

Alternative Photographic International Symposium lecture 2009
Santa Fe New Mexico

Stan Klimek, Guest Speaker. Atelier Printmaking for Artist and Publishers.

Hi, well first and foremost thank you Richard and Melody, Dana and Mark for inviting me to speak AND for your commitment to alternative printing. I can't imagine where we would be without your imagination, commitment, sacrifices and sharing for this tiny little world of alternative printing processes within the art of photography.

I would like to have my presentation of alternative process editioning for photographers as much of an open forum as possible. At any point please speak up or raise a hand or throw a loupe at me if you have a question so we can address it at that point instead of dealing with it later out of context.

Before I get technical a little history...

In my college days I found photography by a natural evolution of trial and error in picking different classes within the fine art dept., eventually I hit photography and I knew I found what I was looking for when I stumbled onto it. It offered the best of most worlds for me – the art of image conceptualizing, capture and printmaking – I was hooked.

I left for Los Angeles and practiced commercial photography for twenty years and ended up loving it. I Every assignment I received after I beat it in the head of the art director that I could provide it motivated me to learn every aspect of the trade from different cameras, different lighting, conceptualizing and executing the idea. It forced me to create a portfolio to get the jobs and it forced me to learn every aspect of photography to execute the jobs. But it eventually exhausted itself from repetition. After all I was creating an art directors concept to sell a clients idea, not my own. I'm not bashing commercial photography, there are commercial photographers out there that are on cutting edge and original as anything that is produced in the fine art world. In addition artists like Michael Kenna, Bruce Davidson and the late great Helmut Newton all took commercial jobs because the art director wanted their signature look. In my case I eventually got to a point that I was not being spiritually satisfied any longer, after all this wasn't how I envisioned photography while I was studying it.

Looking for a way back into fine art photography I eventually came across John Richardson and Norma Smith who were giving platinum printing workshops. Once again I was hooked; here was a handsome process that complimented the image as I had never seen before. Gone was the garish and reflective two dimensional look of silver paper and I now was gazing at my images on hand

coated, tactile and velvety paper, it had the classic hand made printmaking look of the etching, engraving and lithographic world, let alone the permanence and expanded mid tones. Once again I found new found energy to go out and create, this time for myself.

I spent the next 9 years doing nothing but shooting and printing, I loved it, LA had no more use for me so I grabbed my dog Dagor, loaded up the truck and headed for Santa Fe.

Stuart Melvin once said in *View Camera* magazine (July/August 2001) on his excellent article of gum-over-platinum that “Santa Fe is a place where exhausted warriors come to re-invent themselves”.

And I was no exception; the five years of learning platinum took its toll on me financially. Once again there was nothing in the refrigerator except film and gum arabic. I had an impressive portfolio of platinum prints and I was represented by a few good galleries but as we all know that doesn't pay the rent.

As luck would have it James Crump was the publisher of Arena Editions, a fine art photographic book publishing company in Santa Fe and he asked me if I would like to print in platinum some prints for up coming Keith Carter and Tom Baril limited edition series.

One thing led to another and this is how I found myself in this very small world of alternative process printing.

If there is one thing that needs to be addressed when printing for another artist with a process that they have not encountered before is that they will be very protective of their art.

It is helpful to consider that this photographer has committed and sacrificed his entire life to the pursuit of photography. His or her images define who they are and they protect their creations closely and now someone else is going to translate them – they can be vulnerable.

It is always best to actually meet with the photographer if possible before a project begins and show work that you have printed. If the photographer has never seen a platinum print close up and not behind glass he will at this time see the differences in the two processes of silver vs. platinum. Many times he will mention the blacks are not what he is used to and why does the platinum print have its characteristic *or why does it look like a drawing* question that I have heard repeatedly.

Technically it is easily to explain the differences between two processes; the silver print has the image floating on the surface of its gelatin matrix whereas the platinum print is melded deep within the fibers of the paper itself. You loose the 2

dimensional look of silver and gain a tactile look of platinum. Yes the platinum print will never have the D max of the silver but look at the expanded mid range tones of the platinum print. The rest of the platinum print will speak for itself, the look, the feel, the paper and presentation - I have yet to loose this Pepsi challenge.

