

Chris Dahlquist - Dreamscapes

The Place Between the Mile Markers

Story and photograph by Tom Ryan. Art by Chris Dahlquist.

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Chris Dahlquist, Milemarker 65.

In a time when photography changes daily with new digital tools and techniques, [Chris Dahlquist](#) manages to keep her art linked to the daguerriotype. Instead of mercury and silver and glass, Dahlquist combines steel plate, gold paint, polymers, ink, ones, and zeros. Her landscapes, or rather skiescapes, give one intellectual elbow room to dream a bit. She takes you to that in-between place in life, the space between sleep and awake on those nice mornings when you awaken without the alarm.

A life of modern communication, one that includes reading online, challenges us to be careful curators in a way. We work to choose what we sense, given the myriad of choices. Once in a while, we deserve to see and experience art in the real sense. Dahlquist's work can be viewed online, but the artifact and her presentation of it is a rich experience.



Chris and Kyle Dahlquist.

Her works have texture and heft. As photographer and now painter, she presents us with a view of sky and earth that engages and whispers, that slips in a bit of subtlety into our lives. We long for beauty with some posterity, something more than an image on the screen. We're comfortable with something old, something new... granted we're unsure about things borrowed and blue. Dahlquist's sensual art touches the fingertips of photographic tradition from the 19th century when pictorialists paralleled the impressionists.

With such delicious, dreamy subject matter, one without context that gives you the opportunity to contextualize, we might think that the artist is a dreamer. Chris definitely dreams, but she also works at this. Her dreamscapes come from years of photographic experience and love for the composition and process of making images. She takes her art on the road with husband and collaborator, Kyle, an artist who works with wood and plays a mean accordion. She loves the road; the movement mixed with the stillness. It's her in-between space and time. So, her art really has context after all...we just cannot plug it into Google Earth and see it.



[Chris Dahlquist. Milemarker 138. Click to enlarge.](#)

Click image to enlarge.

To see “it” you have to see it and hold it. The “it” is perhaps appreciating your own capacity to contemplate fueled by art. Her fuel consists of a large physical body of work of these framed vistas. Repetition enriches, teaches, and exhausts. Every one of her pieces has an individuality that begins with the gestures of her hands with brush and paint on steel. Repetition teaches her nuance and makes the word “subtle” real. Repetition demands focus, planning, discipline, and the occasional trip to Todd Schulte’s Happy Gillis café up the street for a break.

She shares her experience and insights with other artists who will smile and nod in agreement when reading this. Chris Dahlquist enjoys discussing the pragmatic business of art. This does not sound logical coming from a dreamer. Yet thinking about it, it makes sense that it starts with dreams.

Art begins with a thought, a mental vision. It’s indeed an art to have the insight and drive to take dreams into the studio and the dreamscapes into the marketplace. Easier said than done, but she has managed to develop a dream factory of sorts, walking the delicate line to orchestrate creativity, technology, skill, materials, economics, writing, love, and home to live a life where art is what she does. The three-letter word, as I’m learning, possesses immense depth that just gets deeper when I meet artists like Chris Dahlquist.



Chris Dahlquist, Milemarker 131



Chris Dahlquist, Milemarker 302.

Visit her website www.chrisdahlquist.com. You'll have to wait until July to visit her studio, a short distance east of the River Market in Kansas City, since she and Kyle will be on the road and at art shows for five weeks.

You can see her work at Christel Highland's studio, gallery and boutique, August, at 4759 Rainbow in Westwood, Kansas, see Christelhighland.blogspot.com. Read more about August [here](#).

For a delightful break, visit Happy Gillis café & hangout at 549 Gillis Street, Columbus Park, Kansas City Missouri. Read more about Happy Gillis [here](#).

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