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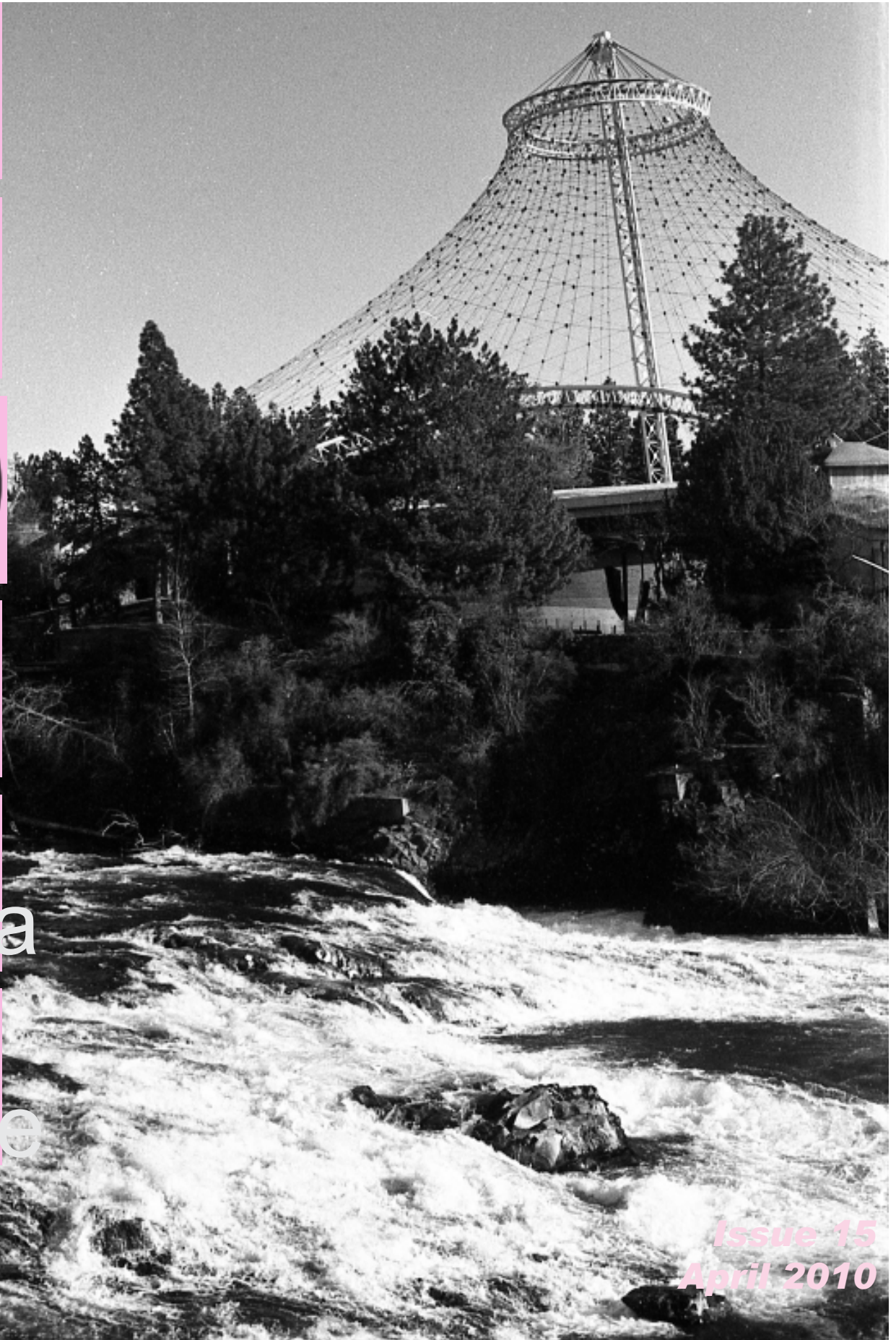
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Issue 15
April 2010

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SPOKE(a)N(e)

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*We do our best to make sure all items are accurate and complete, if you notice a mistake, let us know at
spokenspokane@gmail.com. We will do our best to rectify the error.*

Contributions, story ideas, letters to the editor, love, hate, baked beans and cookies to spokenspokane@gmail.com

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When Tyson and Sara asked if I wanted to take over the magazine, I was incredibly excited about the idea. While my zeal hasn't abated, I am slowly beginning to realize the responsibility that I am undertaking. Providing a quality product, month after month, is no small feat. Yet, it's a challenge I'm glad to be undertaking. □

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There are still puzzles I'm trying to solve and ideas I want to test. I am confident that everything will work out. Readers of this magazine, including me, have come to expect quality, and I promise to do my very best to maintain it. □

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I encourage feedback. I encourage submissions. I encourage high-fives if you see me around town. I encourage you to share SPOKE(a)N(e) with your friends. Let's show the world what Spokane has to offer!

