

evolving beauty
MIRANDA



AN EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ERIC BOUTILIER-BROWN

April 1-27, 2014


VIEWPOINT
GALLERY

artist statement

I was drawn to the Nude long before I began celebrating it photographically. I vividly remember seeing Michelangelo's David at the age of ten, and marveling at the grace, vitality, and power of stone magically transformed into a monument to the strength and beauty of the body.

Miranda and I first worked together late in the summer of 2001. Though she had no experience modeling (nude or otherwise), her body comfort and enthusiasm for the process and results was obvious. By early 2002, Miranda and I were working together frequently, cementing the foundation of a friendship and collaboration that continues to strengthen as time passes.

This is the first time I've focused an exhibition of my photography of the Nude on a single subject. The show highlights some of the best images Miranda and I have made over more than a decade of working together. For me, the Nude is a celebration of the magnificence of the human body; art often shows the viewer the marvelous in the common place, and this is what I feel the nude does so very well, offering the viewer an insight into something new, yet undeniably familiar.

The advantages that long term collaborations bring are hard to quantify. It is not that it's easier to work with a familiar subject; many first-time sessions lead to striking photographs. It is not that it's easier to take creative risks; many of my biggest creative leaps have roots in experiments originating in setting and circumstance. The easiest way to describe the advantage is to focus on the connection created, a rapport based on trust, respect and a mutual drive to create which has strengthened and solidified over the years we have worked together. Without this, I doubt many of the images in this exhibition would ever have been made.



From the first session, Miranda's enthusiasm for modeling made her a pleasure to work with, and is one of the core inspirations of our sessions. I cannot count the number of times she has approached me with an idea for a session, or saw recent work of mine, and asked if I'm interested in pushing the idea further with her as the model. When looking at the images we've produced together between 2001 and now, there is no way to miss the strength and consistency of the images, born out of the long period over which we've worked together, and the strong personal connection we share.

I live for my art and very much see the people I photograph as collaborators, participants in my creative process, as opposed to just the subjects. Without the generosity and commitment of people like Miranda, the work that defines me could not have been created.

the images

Selecting the photographs included in *Evolving Beauty: Miranda* was a challenge. The exhibition was a catalyst for me to review the 6,000+ images that Miranda and I have made together since 2001, reconsidering photos originally set aside, and re-evaluating those previously viewed as our strongest.

Of course the fundamental question was what I wanted to show. I didn't want the show to be a "retrospective" or a chronological review, but rather an overview, celebrating all we have produced by highlighting the strongest images of each style our collaboration has covered.

The first realization was how many images I have made of Miranda with other models; more than anyone else I've photographed, Miranda has always been open to the prospect of collaboration with additional models, but even after removing those images, I still had over 3,500 solo images from which to draw the exhibition photographs.



The first step was to rationalize the images – in many cases I have multiple images of the same pose, in the same location. These were relatively easy to prioritize, with only the best of each set advancing further into the selection process. Then I considered the photographs session by session, elevating 1-4 images per session to the next round; there were 121 sessions overall, and after the end of this step, I had just over 270 photographs being considered for the exhibition.



At this point, a number of people, including Miranda, went through the selected images, and I paid careful attention to their responses, both to images I felt were "definite" (many didn't make it), and to ones they responded to strongly. In several cases, images I considered marginal were provided prominence by this communal feedback on the images.

The last step was to design the show for the layout of the gallery; with four walls, and four general image types (portrait, outdoor, indoor and ruins), the logic of the gallery fit the format of the show. At this stage, several photographs were set aside, while a couple of "almosts" were put back in, as they helped fill out the gallery, and complete the story.

His Broadword instead of an Oar

Prospect, Nova Scotia

This image began when Miranda appeared in my living room one night, in town for a week, and needing a place to stay! She'd left Nova Scotia earlier in the spring, and hadn't planned to return until the end of the summer.

Though she'd just arrived, Miranda was enthusiastic to model a couple of times during her stay, so the next evening we headed to Prospect.



We arrived at the coast about ninety minutes before sunset only to find it slowly disappearing into advancing fog. The light was rich at first, with the sun softened by the fog, adding delicate shading to Miranda's body but as more time passed, it became harder and harder to work with the light as a visual element.

I started to realize the session was going to come to an abrupt end, as the chill of the advancing fog began to set in. I shifted from images of the body in landscape to portraits, which I always prefer to make with soft, even light. There is a lovely simplicity to this portrait of Miranda; when I made this image, I selected a slower shutter speed, hoping to catch the flight of her hair in the wind.

Overall, the session was very enjoyable, as much for the fact I was working with Miranda so unexpectedly as it was for the images we made. It cannot be emphasized enough how much a model influences a session.