It is very helpful to research the photographer and to look at the body of his work, from the library and book stores. The internet is a great source for interviews and project histories. This information gives you clues to how he likes to print, contrast, burn, dodge, think and presentation. Try to get into his head as you look for the subtle nuances in his work, all this research will give you ideas of how to start working on a raw scan from an original negative. As a general rule I have found that working with living photographers who print their own work easier to work with than publishers or estate guardians, another photographer is easier to discuss the possibilities and or lack of possibilities based on the different processes and can visualize the alternative easier.

Occasionally you will work with a photographer who refuses to bend no matter what, it will make you angry but ultimately it will make you a better printer after you start chasing down his request with bizarre developer mixes, forced humidity, experimental Na₂ or whatever it takes to get to what he wants AND you may be surprised to look at the print after he signs off and say to yourself "Well I'll be damned, he/she was actually right" in addition you will have learned a new technique for your bag of tricks.

Once the photographer, publisher and you all agree to work together it's time to come up with the budget.

I remember looking at Sal Lopes (a great platinum printer) price sheet in 1992 and was outraged and how he could charge so much for a platinum print! Now I know why. It will become apparent later in the lecture that the discovery of each image and getting it to the point of production is a major portion of the total production time and expense.

We all need to start out to get the work and build the portfolio and reputation. But if it soon becomes apparent that you are maybe at best breaking even you might as well stay a photographer and work on your own work.

Lately I have been producing more books than prints, they both have different dynamics from a production and budgeting point of view we'll talk about both.

In either case before you can present a budget you need to get the information on:

1. The size of the edition or how many of each image, for example an edition

- of 25 for each image
- 2. How many different images
- 3. The size of the image itself.
- 4. The size of the paper that the image is floating on. For example a 8 X 10 image on 14 X 16" paper
- 5. Process, all platinum or gum-over platinum, waxing...

After you have this information you can start figuring out the digital services.

- 1. Scanning charges
- 2. Photoshop time
- 3. Negative output charges
- 4. FedEx charges

Let's say we are budgeting 10 separate images with an edition of 25 for each image. Each image will be 16 X 20" lying on 22 X 26" paper this would yield 250 prints.

- 1. Gather your scanning cost per image.
- 2. Estimate Photoshop time per image on an hourly basis.
- 3. Estimate your negative output charges and keep in mind that there will be revisions that will generate more negative outputs.
- 4. Come up with your per print materials price - this includes the per paper cost, precious metals cost all other necessities as well as time to make. Also, keep in mind there will be multiple printers' proofs to be sent to the artist until he signs off. I'll explain sign-off a bit later.
- 5. Factor in FedEx cost, FedEx cost will be the printers proofs sent to the artist or publisher as well as FedEx charges sent back in addition to FedEx charges for the end of job shipping of 250 prints. This cost could either be added into per print cost or billed separately or use your publisher or artist FedEx account number.

Adding all this together plus a large dash of psychology in regards to the dynamics of who you are working with should give you a comfortable cost for per print billing. Remember that digital services are billed separately.

For most of the jobs I have performed I was billing the publisher. If I am producing a small edition of prints (25 or smaller) I request 50% up front in addition with my digital services with the balance upon completion. This may seem high but keep in mind that you will need to buy all the paper, platinum/palladium also the scans, duping and multiple printers' proofs - this all takes time to complete before you go into production and even though you are now in production it will take time to get the 50% mark.

If the print edition is large (50 per image and up) I request 25% up front in addition to digital services and work out a monthly billing over the course of the

year for the balance. This frees up the publisher to not have to cough up such a large sum of money for a product he might not see for 6 months to a year.

The largest edition I have worked on so far was the Sally Mann book for 21ST Editions. This was an edition of 100 books, one BAT book and 4 HC marketing. A total of 105 books with 14 images in each book or 1470 platinum prints – a monster. It took a solid year of focus for completion.

