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04/06/2009: "Flounder Lee"



Flounder Lee is a photography professor at the Herron School of Art & Design at Indiana University/Purdue University in Indianapolis, Indiana. I met him there after I did a presentation about my first book, "Art In King Size Beds: A Collector's Journal." I thought that he would make an interesting interview subject. I think you'll agree. By the way, the attached photograph is a shot of him being interviewed in Serbia for his recent one man show there called, "ReMove". After reading out chat, check out his website at

[www.photoflounder.com](#)

MICHAEL: Hey Flounder. Thanks for agreeing to chat. First, let's start with the question that I'm sure you've be asked a million times. Flounder is an unusual, yet very cool name. Is there a story behind it?

FLOUNDER: Hi Michael, I have definitely been asked that question a lot or at least some form of it. I can't convince some people that my name is not Lee Flounder, especially businesses. I wish that meant I didn't have to pay my bills! The origins of my name are shrouded in mystery but it came to prominent use in the Secret Snail Society. I should probably leave it at that. I legally changed it to Flounder in 2006. I find it helpful as a promotional tool and a conversation starter.

MICHAEL: Secret Snail Society? I probably already know too much. Moving on ... I love your photography, but what I've seen isn't photography in the mainstream sense. It appears that you splice and dice photographs to create totally different compositions. It's almost like painting with pieces of photographs. Am I correct?

FLOUNDER: I don't really consider myself a photographer. Maybe a photographic artist or an artist who uses photography. Sometimes I do video, sometimes performance, sculpture, etc. In my teaching I take a similar approach: I am teaching artists, not just photographers. My recent work has definitely been described as abstract painting. I think that some of it looks like Mondrian from a distance. Really what I'm doing lately is making

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Madiba Mandela Lifetime Achievement Award

**Annette Labedzki:** His

Most Famous Painting (Portrait des Albert Paris Gutersloh) - Egon Schiele

**Denise Buisman Pilger:**

Ottawa; bring on the gell!

**Jim Lively:** [Black and White](#)**Gertrud Matysik:** VID: ARTMATYSIK artist GERTRUD MATYSIK joining nature while enjoying Symphonics "SUMMER WIND RISES"**Virginia T Coleman:**

Expanded Notions On My Work

**Hooshang Khorasani:** Hooshang's 'Color Storm VII' in Attleboro (Mass.) Benefit Art Show and Auction

work from a series of preset conditions. I'm taking as much control out of my hands to investigate the way things are instead of the way I want them to be. So if we stick with a painting analogy, it is more like programming a robot to do the painting.

MICHAEL: You just said you are teaching artists, not just photographers. Doesn't that really get to the heart of the role of contemporary photography? I visit these art fairs and exhibitions where I see great photographs but they don't necessarily rise to the level of "art" for me. It seems to me that even with preset conditions and lack of control, turning photography into art requires insight, physical manipulation and the introduction of unique elements. Perhaps my ignorance is showing.

FLOUNDER: I think it does get at the heart of it, I don't think the sort of contemporary photography that I'm making or trying to teach is just photos. It isn't about how pretty your sunsets are or how good your photoshop skills are, it is about the idea that drives the work. But that said, I think they generally need to be somewhat technically proficient and formally pleasing because we are past the conceptual 1970s. Dave Hickey helped change the notion that beauty is a dirty word in the art world. Work can be engaging and beautiful.

MICHAEL: I had the pleasure of walking with you through your exhibition called, "Own." It involves old Native American lands, map making and photography. It's beautiful, engaging and has a powerful social and moral message. What's it all about and where did you get the idea?

FLOUNDER: It is always good practice showing someone around a show, so thanks for coming. In the current work, I am mapping treaties between the US government and various American Indian tribes. I have European and Native American ancestry. Most likely it is Choctaw and/or Cherokee, but it is really hard to trace when your family narrative says that they were the ones who hid from the government to avoid moving west and tragedies such as the Trail of Tears. I've never been raised with any real awareness of my family's history, but it fascinates and conflicts me. I have ancestors taking from ancestors. Not really sure how I decided to pursue this now, but I was mapping the borders of Los Angeles when I moved to Indiana and I wanted to keep mapping so this came up somehow. So far, I've mapped the treaties in their actual locations in five states. I find the original maps, import them, and follow the borders using GPS. I photograph at one mile intervals at set points in the four directions. This removes as much of my hand as possible from the equation. I want to show what is actually there, not what I want to be there. So if there is a casino or a Wal-Mart a quarter mile down the road and an empty field where my GPS says to shoot, I get the empty field.