Constellations

Herring Cove, Nova Scotia

Of all the images in *Evolving Beauty: Miranda*, this portrait was the first one I knew had to be included. It was made during our second session working together, and her first time modeling on her own.

The day began with a brilliant sunrise into a cloudless blue sky, and threatened to be a real scorcher. With this in mind, I chose a coastal location that faced away from the sun; it would be cooler, and the shade would be preferable photographically to the high contrast of sunlight.

Midway through the session, I shifted from images of the body in landscape to portraits. Miranda's totally comfortable being identifiable in the images, so I wanted to produce some portraits to complement the more classical Nudes we'd already created. This image is 50% planned and 50% happenstance; I was preparing to make a portrait of Miranda looking at the camera, and was focusing the camera when she glanced downwards. I loved the way it looked, and asked her not to move while I made the image.



Below the Hill

Le Buttreau, Nova Scotia

The greatest challenge in working with someone over an extended period is maintaining contact and connection as lives evolve and change. When I lived in Moncton between 2003 and 2006, because of my proximity to Halifax, Miranda and I worked together frequently and even produced a full Portfolio together.

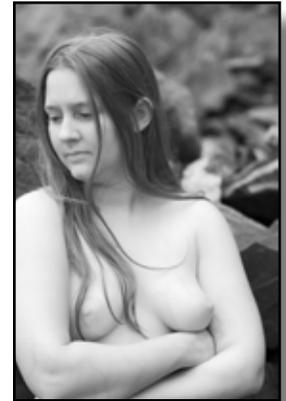
After I returned to Halifax in 2006 however, things swung in the opposite direction; Miranda set off on several extended trips abroad, and the only chance we had to work together was during the brief periods when she returned to Halifax

before setting off again. This image came from a weekend trip Miranda and I took together during one of her respite visits, which served the dual purpose of giving us a chance to hang out some, and to create some new work in settings we'd never worked in before.



While I had been to Cape Breton before, it wasn't while traveling with a model, so this was my first chance to respond to visual spaces as I prefer – considering how they'd work with a figure in them. Ironically, the best image from the trip had little to do with the Cape Breton landscape, and everything to do with Miranda.

If someone asked what I sought when photographing the Nude, it would be easy to say I'm usually looking for one of two possibilities; a striking image focusing on the body in the setting, or a strong portrait. This image certainly fulfills the second criteria!



The Siren's Cave

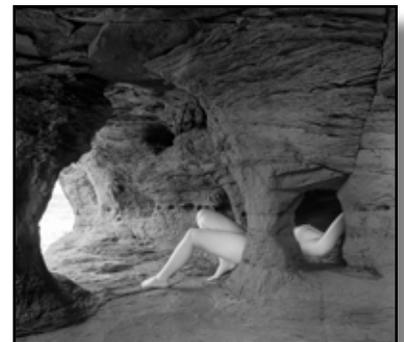
Bas-Cap-Pele, New Brunswick

This image was the last composition Miranda and I made at this location. We'd explored more than a dozen poses and spaces within the caves but I still felt a little frustrated that I hadn't managed to properly convey the three-dimensional qualities of the setting that so enthralled me.

Much of what attracted me to this space were the arches and caves carved out by the ocean, and it was through careful positioning of Miranda behind one of these arches that I finally managed to capture a sense of the magic of the space. After finding the correct camera position, I made this image.

This was the first image selected for the New Brunswick portfolio. At the end of this day as I looked through the images we'd produced, I could tell I'd captured what I was looking for even before it was finished in post production. The delicate light falling across Miranda's torso and legs and the way her body was perfectly divided by the flow of the stone arch between her and the camera lured me in.

This image is included in *Miranda, the New Brunswick Portfolio*.



Veil of Tears

Glen Coe, Scotland

When planning this trip to Scotland, my first thought was how could I arrange to work with the Nude while there. The answer quickly came when Miranda offered to meet me in Scotland, and spend a week travelling and modeling (in the end, I worked with four models in Scotland, but Miranda was the first to offer and be confirmed).

I'd expected to work with the valley of Glen Coe as a backdrop, but the weather and time worked against us. As we clambered up the lower slopes of the mountains, the weather oscillated between rain and almost rain, making working out in the open landscape a challenge. At the River Coupall, however, a canopy of trees kept the weather at bay, letting Miranda and I to make our first images in a new continent. I'd thought Miranda would be opposed to working in the river, but once I explained my idea and assured her that full immersion wasn't required, she was more than game to "have a go".



Sisyphus Sighs

Felzen South, Nova Scotia

This image was almost not made. When Miranda and I came down to the shore, I saw a section of rock broken off from the bedrock and asked her if she could kneel down and lean into it, drawing her body off the level rock and sweeping it up onto the triangular rock. After some wriggling, she managed to find the pose, and I exposed my first composition.



