

## Perspective

An interview of the up and coming Photographer Nate Moreno, interviewed by Art Historian Kylie Foster, on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2021.

I. Kylie: I will begin by introducing myself, Hello! My name is Kylie Foster, I am from Magnolia, TX and I am a senior thesis student at Texas State University within the Art History department. I am really passionate about art because I believe it has a lot of cultural value and that it tells the story of humanity in a beautiful way. Will you please introduce yourself and my first question is why are you passionate about art?

Nate: My name is Nate Moreno, I am from San Antonio, TX. This is my first semester in my senior year, so I am taking Thesis 1. I am a Photography major so that's the art practice that I am pursuing and the reason that I am passionate about it is because I just enjoy the process of taking photos and the post process of editing the photos and the excitement of taking a good photograph. I am not necessarily focused on all the art. I am more focused on taking a good photograph and how to manipulate light in different ways. That is my main focus.

II. Kylie: Where do you work? Where do you create art?

Nate: My job to pay the bills is at Earthbound in the outlet mall off of "Centerpoint." Right now, working within my profession, I do not have much area there. I am mainly just on my own for the meantime, building my portfolio until I have a big binder to share with others.

III. Kylie: Where do you prefer to photograph?

Nate: I try not to limit myself. So I don't only take photos outdoors, I don't only take photos on the shore or of landscape. I mainly like to shoot as many things as I can just to get as good as I can, in a lot of different areas. As far as my setting, I am pretty much everywhere. I think that is the best course of action for me to be, if I am limited to only doing portraiture then I am restricting myself from everything else that I can be absorbing. So I would have to say that everywhere is my setting.

IV. Kylie: What sort of equipment do you use?

Nate: I currently use a Canon Rebel T5 so it is pretty old. It is not a full frame, it is equipped with a crop sensor, I currently have 4 lenses. I have a 1835 mm, a 70-300, a 10-18 wide angle lens and a standard portrait focus 50mm lens. So I have four different ones that I use.

V. Kylie: Will you describe your artistic process?

Nate: Outside of school when I take photos on my own. I am attracted to shadows and contrast. So the process of me making work is if i see something that is saturated or intense in contrast with something plain, like in the real world, it catches my eye. Of course just your standard, "oh that's pretty, I should take a picture of that" is similar to that. Sorry, my roommate is taking a shower, so you might hear some water. Let me see, if its something that does not require props, or setup, its really quick. But when it does require some thinking, I like to use mirrors, that's something that I would use in my process. I do take more time with that so its a more slow and methodical process.

VI. Kylie: Who are your influencers? Where do you find inspiration?

Nate: Normal photographers and my family, my mom and dad, growing up would always record family events. And a lot of those recordings, when I listen to those I can hear myself ask my dad if I can look into the camera, “can I see? Can I look through the viewfinder?” So ever since I was little, I guess I was just naturally attracted to the camera. My mom had a point and shoot film camera that she regularly developed. One time as a child, I noticed that when the film was exposed on the back on the camera, and when she developed the film, the pictures came out fiery red and that intrigued me. So I guess that I was unconsciously inspired or influenced by my mom and dad having cameras around me. As far as photographers, I really like William Eggleston, and the way that he works with colors, especially his books filled with mundane objects in attractive colors. Another one is Steve McCurry, growing up I have always thought about being a National Geographic photographer. I am sure that is every photographers starting off dream. But his photograph of *Afghan Girl*, I am sure that is his most popular photo. I fell in love with the lighting and position, I want to take photographs just like that. To name a third, I would say Eli Reed, I think he makes beautiful photos with tonality. He shoots a lot in black and white, so I think his tones are really sharp.

VII. Kylie: What is the message that you try to convey through your work?

Nate: Starting from the beginning, I try to make good photographs, and the definition of good can be changed drastically by who is defining it. So I guess that my message is just to have fun, just have fun with what your doing. Whether or not its photography, if its ceramics or drawing, just have fun with it. If you don't then you are hurting yourself. That's the most important thing in my message.

VIII. Kylie: Where do you see your work in three years?

Nate: I see my work expanding, I see a binder full with photographs, of friends, weddings, maternity photos, athletic photos. I hope in three years that I have a fat binder and that I can walk into a corporate office and show them my work to generate business. Ideally I will have an 1.5 inch binder full. I don't think that my work will ever be finished but in three years, I believe that I will accumulate a good amount of material.

IX. Kylie: When did you start taking photographs?

Nate: The summer of sophomore year in high school, I remember I was walking to a friends house. In another neighborhood, outside of mine. It was a neighborhood that I had never been to, and they had this big lake in the center of the neighborhood. My neighborhood had one too but it was like a pond compared to a lake. I just remember waiting of my friends to get out and at that time I was riding a skate board. I rode it down the hill and to the edge of a bank. I remember that I sat down, on the edge of a rock, waiting for them and I just took a picture. And when I took the picture I noticed that I liked the way the tree watching composed in the image. That's before I knew what composition was. And when I started to edit, I remember realizing how fun it was to mess with the different values.

Kylie: That was your first work of art?

Nate: Yes, the first one that I can make note of.

X. Kylie: What have you worked on most recently?

Nate: Most recently I am working on my thesis project, that deals with a lot of trash and pollution. But since that one isn't completed, I guess the most recent one was last semester. I did an intervention project. And that one I did use mirrors outside and I set myself up to be duplicated and missing in the scene.

Kylie: What is the title of your thesis?

Nate: It is a working title so I don't have one just yet.

Kylie: Its about pollution. What is your claim?

Nate: That pollution is getting out of hand. Through photography I am trying to showcase that we are living in a bedroom that is surrounded by trash, that it can be uncomfortable to look at because it can be gross and disgusting. But that's how we are living now a days, there is trash everywhere we we go and people are just too lazy to throw it way. So that's what I am trying to convey that it is getting out of hand.

Kylie: What do you think the solution is?

Nate: Just don't be lazy. Throw away trash in the bins, if it flies away don't be like "nature will take its course." No, go get it and throw it away, just to not be lazy is the best way.

Kylie: Would you say that you are passionate about sustainability?

Nate: I would say that I am passionate about the health of civilization and the planet.

XI. Kylie: Why did you pursue photography as a degree?

Nate: Because with the way technology has been advancing, high end jobs such as like particular scientists or computer engineers. Recently those particular jobs have been automated, and have been taken away leaving those people with degrees high and dry. With art, Art cannot be replaced with a robot. Yeah you can have a robot take pictures, if you set it up somewhere on

a timer, but it won't have that artistic and creative eye that a human has. So I think pursuing a degree in the art division is very important when it comes to looking at the far future in automation and where that can go.

XII. Kylie: How do you intend to monetize your work?

Nate: That's a good question, how will I make money? To start, I want to just, as I am building my portfolio if I know a friend that is pregnant and she needs maternity photos, I will offer my skill set to take the photos. Once I get enough practice in for my own personal sake, to where I feel more comfortable, I will start saying "hey! If you guys need photos I will charge X amount by the hour, and if you like the work then I will charge you by the print or I can charge for the digital copy. But I think just working with close friends and finding my comfort price, I think is going to be the best way to start, at least for the meantime.

