



Nancy Breslin, 2-14-08. Tea at the Mad Hatter Café, San Antonio, Texas (2 minute pinhole exposure), toned silver gelatin print, 10" x 10", 2008



Nancy Breslin

Established Professional, Photography
Newark

Fine art photographer Nancy Breslin switched from a career as an academic psychiatrist more than 10 years ago and has never looked back. Rather, she continues to move forward, experimenting with techniques and subjects in her chosen field.

A favorite subject has been amusement parks, but she also has photographed circuses, young ballet dancers, and cemeteries. More recently, Breslin has added a pinhole camera to her list of standard equipment, capturing mealtime scenes for her "square meals series."

The artist has had numerous one- and two-person exhibitions in the region and has participated in more than 40 group shows. She is a part-time faculty member of the art department at the University of Delaware and has written and lectured about photography in a variety of settings. In the past two years, some of her individual pinhole images have been featured in print and online publications.

For almost five years, I have been creating a "pinhole diary of eating out," taking photographs of my meals at restaurants, coffee shops, friends' homes, and events with a pinhole camera. The tiny pinhole aperture requires long exposures, typically a few seconds to 20 minutes indoors, which causes moving objects to blur. Mealtimes feel like a perfect pinhole subject to me, as they last a reasonably long time and feature a mixture of movement (people, cutlery, glassware) and stillness (table, centerpiece, the room). Because the people blur over time, these images are not portraits of my friends and family eating, but rather capture dining as a more universal ritual.

Without a viewfinder, I cannot formally compose the images, and I may have limited control over where to place the camera (needing, as I do, a stable spot that can remain undisturbed), and I may find fascinating surprises in the resulting images. The camera's vantage point is often unusual and might highlight saltshakers or a beautiful ceiling, details that would not engage the viewer if a more traditional photograph had been taken. My hope is that, when seeing a set of these images, a viewer will be met with equal parts familiarity and strangeness. We've all been to restaurants, but not taken it in from a "spoon's eye" view. We've all sat through the length of many meals, yet not seen this time compressed visually into a single frame.

The pinhole diary becomes an interesting distortion of my own experience, as the things that most engaged me during a meal (primarily the people I am with) become ghostly or may entirely disappear, while the camera brings attention to objects and shapes that I may not have even noticed. — N.B.

In March, Nancy Breslin's photographs are on display in the Delaware Division of the Arts Mezzanine Gallery, in the Carvel State Building, 820 N. French Street, Wilmington.



Annette Opalczynski

Established Professional, Poetry
New Castle

Working in the busy procurement office of Delaware Health and Social Services, Annette Opalczynski saves her creative writing for her non-working hours. Driving to and from work or window shopping at the mall, she is constantly turning over ideas in her mind and composing lines of poetry.

Opalczynski earned her M.F.A. in creative writing from American University in Washington, D.C., and has had her poetry featured in literary and other publications since 1999. One of her works, "One To Grow On For A NYC Bike Messenger," was included in the poetry anthology *The Pagan's Muse*, edited by Jane Raeburn. She was a semi-finalist in the 8th Annual Paumanok Poetry Award Visiting Writer's Program at the State University of New York in 1999, and in 2000, won honorable mention in the Jeannette Slocomb Edwards Poetry Contest, as well as an Emerging Individual Artist Fellowship from the Delaware Division of the Arts.

I started writing in the 4th grade. I even remember the classroom assignment that started it all: "What would you do if you visited Peter Pan in Neverland?" The other kids wrote about a page and I wrote seven—front and back. I was hooked. In high school, I began writing poetry. In college, I wrote stories and an occasional poem.

I have always wanted to write a novel, but I don't seem to have the patience. A poem can be written in one sitting and that gives me a sense of accomplishment. I usually work on several poems at the same time, so that if one "trail goes cold" I can immediately work on something else.

My poems tend to be brief, but intense. Family relationships seem to be one of my pre-occupations. I think readers will find my poetry accessible because I write about the emotions that everyone experiences, such as love or grief. Through poetry, I get to share my experiences, real and imagined. — A.O.

Annette Opalczynski will read her poetry at the New Castle Public Library, 424 Delaware Street, New Castle, at 2 p.m., Saturday, April 19. The reading is open to the public.

When My Mother Looked Like Susan Hayward

I want to see you
before the colitis and arthritis
did things to you.
I want you to be the blue-green bikini girl
who splashed in the pool with me
when I was five.
I want your skin to be smooth,
and your hair to be long and auburn,
just like Susan Hayward's.
I want to see the teenager
who cut gym
and sat in Sal's Hoagie Shop,
blowing smoke rings.
Tell me again
about the man you almost married.
He drove a hot pink '57 Chevy
and when you broke up,
you led him on a high-speed chase
for his engagement ring.
Tell me about my father,
the sailor,
who swept you
off your feet like a wave
and carried you across
a wet parking lot
so you wouldn't ruin
your new suede shoes.
Tell me about the nights
you rode on the back of a Harley.
What were you like
back then,
when your laughter
could shatter moonlight?

— Annette Opalczynski