

Charles Caito Biography

Charles Caito is a fine art photographer who uses large format cameras and old world techniques to shoot his subjects.

Caito always knew that he wanted to do something creative but when he was ready to choose his career path his parents swayed him into business, assuring him that he'd make a better living in a non-creative field. He pursued business and sales, all the while feeling as though this was not the direction in which he wanted to move.

As a young man in high school, Caito had a brief interest in photography. After several years in business, his interest in photography was rekindled. His interest in photography continued to grow, and he saw a documentary about O. Winston Link. Link was a large format photographer who is famous for shooting pictures of Norfolk & Western Railroad's steam engines in the late 1950s. After this documentary and subsequently receiving two of Link's photographs as an anniversary present from his wife, Caito researched images and techniques from the Impressionistic Movement and a method of reproduction called Photogravure. He knew that in order to achieve the kind of photographs he wanted to produce, he'd have to start using larger cameras, coupled with some of the old world methods of producing images and his pursuit of large format photography was cemented.

Another photographer that heavily influences Caito's work is Josef Sudek. Sudek was a Czechoslovakian photographer who worked during the early to mid 1900s. It was Sudek's body of work, especially his work with pigment prints that influenced Caito.

In 1996 Caito moved to the United Kingdom where he began to teach himself the fundamentals of large format photography by purchasing books from used book stores and borrowing a camera from a friend for a week. Though primarily self-taught he was lucky enough to find willing tutors who gave him the specific technical skills required to produce the photographs he wanted to capture.

Caito likens himself to a keeper of records when photographing. He uses his industrial design background to work out some of the technical problems of taking a photograph. He maintains the final image as close to the scene as he saw it. He believes that previsualization of the final image is crucial when photographing the subject manner and has just recently found himself drawn back to more impressionistic forms of photography. Impressionism was an early guiding influence to him.

Caito spent several years developing his fine art style and technique. He realized rather quickly that he enjoyed shooting historical images and has occasionally documented historic registered houses before they underwent major renovation. In shooting pictorial histories of buildings, he wants to preserve the original integrity of the images. His photographs therefore usually do not include people. Having people in such images can cause problems because they're outfitted in current clothing that contradicts an image of a 200 to 300 year old building.

Caito has also been inspired and heavily influenced by an old method of photography known as photogravure. While studying the history of photography he has come to notice that the reproductive quality of the photogravures give a gentle softness of images, he tries to achieve this in his current work. Though he has not yet tried the actual method of photogravure, he continues to pursue it and hopes to learn the correct technique.

Over the years, Caito's style continues to evolve. In 1999 he had a show at the Monymusk Arts Centre in Aberdeenshire and exhibited three of his photographs in the Dee Side Art Exhibition the following year. In 2004 he exhibited some of his work in Boston at Peter Williams Museum Services Studio, where he sold some of his work.

The Cleveland Society of Alternative Photographers will be having an exhibit at the Cleveland Plain Dealer Gallery opening on January 30, 2008. Caito will have a new collection of platinum prints on display at this exhibition. As a member of the Cleveland Society of Alternative Photographers, Caito is part of a group of photographers that uses old world methods to produce their images. These methods include: Daguerreotype, Platinum, Albumen, Wet Collodion, Cyanotype, and Gum Bichromate printing methods among others. Caito primarily likes to work with the Platinum method.

While constantly pursuing his love of photography, Caito and his wife split their time between Cleveland, Ohio in the warm weather and Vero Beach, Florida in the colder months.

