

NORM DIAMOND

PORTFOLIO

normdiamondphoto.com

USA





NORM DIAMOND

PORTFOLIO

normdiamondphoto.com
USA

Early in 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General stated what I already knew: that many of us live a life of “loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection.” I think sadness and emptiness are words that could be added.

I had come to this realization one afternoon ten years earlier while visiting Chicago. In a roadway underpass, I saw the words “Help Me” painted on a concrete wall next to an image of a fish out of water. I was struck by the setting and the light, but mostly by the plaintive message. It seemed to succinctly express the unsettling aspect of the human condition that the Surgeon General subsequently described. I spent some time lingering in that spot, contemplating it, photographing it.

That image and its message marked the beginning of this ongoing body of work, Dark Windows. Sometimes shot in low light or at night with incidental lighting, and sometimes in bright daylight, the photographs capture stark, raw, and solitary moments: the lonely view from inside my old childhood living room, a man pensively staring at his own reflection through an antique attic mirror, a lone rower in a scull on San Francisco Bay.

I am often asked why my pictures are so dark and why I avoid photographing beautiful things. My long career as an interventional radiologist played a large role in shaping what I photograph. My colleagues and I used imaging guidance to perform invasive procedures that enabled patients to avoid much more invasive surgeries. It is a stressful field with a high burnout rate, but very gratifying. When I worked, I was too busy concentrating on what I was doing to fully understand the fear and anxiety I knew my patients were experiencing. Retirement enabled me to become much more open to what I had missed. I began photographing scenes that spoke to the emotions I saw in others and eventually in myself.

I looked to my childhood as another source for my rendition of the Surgeon General’s message. I grew up a Jewish kid in the middle of the Midwest corn belt, with a father I could not please, and an inability to fit in with my peers. It was a setup for isolation that followed me as I grew older. With the help of others, I found the strength within myself to get by and succeed. I have had a long, happy marriage and two children I love and nurture. Yet, the feelings of isolation that I experienced reside just beneath the surface of my consciousness. When I go out with my camera, I photograph scenes that harken back to those feelings.

Norm Diamond is a fine art photographer based in Dallas, Texas. For over thirty years he worked as an interventional radiologist, a specialty closer to surgery than radiology. He retired knowing he would become a photographer. After studying with many great teachers, including a mentor, Diamond realized that his images reflected the feelings he had never been able to express before – about his early family life and what he saw and felt as a physician. Themes of memory, loss, and isolation weave through his photographs. “Dark Windows” comprises such images from the past ten years.

During this time, Diamond also embarked on two shorter-term projects that embody similar themes. In the first he visited hundreds of estate sales, photographing the poignancy, irony, and humor he found in the possessions offered by one generation to the next. He photographed at the sales themselves and bought inexpensive items he photographed in his studio. What Is Left Behind – Stories from Estate Sales became a monograph published by Daylight Books in 2017.

In Doug’s Gym, he chronicled the last six months of a dilapidated, yet somehow beautiful old gym in downtown Dallas. The physical decay intrigued him as did its octogenarian owner, Doug Eidd, a character from a bygone era, who had owned the gym for fifty-five years. German publisher Kehrer Verlag published Doug’s Gym: The Last of Its Kind in February 2020.

Diamond has received many honors including being named a finalist for Photolucida’s Critical Mass competition in six different years. His work has been shown in several solo gallery exhibitions as well as many group shows including the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, the Griffin Museum of Photography, the University of Southern Mississippi Museum of Art, among others. The Sixth Floor Museum in Dallas acquired his photographs from the 50-year commemoration of President Kennedy’s assassination.













