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## 5 Minutes with a ViewPoint Member

### An Interview with Keith Michael Cossey

by Angela Creaser, February 2016

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**Angela:** When did you become serious about photography?

**Keith:** *I guess it depends on what you mean by serious. I took up photography when I was in university and learned basic developing of black and white, and took a lot of 35mm colour slides. But I guess I really became serious about it when I was older, probably in 2010. In 2007, I had switched to digital photography, and started doing a lot more photography. But it wasn't until 2010 when I joined [ViewPoint Gallery](#) that I started displaying my photography publicly. So that is when I became really serious about photography.*

**Angela:** You studied design and learned to develop black and white photographs. What made you move to colour?

**Keith:** *The work I was in, landscape architecture, was doing design work. My work required taking mainly colour slides, and I enjoyed making colour slides more than black and white. Although, I did go through a phase where I was using Kodalith film, a film that gave no shades of gray but strictly black and white. It was pretty stark contrast, but I certainly enjoy colour a lot more visually than black and white.*

**Angela:** So you came from an architectural background, does your education influence how you photograph?

**Keith:** *I studied landscape architecture at the [University of Guelph](#). I think it influences me; my preference is landscape photography, streetscapes, macro photography of plants, and some wildlife photography. I actually started off being influence by the modernist [pictorialism](#) style, of [Alfred Stieglitz](#), [Minor White](#), [Ansel Adams](#), and [Edward Weston](#), and they caught my attention in terms of landscape and streetscape photography. I still enjoy street photography, but my practice is more abstract and I've moved more into impressionist/expressionist image-based art, so basically working with the raw image or the straight image taken with the camera, and but*





working with it more artistically and creatively within the digital darkroom of Photoshop to create more layers and nuances of emotion and spirituality.

**Angela:** Your [website](#) is a wealth of information about your photography (your inspirations, style and influences). You talk about the making of your artistic vision, using a digital darkroom using subtle refinements for colour, tone and contrast. Post production has played a large role in your recent work, so wondering if you can talk a little but about that evolution and how that change happened.

**Keith:** Like any artist, you go through periods of lull and creative quagmires, and wondering what can I do next. You lose your photographic mojo and you try a lot of different ways to kick start again. Certainly, I learned a lot from [Eric \[Boutilier-Brown\]](#) on that, so it was just a matter of different ways to do that, and also looking at other people work and being inspired by that. I'm currently being inspired by [Jerry Uelsmann](#), [John Paul Caponigro](#) and [Ellen Jantzen](#). Her work really inspired me to expand my creative envelope.

**Angela:** Is their one image that you created in your experimentation, that you said "this is it, this is the direction I'm going in"?

**Keith:** One of them that comes to mind is "the Red Door". It's from a renovation site, a multiple image composite, a red door image superimposed onto an image of a small cave entry. I also superimposed 3 or 4 images from a graveyard into the door itself. Playing with multiple images and combining images from multiple locations, and different times, to create something surreal. The other one that stands out is one from my [Phantoms of the Forest](#) exhibition, an untitled image of birch trees, which is created through a technique I developed – using multiple motion blur.

**Angela:** The birch trees image, how much is in-camera versus out-of-camera post production.



**Keith:** A lot of post-production. It's basically one image that through layers and masks and motion blur filters. So there are 4 different blurs, and changing opacity allows me to get that effect. I was looking to create an emotional/spiritual effect. That one was the first that popped out to me, and led to others and permutations using the same technique.

**Angela:** *Phantoms of the Forest* was your last exhibition, what are you working on now?

**Keith:** *Well, I'm going through one of those creative lulls right now, and I'm looking for some visuals. I'm still interested in multi-image and blurring techniques that I'm continuing to exhibit through the Gallery, and I'm still developing the technique developed. My exhibition before *Phantoms of the Forest*, the water drop photography [[Dropology](#)] was quite a bit different as well. I still have all the gear for that, so I may explore that a bit more, but I still enjoy the path I'm moving on that started with *Phantoms of the Forest*.*

**Angela:** We have time for five quick questions. What is your...

Favorite colour?	Blue
Favorite animal?	Cat
Favorite food?	Chinese (it can change)
Favorite photographer?	<a href="#">Ellen Jantzen</a>
Favorite book?	<a href="#">I Robot</a> by <a href="#">Isaac Asimov</a>

For more information about Keith Cossey, please visit [Keith](#)'s page on the ViewPoint website.