael Morris

I love it. It's just very expensive. It's it's, you know, you know, we people always like. Ohh well someone so does it for this much I'm like. OK. I'm not him and I'm not. Her. But you can do that certainly. And and and you. I'm a business. I file tax, you know, I mean like everybody else like it. I have to take that consideration. So when I drop those prices on people does it look great? Yes. Is it awesome? You don't need a frame. And I guess like after you print out your photo and and if. You do a custom size framing could be expensive, but you just do an 8 by 10. It's it's more affordable, but it's it's. It's great, it really is, but it's trying to find the customer who's going to appreciate that and understand that it's expensive. It's an expensive meeting. We don't just go to or Shutterfly or CDs. I mean, we use professional labs and they're not going to drop the prices for us because we have a customer doesn't want to spend the money.

Ron Fortier

Right.

Michael Morris

You have to find the customer who wants to appreciate that and that's that really is it's, it's incredible. I mean you do get some really good HD images and you it's sleek. You know you don't need a frame, you still could frame it in a floater or still look great but. The point is. It's ready to hang out of the. Box. You don't, you don't need any.

Ron Fortier

It's floating on the wall here. So that floating kind of thing.

Michael Morris

Problem. Yep, nothing to do with it.

Ron Fortier

Too is by the square inch. It may end up even cheaper than having something. Because, for example, when you do a print, whether it's a photographic print or not reproduction, the first thought to most people would be. Well, I've got to. Get it matted? Well, I. I I'll put mine so that they'll put to a standard size frame because I don't like the mats, you know. My preference, but they can do what they want with. It afterwards, Long story short, I mean. I'll sell a print. A 16 by 20 print with the you know the images floated with two inches on the top left and right, and then the bottom for me to sign and and put my I have a stamp that I used and so they could buy. They buy



that for \$150.00 includes includes. The the mail, OK the the shipping. To get a good frame. A good frame, not something from. Target or you know whatever. Yeah. And have it mattered and. You know, with the museum glass. The whole 9 yards you're looking at 3:00.

Michael Morris

1200 bucks, yeah.

Ron Fortier

\$100 yeah. You know, I mean just one painting of mine, a canvas 24 by \$24600 for basically. Four pieces of wood. You know.

Michael Morris

It's very expensive.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah.

Michael Morris

But if you have a customer that I that wants to do that, that's great. You know, because then because then you know you understand that like they want quality over quantity, you know? Yeah, I I have seen it. It is Nice is a a lab in Germany. White Wall that does a an excellent job doing that and.

Ron Fortier

Right, right.

Michael Morris

So you know, it all depends on your preference. Some people don't want to go that route. I mean, it's great for businesses, it's great for like people who have big space that fail. If you want to do it at 2 by 4. Or, you know, because you know anything under 2 by 4? Really I don't think takes advantage of being in an aluminum or under glass like if it's big, that's when you take advantage of that. You know, other than that, just put it in A-frame, you know, I tell people. You got to go big to go do that. Something like that. Because that's that's the only. It's like a television. You know, you're not going to know that the little. Thing on your screen, but then when you look at your television, it's like. It's a whole different experience and that's the whole point. You can go up to it. You. Can look at the detail. You can see what's going through it.

Ron Fortier

Right. And don't forget in the showroom it doesn't have windows. So you're not gonna. You're not gonna be fighting, you know, extremely slight. So that that makes.

Michael Morris

Museum glass is expensive.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, that's that's another. Thing and it has. To breathe and. So there's a lot of considerations and I think basically it's just that the market. Has to be. The consumer has to be educated on those on those things. Yeah. And it, you know, people will will go out and. Oh, is it acid free paper?

Michael Morris

No, never. Is it? Yeah, never. They'll never ask those questions. Is the purchase clay? No, it's not. They don't. Never ask that. But yeah, it is. You know, of course it is.



Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's, it's, it's it's kind of nuts. Your children now, since they're pretty much the reason how you really got into this. Are they just used to? You having a camera all the time?

Michael Morris

It became very easy. Thankfully, thankfully.

Ron Fortier

Are they just by osmosis, so to speak, picking up the camera using this a cell phone or whatever, and just shooting away or?

Michael Morris

Yeah, now it's with filters, though they do those like little filters and they do the funny things. Yeah, they play the games with it, but yeah, my daughter definitely takes up the picks up the camera and then my son's only two and he's. Going through it and he's swiping and it's it's. It's pretty incredible, yeah.

Ron Fortier

It it is kind of interesting to see.

Michael Morris

He took take some photos. It's funny.

Ron Fortier

It it, it is incredible to see these kids. I mean it. It's kind of bizarre. They're like, kind of trained in the womb or something because they just take to it so automatically it there's no, you know, what's that or whatever, they just they start swiping and.

Michael Morris

Yeah, he's just just there, he's like.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yes. I want to wrap this up in a bit, but. If you have like a magic wand and you could, you could only use that magic wand for one wish. To and it, it can only apply to your career as a photographer. What would? What would you do? What would you wish for?