The initial image (below) was problematic though, as Miranda's back leg appeared to suddenly emerge from the curve of her hips. Frustrated with the flawed composition after Miranda had worked so hard finding the pose, I slowly walked around the space, seeking a better angle of view. As I moved to the left, the second composition suddenly snapped into place - the lines of Miranda's legs and hips suddenly came into alignment. Fortunately, Miranda was patient enough to wait for me to go through all this revision, recompose the image, and make the second, much more successful exposure.



The power of the body set in the wonder of nature is something that simply draws me in, and the inevitable similarities and differences can bring me back to an image time and time again, trying to discover why it pulls me in. An image is perfect when I cannot answer that question, but continually return to ask it. Though they are few and far between, these images yield a reward far greater than the effort to create them, though sometimes, as with this image, the model's effort is greater than for others.

This image is included in *Portfolio XV*.

Chiral

Martinique Beach, Nova Scotia

This was from my fifth time in one year working at Martinique Beach; each session built on the previous one, and headed in a new direction, all at the same time.

I'd expected to focus on images of Miranda posing on dunes below a sunset sky, however as the sun descended, the wind dropped and some high fog rolled in, all but obliterating the sky. Determined to make the most of the session, Miranda and I headed to the inland side of the beach, to see if the water was appropriate to model in. Miranda stuck her toe in, declared it warm enough, and we set to work.



The biggest challenge was finding poses that worked. Miranda had to pose close to the water's surface for the look I sought, and we quickly discovered that the only angle that worked was with her body parallel to the camera. With the light dropping rapidly (decreasing by as much as 50% in five minutes) Miranda and I had to work as fast as we could. By the time the light had faded to a point where it was too dark to work, Miranda was pretty chilled, and ready to come out.

The whole session lasted 15 minutes, but I managed to expose 4 rolls of film (40 photographs) and make one of my favorite water images of all time. The session was over, but I felt strongly we had achieved what I was looking for.



Ley Line

Bouc touche, New Brunswick

One of the best elements of working on la Dune de Bouc touche is the isolation. Once past the boardwalk, signs of civilization quickly fade, and while one has to keep a weather eye on the horizon for beach walkers, it is easy to photograph for hours at a time without interruption (the only issue we had was the trail of clothing and equipment left behind as we moved slowly down the beach).

This session was idyllic; the day was solidly overcast, providing great light to work by, but wasn't hot enough to become uncomfortable. As we moved down the beach, I alternated between photographing in the shallow ocean and on vast planes of unbroken sand. For this image, I was drawn to a dark patch of sand, and how directional it was within the context of the beach. I asked Miranda to walk into the frame from the end of the dark sand, so her footprints would become part of the final composition; with little effort, she found the perfect pose, and we made the image.



Eventually, the weather put a damper on the day - late in the afternoon, the wind came up suddenly and the sky darkened. Realizing that a downpour was imminent, we swiftly packed up, and walked the hour or so back to the parking lot and the drive home.

Cataracts

Dawson Brook, Nova Scotia

The longer I work with the Nude in water, the more amazed I am that it took me so long to discover how perfect a combination it is (I first worked with a model in a river in 1996). That being said, no matter how much I work with water, it is always magical how different it can be from one image to the next.



When making this composition, I purposely set Miranda's figure against the white water flowing behind her, using it to separate her from the background. The results were even more successful than I had hoped, as her wet hair almost blends in to the rocks and dark water below her.



Working with a large 8"x10" camera can be challenging at the best of times, but working in and around water with it is another challenge altogether. Dawson Brook is not as treacherous as some of the other places I've worked, and while the footing was a little tricky at times, I could generally get the camera where I needed it with relative ease. The slower pace that the camera imposed was a little hard on Miranda, given that it sometimes took me five or more minutes to get an image composed and camera ready, but she was indulgent, placing her confidence in the strength of the images I was trying to create.

Darklight

Sherbrooke Lake, Nova Scotia

There's no doubt that my favorite setting for the Nude is in water, either indoors (baths, showers, or even constructed pools in a studio) or out. There's a beautiful spontaneity and randomness that comes out of working with such an uncontrollable environment.

This session was on an inland lake, working at the end of the day as the sun moved lower in the sky. I knew the low light angle would work wonderfully with Miranda's body emerging from the water, but hadn't counted on the fine water grasses growing right by the shore.



Made at the very end of the session, this photograph actually started as a back-on image of Miranda wringing out her hair. The light was lovely, but as much as I liked the line of her back and arms as she sat posing, it was the pale green grasses, a wonderful luminous white in the infrared, that kept catching my eye. I asked Miranda if she could keep sitting where she was, but lean back and into the water, so I could incorporate the grasses behind her. After a little tweak of the pose, this image was born.

