

LIQUID



LANDSCAPES

CREATE EVOCATIVE IMAGES FROM WATERY SURFACES

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY MEREDITH WINN



Reflections are the beauty of a childhood imagined. The daydream of life captured in a flash of sunlight and sea sparkle. I dig turning the world on its end, diving inside and outside to peek beneath and beyond the ordinary world I face every day.

The dreaminess of a reflection aptly resembles the many layers that life hands us. Nothing is as it seems, I say. And so I gaze into puddles, searching for other dimensions. Through reflection, two worlds break free to become one. Two selves connect at the ankle while standing in a cold New England puddle. It's more than just an inverted image; it's the eye with which you view the world.

Photography is equal parts abstract

and truthful storytelling. Reflections provide creative inspiration because they force photographers to slow down and really view all angles of their surroundings. You can happen upon a reflective body of water during a photowalk, but you must *create* the image to make it striking.

Turning my world into something surreal and obviously obscure has become a favorite way of seeing. I take pleasure in tweaking my reality by creating liquid landscapes and reflective portraits. I let the watery surface speak for me. My surroundings and the people I photograph take on an otherworldly quality. Is it simply because, in the final image, they're upside down? I believe

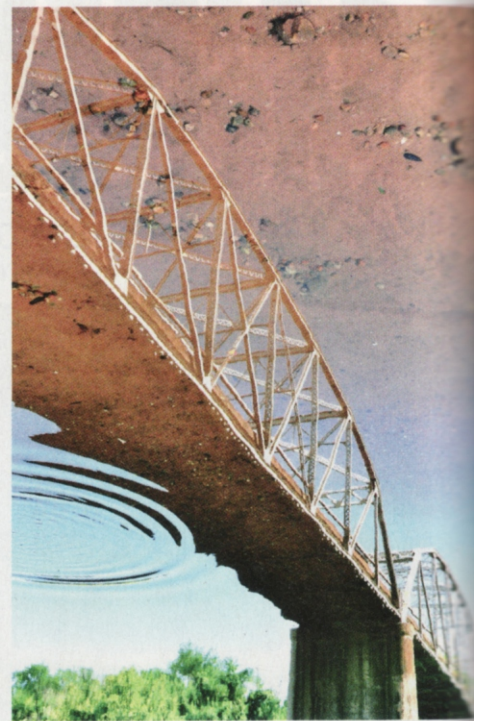
there's more to it than that. Composition is key. Details are crucial.

Reflections become windows into our minds. Like paint on canvas, it's a glimpse of a loved one, abstracted, but still true. It's a set of new eyes for familiar or commonplace surroundings. The results can be truthful, yet still remain masked.

When setting out to create a liquid landscape, keep in mind the weather. Shooting in inclement weather is fun, but wind and heavy rain will make finding reflective surfaces more difficult.

TIPS FOR BEST RESULTS

|| A calm day is ideal. Winds will create ripples on the surface of water, which isn't always a good thing. An important



aspect of creating a mirror of reality isn't just an interesting subject, but a crisp and clear reflection. This means no wind.

2 | Seek out not just bodies of water—ponds, lakes, pools and shallow creeks—but also unassuming watering holes, too. (Puddles, puddles, puddles!)

3 | Walk slowly around the puddle or body of water. Squat down to get a different angle. Placement of person or landscape *into* the puddle is critical. Nothing reveals itself without help from you! As the photographer, you have to angle yourself to create the composition.

4 | Focus on the reflected image, but don't lose sight of the environment surrounding the puddle or body of water. Including leaves or bits of debris along the edges of the frame will make for interesting images once inverted. It's these details that provide the mystery to your optical illusion. Keep in mind that the ground becomes sky once you invert your image.

5 | If your body of water is *too still*, with little or no debris, focus on the shape of the puddle or toss a small stone into the water to create a ripple that adds to your illusion of landscape.

6 | When viewing your images on the back of your camera, turn the camera upside down so you get a picture of the inverted image. Composition can change



when you flip pictures horizontally or vertically. Try recomposing the shot or take multiple shots of the same scene.

7 | Once you're satisfied with your photo shoot, have fun processing your images! I create liquid landscapes and reflective portraits with both my iPhone and my Nikon DSLR. Using Lightroom (or any number of smartphone apps, my preference being Camera+ or VSCO Cam) will allow you to invert your

image, turning it right side up. Then, simply add presets or filters to aid in the optical illusion based on your individual photographic style. DP

Meredith Winn is a writer, photographer and Associate Editor of Taproot Magazine. She's a contributor to Shutter Sisters, featured in our regular column Point of Focus. See more of her work at www.meredithwinn.com.