

*From Shadow and Light, the Intimacy of Place is Born*

Since a photograph is known as a drawing by light, photographers have begun showing their talents and visions in their works that depend on the camera's eye, which in turn relies on what the artist's eye sees. The photograph uniquely picks up the elements and its relationships in a place or a city that contains faces, streets, and sidewalks that are fully loaded with memories and events.

In fall 2014, the American art collector, history of art teacher, and curator Ted Decker hosted Brazilian photographer Wanderson Alves in Phoenix and invited him to present some of his beautiful black and white works. In the exhibition with Phoenix Institute of Contemporary Art (phICA), Wanderson showed us the intimate moments that are spread out throughout the big Brazilian city, São Paulo. My impression is that Wanderson does not just portray faces and figures in their natural poses, not even following the conventional frames in portraying the beauty of places, faces, and figures, but he goes further by documenting the psychological moments beyond those places, faces, and figures. He documents the beauty of the warm moment that surrounds the materiality of this place or that café. Such a work is professionally achieved by using the two-color technique, black and white. In black and white, the tone gradation of light and shadow creates an effective contrast and plays a major role in portraying the psychological aspect of the represented object. This is why Wanderson relies on the black and white technique in his work.

Also, some of Wanderson's works have no depth perception; he lets the camera capture the whole scene with no focus on an object to illustrate the depth of field. This is another technique that Wanderson loves to use. This technique contributes to creating a dreamy emotional space, sometimes melancholic in reminding us of our beloved departed people as seen in the gravestones photograph. Wanderson, in his photograph of the gravestones, has also employed some other artistic elements such as contrast and symmetry between the objects represented.

Furthermore, Wanderson professionally succeeds in creating an artistic vision by the reflection technique, the reflection of objects whether on water or cars and apartment windows. Objects are amazingly reflected on water or car windows to the extent that they create a brilliant composition of dark and luminous scenes. In his work, Wanderson captures the aesthetic feeling of that moment that comes to the person in his solitude and portrays it in a warm, intimate, and dreamy scene.

In his exhibition, Wanderson's photographs exceed the familiar boundaries of a photographic work to dive into the spiritual dimension of human experience. Such photographs tell us that this kind of art is not only an aesthetic archive but also a work that represents the human and spiritual dimensions out of the photographed scenes. By painting with light, employing refractions of light, using shadow, and creating reflections of objects on water or glasses, one can taste the pleasure of such of art and its fascination. It shows the amount of effort that a photographer puts into portraying the human and aesthetic dimensions in a unique and special photograph.

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