The Shell

Bouctouche, New Brunswick

In the years following our first session, Miranda had let her hair grow progressively longer and longer, and in the right conditions, it could become the most beautiful mass of wildness incarnate.

In many ways, Miranda's hair was the embodiment of this session; we'd set out to photograph our way to the end of the 10km long la Dune de Bouctouche, but kept getting distracted by the beautiful wild beach that surrounded us. The session was spent working between the shoreline and the dunes, on sand, in water, and in beach grass.

All through the Bouctouche session, Miranda was collecting shells and making small treasure piles on the beach. At one point, she came over to show me her favorites. I couldn't resist photographing them, and, much to my surprise, one of my favorite images of the day was of Miranda's shell, surrounded by the beautiful chaos of her hair, swirling around her in the afternoon wind.



Northern Chiaroscuro

Plage de Tabusintac, New Brunswick

Though the beach was deserted when we arrived, given how lovely the day was looking, Miranda and I decided to walk down the beach a ways before we started to work. This not only put us far from the parking area and any passersby but it also gave us both time to become accustomed to the space and develop ideas for images.

On the whole, flat level beaches are difficult to photograph on; there is little in the way of landscape to take inspiration from, so instead of focusing on the beach itself, most of the images from this session focus on the anomalies - driftwood, old dead trees, and other debris on the sand. Because the light was so harsh, it was difficult to compose images - often the best angle photographically had the wrong lighting, so many of the images were compromises between the best angle and the best light. Occasionally, the setting, light and pose all came together, as they have in this image. The beautiful edge lighting on Miranda's torso, set against the dark, near-featureless sky, is a perfect example of why I love infrared photography.



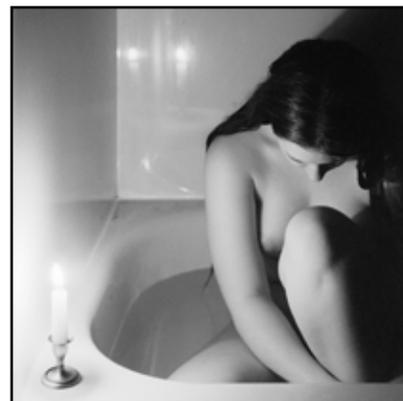
Miranda and I actually spent much longer on the beach than I had anticipated - more than half of the four hours was spent walking, simply getting to the spaces in which we worked. As frustrating as the bright sunlight was to work with, both Miranda and I quite enjoyed the weather, relishing the warm enveloping sun after days of rain.

Evaporate

Halifax, Nova Scotia

I had worked with models, candles and bathtubs several times before this session, but in every case the photos had been focused on the body emerging from the bath, and the reflection of the candle on the surface.

For this session, after discussing my previous explorations, and looking through the results of earlier bathtub photos we'd made, Miranda and I investigated the possibilities offered by her sitting in the tub, as opposed to lying down. Right away, I saw potential; this pose, with her knee up and head bent forward, was very classical, and the highlights of the water running off her body were quite beautiful.



At this point, I identified an issue that hadn't existed with my earlier bathtub images: an image lit by a single candle required a long exposure: for each image I made, Miranda had to stay completely still for several seconds. Fortunately, she was able to push her back into the wall of the bathtub, and steady herself.

The final results, with Miranda's eyebrow and the candle base being tack-sharp, and the rest of the image fading slowly out of focus, is really pleasing. The classic pose and the elegant light from the single candle offset the fact that by the time the image was made, most of the water on her arm, torso and leg had evaporated.

Contemplation

Halifax, Nova Scotia

There's magic in working with new models, but there are advantages to long-term relationships with models, including their tolerance for testing. In this case I wanted to try my multi-image digital stitching technique indoors (by this time I had already used it with great success outdoors). Miranda was happy to help me with the experiment, even though she knew it would involve longer poses as I made the numerous exposures necessary for each image.

A second, less pressing reason for the session was to continue testing how far I could push my new digital camera. One of the first comments a friend made when I was considering a digital SLR for my second-line camera was "But a digital camera wouldn't produce those luminous highlights you are so used to!"

The end the results more than matched my expectations on both fronts: the colour and tones of the images brought me back to my first explorations of colour Nudes indoors, where I stumbled upon the luminous qualities of slide film in high-key situations, and the image quality realized from multi-image stitching was more than enough to equal the film camera I had replaced.



Against the Light

Halifax, Nova Scotia

One constant in my work is how often successful images are created in spite of failing to realize what I'd intended to create (success born from failure, essentially).

This session, set in a friend's bathroom, was intended to focus on photographing Miranda in a claw-footed bathtub, but the space was different than I had envisioned; while there was a window above the tub as I'd been told, it was too high to give the reflections I'd expected in the water. The light coming in the window above the tub was absolutely beautiful, however, so I began the session with Miranda standing in the tub in front of the window.



