

*This is an excerpt of an interview conducted between Emmet Gowin and Brian Arnold in May 2000. The interview was conducted as part of exhibition Brian organized called **Precedence: Emmet Gowin and His Students**. The exhibition was an attempt to look the combined roll of artist and teacher, and the meaning of influence.*

**Emmet Gowin:** I had, maybe contentious is not the word that I am looking for, but I was in kind of a mood. I was just responding to some young people here at the university, who are in the Art History, and the German and English literature departments, and they are putting together a conference for this fall called *Surviving the Photograph*. I'm sending them this message back, and I was just thinking, what you think, how would you hear this if I said that they were going to have a conference and call it *Surviving Art History* or *Surviving Criticism*?

**Brian Arnold:** Which would probably be more appropriate.

**EG:** Right. The poor little photograph, it seems like such an innocuous thing. But I guess for the person who has a kind of contention with it, it really is a beast. In a way, maybe that's all of that stuff that needs to be discussed. It's very posited in the terms of how this person feels when they write that prospectus.

**BA:** They are two totally different languages, the language of seeing and creating an image, and the linguistic structures that are used to decipher these are two different exchanges.

**EG:** And both are full of habits.

**BA:** And shortcomings.

**EG:** Right. And norms too. Simplifications or standardizations, and so forth. Anyway, that's not what you want to talk about. Let's talk about what you want to talk about.

**BA:** So perhaps I can start with one of the more predictable questions. Seeing you speak at the SPE conference in Cincinnati, and in the few conversations we've had, you've talked a lot about Callahan and Sommer. What made them such good teachers for you? It seems like you must have worked with them a fairly long time ago, and you are still talking about things you learned from them. I am wondering what it was about their presence that enabled you to understand them for so long, or to think about them for so long.

**EG:** That's a neat and interesting question, and I am guessing that I have a relatively simple answer to it. In both their personalities, there was never any requirement that I abandon who I essentially was. And at the same time their consistent pursuit of who they individually were was so interesting and so supportive of what I wanted to be. I never felt that I was losing any part of myself, but gaining in a kind of rich complexity in the

way that I could think, the way that I could go after things. The kind of elevated standards that I felt I was acquiring. And you could misunderstand a thought like elevated standards, it was just that they represented such a level of dedication, and I came to them both when they were both, well you now, Harry was very close to my age, 50. I should figure it out, 55 at least, when I worked with him. And Fred was a full 10 years over that, so he could have been 60-65. I should figure it out, 1967, so he born in 1905, so he was 62.

**BA:** Has seeing them pass on changed how you think of yourself? Your own roll today?

**EG:** No. Not really. That's not much of an answer, is it?

**BA:** It seems like when the two of them passed away that a moment in history closed, because both of them, maybe in similar ways, but also very unique ways left an incredible mark. An incredible mark in terms of a community of photographers, an incredible mark on the possibilities of photography, in terms of their own aesthetic pursuit, and their dedication, as well as their commitment to innovation.

**EG:** Well, I don't feel like any of that is lost. That somehow that is preserved in the future for any person who is introduced with that same kind of innocence and wonder that we had when we discovered that photography is something that we are interested in. On a personal basis, I think when I left Harry after those two years, I felt that I was truly on my own. He was like a true friend after that, but he would never pester me, he would never hold me to any kind of you owe me something, or I expect you to subscribe to such and such a theory. I was not accountable to him. And yet, the little exchanges that we did have were just full of thoughtfulness. Really tender things. I don't know if I told you this, but about four years ago, five years maybe, I was taking a class into the city, and called ahead in the afternoon at Pace/MacGill, and asked could we see so and so and so and so, you know a list of things I was hoping that would look at. I came in with my class, and one of the young women met me at the door and said, "Harry is here. He was going to leave. He was going to leave, but he heard that you were coming so he said that he would sit down and wait." And that's the kind of tenderness. It wasn't to say, "Are you doing any good?" It was to just, just waited because I wanted to see you, and now I've done that. And then to say, "It's always great to see you." And then goodbye, in a way. Very simple, but in very physical terms.

**BA:** I have this perhaps idealistic vision that seems to clash a lot with many of the artists that I have met in my life (or maybe it's not just artists), but that seems to be exactly what it should feel like. I think a lot of art is about that type of emotional sensitivity. Something a lot of people involved with this show have talked to me about in exchanges or in the essays they have given me, they have emphasized this connection between making art or making photographs and daily life, making art being about family, about gardening. So I think your story about Callahan is a great story to hear. I wish that were a more common happening.

**EG:** Well one thing – this is tangential in a way – one of the things that I really admire in teaching, and one thing I really admired in Harry and Fred. Harry interacted with everything differently than Fred, and was wholly a different person. You could relate to him primarily through a mutual love of photography. Which you just felt that on a daily basis it continued to save his life, and give order to things, and that he could very easily slip into darkness without it. Fred was not like that at all. This won't sound like it is terribly connected, but it's the trait that I love so much and believe so much in in teaching is that the people who come to you to work with you should leave as more of what they arrived as, instead of less. They should in now way need to resemble you. All of the differences that they arrived with are their advantages and should be preserved.

