

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT **Alan Shefland**



Artist-Instructor Alan Shefland

Artist-Instructor Alan Shefland's road to the Minnetonka Center for the Arts has been filled with a number of unanticipated twists and turns. A native New Yorker, Shefland grew up in Queens and navigated his way through the hospitality industry, insurance investigation, film and television editing and finally to Minnesota and photography.

He spent much of his professional life in Los Angeles after a sudden decision to travel cross-country with a friend. After a few years in the insurance industry he spoke with a family friend who mentioned working in commercial editing houses. It was an interesting transition because "photography was always there for me," and "I was the designated family photographer." The switch to visual art seemed to come fairly easy.

He eventually received a post-production degree and went on to work in film and high-profile television programs. On film editing and the creative process, "You have things that drive you, that you want to do, but at times it's like if someone was hovering over Monet and said, there's too much yellow - you've got to get rid of it." Balancing the expectation of directors and producers with his own creative goals was always a delicate task.

He met his wife, a Minnesotan native, while working on *Quantum Leap* in 1989. She was also an editor, and they spent nearly 20 years in LA working on their independent careers. At some point in the early 2000s they decided to move to Minnesota to be closer to her parents. They also realized "we can get out of [Los Angeles] alive!"

Throughout his editing career, he continued to hone his photography skills, often bringing his photos to work for feedback "and it was for the most part always positive." Upon moving to Minnesota he decided to make photography a bigger part of his life.

After discovering MCFTA through his wife, he spoke with several of the photography instructors and began to take classes. At the time the offerings were fairly limited - mostly portrait and advanced photography. As the program grew, "I found a passion and home for something that made me comfortable."

Shefland is an eclectic photographer - working with abstract, landscape and portrait photography. "Whatever catches my attention, makes me think, oh that could be cool!" He does admit that abstract photography is his

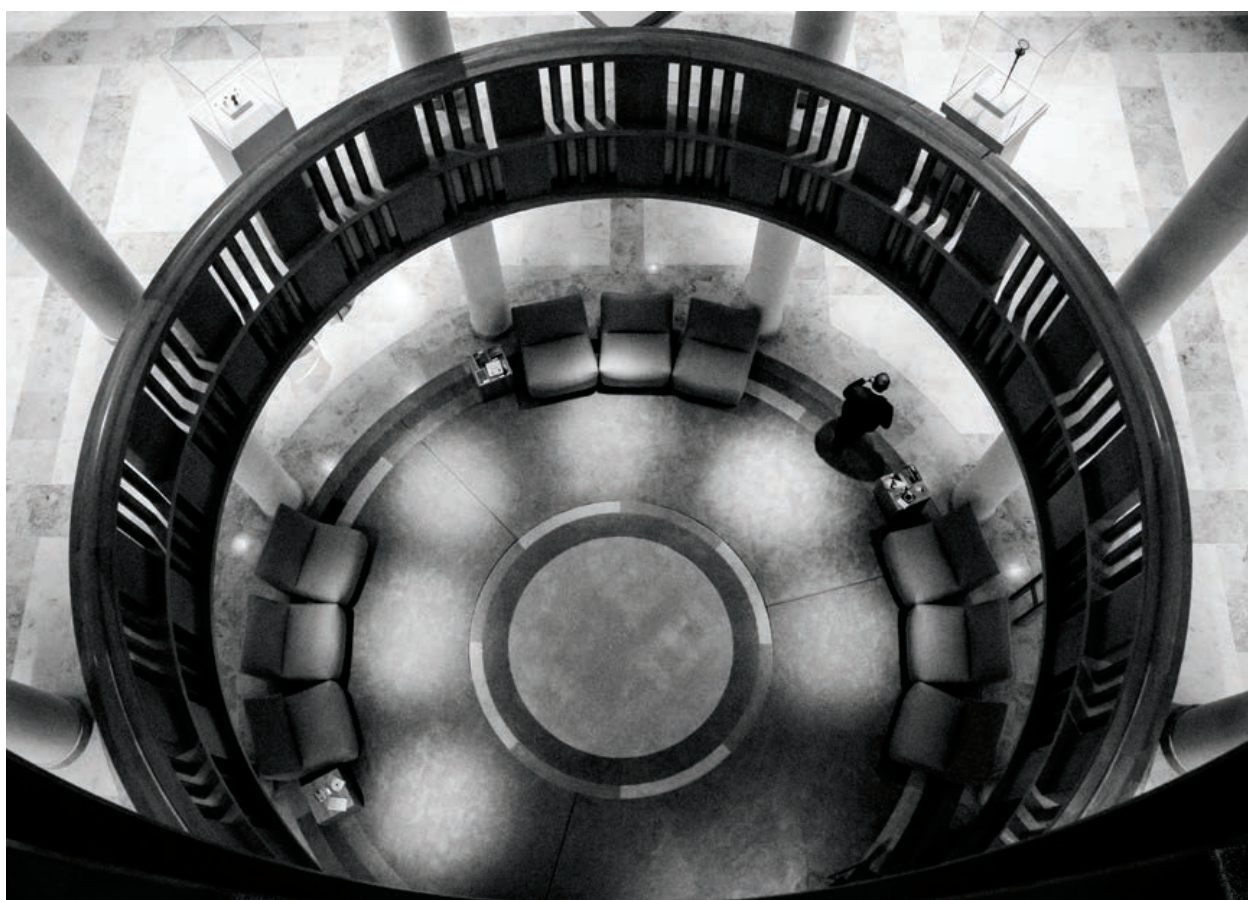
favorite, "People will say that that's a tree, but I say no, it's going to be something different when I shoot that. It's like everything in storytelling - no matter what style, it should have something to say."

Teaching at MCFTA has been a phenomenal experience for him. "It's exciting getting people into a hobby or even a career," also admitting that you as a teacher learn more as you go. About teaching onsite he says, "It's also one of the most beautiful buildings [...] it's mind-blowing. It's a place full of different disciplines." "As photographers we are able to use the building as a subject. I couldn't think of a better mix of people and place."

This winter he will be teaching three classes: *Beginning Digital Photography*, *Advanced Beginner Digital Photography* and *Lightroom Fundamentals*. He will also teach two workshops: *Photo Field Trip: Winter Wonderland* and *Balancing Whites in Lightroom*.



Flowers #9, photo by Alan Shefland



Looking Out From Within, photo by Alan Shefland



Triptych Cancun, photo by Alan Shefland