



# Wisconsin Visual Artists

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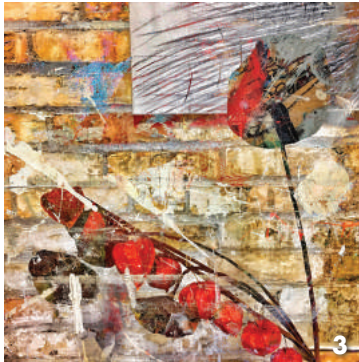


## FEATURE ARTIST DALE VAN MINSEL *by Aaron Wilbers, WVA Magazine Designer*

Dale Van Minсел has long been in contact with photography as a medium. In his college days, his first foray into photography was when he borrowed a SLR film camera from a friend. He described his learning process as a journey, most of which has been informal and self-taught, with some formal classes. A large deal of his ongoing growth has been from his choice to experiment and take chances. When he has found an opportunity, it has led him to expand



his skills and knowledge, which leads to the next opportunity, and so on. One serendipitous event that Dale felt truly marked the beginning of his journey into art, and feeling it was the right path for him, was when a co-worker had sent him a call-to-artists. Dale happened to be visiting Chicago at the time, and was literally standing in front of the Art Institute when he received the call-to-artists on his phone.



Another important factor in his successes is his willingness to simply apply to exhibitions or venues, rather than overthink it or let intimidation and worries prevent him. He gives praise and credit to the mentorship of generous and talented friends. Some, but not all of whom are Frank Juarez, Kathryn Dreifuerst, Mel Kolstad and Erin La Bonte. La Bonte is an Associate Professor of Art at Silver Lake College who offered helpful guidance when Dale asked her for a review of his portfolio after he'd been accepted for a show at Two Rivers City Hall. She also served as a mentor to help him better understand the art scene as he began applying to more exhibitions.

Dale also teaches the skills and tools he's learned to others in his "iPhoneography" classes. "I find it very rewarding to share the tools and methods with others, and to know that I'm passing on something that allows me to be a positive influence." Some of his former students have told him that their observation skills have altered as a result of his classes, which he finds very gratifying.

With the advent of digital photography, Dale became more involved with the media and became most active with it around 2011. When he saw images a friend took with an iPhone and the "Hipstamatic" app, he was hooked. At the time, Dale did not own an



iPhone, so began by borrowing his wife's. A string of successful experiments led him deeper and deeper into this as a form of creating artwork.

Sometimes, the setup of the composition is the longer part of the creation, and sometimes acquiring the image is only the first step. Dale most often acquires his images with an iPhone, but sometimes uses a DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera. The tools of his methods also include Photoshop Elements, Snapseed app, and an iPad Pro.

- 1) *Showtime*, 12" x 12", Altered Photography/iPhoneography
- 2) *And Heaven and Nature Sing*, 18" x 18", Altered Photography/iPhoneography
- 3) *The Red Flower*, 10" x 10", Altered Photography/iPhoneography
- 4) *County Fair*, 16" x 20", Altered Photography/iPhoneography





When asked about the benefits and limitations of using an iPhone, Dale said “The only limitations I feel I have when using an iPhone are the lack of a true zoom lens, and some difficulty with low light levels.” For low-light settings, like in “County Fair”, he may use his DSLR camera. He says the benefits of the iPhone are that it allows him to capture the spontaneous, is convenient, and unobtrusive. It also has a more seamless process from capture to completion. Regarding the editing of images, he said “In the days before digital photography, dramatic alterations of the image could be achieved using Infrared film, specialized darkroom effects or Polaroid films. Today, I use digital photography in conjunction with computer software to dramatically alter color, depth, exposure and texture to achieve a truly unique image”. He uses whatever applications are necessary to see just how far he can push the boundaries of the technology to create artistic images, often saving about 5 variations of the image.

Color is one of key importance in Dale’s work. Utilizing his color choices, he works to ensure elements of excitement and drama are present. It is one of the methods through which he hopes to give viewers an emotional interaction with his works, so they are active participants.

The subject matter he is most comfortable with is landscape. He said that they are his choice due to their beauty, and the ease and availability of them as subject matter. Living in Sheboygan, Lake Michigan and other bodies of water offer a great deal of the naturally occurring subjects, as well as all the man-made items that are around bodies of water.

Asked what is currently most exciting about his work, Dale mentioned that he is in a transition period after recently retiring. That circumstance coupled with the cold weather is providing time for rest and planning, which is building eagerness to create more new work.

Dale’s work can be seen at numerous venues, including gallery representation at Two Fish Gallery, Elkhart Lake, WI, and Ubuntu Art Space in Fond du Lac, WI. You can also see more on his website: [www.dvanminsel.com](http://www.dvanminsel.com)

*Before the Storm*, 14" x 18", Altered Photography/iPhoneography (top)

*Flock*, 14" x 18", Altered Photography/iPhoneography (middle)

*Country Winter*, 14" x 18", Altered Photography/iPhoneography (bottom)