Initially, the contrast between Miranda and the window was too high, but once I hung a translucent cloth and asked Miranda to move behind it, everything changed. The late afternoon light reflected off the cloth and illuminated Miranda's torso from the side, balancing the wonderful glow from behind. Miranda and I explored a number of different poses, ranging from her being completely behind the cloth, to this image, with a wonderful balance between being concealed and revealed.

On White

Moncton, New Brunswick

I'm often surprised by how successful short sessions can be; in the past I've had sessions under 30 minutes yield very striking images. This morning session was jammed between an early breakfast and Miranda and driving to Fredericton to do a presentation and demonstration photo session, for which Miranda was modeling.



Though I knew I would be photographing her in Fredericton, I was keen to make the most of Miranda's time while she was visiting Moncton, so we'd agreed the night before to spend a little time working with the morning light before heading out.



For years, my default process for indoor Nudes has been to cover whatever space I'm working in with white sheets, both to even out the light and to create a "neutral space" as opposed to a personal/individual space, which would detract from the focus on the body's own beauty.

This session has a small modification on that process. I began with a simple idea: as opposed to photographing Miranda on white sheets, I asked her to act as if she was emerging from them. This drew inspiration from some images I made in Maine years earlier, but where those images were "genuine" (the model was chilled from working outdoors, and huddled under the sheets to keep warm), this session intentionally used the sheets as an aesthetic and compositional device. I made a number of variations on the theme, with Miranda first looking at the camera, then looking away; in the end, the simple elegance of this image appealed to me the most.

Caryatid

Spion Copp, Nova Scotia

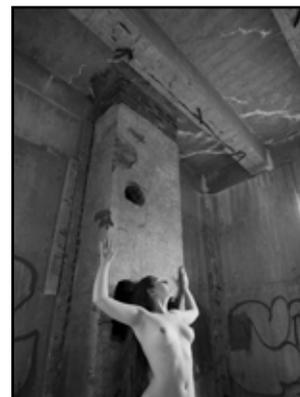
This image is quite unique in my work - not so much in terms of appearance as in how it was made. A year earlier, I'd made a similar image but I had been frustrated with the results; the setting and pose was perfect, but I didn't select the correct lens or point of view necessary to really tell the story I was after.

Usually, I find the idea of "remaking" an image abhorrent - it often is futile to try to recreate a fleeting moment - but in this case, as the flaws were all mine, and the solution was evident to me, I was willing to try.



On the day this image was made, Miranda and I had planned to work on the coast, but the weather had different plans, so we had to find a location to work out of the rain. I asked if Miranda would be up for revisiting Spion Copp, even though she'd modeled there before, and she was more than keen (for one thing, it meant no modeling in the rain).

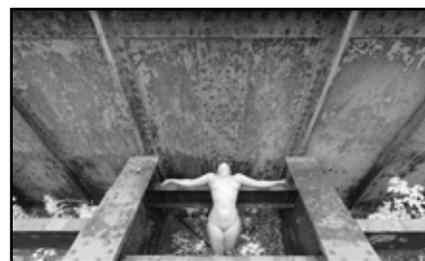
Midway through the session I recalled the image made a year before, and decided to revisit the pose, but this time opted for a more dramatic lens and camera position. The wide lens let me place the camera closer to Miranda while still showing the room around her, while the lower camera position lent a drama to the perspective that was missing in the earlier image. When making the new image, both Miranda and I were working from memory, but when the final image was finished, and I compared it to the original, I knew that in this case, revisiting the initial image had paid off.



Iron Angel

Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick

I've always had an attraction to symmetry, likely rooted in my love of gothic architecture. With this space, I fell in love with the bold ironwork, overlaid with the random patterns of the rust and decay. Having Miranda place herself in the absolute centre of the girder box, and then composing the image with her centered in the frame image, further reinforced the symmetry.



One of the most important images in my work, Concrete Angel, was made almost fifteen years before this image. A simple composition of a model perched on the side of a lighthouse, the photograph was the first that really expressed what I was seeking to say about the Nude. It also was typical of my early work with the Nude, in that much of the gender of the model was concealed, hinted at, rather than shown.

In many ways, Iron Angel is a symbol of one of the longest, most subtle shifts in my work, away from androgyny and gender neutrality, and towards imaging the body in a more confident, gender specific manner. I couldn't have made this image a decade earlier, as the bold, confident pose Miranda is in would have been too direct and strikingly female for my earlier self.

Fulcrum & Balance

Gray's Island, New Brunswick

Miranda and I had just completed a set of images in a copse of trees and were checking if there was anything else in the area to work with when we saw this pole, bedded in concrete, but fallen to almost horizontal position. Both of us agreed it was too unusual to pass up, and so we proceeded to explore how it could be best utilized in an image.