There is also a phrase called print per sale where a large edition is called for but only half of the edition is produced at the beginning with the balance printed per sale. In this case I will still request 50% up front with my digital services and balance upon completion of the first half and charge per print after that when requested. Keep in mind the major work and time spent is the chasing down the images to the point where the artist signs off. Once you have your times and mixtures set it is easy to print consistently from the notes and the BAT you have created even years after from the time you delivered your first balance of an edition.

After everything is finally agreed upon I will request from the artist or estate a full set of the original negatives and a full set of custom created silver master prints of the images chosen. I say request the original negative but I don't always get them, though I try. The requested custom silver master prints I like are usually the image printed by or approved by the photographer on 11 X 14" silver, glossy paper with only a one inch border all the way around. These silver master prints provide a tremendous amount of information from the photographer that illustrates the tones, printing techniques and *feel*; they are the presentation the photographer likes to be represented by and should not be underestimated when you request them. In addition they may need to be used for scanning because the original negatives are not obtainable for one reason or the other. If you are scanning from the original negative the master silver prints will illustrate all the contrast burning and dodging that is so helpful when you start your raw scan from the negative in Photoshop and if you scan from the print - well it's all there. You may ask why not scan only from the silver prints if it's all there to begin with? Nothing beats the original generation especially if you are duping up from a smaller or medium format negative. The grain of the film from the original negative from a high quality scan just has a more natural and non-duped look to it, in addition the delicate shadow areas will separate much better than if it was captured from a reflective surface.

One more reason that you may have to accept scanning from the silver prints is quite frankly the photographer has a printing style that is highly custom and personal; a technique that only the artist can do that is a radical departure from the original capture. A Robert Stivers or Bill Jacobson image is a good example the image does not come into its own until the personal technique is applied to it in their darkroom by their hand.

In either case a good scanner technician is worth every penny. I do not believe just a high quality drum scanner is needed. An experienced scanner technician knows how to squeeze out just the right amount of information for the application needed. He will appreciate viewing the silver master prints before scanning the negative as well.

When I was working for the Henri Cartier-Bresson foundation Martine Franck would not allow the originals to leave the HCB archive, understandable, what we received for silver master prints were original vintage silver prints printed by Bresson but they were dark and muddy but all the information was there with grain and detail. The other set of Master prints we received by request after the first set were contemporary looking, she had internegatives created from original silver prints and they were printed with a clean contemporary look, but the internegatives did a poor job with the grain so what you had were nice looking 16 X 20 silver print with good tones and no grain. It would seem to me that any reproduction of Bresson that was generated from his 35mm tri-x negative should have that lovely grain look, grain is the real thing, and when handled well adds to the printmaking experience. So we scanned the muddy 16 X 20 vintage prints on a large Heidelberg flat bed that created huge hi rez files and later opened up the values while we did our thing in Photoshop. We use Chip at Lumiere Editions, Glendale Calif. Chip did the recent show of the Eggleston retrospective at the Whitney Museum.

On the other hand Bruce Davidson was concerned about sending out his negatives but wanted the best for his project and supplied them. I have platinum pieces of both Bruce Davidson and Henri Cartier-Bresson here if anyone would like to see the prints close up.

In Photoshop I calibrate the negatives as close to one drop of 2% Na2 for printing as possible. A small amount of restrainer is always good and 2% enables us to go up or down slightly for contrast changes in the printing. Here is where the artists silver prints are referenced while you create a set of your first output negatives in Photoshop. Many times when we start our second generation of printer's proofs it is only for delicate small changes we discover after the initial printing, these second generation digital negatives hopefully will drop the image right to where it needs to be. It's those subtle nuances that make the print. These extra generations of discovery from the printer's proofs are what separate a good print to a fine print. It's important to note here that you are not trying to duplicate exactly the reference prints all the time. Ultimately it's great to come up with a variation that is everything the reference prints are but a personal refinement as well. For example the silver print may have a hard vignette 4-corner burn that could be opened up and softened. Sometimes the silver print just has flaws and can be improved upon. Here is an extreme example this is an image of Sally Mann that we were doing for 21ST. Editions (**image, free floating veil, raw scan**). This was a contact print from an 8X10" negative that we had to scan from. As you can see it has multiple problems. I contacted Sally and expressed

