



CORRESPONDENCE

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The first thing I do when I walk outside is look up. The next thing I do is scan the horizon. Hopefully, there's water nearby; no matter how active or still it is, I'm mesmerized by it. I'm always looking at the sky, the horizon, and water for information and inspiration. Sometimes I stare for hours. More often than not, just for seconds or minutes. I consider myself luckier the longer I look. I have no idea how much time I've spent gazing at these things, but I'm always rewarded – if not with an image, then with a new state of mind. That's how these images were made, through the accumulation of a lot of looking. These images are meditations. They're an invitation to look closely at looking. They're an invitation to see more fully, more deeply, and in many ways.

Moments of Grace

I collect images of the things that inspire me. I keep them with me, holding them close in my mind and heart. Often I combine them with other images. I search for poetic combinations that produce unexpected truths.

Bringing seemingly unconnected elements into, proximity and alignment creates a felt connection. A communion of sorts takes place, enacted first through the subjects, second through the visual elements that represent them, and third through the mind, heart, and spirit of the viewer. Each reenactment reanimates the image and the world around us. These visitations reveal the extraordinary gifts of the commonplace. The eye reaches out and touches the spirit in all things and finds connection. In the right frame of mind, everything seems illuminated.

This is a frame of mind I like to visit and revisit, hoping to sustain it longer and longer each time. Making images may be an attempt to stay in the moment longer. The image persists long after the moment is over, allowing it to be revisited. Sometimes you have to hold still for a long time, to make the thing that holds the moment still for an even longer time. Connections are sustained.

Connection

The frame creates a connection between the elements within it. Over time, I've found myself called to seeing things with ever-widening horizons, using wider and wider lenses, filling the frame with ever more. Perhaps, this is an ongoing search to find the connections in all things. Perhaps, this is also a desire to embrace the vastness of creation.

The frame creates a connection. The act of making an image is part affirmation, part possession, in part the act internalization, and part expansion. When you make something you take something into yourself and grow. When you make something you give it to the world and it grows.

The act of bringing the inside into alignment with the outside is a magical act. It recreates the outside inside. It's an act of self-creation. It's an act of co-creation. It is a transcendent moment.

Divination

Sometimes we look to understand nature. Gazing at the sky has historically spawned many forms of divination: aeromancy – atmospheric conditions; astromancy – relative position of stars; austromancy – wind; anemoscopia – wind direction and intensity; ceraunoscopy – thunder and lightning; chaomancy – aerial visions; cometomancy – comets; meteoromancy – meteors and shooting stars; nephomancy – cloud movement. Related disciplines use water: hydromancy (motion) and scrying (reflections) are two. The notion that the state of the heavens is mirrored by the state of the Earth has persisted throughout the ages.

Sometimes we look to understand our own nature. Contemporary forms of divination take on a psychological character; where the diviners examine themselves; the contents and progressions of their thoughts, their associative processes, their emotions – sometimes products of the predictable conscious mind and sometimes the unpredictable upwellings of the unconscious. This exchange of reception and projection unlocks our powers of intuition, revealing otherwise hidden wells of wisdom. This call and echo, within and without, establishes a vital correspondence.

Constellations

The patterns of waves and clouds found in these images are captured, modified only in proportion, not created. The stars and constellations in these images are rendered not captured. I use software to render them more like the eye sees than the camera. I place the stars at random, not in specific patterns to reproduce a known constellation or an object, but rather to establish an unpredictable visual balance. It's surprisingly challenging to not create lines and shapes and leave a foothold for the conventional mind to take over. It's surprising how the placement of one point can alter the tone of a composition, sometimes subtly and sometimes dramatically. Everything is significant.

Horizon

The horizon is an essential feature in a majority of my images. Like a rainbow, the horizon is a virtual image; if we move, it moves. If two people look from different locations, they not only see different horizons, they also see what's beyond them differently. Horizons mark the limits of our perception. Like the picture itself, the horizon is a visual artifact that is experienced differently every time it is viewed. Horizons also highlight that, in part, we determine the qualities if not the contents of our own experiences.

Hard Eyes / Soft Eyes

Many oriental cultures make a distinction between two ways of seeing – 'hard eyes' and 'soft eyes'. When we look with hard eyes, we see specific details with sharp focus, but we don't see the relationships between different details as well. When we look with soft eyes we see the relationships between everything in our field of vision, but with this softer focus, we don't see all the details as clearly. These images present both experiences simultaneously, seeing details with exceptional clarity and being equally mindful of their relationships with other details. Often a point (typically a cloud or star) or a line (typically the horizon) serves to fix the gaze in one location while the eye searches without moving, expanding awareness.