Initially, I thought I'd set the pole and Miranda against the background of the Petitcodiac River, but try as I might, I couldn't find an angle that worked. Changing my approach, I found that with careful composition, I was able to isolate the weathered tree trunk in the landscape, simplifying the background to the sea of grass and focusing the image on Miranda, the pole, and the grass. The only other issue was the length of the log compared to Miranda - the obvious solution was to work with an elongated pose - and rather than trying to explain my way through it, I just showed her, stretching out as I wanted her to be positioned. It turned out to be a little trickier than I'd expected as if Miranda moved too far out on the log, it would tip down, ruining the composition; with a bit of experimentation, she found just the spot to be in.



In many ways, while this image is of a man-made object, it has more in common with my landscape Nudes, than those in architectural spaces. With models in landscape, I am usually responding to the environment, whereas with architecture it is usually the light that provokes an image to be made.

Articulation

Shenstone, New Brunswick

Made during a weekend of photography with four models in the south-eastern New Brunswick landscape, this image is unusual for me. In over twenty-five years of work, I can only think of one other set of images of the Nude set on a vehicle (which either points out vehicles are not very aesthetic when mixed with the Nude, or I am blind to a whole potential direction for my work).



The night before we'd all arrived at dusk and had a quick look over the property seeking ideas for locations to work in. First and foremost was an old hay cart sitting on the grass, which is where I began photographing after breakfast the next morning.

I worked with the cart for a long time, first with one, then two, then finally three models; though simple on the surface, the many different levels, angles and lines of the cart were perfect for posing on, and when I found one pose that worked, after making whatever images I could, I would ask another model to try to find a second pose, building out from the first. In the end, however, it was this dramatic horizontal of Miranda, from early in the experimentation, that was the strongest of the location.

End of Days

Kirkwood, New Brunswick

Miranda and I had driven north to the Miramichi River in hopes of making some images on one of New Brunswick's largest rivers. Not knowing the area, we drove slowly up river, hoping to find a space close to the road, yet isolated enough to permit us to work in seclusion.

It was during this exploration that we passed over a tributary river and I caught a glimpse of abandoned bridge piers in the river. Five minutes later, Miranda, tripods, cameras, and I were under the highway bridge hard at work. Because the old bridge was so close to the new, Miranda and I could work directly under the highway, with no chance of being interrupted.

The biggest challenge with the space was that of scale. The piers were so massive, and so far out into the river, that there was no way to work with them and Miranda in the same composition without Miranda being dwarfed by their size. Initially I was frustrated by this, but when I shifted to using the piers as a backdrop, as opposed to the focus, everything changed. Using a wide lens to open up the perspective and keep Miranda's figure prominent in the composition worked wonders and, after a couple of minutes of exploration, we made this hauntingly cinematic image.

This image is included in *Miranda, the New Brunswick Portfolio*.



Dimensional Shift

Sandy Lake, Nova Scotia

I love photographing in old or abandoned buildings or industrial sites: the contrast between the lines of the body, and those of the man-made structures and objects provide a wonderful contrast to focus on photographically.

The sawmill at Sandy Lake only operated for 14 years, but the plateau of sawdust it left behind (more than 5 metres high) is almost as impressive as the massive pieces of machinery lying around on its surface – it isn't an exaggeration to say the sawdust pile is as high as many of the trees that surround it!



Miranda and I worked hard with this space, trying to deal with the frustrating lighting and with the shape of the machine remnant, both challenges that took some time to overcome. The harsh sunlight gave some very nice highlights to the edges of the wheels, but

plunged the rest of the machine into dark shadow, and the hard, unforgiving iron edges proved a little uncomfortable for Miranda to pose on. In the end, working just to the side opposite the sun, and having Miranda lie back across her clothes, solved the problem, and helped make one of the most successful images of the day.

This session was the last time I photographed with film.



My work with Miranda spanned a sea change in my photographic process. When we first met I worked with film exclusively, and from there, our collaboration flowed through my early experiments with digital cameras, and was central to the decision to set aside film and commit 100% to digital photography (in fact, my last film photograph was made of Miranda!).

From 2001 to 2005, I worked with three different film formats; 35mm, 120 (6x7 and 6x9), and 8"x10" sheet film.



35mm cameras were what I discovered photography with in 1986, but by the time I met Miranda, they were used almost exclusively for infrared photography, a very magical (and grainy) film which inspired me to use infrared-converted digital cameras when I transitioned to digital photography in 2005. I also used 35mm cameras for colour photography, but as I couldn't make my own colour prints, this was only a small portion of my 35mm photography. I stopped using 35mm film in 2003, because of my transition to digital photography. Only one image in *Evolving Beauty: Miranda* was made with a 35mm camera.



