



"QUAY" by Tim Forcade.

Pure vision

BY JON NICCUM

Tim Forcade unafraid to let the incorporation of technology complement his artistry

Tim Forcade doesn't think of photography as being an authentic "window on the world."

"I'm not trying to make photographs. I'm trying to make pictures. There's a very big difference in my mind," the Lawrence artist says.

"There is no implicit truth in what a camera does. A camera abstracts everything it touches. Sometimes that's obvious — like with a wide-angle lens or a filter. But even a 50mm normal lens on a subject is very abstract. You're taking a 3-D world and turning it into a 2-D object."

A 40-year veteran in photography, Forcade has proven himself an innovator in all things image-related. While some artists shun technology because they believe it somehow taints the purity of their work, Forcade has consistently embraced new technologies, back before most people had any idea the magnitude of their potential.

The Kansas City native began working

professionally with computers in 1969. By 1976, he had built his first computer. A year later he founded Forcade Associates, a photography, design and production company that integrated computer graphics into its methodology.

That willingness to manipulate images via technology will be on full display during Forcade's latest exhibit, "Imagination & Place," which opens today at the Lawrence Arts Center, 940 N.H. Forcade will showcase 25 photographic pigment prints.

"People may sometimes mistake Tim's photographs for paintings," says Rick Mitchell, gallery director of the arts center.

"He was trained and thinks like a painter, uses color and form like a painter and operates the camera as if it were an instrument of pure vision — like the eye itself — rather than as a photojournalist might use it to illustrate a story or docu-

TIM FORCADE

What: Opening reception for "Imagination and Place"

When: 7 p.m.-9 p.m. today

Where: Lawrence Arts Center, 940 N.H.

Tickets: Free (all-ages show)

More info: 843-2878

● **At LJWorld.com:** Hear a podcast with Forcade about his photography.



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Photographer embraces technical side of art

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ment a news event."

'Artist nerd'

In his home studio located near the Kansas University campus, Forcade has assembled a scaled-down collection of the prints he'll be featuring in "Imagination & Place." Though they are smaller than the huge 48-by-56-inch versions that will hang at the exhibit, the effect is the same: a symphony of effervescent colors and perspectives.

Forcade drew influence from numerous disparate locations to achieve the images.

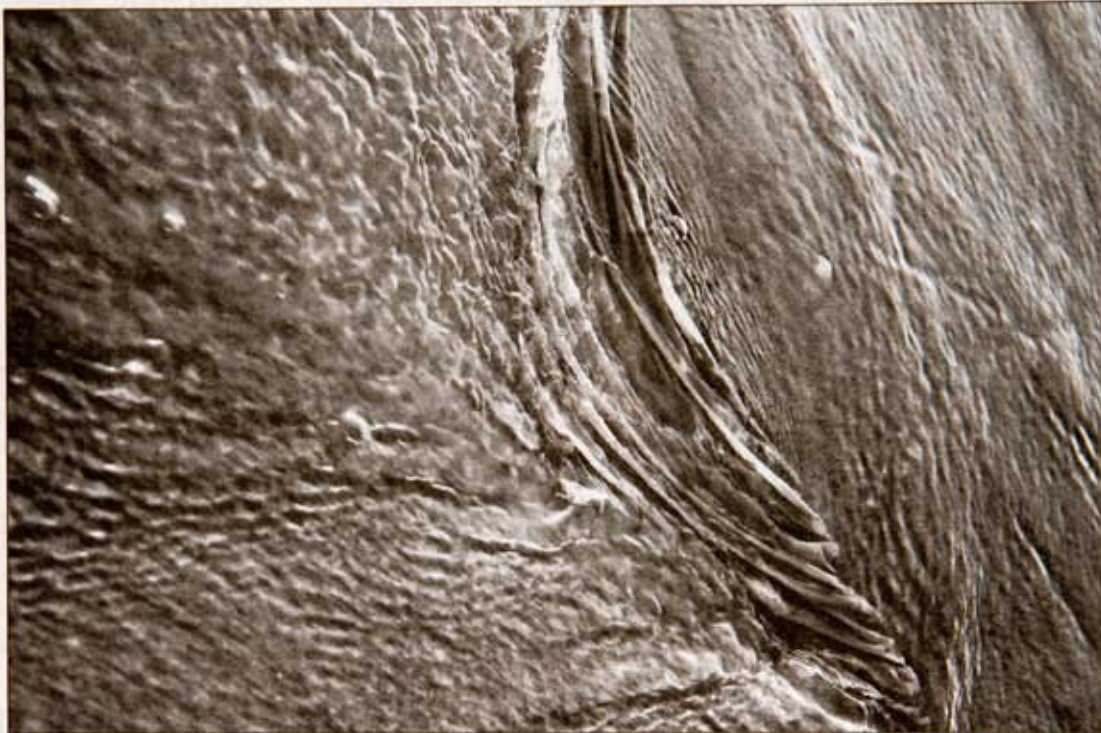
One features a bird's-eye view of the Pacific Northwest taken from an airplane. Another details the lonely calm of a snowy patch of the Flint Hills.

"Debris" reveals a curious composition that turns out to be plastic trash embedded in the sand on a Texas beach. "Quay" details the vibrant shade of an Orient-pet lily, photographed in macro at his studio.

"I shoot what shows up — though I rarely shoot people or animals," he says. "A lot of that has to do with composing in the frame at the time. I almost never crop it. That's all done in the camera."

Forcade claims he's an "artist nerd" because of the computer time consumed in post production. He artificially manipulates the color of the digitally shot images, hoping to heighten and in some cases surpass the reality of the subject.

"I spend weeks on these pictures," says Forcade, who graduated KU in 1970 with degrees in drama and paint-



Tim Forcade Photo

"DEBRIS" is a photographic pigment print that shows tide water, sand and plastic debris that Tim Forcade took while strolling Jamaica Beach, Texas.

ing. "I don't just click and then it's done. There's the actual shoot, then there's all the time occupied with post processing that picture to get it to do what it has to do. You just work it and work it and work it until it can hold up."

He began shooting everything on digital in the early '90s, years before the industry had shifted to the mode.

"For my commercial work, film had always worked just fine. But to solve these experiences that I was trying to record, I couldn't get back from film what I saw. It was incredibly frustrating for me," he explains. "Digital was what saved my work."

Overwhelming beauty

"The first thing that impresses one about For-

cade's work is its overwhelming formal beauty ... a beauty that is pushed to the point of almost being excruciating," says Richard Saba, a noted New York-based artist who met Forcade in Seattle four decades ago.

"I feel that part of Tim's genius has to do with the way he gives us both sides of the coin, so to speak, of the subject; a delightfully optimistic sunflower becomes almost suffocating when seen in vast numbers that fill one's entire field of vision ... This ability to create and resolve such deep and profound psychological dualities is the sign of great art, and Forcade does it as good as any photographer I know."

In addition to tonight's opening, Forcade will also

conduct a gallery talk at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the arts center.

But, he says, part of his strength is in not overintellectualizing his work. Rather, he hopes the experience of a photographic moment just organically takes over.

"It's like the world shows up and there's this sentence involved, this knowing involved, and it's kind of going 'kitschy-coo, check this out.' So I get this wonderful, mind-boggling stuff. And sometimes I almost feel guilty," he says.

"All I have to do is just point the camera because the world keeps showing up."

— Entertainment editor Jon Niccum can be reached at 832-7178.