



#1 Freedom



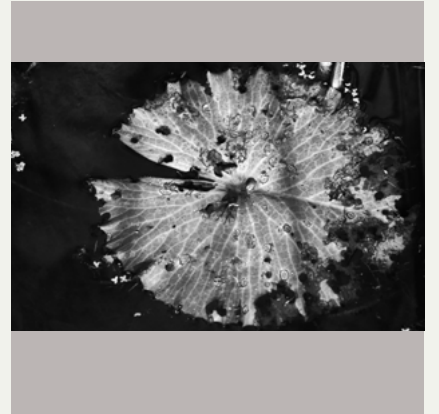
#2 Perception



#3 Darkness



#4 Illusion



#5 Impermanence



#6 Reflection



#7 The Matrix



#8 Enlightenment



#9 Microsm



#10 Flow

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# ONWARD Compé '16

Submission Review:

Sesh Kumar Sareday

## 1. Initial Assumptions: What is this work about?

This black and white work is an exploration of various elements of the human condition (freedom, enlightenment, darkness, etc) through imagery of both the natural world and our environmental human constructs.

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## 2. Three Effective Technical or Formal Elements of Series as a Whole

### Subject and identity

Although you are discussing very human conditions and emotions, no subjects are human. Rather, your perspective is that of a person in isolation, reflecting on their condition in relation to phenomena of the natural world.

### Textual and Visual Consistency

The titles of your work and the imagery itself work effectively and in tandem, echoing both their human inspiration and embodiment outside the human psyche. This gives a conceptual framework to the images that allows me to clearly understand your direction and delve deeper into the aesthetic qualities themselves.

### Focus

Your use of selective focus, both with light and depth of field, successfully directs the eye to elements of the photographs that articulate the experience that each seeks to describe.

## 3. Three Ineffective Technical or Formal Elements of Series as a Whole

### Distance

The images are shot from an array of distances, from extremely close to far off in the distance. While variation here is important, I feel the huge breadth jolts back and forth too drastically.

### Precedent

A few of the scenes in these images are common in nature photography, for example the rippling water or blades of grass. While conceptually they are consistent with the rest of the work, aesthetically these images are more typical than the rest.

### Choices of individual concepts

While effective across the project visually, a few individual concept titles I feel could be strengthened, such as "Flow" or "The Matrix," which visually make sense but seem disjointed when read together with the rest of the titles

## 4. Most Effective Image

### #4 Illusion

The blurred motion in this image almost implies a human shape, but more suggests a mirage born of the smoke billowing from the surrounding flames. The tonal gradation is nuanced and wide, allowing contemplation on both the aesthetic quality and concept of the photograph—these two work marvelously together here.

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## 5. Least Effective Image

### #2 Perception

Ironically this is a compelling individual photograph, but sticks out from the rest of the project visually and in terms of subject matter. This is the only image very clearly taken of an animal or otherwise sentient being, drawing attention to its energy and perhaps even brutality. It is so direct and graphic that it breaks the meditative flow of the rest of the work.

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## 6. Does the Series Work Cohesively?

Generally, yes. Your concept is well thought out and consistent with the imagery, barring #2 most noticeably. I'm able to grasp these very lofty ideas and experiences easily, and your perspective allows for a contemplative process of seeing and interpretation, both as a viewer and imagining the photographer in the act.

## 7. List Recommended Artists and/or Books

### Kikuji Kawada, *The Last Cosmology*

This fantastic monograph from the famed Japanese photographer examines his understanding of the passing of time and aging through imagery mostly of the cosmos. I think it mirrors many of your intentions and aesthetic choices.

### Duane Michals, *50*

The master photographic storyteller also examines larger human ideas and experiences such as salvation, death, and enlightenment, through various successions of images and written content. This is an example of lofty concepts addressed both viscerally and subtly in narrative fashion.

### Andrea Modica, *Still Life*

Andrea Modica observes nuances of human experience and connection through the objects and environments we utilize, and there is a sense that the subject is both present in an ethereal way yet absent visually, comparable to your ideas here.

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## 8. Final Thoughts

A tightening of your subject matter and subject placement will help propel this project to new heights. By concentrating on the sharpness and proximity of your subjects and the nature of the subjects themselves, you can achieve a level of both consistency across the project and individually subtle and evocative photographs.