

M: Just tell me whatever you want to tell me,
--there's a caption to your picture, I mean something about,
you know, your life and how you got to where you are now.
_____ the Adirondacks.

Nathan: I think that really, I think probably the most
important thing in relations to this body of work is the
fact that I grew up here. And I knew a lot of beautiful
places before I started photographing, you know, I knew a
lot of places to go. And I think that really helped
enormously.

M: But between childhood and coming back as a serious
landscape photographer, can you tell me about that.

Nathan: Well I didn't--I don't think I came back as a
landscape photographer. I came back--I came back knowing,
feeling kind of chauvinistically that this is one of the
most beautiful places there is. And, you know, I had been
to a lot of places and I traveled in my work but--not that I
felt that this place was better, I felt like this place had
never been really photographed. You know, had never been
shown for what it is. And I felt a bit, as I say, a little
bit chauvinistically, I felt like I had a mission, you know,
there was something I was trying to say about--about the
place. And my feelings about it, to say that my, you know,
it's a generalization of my feelings about nature. That
doesn't make a lot of sense because to me this is nature. I

mean this is, oh when I want to get back to nature, when I want to go out in the woods, I think of the Adirondacks. It just there are wonderful places to lie down and sleep and, you know, soft pine, you know, beds, so forth.

M: You camp out in connection with your photography?

Nathan: I camp out a fair amount, I camp out a fair amount. But I started to say something I think is interesting. Very often I will take a nap before I take a picture. And I wake up and I see things, you know, fresh or I see things--a lot of my best pictures are in the early morning. Feel like each day's a--try each day as a new beginning. But each of us begins fresh each day, too. But a lot of times I see my best--I see my best photographs, I take 'em after--I wake up and whatever's in front of me is the right thing. And that sort of relates to meditating sometimes.

M: Tell me more about that, how being in a meditative state when you take pictures.

Nathan: Well I like to meditate. I don't do it as much as I should or would like to and I particularly like to do it outside when I'm, you know, in a place where I feel a certain peace, where I feel certain connection with the forces of nature.

M: Now would this be the place where you're taking pictures?

Nathan: Often, often I find a place where I feel there's certain powerful physical forces. I mean sometimes you can see those forces visually, you know, with the lines of--the lines that ice has scraped across the rocks. Sometimes you can very clearly see what the wind is doing to the trees on mountaintops. You can--you can--you know, there are visual--there are visual manifestations of the natural forces. And a lot of times that's what I'm trying to photograph. Or that's something that I think about. I mean, for example, that photograph of the crack, you know. You're seeing physical force operate, or that did operate there at one time. And I related physical force to the larger forces in the universe, you know.

M: You're pretty committed to photographing the Adirondacks. I mean you've done an awful lot in your career of photographing people, going to London and all these different things.

Nathan: Well I feel like I will always photograph here some. I did that body of work in a relatively short time. Eighteen months or two years. And again, it was all stored inside of me from childhood, you know, I mean a lot of those pictures, a lot of the places, a lot the--a lot of what I knew about the Adirondacks was stored there and I just had ta--I couldn't work fast enough to get it all out. Now it's a much slower process, much more difficult much more

tedious, you know, there's more searching. I've gone, you know, I've skimmed off the top, now I have to look harder. I have to work harder I think. I'm working on another book of Adirondack photographs, I think might take me five or eight years. And I, you know, I don't know, I mean-- And also I see it broken up by doing other pro--by working on other projects.

M: Also you'll be digging deeper, or--

Nathan: Well, it's hard, it's not-- First of all, on the most immediate level, is there are a number of wonderful places that I know I haven't photographed yet, that I've been to. I-- Digging deeper is a hard, is a hard thing to say. I mean I'm--we're always trying to do our best and-- I mean I think, I feel like I have to make images that are at least as good or better. I hope that I'll be able to do something that will be better, if, you know, that 'a-- I mean people expect you to bring them to a new level, you know, too--and I think rightly so. It's reasonable to, you know, once you have a bit of an audience it's reasonable for them to expect you to produce something that excites them in a fresh way. It's hard--it's hard.

M: Why do you use such huge equipment?

Nathan: Well clarity, basically. I mean I feel that the one, you know, I talked about the physical forces. That's an important aspect to me. But one of the other very

important aspects of my work, to me, is the detail. Is the exactness of things. The--I mean, again--but when you really start photographing very refined detail you're photographing physical forces again. You photographing, you know, the grasses and that--those--the little water grasses there, you know, speak about the flow of the river and the sunlight that makes them grow in a certain way. So detail is-- I'm just one of those photographers, I mean that I've always felt detail is one of the most important things you can present to people. That's where reality is. Reese Vanderou said "God lives in the details." I mean a lot of, you know, Weston--I mean I think it's also one of the things that separates photography from other mediums, it's really one of photography's great strengths, is that it can deal with the exactness of things so well.

M: How do you compare yourself and your approach and so forth to the landscape photography that was done in the Adirondacks in earlier years by let's say Senneca or some of the other greats who were using large negatives?

Nathan: Interestingly I wasn't too aware of Senneca, Ray Starks work when I began. I mean that might surprise you but I-- There was one--his greatest picture I think, is one done up in Avalanche Pass. And I tried to find the exact spot where he photographed from, and I tried to do a modern version of that, albeit it in color, and I did it in

the winter. I mean--I'm not ashamed of using somebody else's vantage point or, you know, learning from someone else. I, you know, I see a lot more differences than similarities. I think, I don't know. I just wouldn't really want to--I mean I admire his work but I really wouldn't want to make comparisons. I mean I think each person has different motivation, let's use that, different motivation in mind and, you know, I think there's some places where obviously our motivations would cross and there are some places where they don't have very much to do with each other.

M: Yeah. Okay, I'm trying to think of what else to ask you. Let's turn this off-- We're back on again.

Nathan: Well I do get very excited when I'm out there in nature. I mean I really feel good, I jump up and down and yell, I mean I act like a child essentially, some of the time when I'm out there. I just feel free, you know, I feel wonderful. And that's, I mean that's-- I guess in a way one of the reasons I do what I do is I like to be out there. I like to be outside. I like to be out, you know, seeing it, feeling it, the nip of the air, the-- And you know, now you're asking me about the work of it. The work--part of the work is framing and, you know, finding--it's kind of building structure into a picture. Finding shapes, forms that relate to each other. I am always going around looking with a--with framing in mind. I mean that the gross--that's

where the picture starts from, the gross shapes and forms and how they relate to each other. And, you know, I use my--I use the L of my thumb and forefinger doubled and look through, you know, look at things that way. That's probably the hardest part, or one of the hardest parts is finding the frame. For me at least. And with the view camera, I mean it's so infinite. There's, you know, once you start moving the front standard to the right to the left, up and down, I mean that's one of the reasons I love using the view camera too. Is the possibilities of framing that arise from using the view camera.

M: Okay.