MICHAEL: What you're doing incorporates photography, artistry, anthropology, sociology, politics and travel. It all makes for very heavy subject matter that will inspire some and incite others. Yet art is your venue. I liked the exhibition, but you obviously know that pitching this to collectors or even curators can't be easy. In short, it's not "entertaining" and you know how much people want to be entertained ... that's assuming you can even lure them into a gallery. Is this a concern?

FLOUNDER: I make work that is important to me. Quite often it will be important to others too. I sometimes make work that is more fun or entertaining but that is not generally one of my primary goals, except maybe when I'm doing performance art. I honestly haven't had many encounters with collectors at this stage in my career, but I've shown this work a few times already. A curator of a show in Europe liked it enough that she invited me to come make more work there for the show. I've also used this as a platform for teaching others about this history, including my own family. Even still, the patterns of images that emerge from my work can be enjoyed without knowing the history of what the work is about at all.

MICHAEL: Flounder, this brings up what I think is a great question. When you've busted your butt to make your art meaningful and true, isn't it a little irritating to have people look at it and say, "I like the colors!" or "Will it match my sofa?" I've even heard artists reduce the work of other artists to simple whims. You've done all of this work and they've missed the entire point.

FLOUNDER: Artists aren't the only source of meaning for their art, so art is going to mean



Cassandra Gordon-Harris:
Driving



April 2009						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

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different things to everyone. How's the saying go? "You can't please everyone." Well, things are going to be pleasing to people for their own reasons. I want some people to get my work but know not everyone will. I really dislike a LOT of art, I don't get it, but know other people do. I don't think this is an issue really. I've always thought that colors and matching and such are just levels to the work. Maybe levels that I don't care about, or even care to know about, but levels none the less. My wife isn't an artist and she is definitely more concerned about artwork fitting in with our other decorations than I am, she doesn't understand how I don't really worry about color schemes and the like.

MICHAEL: Many of the artists I know are totally "consumed" by art. Many, if not most artists consider art synonymous with who they are as individuals. Does this describe you?

FLOUNDER: Yes, I think it does and I'm sure my wife would agree. She has a hard time grasping that my work does not really have any sort of set hours. I can just be playing online but it is usually at least tangentially related to my art. I'll either be looking for blogs to submit, looking up new artists or shows, reading about mapping or science. I never know where my new ideas are going to come from so I keep constantly looking. But even all that said, I still take plenty of time to do other stuff if I can find it. I love to camp, hike, cook, and garden (although I rarely do most of these activities without a camera).

MICHAEL: You said earlier that you dislike a LOT of art and that you don't get it. Do you think this is more of a reflection of your personal taste or the artists' failure to communicate effectively? When people read my writing, I find it somewhat upsetting that they missed my point. They don't have to agree, but they do have to get the point, otherwise we're not really communicating.

FLOUNDER: I think sometimes it is a combination of both of those things and also the fact that some art really doesn't carry a lot beyond its surface. Art means a lot of different things to people and sometimes it is purely a visual exercise. Of course this is the art that I generally don't like and it rarely receives any sort of critical praise, but still might be popular with many people who think the best a painting can do is look like a photo and the best a photo can do is look like a painting. Ha! I like art that gives you something on multiple levels, it has the surface stuff that you can appreciate, but it has a depth to it that allows you to explore. Writing is sometimes similar, just because something is funny or exciting, doesn't mean it doesn't have depth of meaning. I'm currently reading a couple of books about geography and history. One is textbook type writing and I can barely stay interested even though I love the subject. The other is narrative style and I hate to stop reading it to do anything else, but I still feel like I'm learning a lot about the subject.

MICHAEL: When it comes to art, what do you think you'll be doing 20 years from now?

FLOUNDER: Well I'm really hoping that they come out with Dream Recorder by then because I think my dreams are really where it's at. Otherwise some sort of digital media and installations probably. But honestly who knows, 20 years ago I was 10, playing on a playground wanting to be a rocket scientist. That desire got me to 19 when I left the University of Alabama's aerospace engineering program to take a year off and move to Florida where I got my degree in photography.

