

Alan Blaustein

Alan Blaustein is a photographer with a singular focus.

For the past twelve years, he has worked on a photographic series of public benches and their surroundings. His images evoke a contemplative mood, a sense of tranquillity and timelessness, while the benches themselves suggest community and social interaction. He has traveled extensively in the United States and Europe in search of the right settings. He says taking pictures of benches is easier in Europe than in America. In Europe, the bench materials are more sculpted, more ornate. And you'll find a church from the 15th century in the background. In America, everything seems so new.

His original photographs are printed on watercolor paper using processes dating from the late 1800s, and are often painstakingly hand-tinted with watercolor pigments which offer much more subtlety and diversity than standard photographic dyes. This process has translated well to the poster format, giving them an antique feel.

Blaustein's first job was as an art director for Bloomingdale's in New York. Eventually, Bloomingdale's published a book of his photographs. He holds MFA and BFA degrees in photography and film from the Academy of Art College in San Francisco, California where he is an instructor, and the Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York. His work has been exhibited throughout the United States, including in the San Francisco International Airport. Chronicle Books of San Francisco has also published his bench photographs in a 1996 calendar.

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