

Sally Gall

"I ALWAYS WANTED to be an artist, perhaps a sculptor, or painter, and when I discovered photography, I realized that this was the medium I could express myself in", relates Sally Gall. I could interact with the real world, be in the real world, move through the real world and not be isolated in a studio. It appealed to me to be outdoors particularly, a love of nature being one of my strongest passions since childhood. Thus, photographing the natural world seemed an obvious activity.

I graduated from Rhode Island School of Design with a BFA in Photography in 1978. Shortly after that I began teaching photography as well as continuing to make photographs. It was only when I moved to New York City in 1989 that I realized the possibilities within the huge world of client driven commissioned photography; magazines, advertising, private commissions.

I began to take my portfolio around to photo editors and art directors and started doing editorial work which opened up an entire new realm to me, that of problem solving for a client, which was very different from being personally motivated to photograph. I got jobs that sent me to places where I met people that I never would have encountered in any other way; from photographing life in a remote inaccessible (except by boat) village in Fiji, to photographing Israel's female judo Olympic athlete.

My clients have been diverse, like The New York Times Sunday Magazine, Travel & Leisure Magazine, Esquire, Men's Journal, and the list goes on. This in turn led to some advertising work, and though I don't do it often, it has offered some of my most interesting work. One example, for an Adidas trail running shoe; a beautiful unpeopled landscape with a path leading into the woods; for another Adidas shot, a runner, small, against a vast expanse of sand dunes, ocean, and sky, jumping into the air while cresting on the dune. I did the photographs in black and white, my chosen medium.

My current personal project is a body of work, which will be an exhibition concurrent with the publication of my next book tentatively titled *Into Darkness*. It contains photographs about going underground, into the earth, into caves and grottoes, photographs about the mystery of darkness. After years of being a landscape photographer, interested in light and expansive space, it only made sense to tackle the idea of what is below.

The book is scheduled for publication in 2002. One of my proudest achievements was the publication by Chronicle Books/Umbra Editions in 1995, of my book *The Water's Edge*: photographs about the sensuality of water and the edge between water and earth, liquid and solid.

My time is divided between my own work and assignments, and it is different every year. I have worked with the Hasselblad since the beginning, being naturally drawn to the square format and wonderful sharpness of the lenses. Landscape often lends itself to the more traditional rectangle, but I wanted to do something different. I work very minimally, same film, same few lenses. I own a 35mm and have recently bought and started working in 4x5. I don't use the 35mm very often, it simply seems too small, both the image in the viewfinder and the negative. I don't have an opinion about digital photography. It is simply another medium, and one I have not yet been very interested in. It seems handy for commercial enterprises, but for the moment I am still very interested in the art of printmaking, so I prefer to have a negative, rather than a digital output.

I think the key to success in any endeavour in life, is a combination of passion and determination. My advice to any young artist is that one has to be extremely self-motivated and self-dependent as external success and rewards are hard to come by. Photography is essentially a solo act, despite the production crews on commercial shoots. You need to be able to push yourself and go for it alone. And believe in your own vision. The hardest thing is to really have a vision that is uniquely your own. How to achieve that is one of the great mysteries."



Tropical landscapes



Oasis, 1999