

Photo taken 09-11-2021 at downtown Midland, Tx
Photographer – Malcolm McElvaney



Why do I keep taking the next photograph and one after that one?

The question applies to this image as I took it on 09/11/2021 in downtown Midland, TX but this session wasn't unplanned but a gathering of photographers to just go take some pictures at Centennial Park. The groups plan changed as the park was closed but I was in a new place to explore so I did. I never know what I will find or even why I select a scene to photograph sometimes but this session produced two hours of field time and six images processed from bracketed sets. Another aspect that I find just as satisfying as taking the picture is the post processing because one can't predict exactly where the combining of multiple exposures and selection of blend modes may lead. I like to use layers to blend together the final images I work on and inspiration can definitely result along the way.

Having created this image and being able to make the mural on the wall pop out I can appreciate this and gladly add it to my collection; however, beyond backing up files and storing it did it serve a purpose long term. My collection is vast and forgotten but in this moment the newest addition is remembered until time buries it under the sheer volume of each new addition. Being secreted away is an option that photographers have used

because they produce the work for themselves not others but sharing the work and at least letting others see the final stage of the process is the route I prefer. Until recently I would have posted this on the Facebook page of the camera club I joined to at least be appreciated by a few more people. Does this action make the inevitable archiving of an image alter it being lost in time in anyway because even on Facebook it is a reduced in quality version to be replaced by images posted later. Be it the stream of never ending images or time itself nothing is forever. A fleeting visual treat and some lessons learned to apply to another image is perhaps the best result possible unless printed out and framed.

Where does that need to share come from and what is the motivation? As I avoided most social media I'm no expert but posting this image or any other to count how many likes and comments it got would be a motive I know that would play a part in the decision and this feedback isn't bad necessarily. Does this feedback alter what I shoot and aim to post as an external reason to take pictures and not some other purpose. In general this is something to consider even if it isn't based on what will sell for money, my goal is to be random and shoot pictures I like regardless of who may see it. Once upon a time in 2007 I focused all my energy on the Monahans Sandhills State Park and for a year and half at least I just visited that one location and the pictures built up until one day I questioned why I kept doing this. That phase was over but I discovered the value of the collection and sharing with others. The gates being opened and new places to explore perhaps I shared too much but like all cycles I know I don't share as much as I use to. From a focus that I sometime wish I still had and ability to experience a place so uniquely to working on the artistic talent and just being present maybe the motivation isn't so critical as photography is a way to clear my mind and observe the world around me.

I got off of Facebook finally so I can't post the image there but have shutting off one path a new path has to be created to allow an outlet for this creative energy. This is the challenge I have set myself. If you are reading this then you have found that new outlet.