MICHAEL: Sounds like the sky is your limit. Thanks for chatting Flounder. Don't forget to check out Flounder's website at www.photoflounder.com

MICHAEL CORBIN IS AN AVID ART COLLECTOR AND AUTHOR OF THE AWARD-WINNING BOOK, "THE ART OF EVERYDAY JOE: A COLLECTOR'S JOURNAL."
CHECK IT OUT AT WWW.ARTMAESTROGALLERY.COM

Replies: 67 Comments

on Thursday, October 29th, [Canada Website Design](#) said

Thanks for sharing information about Flounder Lee. He is a great photographer and I used

to follow his at Flickr. Thanks

on Thursday, October 29th, [drug testing](#) said

I will also launch one web blog soon. Hope the blog will be successful.

on Thursday, October 29th, [car leasing](#) said

I loved web blogs since my childhood.

on Thursday, October 29th, [Web Design Melbourne](#) said

Art weblogs are being popular quickly than other general blogs these days.

on Wednesday, October 28th, [wsf](#) said

Wholesale Rolex replica ***** is the most wholewatches, As well known replica ***** wristwatch brand in the world replica ***** and one rolex ***** of the most expensive rolex ***** in the world rolex *****. Unfortunately, Rolex are being copied like many other over priced brand name replica rolex *****. Lots of people replica rolex ***** are willing to replica rolex ***** wear the fake one replica breitling if they cannot afford a genuine replica breitling ***** in order to replica tag heuer ***** satisfy their vanity replica tag heuer ***** because it is replica cartier ***** worn by replica cartier ***** people who are replica omega ***** considered to be rich. Rolex ***** are the status symbol as much as what Rolls Royce car is. Basically a replica Rolex is an identical copy of the real replica omega ***** , which looks the same on the surface. Generally speaking, it is quite difficult to tell the difference between an original and a fake Rolex.

on Wednesday, October 28th, [wsf](#) said

Wholesale Rolex replica ***** is the most wholewatches, As well known replica ***** wristwatch brand in the world replica ***** and one rolex ***** of the most expensive rolex ***** in the world rolex *****. Unfortunately, Rolex are being copied like many other over priced brand name replica rolex *****. Lots of people replica rolex ***** are willing to replica rolex ***** wear the fake one replica breitling if they cannot afford a genuine replica breitling ***** in order to replica tag heuer ***** satisfy their vanity replica tag heuer ***** because it is replica cartier ***** worn by replica cartier ***** people who are replica omega ***** considered to be rich. Rolex ***** are the status symbol as much as what Rolls Royce car is. Basically a replica Rolex is an identical copy of the real replica omega ***** , which looks the same on the surface. Generally speaking, it is quite difficult to tell the difference between an original and a fake Rolex.

on Wednesday, October 28th, [Aball Eight](#) said

founder lee wan the award to the human being to make more money in 17 secs, im not joking he made like 2 millions quick cash in not time

make fast money get rich quick make money online make fast money get rich quick make money online

on Tuesday, October 27th, [Aceres Robin](#) said

Flounder lee new exhibition will take place at the following locations: FiveMyles, 558 St. Johns Place, Brooklyn, NY
Diaspora Vibe Gallery, 3938 North Miami Ave, Miami, FL
labotanica in partnership with Project Row Houses, 2521 Holman, Houston, TX

Poker Online | Titan Poker | Titan Poker | Poker Online

on Tuesday, October 27th, [ebay coupons](#) said

They are both rely good. Flounder is a great photographer.

on Sunday, October 25th, [vistaprint promo code](#) said

yes its a comment a. howzat lright

on Sunday, October 25th, [Myositis syndrome](#) said

Flounder Lee is by far one of the best artists I have seen in a long time. He has done amazing work in the past and I am sure will continue as well.

on Saturday, October 24th, [zauberer firmenfeier](#) said

Really cool interview. Thanks for sharing it. There are so creative Photos from Flounder, its like magic. Close-up Zauberer and Pianist

on Saturday, October 24th, [tiffany](#) said

mens prada shoes
bally shoes
buy ipod touch
ipod sales 2009
tiffany jewellers
tiffany jewelry replica
tiffany silver jewelry

on Friday, October 23rd, [grocery coupons](#) said

thanks, great post..

on Friday, October 23rd, [Online Games](#) said

Flounder Lee is really under appreciated I believe.

on Thursday, October 22nd, [YorTz](#) said

Thank you for another interview with Michael charm. I understand the struggles have been shooting some of their art. His knowledge, creativity, knowledge and new meaning. I also have a very trying time for the site!