Proportion

In these images, the horizon, in combination with the frame determines proportion, establishing a specific relationship between what's above and what's below. Historically, proportion has been seen as a key to unlocking the secrets of the universe. The proportions in these images are finely tuned, taking into account both the colors each field contains and their compositional elements, probing the psychological effects of point, line, and plane, resulting in a resonant whole. The process of tuning each image clarifies the oscillating relationships between the distinct units, strengthening the propagating waves that create sympathetic vibrations in the viewer, especially when the gaze is sustained over time. This is not entirely dissimilar to the subjects themselves, which also propagate waves and are in turn created and revealed by other waves.

While horizon is relativistic and the frame is imposed, both are interactive. When considered carefully the frame and the horizon determine a primary focus and they simultaneously suggest that more lies beyond them. Equally important to what's seen in the frame, may be what's unseen behind what's seen or off frame altogether. Unseen things tell us more about what and how we see.

Color and Music

The original titles for these series were musical – Sonata (day) and Nocturne (night). A link between color and music has long been drawn. Both color and sound are products of physical reactions to vibrations. Both are experienced in time. Most explorations have focused on proportional relationships, in attempts to define harmony. Despite common reactions, it is difficult to form consensus about the appeal and meanings of colors or sounds specifically. Nevertheless, they are universally shared experiences that we find particularly expressive.

Black and Blue

These images study two colors, their essence and their interactions, very closely – black and blue. Each family of colors has wonderful variants; light and dark and warm and cool and saturated and desaturated. Many

color variants of each image are explored in depth before settling on a variation that feels most compelling. It's fascinating to test the limits of each color and experience where one ends and the other begins. When does black become blue? When do both become gray? When does blue become white?

Code for Change

Color in my work is not only a formal concern, not only an expressive device, but also a code for change. The colors of the things I photograph are often highly changeable over time. Color marks the then current, now past, state of the subjects I photograph. It suggests that, to varying degrees, all things are in a changeable state and were once and will be something else. Though never the same twice, similar things or states that pass will return again – some will not. Photographs make records of these states, records that persist for longer periods of time than the states themselves, but eventually they too pass into something else. To see more fully, we need to be still long enough to see change. To see more fully, we need to move enough to see change.

Light

Sky and water can show us light. Color itself, whether sky blue or sea green or midnight black, is one experience of light. As the atmosphere grows thick, we may begin to see other states of light – rays, halos, rainbows, parahelia, or aurora. On a turbulent surface we may see not just one but thousands of reflected suns. In the absence of daylight, we may see far more distant lights. While sky and water both reveal so much, they also conceal so much more, the deeper spaces behind them and their contents. As they grow still and clear, we begin to see more of what's above and beyond them. Sometimes, they show us what we cannot see.

Invisible / Visible

Sky and water readily display the presence of invisible forces at work around us. The clouds in the sky and the waves in the water, different states of the same elements constantly recycling from one to the other, show us the work of many waves – waves of light, waves of heat, waves of wind, waves of gravity, and more. The waves we see are not water,

the water merely tells us of the passing of the wave. Water and sky are mediums that both make visible and transmit. So do these images. These images stand before the flow of many forces, long enough to be affected by them, arresting them briefly to make something tangible from them, for sustained consideration. They represent both an awareness of what is and a growing into something more.

Insights

People are always looking. Some people look more carefully than others. Engaging the visual arts is an invitation to look more carefully, to see more clearly and more deeply and in many more ways. The insights that come from becoming involved in the process of looking, fully and repeatedly, inspire and enliven us and others. Looking creates growth.