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Thank you to all who helped me put together this first issue. Your assistance and support helped make this possible in more ways than you can imagine. □

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Finally, I want to thank Tyson and Sara once again for this opportunity. I have been blessed to count them among my friends over these many months and truly wish them the best of luck in their new lives. Guys, you will be missed. Be sure to stay in touch! □

All right then, let's get started.

Michael McMullen
Editor
SPOKE(a)N(e) Magazine
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*Photo by
Michael
McMullen*

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Self Portrait by Matt Shumate

What initially drew me to the work of Matt Shumate was the variety of styles I saw: portraiture, wedding, photojournalism, and street photography. While I have seen all of these styles done before, Matt has a uniqueness to his work that stands out from the crowd. If you're anything like me, looking at the work of Matt Shumate makes you want to improve your craft.

Spokane photographers, the bar has been raised. □

Tell us a bit about yourself, basic biographical background stuff. □

I grew up in Tacoma. Strong family. Played sports. Always enjoyed drawing. Never took anything other than a basic art class until going to school for art. The support of my family—first parents, now wife and kids—has always given me the freedom to pursue my passions. Majored in just about everything (biology, criminal law, marriage/family counseling) before deciding to start over and reassess what I really wanted to do. I remembered that I'd always loved letters/fonts and logos and [had] drawn them out whenever I could—before I even knew that graphic design was an actual vocation. Art school was the answer. Graduated from PLU with a BFA in design, minor in art history. Moved to Spokane a couple of months after graduating because I was offered a job. □



When did you first become interested in photography? □

I always appreciated being able to click the shutter on my dad's camera, but since film was so expensive, it was a rarity. In art school, I had to take sculpture, ceramics, watercolor, drawing, and photography along with my design classes. I fell in love with the developing film and the darkroom in that photography class. I spent every chance I could perfecting my prints. Many days, I'd get to the darkroom when the building was just opening and hide out there until after the building was locked up. I even had my photography instructor suggest changing to photography from design. No chance, I thought, since I reasoned graphic design had more feasible job options. After graduating, I decided to put photography on the back burner to concentrate on graphic design. Finally, at the beginning of 2009, I woke up the sleeping dragon that was resting dormant. □

Who are your biggest influences? □

My biggest influences come from all over. The classes in school which helped my creativity more than any other were my sculpture classes. I had to learn how to creatively solve problems which comes in handy when something happens. □

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A few days ago, I was taking pictures on location and I needed a reflector, so I grabbed a white door laying against a wall to use as a reflector. I also had to learn how to self-critique my work. I take lots of really bad photos, but I've learned how to only show the photos I feel meet my standards which has fooled people enough that they think I'm a decent photographer. □

My graphic design experience probably informs my photography more than anything. I have no doubt that it was important for me to come to photography through the path of graphic design. I feel like graphic design is a large component of my photography "style." Both graphic design and photography share the elements of line, color, contrast, and composition, not to mention the software crosses over between the different disciplines. The things I had to focus on when I decided to take on photography are the technical things like camera settings and understanding the properties of light. Really, my photography influences are all around me. I try to always have my eyes open and looking for inspiration. Sometimes it's in a movie, sometimes it's a music video, sometimes it's a magazine (I love fashion magazines), sometimes it's a book I'm reading. Photographers who influence me are way too many to list. If I had to pick a single photographer who influences me, it's gotta be Zack Arias. His story and OneLight DVD have changed my life, quite literally. □



What are your long term goals with photography?□

I'm not sure about long-term goals yet. My photography life has moved at a pace faster than I could plan for, so looking too far forward is tough right now. I have several short-term goals which I focus on constantly. The biggest one is that I want to connect with my clients and deliver to them photography that moves them. I honestly feel blessed to have clients who trust me enough to hire me, but also who trust me enough to open up to me and allow my lens to really see them. More than loving it when I hear people love the look of my photography, the compliment I live for is when I'm told that I've captured their emotions and personality. Whatever happens, I never want to become complacent in my photography. If I show up to a session or wedding without those butterflies in my stomach, I'll know it's time to reassess what I'm doing, since those butterflies are what keep me motivated to get the best for my clients.□



What sort of things going on in the Spokane creative community are inspiring you right now? □

Openness. I was shocked by how open the community—especially among wedding photographers—is. I've been in competitive industries before and in all of those the competition is cutthroat. If someone has success, they're so protective of whatever it is that's allowed them to achieve that success. □