my concerns for a platinum print using her reference print as the example. I mentioned that the image itself was evoking a delicate ethereal quality to it and mentioned the work of Paolo Roversi and his nudes that had a delicate graphite pencil quality to them and requested that it might be a good route to go. She gave the go ahead and we ended up going with this interpretation (**image, final Veil**). I added a light water color wash to the image for the tone. The point is you are not really hired to faithfully recreate the work all the time, It can become a balance of your and the artists ideas that will eventually arrive with a unique interpretation with your collaboration.

With the Magnum Founders job I did we ran into other problems. The documentary photographers in the early part of the century were more tuned to capturing the image and not always printing them leaving multiple variations of cropping and image quality. Perhaps this is usually not too much of a problem unless the image is controversial – for example.

(IMAGE, falling soldier) Robert Capa's Falling soldier is a good example of a 'printmaker's responsibility'. Perhaps one of the most celebrated and controversial images in the history of photography. This image of the 1936 photograph of a Spanish Republican (Loyalist) militiaman collapsing into death has a running debate as to authenticity in regards to its actual moment of death or did Capa distort the truth. In purposes of our discussion here the image needed to be interpreted as honestly as possible. The prints we received from the estate were not much help, in fact they were horrible. In every example we found either in book form or the internet radical difference existed in tones, color and cropping from one place to another. These old estate prints to be used for scanning were not spotted and showed signs of deterioration. It became a balancing act of rendering the image faithfully without re-interpreting it.

(IMAGE, Normandy) another example, of perhaps the most famous war photograph of all time shows the Landing at Omaha Beach, D-Day again by Robert Capa June 6th, 1944. This outstanding image was captured by Capa floating in the water while documenting the landing. What happened to the film is best quoted here from a re-print from article by John Godfrey Morris:

“With his cameras held high to keep them from getting waterlogged, Capa was pulled aboard the LCI (landing craft, Infantry) and was soon out of harm's way. He had used three rolls of film and exposed 106 frames. After reaching England, he sped by train to London and delivered his precious film for developing.

A darkroom technician was almost as anxious to see the invasion images as Capa himself. In his haste, the technician dried the film too quickly. The excess heat melted the emulsion on all but 10 of the frames. Those that remained were blurred, surreal shots, which succinctly conveyed the chaos and confusion of the day.”

You could easily argue that this mistake of reticulated film that happened from the film developers processing and drying created a unique and timeless image.

Without reinterpreting the silver master print received by the estate we refined its tones, values and essence.

Prior to our last job I had always used Peter Ellzey for all my negative output needs using the stochastic and Agfa Imagesetter. Mostly it worked very well for my purposes with Peter at the helm. About a year or two ago The Imagesetter was sold to Mexico and I had to break in a new output and fast. Chip from Lumiere Editions our scanner suggested using the Lightjet and sent one of our scans to Weldon Color Labs in Santa Monica to test. The output we got back even from the raw test showed great promise. So to make a long story short I dogged out the new process to gain control. I am now very pleased with the Lightjet output. One of the things that annoyed me with the Imagesetter was that even though you were working with a stochastic or random dot output, you could see under careful inspection with a loupe on the platinum print in the highlights its random but still mechanical pattern. The Lightjet does not show any digital artifacts at all in the print period. Also, the grain from the 35mm Tri-X film was reinterpreted faithfully. The output is expensive, \$25.00 for an 8X10 and it is a bit slower due to the Ilfoclear base. We did the Bruce Davidson book with the Lightjet, the delicate snow scenes and flesh tones are beautiful. I do have some examples of this if you are interested.

I have always wanted to do a shoot out with the Lightjet and QTR; hopefully I can get to this in the near future.

