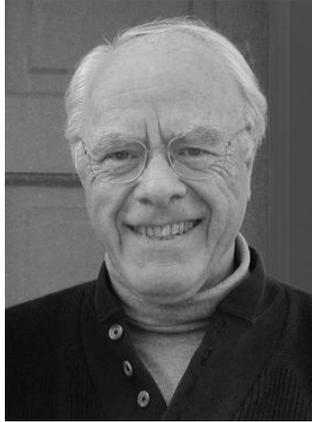


John Geesink 's Work

Holland

I was born in Holland and grew up in the city of Haarlem, the home of many 17th century painters and only a few miles from the dunes and the beach along the North Sea. I was surrounded by nature and art and fell in love with both of them – a love that never left me.



America

At age twenty-one I came to the US to study. While in graduate school I worked for Polaroid as an advertising photographer. After university I accepted a teaching and consulting job that took me all over the world for the next 25 years. Today I am glad to stay put in Newburyport near miles of sandy beaches, tidal marshes and beautiful forests.

Where I find my images

I take most of my photographs in an area no farther than a thirty-minute drive from my home. To the east lies the Atlantic Ocean and Plum Island with its miles of unspoiled sandy beaches. To the south lies the Great Marsh with its salt-water marshlands that stretch for miles parallel to the coastline. To the west lies Maudslay State Park with its almost five hundred acres of beautiful woodlands and fields that once formed a private estate.

I visit these places over and over again. The better I know a place, the more subjects I see. Each of the areas changes with the seasons, the weather, the tide and the time of day. Add to this the changes in my moods, thoughts and feelings which influence the way I look at things and it becomes clear that there is simply no chance that I will run out of subjects to photograph.

From film to digital

After using film cameras for most of my life, I now use digital cameras. When I turn off its automatic settings the digital camera functions very much like a film camera. One advantage is that I can now immediately check to see if my picture looks sharp and is well exposed. Of course, the most essential factor in photography remains the eye of the photographer.

What has changed is the darkroom. I remember with pleasure the smells of the chemical baths and the excitement of seeing the image develop at the bottom of the tray. My darkroom is now a computer with image editing software. This gives me unlimited editing choices and opens up a huge and exciting creative space allowing me to fine-tuning my images to the very limits of my technical and artistic capabilities.

The work necessary to turn a digital negative into a gallery print often takes several days stretched over a period of a month. At the end of the first day of editing I may feel satisfied, but looking at it the next morning I often notice more room for improvement. But there comes a moment when the left and the right sides of my brain tell me in unison: "This image is finished."

Beauty

There is no practical reason for the world to be beautiful and yet it is. I want to capture some of this beauty and I look for it in nature.

Beauty is a personal experience in four movements. First there is the subject itself, second there is the composition of the image, third are the feelings the image invokes, and sometimes there is a fourth movement when an image gives us a glimpse of an order and harmony beyond nature.

I love the work of creating images and I feel satisfied when I can add a new image to my portfolio. But I feel most satisfied when an image strikes a responsive chord with you, the viewer.

Valerie's Gallery, 26 State Street, Newburyport