Donato (Danny) Pietrodangelo
Artist Statement

For more that 40 years, beginning in the mid 70s, my photography was influenced – and reflective of - the classical school of "straight," non-manipulated, photography, typified by the work of Edward Weston, Paul Strand, Minor White, Ansel Adams and others. My approach to taking a photograph emphasized pre-visualization, that is, the photographer sees the image even before exposure, than takes the photograph and presents it as the subject was seen – without manipulation – even cropping- after the picture is shot.

A significant difference in my work, from the classicists, was that the images were in *color*, rather than the monochrome typically associated with this style of fine art photography. This made it unique, at the time, resulting in it being recognized, published and widely exhibited in Florida museums and galleries (see biography).

My interest in color photography, took me to the George Eastman House, under an Individual Artist Fellowship, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, to research the historic development of color photography in the late 1800s and early 1900s, which resulted in articles on color internationally published (i.e. *Creative Camera, Aperture*).

In a way, I was rationalizing my use of color based on history. (Interestingly, Ansel Adams published a rare collection of color photographs in the 1950s. I wrote him to ask him, by shooting these images he was making an aesthetic statement about the viability of color as fine art. He wrote back saying no, not at all.)

Later in the new millennium , I began to think of an interpretation of photography written by Edward Weston, "Photography is an approximation of reality." It made me reassess my approach to image making, concluding, if photography is no more than an approximation of what is real, why not re-envision an alternate reality, using the new digital image editing tools now available.

As a result, I began to produce work in a radically different style - essentially a 180 degree turn - from what I had done in the past. Taking advantage of the immensely wide palette of possibilities offered by digital technology, I started producing highly manipulated images.(See article, *Film Is Dead.)*

To me, as an older artist, this was as significant as it was rewarding. That is, I progressed to a new and fundamentally different style of image making - an evolution from what I had done for years. Especially important, it has been well received both critically and publically with new solo exhibitions and inclusion in multiple juried exhibits.

I began to produce, digitally constructs, *photocomposites* of cities and towns, which I call Cityscapes. In addition, I applied the approach to other subjects - both organic and inorganic, as I began to see the symmetry and visual repetition inherent to nature and man/woman made constructions. For example, intrigued by the symmetrical order of a brick wall, I altered, manipulate and tone the image to create an alternate view intended to elicit a similar response, when presented from a different perspective.

Current and recent work has produced a series of images I refer to as Cityscapes.

These are images that approximate reality from a different view. They are imaginary cities, pieces and parts of what I see as I wander the streets of an urban area. A roofline from here, doorways from there, selective details – that might be otherwise overlooked – removed, reordered, repeated and reconstructed into a place that doesn't really exist.

I began to use the same approach with natural elements, to capture the powerful and gentle elements of nature – storm clouds, fire, the ocean - as well as human constructs that might be viewed differently – boat hulls, painted bamboo - re-imagining the subjects, reinterpreting the balance and imbalance of colors, patterns, light and textures.

The images are about not just taking a picture – but making a picture – of something that exists only in your mind.