OK, time to get to printing.

Before you go into production you need to get a full set of platinum artist signed BAT's. It's good to borrow heavy from the time honored printmaking world of etching, serigraphs and lithographs from the fine art limited edition studios like Gemini and Tamarind there is a logical and referenced progression they use that was adapted from even earlier edition studios between the first and final approved print that comes from the collaboration between artist and printer.

I start by creating the first printer's proof as if it will be the final approved BAT. These first printer proofs will be presented as finals with all the look of paper size, image size and presentation. In other words exactly how the final will look so that the artist only has to deal with the image. The first printer's proofs may be in fact multiple generations of discovery from more negative outputs before this first printer's proof is sent out. You don't want to send half baked prints asking or looking for directions; it will just get confusing and will establish a lack of confidence from the artist. Sometimes you will get lucky with your first printer's proof but usually the artist will take a look and think hey, these are great, BUT - I wonder if we just did a little change here and there. Actually that's a good sign - it

indicates the artist is involved and looking for more refinement. I encourage the artist to mark up the prints with notes on his thoughts. When I get the prints back I label them as printer's proofs #1 with all the mixture formulas and exposure times and start the Photoshop revisions for the second set. If you have done your work well with the first set your new changes may be just slight changes.

When we were working with the Bresson estate (**image Kashmir**) there were some very anxious moments from myself and the publisher. Martine Franck who manages the estate, wife of the late Bresson and a Magnum photographer herself studied the first set and her only complaint was that the black border that Bresson is known for was too thick! There was a collective sigh of relief from myself and the publisher.

When you send off for the second set of proofs you are going after the signed BAT. This BAT is a French acronym from the printmaking world that translates to 'bon-a-tirer' or in English - *good to pull*.

If you look at the colophon in a hand made book or provenance of a print many times you may see the edition size i.e. #28/50, also the colophon may indicate every book or print that was created for historical and collecting purposes and include the BAT as well as the HC's. HC's is abbreviated from the French term *Hors Commerce* they are additional editions created usually not more than 3 that are used by the publisher to help start selling the book on advance notice. So in a very traditional colophon you could see the edition size, the BAT as well as the number of HC's that were generated all signed by the artist and it gives the collector a complete discovery of how exclusive this edition is. Also, just speaking print edition here, the printer's proofs can be given to the artist as long as it is noted and as a general rule usually no more than 10 percent of a small edition or less than 10% from a larger edition. If this is a pre-arranged request have the artists notes attached not on the printer's proofs.

After the BAT is approved I or you may need to create a full set of HC's so that the publisher can start marketing the product before you start production.

The BAT is signed by the artist as BAT with his signature anywhere on the print that he wants. It becomes the reference print for every print that you make and those prints must match the BAT.

Actually the BAT protects you, if there is a discrepancy the BAT is sent to the artist for him to compare. Traditionally the BAT's are sent with the prints for signing but sometimes they are not based on certain dynamics and scheduling at the time. Of course the artist can ask to view them any time at his discretion.

Another reason to work within the traditional printmaking process is a time honored tradition for the artist to gift the full set of BAT's to the printer. I have

been fortunate to have received the full sets of signed BAT's from all the photographers I have worked with in addition to full books that contain the signed images – this is an amazing time honored gift but to receive it - it is necessary from the beginning of your relationship with the artist and publisher to detail how you work.

This process of securing the BAT's takes a long time from the point you receive the original negatives, to the point you receive the go ahead BAT signatures of the full set. It is not unusual for 3-6 months pass for a large production.

Production – finally.

If there is anything that I'd like to stress **IS** how important it is to have all your printing techniques standardize. When things go out of control, and they will eventually; if you are organized it will make it all the easier to start chasing down the fugitive problem.