120 (medium format) cameras in both 6x7 and 6x9 formats were a frequent choice when I didn't have the time for large format cameras, or when I was working in very low light and needed high-speed film (Ilford Delta 3200 was one of my favorites). I also used them for a small amount of colour photography. Though I'd continuously owned medium format from 1998 to 2003, once I started using large format view cameras in 1991, medium format cameras were relegated to "second line" tool for situations where the larger cameras were impractical; as a result, only three of the photographs in *Evolving Beauty: Miranda* were made with 120 cameras.

8"x10" (large format) view cameras were at the centre of my photography from 2001 until 2005 when I finally set aside film and shifted to working with digital cameras for 100% of my work (previous to this, my primary camera was a 4"x5" large format camera). The incredible control and exceptional image quality these cameras provided made them my camera of choice for almost every setting and subject. Five of the images in *Evolving Beauty: Miranda* were made with 8"x10" view cameras.

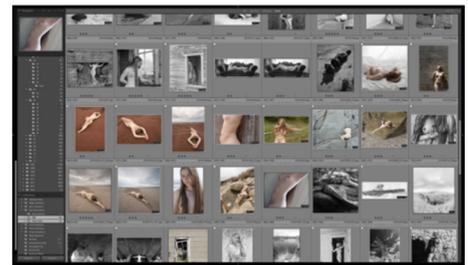


There are thirteen digital original in the twenty-two photographs displayed in *Evolving Beauty: Miranda*. These were made on a variety of Canon and Nikon DSLR cameras.



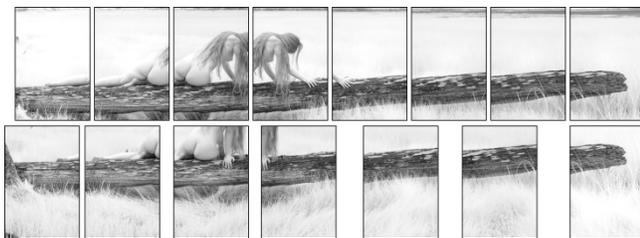
All my digital images are created with RAW files. A RAW file contains the information recorded directly from the sensor with minimal processing. This provides the greatest flexibility when it comes to image processing, and ensures the highest quality in the final photograph.

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom is where most of my digital workflow is accomplished. Images are imported, keyworded, and lightly processed. Once I have culled the images to those I will keep, I finish the keywording, polish off the editing as needed, and renamed and archive the files.



The digital original photographs in *Evolving Beauty: Miranda* were produced in *Adobe Photoshop*. At the core of these files were Smart Objects which contained the original RAW files and facilitated easy revision of the original processing as needed and kept the image quality as high as possible. To finish the images, layers and masks were used to apply local adjustments and any other changes.

Print size is directly related pixels in digital imaging; when there aren't enough pixels for the desired print size, image quality drops rapidly. To overcome the fixed resolution of digital cameras, I frequently stitch together multiple images to create higher resolution photographs, much like making an image out of puzzle pieces. Nine images in *Evolving Beauty: Miranda* were created from stitches of two or more frames, using a



total of 84 separate exposures. One of the largest stitches, for *Folcrum & Balance* (left) was created from 15 separate camera images which were hand-assembled in Photoshop.

Besides resolution, there are other reasons for stitching; it can provide an image with a wider angle of view for a dramatic composition and it can permit the creation of an image with less depth of field than a single frame allows.

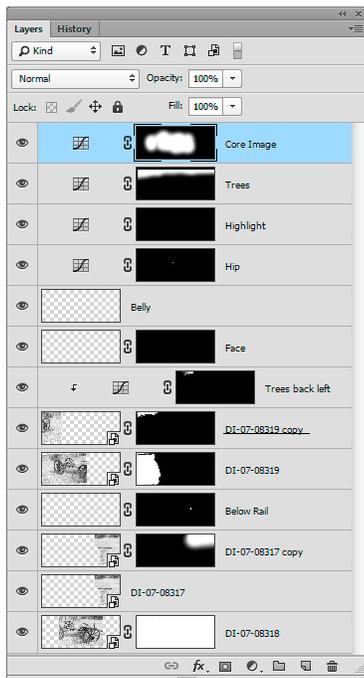
evolving beauty MIRANDA digital darkroom II

The prints in *Evolving Beauty: Miranda* were printed on Epson Premium Lustre or Ilford Pearl roll paper using either an Epson 4900 or 7900, which use Ultrachrome K3 ink, with a tested stability of 140+ years, providing image stability that rivals traditional photo-chemical colour prints, and matches black and white fibre prints.

A large part of the quality of an image is determined by how it is prepared for printing. With a darkroom print this would be carried out during the actual printing process, but with digital photography these adjustments are made before the printing process even begins, by using software such



as Adobe Photoshop to adjust the image tone, colour, and content.



