

Al Weber

California photographer Al Weber recalls serving as an aerial observer for the Marine Corps Artillery during the Korean Conflict. He says that flying low over the mountainous Korean landscape gave him a new perspective – an unexpected surprise – a visual reality in map form. This started his 50-year journey of photographing while flying in a small airplane.

Describing his aerial work, Weber explains, “Working in the air brings on a whole new set of demands, both mechanical and visual. Scale changes from the air – there is no near-far relationship. Everything is flat and two-dimensional. Nothing you photograph is touchable. You make a photograph while moving. Instinct is the prime factor in composing. And it happens in seconds. At 125 mph, one hasn’t the time to think it over...it is impossible to bring the plane around to the same place for a second attempt; it is gone forever.” His works in the exhibition are evidence of his ability to consistently get it right in a single attempt.

Weber says, “When I photograph from the air, I feel I must have a sense of flight in the photograph. The bird’s eye view. The quickness required. The ever-present wind. The gentle vibration of the plane. The presence of a pilot I like and trust. The wonderful sense of isolation.”

Weber’s career in photography spans six decades and includes both black and white and color processes, working in commercial, architectural and fine art photography, as well as serving as an industry consultant. A legendary teacher of photography since 1963, Weber was an instructor for Ansel Adams in Yosemite, at his own school in Victor, Colorado, and more recently in numerous workshops including those for the Friends of Photography at home in Carmel, CA and with David Vestal in Montana. He has been an Artist in Residence at universities including Baylor, Colorado Art Institute, Columbia College and Cal State, LA. His work is exhibited in permanent collections including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Utah Museum of Fine Art; the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan; and the Monterey Museum of Art. his aerial work was most recently shown in a solo exhibit at the Center for Photographic Art, Carmel, CA. He is the author of *Advice for Photographers: the Next Step* (2006).

Statement

“I try to make a successful photograph of a common or oft seen subject to bring forward the common, and make it uncommon with grace, simplicity and good craft.”