on Thursday, October 22nd, [vds](#) said

Tiffany Online Store provides brand new tiffany & co silver jewelry with high quality. Enjoy your tiffany jewelry shopping with quick shipping and best tiffany jewelry,tiffany co jewelry, Tiffany Style Silver Jewelry: Rings, Earrings, Necklaces, Bracelets and more Tiffany Jewelry at low prices
Tiffany Jewellery.tiffany co
Tiffany Rings,
Tiffany & Co Jewelry Outlet Online Store Sells Various Kinds of Cheap Tiffany's Silver Jewelry, Including Rings, Necklaces, Pendants, Earrings Tiffany Bracelets
Tiffany Necklaces

on Thursday, October 22nd, [travel thailand](#) said

Good story! I like it a lot! This is great stuff! This is probably my heart to read long posts is a stub. For your sharing with us. I especially when drunk with dinosaurs

on Thursday, October 22nd, [YorTz](#) said

Site is interesting, and informative. Such as browsing web pages. Keep up the good work. Salam ..

on Tuesday, October 20th, [furcoo](#) said

You will surprise to find the high quality tiffany jewelry in much.Everyone will focus on the shinning of tiffany co jewelry without awareness of rovide 100% sterling silver Tiffany jewelry,you can buy discount Tiffany & Co jewelry here.Tiffany And Co Jewelry is the best jewellry.
discount tiffany jewelry, Tiffany Jewelry, Tiffany Jewellery, Tiffany Silver, Tiffany, Tiffanys, Tiffany's Jewelry.We Provide a wide range of fashionable tiffany co jewelry, including
In 1950 Tiffany's had its biggest boost in popularity as Truman Capote's Breakfast at Tiffany's was published. Tiffany's was shot to worldwide fame in 1961 when the film adaptation starring Audrey Hepburn was released. This film and its star became icons, as

did Tiffany's
Tiffany Bracelets
Tiffany Rings
cheap tiffany with.Discounted Tiffany & Co silver jewelries are provided in our
Tiffany's online outlet store
Tiffany Earrings
Tiffany Necklaces
Links Of London
Links Of London

on Monday, October 19th, [beobow](#) said

Thanks. Flounder is an interesting cat that's for sure.

on Sunday, October 18th, [Free MMORPG](#) said

Good photographer. Nice stuff.

on Friday, October 16th, [free credit report](#) said

flounder lee is a great photographer..

on Wednesday, October 14th, [work out plans](#) said

He seems like a very knowledgeable professor! I am sure he will be there for quite some time.

on Tuesday, October 13th, [cheap business cards](#) said

this is a great site

on Tuesday, October 13th, [DVD creator for mac](#) said

As Art can be understand only by the feeling of sensitive soul.

Keshav Malla

on Monday, October 12th, [cheap luggage sets](#) said

this is an interesting post.

on Monday, October 12th, [cheap dental insurance](#) said

he is really a good photographer too.

on Monday, October 12th, [Cirurgia Plastica](#) said

Thanks for another fascinating interview, Michael. I appreciate Flounder's using photography in a way that it becomes a component of his art. His insights re creativity are intelligent and meaningful. I also had a wonderful time on Flounder's aumetar bumbum site!

on Monday, October 12th, [Lipoaspiracao](#) said

I appreciate Flounder's using photography in a way that it becomes a component of his art.

on Monday, October 12th, [vigrx plus](#) said

nice post

on Sunday, October 11th, [medifast coupon](#) said

flounder lee is amazing..

on Saturday, October 10th, [auto insurance quotes](#) said

Thanks for another fascinating interview, Michael. I appreciate Flounder's using photography in a way that it becomes a component of his art. His insights re creativity are intelligent and meaningful. I also had a wonderful time on Flounder's site!

on Friday, October 9th, [Zauberer MÃ¼nchen](#) said

the interview is really interesting. He looks quite young for a professor! thank for the post

on Thursday, October 8th, [herpes treatment](#) said

nice interview..

on Monday, October 5th, [Nike shoes ! Addidas ! crazy buying](#) said

Nice article, very helpful. Thanks!

on Saturday, October 3rd, [---- trading software](#) said

Well I'm really hoping that they come out with Dream Recorder by then because I think my dreams are really where it's at. Otherwise some sort of digital media and installations probably. But honestly who knows, 20 years ago I was 10, playing on a playground wanting to be a rocket scientist. That desire got me to 19 when I left the University of Alabama's aerospace engineering program to take a year off and move to Florida where I got my degree in photography.