I got into wedding photography fully expecting to exercise the competitive elements of my personality. That was quickly dampened when I was welcomed by photographers who I have looked up to since I started shooting. They offer words of advice that are better than I could ever get from a book or online resource. Likewise, if there's something I'm doing that I can share, I'm happy to. Since I love talking about photography, it's easy to get me to divulge any of my "secrets." Really, all it takes is asking me. □

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What would you like to see more of from Spokane as a creative community? □

I'd like to see the creative community expanded to include everyone. We all have art in us somewhere, but sometime in our lives it's pushed out of us as we're told it's not important and we need to spend time doing "something productive." Fortunately, I don't ever remember that happening to me and I think that's given me the confidence to become "a creative." I've learned that for me, the times when I'm most productive are the times when I allow myself the opportunity to create, since creativity frequently comes down to figuring out new ways to solve problems.

To see more of Matt's work, please visit www.mattshumate.com

*-Interview by Michael McMullen.
All images by Matt Shumate.*

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There was a lot to cover this month for First Friday. Between the Transcendence Project, and a host of different artists from around the area, it was a very exciting night.

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The Transcendence Project was a collaboration between the artistic community, non-profit groups and businesses. Various businesses provided spaces for installations created by the artists to showcase the mission of their partner groups.

□ I started out at the STA Plaza where the Salvation Army had set up their Transcendence Project installation, “Blanketing the Community.” It was a tent made out of blankets with children’s drawings attached to them. Inside, they had statistics explaining the work of various community programs. This piece—interactive art that is educational and creates a focal point for both artists and the community at large—is what initially drew me to the concept of the Transcendence Project. Sadly, I wasn’t able to hear the Salvation Army brass band, but I’m sure they rocked the house. □

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Next was a visit to the Kress Gallery. They had sumi-e paintings displayed, as well as live music from Todd Milne. Always a fan of sumi-e, I never had the opportunity to see them up close until last night. Sumi-e is a style of East Asian ink and wash painting that seeks to capture the soul of the subject in only a few brush strokes. I was very impressed with the examples there. The minimalist style and use of texture gave each work a delicate feel. Todd Milne’s music was beautiful and added the perfect atmosphere. He said that he uses a variety of flutes, from Native American to Asian. Some are even homemade, including one made from an acrylic tube. □

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□□□□ From there, I visited the Brick Wall Gallery to see the photography of Steven Meyers. His work consisted of x-ray photographs of different plants and flowers. I was very excited by this because I had never run across this concept before. While the works were indeed beautiful, I did have one gripe. The photographs were printed on a textured paper, almost like watercolor paper. This gave them a look similar to charcoal drawings. I felt that a more traditional photographic paper, perhaps with a glossier sheen, would have emphasized the luminosity of the works. I wanted to see them as if light were coming through them and they didn’t quite have that effect. □

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Finally, I made an impromptu stop at the Community Building to see another Transcendence Project entry, “Give Peace a Chance,” by M.E.A.D. Alternative High School and the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane. This piece also utilized the interactive aspect that I was hoping to see, and I enjoyed their approach. When I entered the building, I was handed a piece of paper that had lyrics to some songs. A few moments later, after some practice, everyone was singing along with the musicians. It was the perfect way to end the evening. □

For more information on the Transcendence Project: □ riverspeak.net/transcendence-project

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*Light display in the Salvation Army Installation
by artist Sarah Hoffart*

-Text and Photos by Michael McMullen



(Above) "Blanketing the Community"
Installaion



(Right) Interior of
"Blanketing the
Community"



Sumi-e Paintings at Kress Gallery



X-Ray Photography by Steven Meyers



(Above) Installation "Give Peace a Chance" by M.E.A.D Alternative High School Students and Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane.

(Right) Live music performance at the Community Building.



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(Left) "Road"
by Michael
McMullen

This article is replacing a standard feature of SPOKE(a)N(e) that I am sad to see go. Sara's *Compulsive Chronicles* was always entertaining and informative. Her voice on the music scene will be missed.

I've given a lot of thought about what to do with the magazine, and this space is one that has occupied the majority of those thoughts. As we are a magazine of the arts, it would be unthinkable to leave out music. A profile of a musician every couple of months just doesn't seem to cut it. I love music, but I'm not really invested in the music scene. I usually hear about shows from friends of mine, while I'm the one telling them about gallery shows.

I've been in talks with a friend of mine to take up the mantle of music writing for the magazine. Next month we should have a new music article ready for you all.

That's a start, but there are a lot of ideas I'm still kicking around. None of them are quite ready to move forward on. Some are as simple as design and layout, some about introducing new regular articles. There are a host of opportunities to explore, and I'm very excited to have you all along for the ride.

The next thing on my list is to come up with a catchy phrase to close my Letters From the Editor. Until then...

Love, peace, and hair grease!

-Michael

