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Lyrical Nature

Black and White Images by Jack Ahearn on Exhibit at Conservation Center

CONCORD – September 12, 2014 – If you’ve been moving too fast lately to feel pleasure in the beauty of nature, spend some time in front of the black and white images of Jack Ahearn and be compelled to slow down and start looking again.

Ahearn, a photographer who lives in Amherst, finds scenes outdoors that evoke some emotional response in himself, then mixes traditional photographic film craft and digital technology to try to create an image that resonates with other people, too. Some of his results are on display through the end of October at the Conservation Center in Concord, in an exhibit called *Lyrical Nature*.

Ahearn uses the traditional view camera that creates a 4-inch by 5-inch negative, which he develops in his darkroom. He then scans the negative and uses digital technology to edit and print his images with an ink-jet printer. It’s a hybrid of old and new techniques that gives him the most creativity when producing his large finished images.

He prefers black and white images for their simplicity. “I’ve always found black and white to be expressive. There’s a lot to be said for color, but it’s the minimizing of some of the distractions that I’m trying to do by staying with black and white,” he said.

Ahearn chose images for *Lyrical Nature* that were captured during visits to several parcels of land near his Amherst home that are permanently protected by the Society for the Protection of N.H. Forests (Forest Society). Other images are from visits to Virginia, Colorado, Death Valley, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. Details of rocks, roots and flowers intermix with sweeping landscapes. The series of images of peaceful stands of aspen taken in Colorado are among his personal favorites. “Those were spectacular for me,” he said. “I find them luminous.”

Ahearn has been practicing his craft since his college years at St. Lawrence University, where he had opportunities to take several workshops with master photographers Minor White and Paul Caponigro. After college and graduate school

in physics, he pursued a career in scientific research, making photographs on occasion over the years. In the last 10 years he has devoted a substantial and focused effort to create fine art photographs.

He has pursued additional training in photography most recently through workshops with master photographer John Sexton at Anderson Ranch, Professor Craig Stevens (Savannah College of Art and Design) at the Maine Photographic Workshops, and Gary Samson at the New Hampshire Institute of Art.

Recognition of his work has come through acceptance in two Sharon Art Center juried exhibitions; being selected as honorable mention in the Golden Light Awards competition, 2005 by the Maine Photographic Workshop; and inclusion in the Gallery at Halmark's juried show of New England Artists: *Art + Space: Collected Work from Local Artists* in February 2010. Ahearn's work was selected for the Sharon Arts CSART program in 2011 and he was selected to present at the Currier Museum's Photo Slam event in 2012. He was also selected for the 33rd Annual Parfitt Open Juried Photography Exhibition of the New Hampshire Art Association in 2012 and for the Center for Fine Art Photography in Fort Collins, Colo., in their *Box Squared* show in 2013 and the *Art of Photography* show in 2013 at the San Diego Art Institute in San Diego, Calif.

Ahearn's exhibit is open for viewing Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Conservation Center Conference Room, located at 54 Portsmouth St. in Concord. The Conference Room is used for meetings, so please call (603) 224-9945 before visiting to make sure it's open.

Founded in 1901, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests is the state's oldest and largest non-profit land conservation organization. Supported by 10,000 families and businesses, the Forest Society's mission is to perpetuate the state's forests by promoting land conservation and sustainable forestry. The organization owns 50,000 conserved acres of land in New Hampshire and holds conservation easements on another 115,000 acres.

Caption 1: "Aspens"

Caption 2: "Salmon Cove"