on Saturday, October 3rd, [games](#) said

Flounder is an interesting cat that's for sure. Great interview with him.

on Thursday, October 1st, [Free online games](#) said

I'm taking as much control out of my hands to investigate the way things are instead of the way I want them to be. So if we stick with a painting analogy, it is more like programming a robot to do the painting.

on Wednesday, September 30th, [Essays](#) said

Hello my dear friend! I'm a pure student...

on Wednesday, September 30th, [Doctoral Thesis](#) said

Very exciting show, Alice. It seems like the exhibition, like the artist, is dynamic and ambitious! Thanks for the interesting read.

on Saturday, September 26th, [meilleur site poker](#) said

Develop a theme further. It is interesting to receive particulars

on Thursday, September 24th, [watch bandslam online](#) said

Flounder Lee is really under appreciated I believe.

on Thursday, September 24th, [watch movie online](#) said

Flounder is an interesting cat that's for sure. Great interview with him.

on Thursday, September 24th, [watch gamer online](#) said

I have been pondering this issue,so thanks for posting. I will definitely be subscribing to your site.

on Thursday, September 24th, [watch the ugly truth online](#) said

His insights re creativity are intelligent and meaningful. I also had a wonderful time on Flounder's site!

on Thursday, September 24th, [watch 500 days of summer online](#) said

I appreciate Flounder's using photography in a way that it becomes a component of his art.

on Tuesday, September 15th, [Online nursing degree](#) said

This site is interesting as well as informative. Enjoyed browsing through the site. Keep up the good work. Greetings..

on Tuesday, September 15th, [life experience master degree](#) said

It will be much kinder of you if you could give more!

on Tuesday, September 15th, [life experience bachelor degree](#) said

I have been reading your blog last couple of weeks and enjoy every bit. Thanks.

on Tuesday, September 15th, [life experience phd degree](#) said

The stuff on this web site is really witty and cool wise

on Tuesday, September 15th, [online degree](#) said

will definitely be subscribing to your site.

on Monday, September 14th, [Art Smith](#) said

Interesting interview.

on Monday, September 14th, [Tiffany Bracelets](#) said

i like

on Sunday, September 13th, [free internet advertising](#) said

Nice story! I enjoyed it a lot! This is a great stuff! This is probably the most breathtaking post I've read in a long long time. Thanks for sharing it with us. I liked especially the moment with this drunk dinosaur

on Wednesday, September 9th, [Invicta -----](#) said

Flounder Lee is really under appreciated I believe.

on Monday, September 7th, [Emo Boys](#) said

Thanks. Flounder is an interesting cat that's for sure. Great interview with him.

Emo Boys

on Sunday, September 6th, [internet marketing Melbourne](#) said

Great interview.

Thanks for sharing with us

on Saturday, September 5th, [glass pendants](#) said

on Friday, September 4th, [fatima](#) said

Blogging is transferring knowledge and its fun to be part of it. At blogs you link to people and share ideas about different things.

on Friday, September 4th, [fatima](#) said

Blogging is transferring knowledge and its fun to be part of it. At blogs you link to people and share ideas about different things.

on Thursday, September 3rd, [Meaning of Dreams](#) said

Flounder is an interesting cat that's for sure. Great interview with him.

on Saturday, August 29th, [best fx trading system](#) said

I have been pondering this issue,so thanks for posting. I will definitely be subscribing to your site.

on Wednesday, May 6th, [I Shed Thirty Pounds in Only a Month](#) said

Hi, interesting post. I have been pondering this topic,so thanks for sharing. I'll probably be coming back to your posts. Keep up the good posts

on Monday, May 4th, [How I Lost Thirty Pounds in Thirty Days](#) said

Hi, nice post. I have been wondering about this issue,so thanks for sharing. I will definitely be subscribing to your posts.

on Sunday, May 3rd, [How I Lost Thirty Pounds in Thirty Days](#) said

Hi, good post. I have been pondering this issue,so thanks for posting. I will definitely be subscribing to your site.

on Wednesday, April 8th, [Ellen](#) said

Thanks for another fascinating interview, Michael. I appreciate Flounder's using photography in a way that it becomes a component of his art. His insights re creativity are intelligent and meaningful. I also had a wonderful time on Flounder's site!