In my studio if I am doing a book for production I am able to order four negatives of each image; after they have been stripped in with Rubylith for the clean white border, I am able to expose four at a time with my vacuum frame. I expose with a 5K metal halide though a 1K would do the job just as well. By the way the deals on 220 volt 5K Olite exposure systems are outstanding right now. You'll need to sign up for auction alerts within driving distance to your home town. The graphic art studios are auctioning them off for next to nothing, I recently purchased a 5K Olite with its separate AL53 power supply, plus vacuum frame, plus compressor for the vacuum and integrator for 350.00 dollars, and there was only one other person bidding against me, great deals are to be had but only if you can drive to pick it up, shipping would be the killer.

On a large edition usually the publisher will request the first 50% is printed and delivered before you start the balance. This gives him the chance to start getting them ready for the market. If it is a book the letterpress and book maker can start. If they are prints the exhibition shows can be set for sale. It also helps to do the first set of 50% to break up the monotony of printing. Production can become monotonous and seem to go on forever.

To prepare for production I'll:

1. Rip all my paper for the right size and de-buffer in 2% oxalic acid if needed.
2. Strip all the negatives into Rubylith if the image is presented with a clean border.
3. Mix and prepare all my platinum/palladium.
4. Mix up only enough ferric oxalate for two days of printing.
5. Mix up different strengths of Na₂

6. Mix all clearing chemicals

Each image has its own BAT or reference print with attached notes of all mixing ratios, exposure times and other any relevant information.

If I am doing a book I'll coat, humidify, expose and clear 12 prints before lunch. After lunch I repeat the same numbers. I've done more in one day but it starts to open up Pandora's Box in addition to completely wiping me out. This goes on day in and day out. I'll wake up in the morning drink my coffee, have my breakfast, check my email and head off to print. Break for lunch and head off to print. After I finish my second set I come in check my mail have dinner with Pamela, lay down on the couch and watch a Netflix movie and the odds on favorite is that Pamela will turn around and ask "did you fall asleep again"? At which point I say "yes, sorry" and the beat goes on.

If the monotony of production starts to get to you it is possible to stare at all the prints hanging just before you close the door for the night and count them, then multiply by the amount you are charging per print and then times 2 for the batch you did in the morning - works for me!

If you do multiple images at a time and expose all at once for a one day yield you stand the chance of throwing away many of the prints if something jumps on you that you were not aware of it. One of the cool little tricks you can do when you are processing is take a completed image you are going to print for the day and leave it in water next to your water wash. When you are ready to hang your freshly cleared prints; examine it closely for all the tones next to the wet image you placed in the water. It takes a long time to compare when waiting for the dry down but if an approved print (not the BAT) is lying in water under an inspection light you will be able to judge the tones between the two if they are side by side under the light out of the water. This will give you the confidence to expose the next batch or make some slight modifications if need be.

The next morning it starts over by walking in gathering up yesterdays yield by putting it into a box and start coating again.

Every once in awhile something will unexpectedly spiral out of control and you are at a lost as to what it is. No matter how careful and redundant you are it's gonna happen and all you can do is chase it down until you find it. Most of the time it ends up being something so simple that you hate yourself for not discovering it earlier, we or perhaps I gloss over the simple things and try to over complicate the problem.

I was in the middle of doing the Magnum Founders Book with an edition of 70 with 14 images in each book when something jumped and I lost my blacks and smooth tones, I remixed my ferric oxalate, recalibrated my integrator, and on and on and on. The paper I was using was Artistico extra white, a paper I had used

for years with excellent results. In addition I bought the paper in roll form all at the same time, it was the old tried and true and so I didn't question it earlier, after all I was already using it with success. After exhausting every other possible solution I came back to the paper and noticed that even though I purchased it all at the same time I noticed that they had sent two different runs to me. The paper jumped and this new run was up-printable! I needed to find different paper; I was already close to half way done with the project on Artistico. In addition the paper had to be 300gsm or 140 lbs as this weight was already set for the bookmaker's templates. There just isn't a lot of high quality predictable 140lb bright white, hot pressed paper out there that can match what was already accomplished with the Artistico. I used to use Arches Platine in the Past when I lived in Santa Fe but started having problems with it and abandoned it. I heard Martin Axon was able to address many of the problems and decided to give it a go and bingo, thank God, I got lucky, it printed beautiful, the blacks were just a touch weaker but close enough, the tone was slightly cooler but had the same paper texture, bright white and weight, it was going to work. I did need to re-adjust all my mixing ratios and exposure time but finally I was back on track with quite a delay. In addition I did not have to a pre-wet the paper with a 2% oxalic acid soak for de-buffering as with Artistico – a big time saver! Thank you Martin...