Correspondence Sonata In Blue III



Correspondence Sonata In Blue I



Correspondence Sonata In Blue XIX



Correspondence Sonata In Blue IVB



Correspondence Sonata In Blue XVII



Correspondence Sonata In Blue XV



Correspondence Sonata In Blue XVI



Correspondence Sonata In Blue XVIII



Correspondence Nocturne VI



Correspondence Nocturne VIIA



Correspondence Nocturne VIIIB



Correspondence Nocturne I



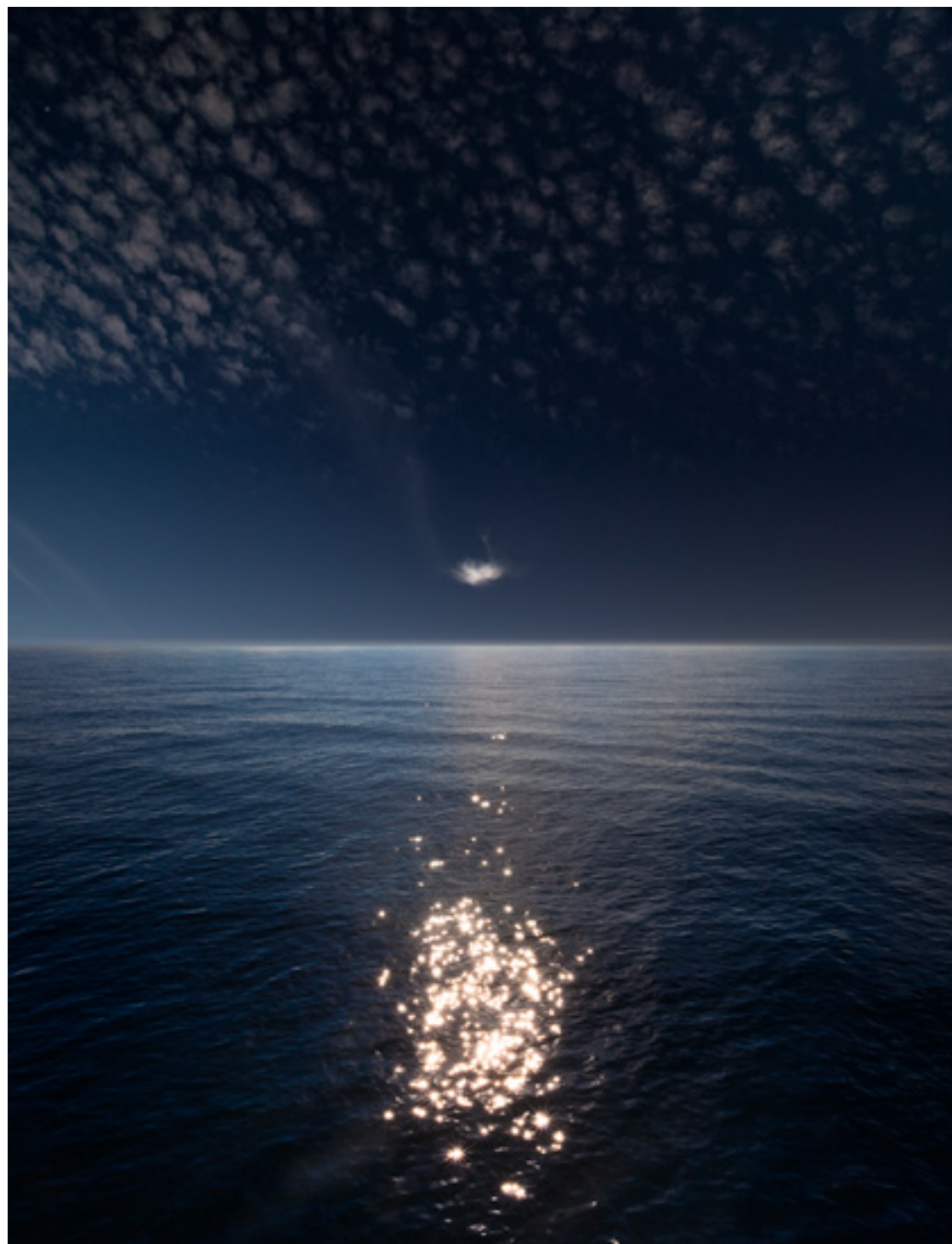
Correspondence Nocturne II



Correspondence Sonata In Blue III



Correspondence Nocturne III



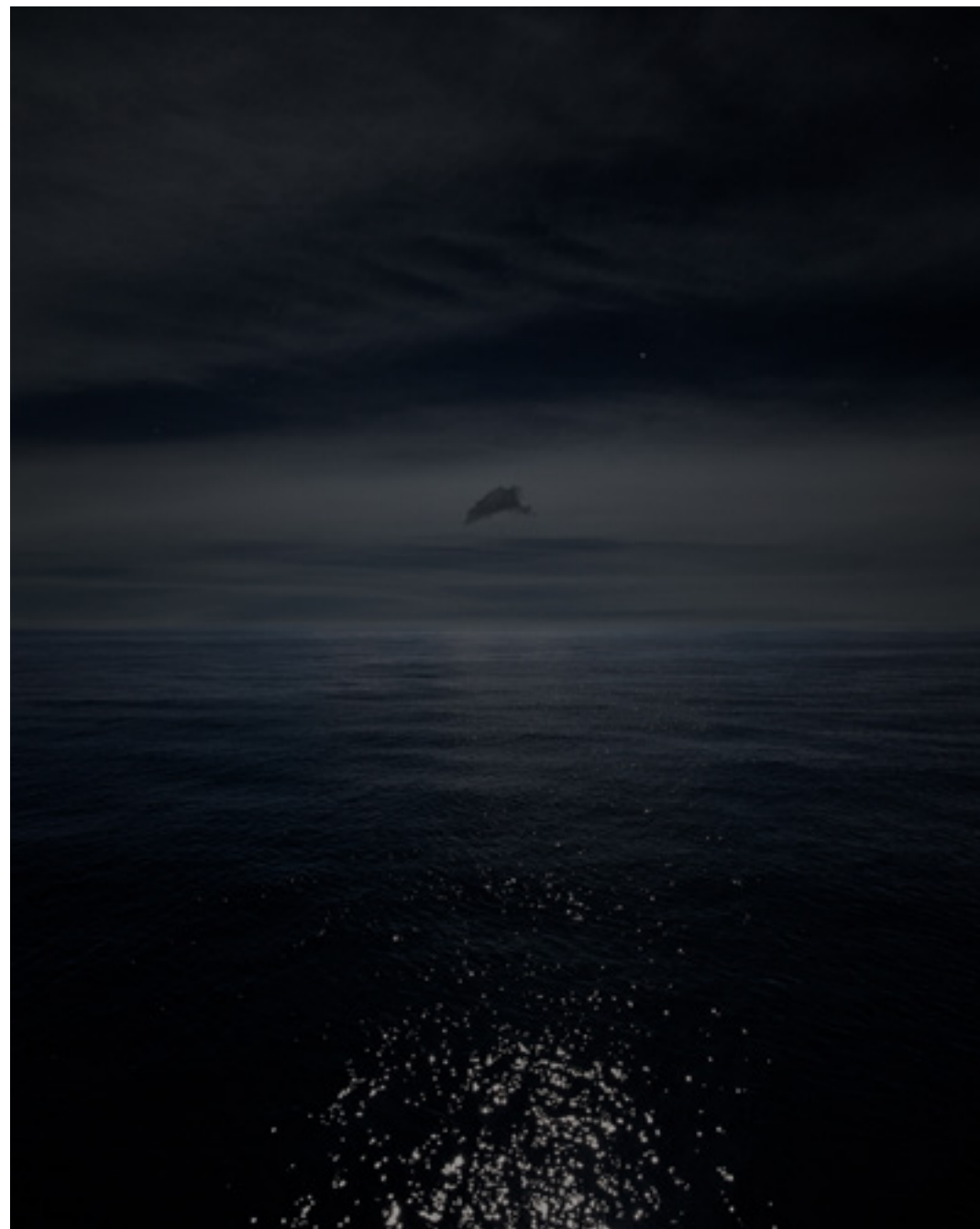
Correspondence Sonata In Blue XIX



Correspondence Nocturne XIX



Correspondence Sonata In Blue XXXVIII



Correspondence Nocturne XXXVIII

Biography

John Paul Caponigro is one of the most prominent artists working with digital media. His art has been exhibited internationally and purchased by numerous private and public collections including Princeton University, the Estée Lauder collection, and the Smithsonian.

John Paul combines his background in painting with traditional and alternative photographic processes using state-of-the-art digital technology. His life's work is a call to reconnect with nature through conscientious creative interaction with our environment.

Respected as an authority on creativity and fine art digital printing, he is a highly sought after speaker, lecturing extensively at conferences, universities, and museums, in venues as diverse as TEDx, MIT and Photoshop World. He leads workshops globally.

John Paul's work has been published widely in numerous periodicals and books including Art News and The Ansel Adams Guide. A contributing editor for Digital Photo Pro and a columnist for the Huffington Post, he is the author of Adobe Photoshop Master Class and the DVD series R/Evolution. John Paul is a member of the Photoshop Hall of Fame, Canon's Explorers of Light, Epson's Stylus Pros, and X-Rite's Coloratti. His clients include Adobe, Apple, Kodak, and Sony.

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