Thirteen different layers were used to create *Articulation* (left); three images in five layers, one clipped and four global adjustment layers, and two retouching layers. At a later stage, the entire layered image was sized for printing and sharpening. The primary advantage of layers is they permit specific changes to be made to discrete areas of the image (using a mask), without altering other parts of the image. Each layer can be altered at will, or even removed at a later date. This level of control would be impossible in a traditional darkroom, even with the most skilled technician.

Sharpening is the final stage in preparing for printing and combines masking, testing and experience to produce an image as polished as possible for a given print size.

Image, adjustment layers and masks have a dramatic impact on image files sizes; the working file for *Articulation* was 1.18 GB in size with the image layers intact. For the 22 images printed for *Evolving Beauty: Miranda*, over 18.5 GB of files were created, averaging 861 MB per image.

I was born in New Brunswick, but grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia, except for a short time when I lived in York, England, while my father was on a sabbatical. Involved with the arts from a young age, I began photographing at 17, just prior to attending the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

Shortly after graduating from the art college in 1995, I posted my first web site with 24 images. Since then, the web site has continually reinvented itself, with the current incarnation, www.evolvingbeauty.com, containing more than 2,500 images, representing more than twenty-five years of work.

In 1999, I completed my first public portfolio, *Victoria, the Alberta Portfolio*, and since then have produced four other portfolios: two focusing on provincial work, and two working as retrospectives marking milestones in my career.

From 1986 to 2005, I worked with a wide variety of film cameras, ranging in format from 35mm SLRs up to a 12"x20" large format view camera. I began using digital cameras in 2003, and in the fall of 2005, I made a complete shift to digital, setting aside film cameras and a wet chemical darkroom in favour of digital single lens reflex cameras, a digital lightroom, and an archival inkjet printer.

For most of my artistic career I have focused on photographing the Nude, but other subjects that have fascinated me have been 19th century military architecture, macro photography (particularly of flowers) and portraiture. Increasingly over recent years, I have been exploring landscape as well, an element which has long been part of my images of the Nude.

Between 1990 and 2006 I worked in a variety of photo-related jobs, ranging from operating a government photo lab to working in photo retail. In 2006, I founded *PhotoWorkshops.ca* and currently divide my time between teaching photography in a wide variety of courses, workshops and one-on-one sessions and pursuing my own photographic vision.

Eric Boutilier-Brown
April 2014

Solo Exhibitions (selected)

The Light Beyond, ViewPoint Gallery, Halifax, NS, 2012
Frozen Light, ViewPoint Gallery, Halifax, NS, 2010
Evolving Beauty New Brunswick, Galerie Maurice Henri, Moncton, NB, 2008
Memory of Water, ViewPoint Gallery, Halifax, NS, 2008
Evolving Beauty, ViewPoint Gallery, Halifax, NS, 2007
XV, ViewPoint Gallery, Halifax, NS, 2003†
Simulacra, ViewPoint Gallery, Halifax, NS, 2001
Digital Nudes, Nova Scotia Digital Media Festival, Baddeck, NS, 1999
Evolving Beauty, University of Maine, Orono, ME, 1998

Group Exhibitions (selected)

Art Brut, McKenzie Art Gallery, Moncton, NB, 2007
Best Photographers 2006, Pisecka Brana Gallery, Prague, CZ, 2007
Naked in the House, This is London, Toronto, ON, 2006
Canon USA, PMA 04, Los Vegas, NV, 2004
Canadian Nudes, Arts NDG, Montreal, PQ, 2000
Stark Naked, ArtSpace, Hartford, CT, 2000
Furrows and Deltas, UNFAO, Providence, RI, 2000
Art Expo 94, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS, 1994
Photo Salon, NS Photo Co-Op, Halifax, NS, 1987

Media and Television

Naked in the House, Fashion TV, Ontario, 2006
Foto, Rogers Cable Network, NB, 2003
Revealing Beauty, Etherore Digital, 2002

Publications (selected)

Erotica: The Nude on Contemporary Photography, Art-Photo-Akt, Germany (12 images, back) 2011
Portfolio, PhotoArt, CZ (10 images), 2007
The Mammoth Book of Erotic Women in Photography, Carroll & Graff, USA (nine images) 2005
The AVA Guide of Outdoor Photography, AVA Publishing, SA (two images), 2004
Outdoor Lighting: Nudes, AVA Publishing, SA (cover, five images), 2003
"You Can Do It," *Popular Photography*, USA (feature article), 2003
Better Picture Guide to the Nude, Rotovision, UK (36 images), 2001

Education & Awards

Canon Imaging Academy, First place, Digital Capture, 2004
Associate, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1995