You need to divulge any changes you made in mid stream so I headed to Santa Barbara to explain and show the fix and got the go ahead from the publisher that it looked fine. The point is to try and keep all your standards up and don't drop your guard for a second it will just make things easier to fix the mystery when it happens.

Once your edition is printed but before you spot and flatten is a good time for searching for the rejects. Take out the BAT for that image and inspect each one underneath a good even light source. Count the rejects for each image and keep reprinting until you feel comfortable that the whole set is consistent.

I spot and clean the prints before flattening on a large table with clean butcher paper laid down and a good light source and then off to flattening which is nothing more than a dry mounting press on low heat for a minute or two and then laid underneath a sheet of double weight glass until the heat dissipates.

I interleave each print with glassine. The reason I use glassine is that it is safe and cheap. You could buy some expensive inter-leaving but it is usually thrown away and replace with what the artist or designer wants later. Also, during the interleaving I will keep a sharp eye for more little black dots or spots that need to be addressed that I initially missed. Keep wiping with a drafting brush and slip into heavy weight archival bags.

It also helps to collate the prints that are in one bag and the BAT's that are in the other bag so that the artist can take out the first BAT and lay next to it a full set of the same image for inspection and signing. The signing of the prints is often a

long and tedious process for the artist and they will appreciate a nicely collated package.

Inventory the entire set you are sending and label each bag with the contents and count.

Carefully package the entire contents for shipping and be sure that it is gorilla proof and drive it down to FedEx/UPS. It's always a great feeling when you get back into your car knowing that your antagonist is now on its way somewhere else. The great feeling will only last for a day or two until you start to feel a bit anxious waiting to hear from the artist and his thoughts. But if you did your job well followed the BAT's and stayed true to yourself you will be fine. It's the big surprises that no one wants to see.

I've had artist that just sign without too much concern. I believe they feel confident by the BAT's and updates. Also while they are signing they are viewing. The last two jobs I produced, the publisher (not the artist) had the keenest eye I've ever come across. I respect him for it, he wants to stand by everything he represents but it can be very stressful while you are presenting the BAT's and the actual edition as you show print after print as compared to the BAT, but this is not always the case.

Images overview and discussion

When all is said and done especially for a project that can be a year in the making I basically have a bit of a let down and just do nothing for a week or two. In production sometimes I joke to Pamela that I feel as if I have an ankle bracelet on that will not allow me to leave the studio. She tries to structure my time so that I can have more balance but I believe I get a bit obsessive with my projects and just continue to dog them. Eventually three or four months later after completion of the job, the BAT's are returned and if it was a book I produced instead of prints they are encased and signed like the rest. Pamela and I usually wait until later that night, open a bottle of wine and go over the project and reflect on the journey.

The books and prints are beautiful and they are worth the journey. In addition when you look at them you take great pride in your accomplishment.

I believe the art in good platinum printmaking perhaps is not unlike the work of a good literary translator that has taken a classic novel and translated it faithfully into another language working diligently to reproduce the feeling and essence of what the artist wanted to share.

I do not know if custom platinum editioning will always be a source of revenue for us. It is affected by the economy and the disciplined digital forward march. I do believe that the hand made print will always be more exclusive in the world of

fine art collections. I may not work as much as I am now or I may be working more - time will tell.

In closing I'd like to thank all the artist and printmakers who have shared their knowledge and experiences by book, internet or word of mouth. One could comfortably say that the contemporary platinum print and many of the other alternative processes are more refined, stable and better understood today based on the selfless contributions of artists eager to understand and refine their discoveries through the process of sharing.

Thank you...
