Landscapes of the Holy Land

Dome of the Rock *Jerusalem, 1997*

Photographs of Duncan MacInnes

Profile

- Studied Fine Arts and Photography at the Worcester Art Museum and Clark University in Massachusetts.
- Assistant photographer, Yale University Art Gallery
- Freelance photographer, Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Staff photographer, Museum of New Mexico
- In the non-photographic realm, currently the Director of the U.S. Information Service at the Consulate General of the United State in Jerusalem.

Exhibits

- New Mexico Biennial Show, Sante Fe, New Mexico
- One-man show, *Dancing with Stones*, Gallery 706, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1996.

Photographer's Notes

When I first began to photograph Jerusalem, frustration quickly grew at the seeming impossibility of capturing anything more than the most superficial sense of the city's identity. Photographs from the last century, however, seem to effortlessly convey a sense of place. Perhaps the instantaneous miracle of modern photography stumbles when trying to portray a city existing outside the bounds of time.

To add the element of time to my photographs, I went back in history to the roots of image making: the pinhole camera. A camera based on the centuries-old design of the *camera obscura*, a devise used by Renaissance painters and scientists to capture the details of nature and to study perspective. In its most simple form, the pinhole camera is a light-tight cardboard box with the smallest possible hole in place of a lens.

Nothing mechanical or electronic: no shutter, no flash, no viewfinder. Images squeeze through the tiny aperture of the pinhole to reach the camera's film unhurried by impatient shutters, untrimmed by rigid viewfinders, and uncorrected by color-coated glass optics. Add time to light and the photograph captures a series, or more accurately a continuum, of similar images. Elements invisible at 1/1000 of a second (call them ghosts, spirits, or atmospheric disturbances) begin to emerge on the film over a thirty-minute exposure. On other photographs, the long exposure erases the superficial and transitory elements of the scene, leaving behind the essence of the place. Viewed through the pinhole, the crowds of passers-by at Damascus Gate fade away, leaving behind the timeworn stones and the immutable images of Palestinian women selling their fruits and vegetables.

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