Michael Morris

Probably be get more exposure. It's tough exposure is, is very tough. You have to really know somebody that knows somebody that knows more people, that knows another person. That's that's the tough stuff. Getting exposure nowadays is very tough because it's. Back then, people would know who you were if. You were a. Photographer or you did something. Now it's you. You. You just do a little quick search and you got like 50 peoples in. A second that will. That could do a job, you know? So exposure is exposure is the number one thing definitely getting exposure because once you know once the exposure happens, everything else is pretty easy. So yeah, nowadays it's just the digital age makes it tough to get exposed cause it's just so many. So many ways.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, I'm, I mean, I'm thinking about a guy like Dana Smith. He's from this. Area and he started off, you know, like a lot of people do. I remember the morning of the kernville fires. He just happened to be there. Because he was doing work for an agency I was working for, and as we were coming into work, we could see the, you know, the sky. 'S on fire and you know he he did some stringing, I guess for the standard times. And then he ended up going to Yankee magazine. You know, I haven't had a chance to get. On the show, but.





Speaker

I think.

Ron Fortier

A lot of it is is, you know, the exposure comes through networking and the networking is is, is, is a form of community. It's not you just knowing people, it's people knowing of you.

Michael Morris

Yes. Yeah.

Ron Fortier

And I think that, you know I I was used to saying like my classes at, you know, birds of a feather flock together. So and people who. People like doing business with people they like. So they can't like you unless they know you. So there's the introductions. There's being in the right place at the right time, so to speak. It's the big break. You know, when you're getting you got a shot that.

Speaker

I guess these days.

Ron Fortier

It's gonna happen on Instagram, on Facebook. Where it's a shock. That she totally blows people away.

Michael Morris

I got lucky couple of months back. The magazine has it come out yet? Because who knows when it's, you know how they work. But I did a shot. From a. Random magazine. So that was pretty cool. It's a national magazine, so I'm I'm looking forward to see when that comes out and then you. Know my name is in there and I've been. I've been into like Soco. I've been into like all these other, you know, other places I've been featured on many. You know the places even like just on Instagram, like FAO Schwartz and Pier one. I I actually won a won a photo photography contest on PS1. I won \$1000 gift card. So that was pretty cool. I was able to style my house. So it is a, you know exposures? Definitely one thing, because if you know someone like all it takes is that one time. So I'm hoping like, you know, once maybe this random magazine goes out and it gets published, maybe that exposure shows it to other interior designers and it it it. So it was someone I knew that knew me. So, you know, hopefully it's a waiting game, but it, you know. Hopeful that it'll actually see that maybe I'll get a lead from that, maybe something will happen because I'll be in there as a total credit.

Speaker

OK.

Michael Morris

And stuff for the magazine so.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah. Now, I didn't ask you, but is this full time? Is this? Your job or is? This OK.

Michael Morris

No, no. Yeah, that's that's the incredible thing about it too, cause it's. It's kind of is a full time job and it's not, but yes, right. Yeah.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah. I mean, there's a lot. Of us that you know. We can consider, you know, or what people. Think is a



hobby to be. A real job and then the other. Job is just to pay. The Bills and put you know.

Michael Morris

Yeah, yeah. Well, just took off from taking pictures with my.

Ron Fortier

They were.

Michael Morris

Daughter to a lot of. Other things now you know it's being a full time business and. You know, and and they actually it's just business has picked up. You know I've had something. Every week so. Since since April, since the weather, obviously, but.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Ohh, that's interesting. That's interesting. Well, we're definitely gonna wrap it up. Now our final question. Let's see. If you could. Be reincarnated as any photographer that's ever existed.

Michael Morris

Slim arons.

Ron Fortier

You get out about there. Yeah, and because.

Michael Morris

He lived a good life and he captured he jet set life. If you actually go look back in his book, he captured history that you can never get back history that you do not know existed and he captured it in the best way possible. These people live the life of being privileged and it's just. We, you know, he lived a hell of a good life doing those things and seeing what he did. I mean, I could imagine the stuff he saw was pretty crazy too, because back then it wasn't Instagram and. People are very private but and you got to travel all over you get to see the best of the best and you get the his networking was was.

Ron Fortier

Right.

Michael Morris

Was one of the best in the world. So yeah, I I envied what he did and he he lived during the time where. Man, it was it was cool to. Party, you know.

Ron Fortier

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. There there was a whole. It was a whole. It was definitely a whole other world, that's for sure. Alright. Well thank you so much. I'm going to wrap this up and so hold on a second. Hi this. Is Ron Fortier with a? Another episode of the In Focus podcast. Brought to you by the. Artist index, the South Coast Artist Index and sponsored by Heavenly Spirits Importers of fine French spirits, primarily with that might we hope that you're getting along well. You're enjoying your summer. And remember, be kind to each other out there until the next time. Thanks and goodbye.