**BA:** Do you think that there is a way that you can facilitate that?

**EG:** In a way I don't know. Maybe. You can really struggle with something with something like this, and say, "Oh I just get so messed up that I don't know how to do anything, I don't know how to what you need to have happen. I don't know how you are going to learn this. I don't know what you are going to do. I wish I could help you, and I am just so confused." Fred would never take a thing like that on. He would never say, "Oh I am confused." Harry would use the technique for surrounding responsibility for you. Saying I don't know how you are going to do this, but you are going to have to do it. I can tell you that you need to it, but I can't help you do it. Fred always showed up with really interesting things to think about. With lists, with books, with something, a new idea. He would arrive with one new thought written out on a piece of paper; "I got up in the middle of the night and wrote this down and I couldn't wait to tell you." And it would just be a thought, but it would be a general thought about our relationship to the world, and how the practice of art had led us to think about these things and to care about them. I don't know if I said anything about this at my talk at SPE, but one morning, I had been in Prescott, AZ for almost five or six days, over the winter, probably during the winter break, and it was clear that I had to go the next morning. And he would just stay full alert during the week when we were there. We would sort of agree just how much of a day we could stand to be thinking and talking, and then we would stop at maybe six in the evening or seven in the evening, it would start to get dark and we would say, "Oh, that's enough for today." I would go off with the locals, and we would talk nature or something else, and give him some recovery time. It never would seem the next morning if he would say, "I was thinking about, or I wrote this down in the middle of the night..." This one morning he had gotten up and he said, "Now this is it, this is the way we want to think about this. A great photograph, a mature work of graphics and a work of art are the kind of strata, which are open to us. They are like parallel worlds. And the great photograph anybody can make." We don't even know how you do it. It just can happen. You could fall over a tree and the camera would go off, and bang, it would be this unbelievable picture.

**BA:** Right. It's frustrating how many of the best pictures are accidents.

**EG:** Exactly, but maturity, maturity or a kind of growth in an understanding of design was something that you had to work or. A work of art was like the great photograph, you

could work your head off, and if it wasn't going to be than it just wouldn't, and it wouldn't be anything that you could command to happen.

**BA:** You made reference in one of our earlier conversations to Robert Motherwell, and one of my favorite comments of Motherwell's is that the unconscious or any kind of meaning is only discovered through hard work and a commitment to see through your errors, which seems to be the same way of saying what you are remembering right now.

**EG:** Yes. I may have said that the first time that I went to Arizona in 1969, I did it sort of with the full knowledge that Fred and Francis had already gone to Japan and they weren't even going to be there. I felt like that if I could just see their living space I probably could figure out all kinds of things that I need to figure out. You know, I just felt that to see where they lived would tell me something that I would find useful. And it was beautiful on many levels, but one of the most staggering things was to see his library, which lined almost every wall of every room. Not literally, but strategically in most of the rooms were library shelves, and to see the French philosophy and poetry in one channel of the library, you know, one stack of books, and then the German philosophy and poetry, and the Italian, and just to see that he was taking on, had taken on, probably before he had even quite come to art, these various realms and in different languages seemed an idea wholly unattainable to me, but it was so affirming.

**BA:** That is curious to me, if I can interrupt for a second. I also wrote a short essay for the catalog we are printing to document the show, and in what I wrote I made this comment – and this is my own perspective, I would be interested to see your reaction – that teaching and being an artist in some ways feel contradictory, because the energy it takes to teach drains the energies that I can bring to my own work, but at the same time I also find them to be the same thing, because both of them are about a really acute desire to learn and to understand something.

**EG:** Acute desire, to be available to what could possibly animate and fill your spirit, with something parallel to what you do when you're actually working, and trying to acquire firsthand experience. It is a parallel realm, because when you are photographing you are waiting for the world itself to open up. But when you are teaching you are waiting for a parallel world of association to open up, the poetic way in which things get said. You know, just better and improved ways of saying things. Or, just better insights into an old thing.

**BA:** Right. Well, and either way both of them are improvisations.

**EG:** That's right. That's absolutely right. So making the picture is an improvisation in the same way. In all cases, you are oddly, you are imperfectly prepared for what actually transpires, but all the little things you know are your building kit which you handle when it happens. You take an old experience and an old way of saying something, and an inspiration about the moment or the object under discussion and you are trying to build a way to say it that is poetically appropriate to then. It is the same kind of spontaneous

response that you need with the camera in your hand. Or the same spontaneity that a poet needs. I guess, if anybody ever pressed me, that while I love painting, and studying painting probably than I study poetry, I never thought anything was to closer to what we do than poetry.

**BA:** How so?

**EG:** Well....

**BA:** Is it the economy of means?

**EG:** It is. It is that you are trying to get something to speak which is unwritten. You put something on the page, that is the part that's written. But poetry lies behind the words in something that hasn't been said. I think in the picture the same thing is going on. Something is articulated in the picture, something behind or exterior to the picture.

**BA:** It's the implication of language.

**EG:** Yeah. And one of the reasons that a concern for form has some rich value for visual people – just the way the qualities of sound or cadence or rhythm for poets – is that things which are not literal, but implied, associative, come just from those things, just an angle, just a shape, just a space, in a sense, something felt. Some things in the picture are very clear.

**BA:** Remembering back to the first conversation I had with you, you made another reference to Frederick Sommer that has really stuck with me. He said something to you about a how a real sensitivity to materials and form teaches you the subject of your photograph.

**EG:** Yeah.

**BA:** I don't know if I am remembering it how you said it.

**EG:** Well, you've said it in a new way, so it's coming back around to me, as if it were a fresh thing, something that I hadn't heard quite like that. There are two forms that I remember it in, and one was in Dayton. We had just passed a Chinese painting, and he called me back, not so much to look at the painting, but he just pointed his in the direction of the painting, as if that was the content, and then said, "Don't let anyone ever talk you out of physical splendor."

**BA:** That's a pretty wonderful sentence.

**EG:** It's a wonderful thing to say. It was that there would be this contest between what things mean, or are suppose to mean, their alliterative, easily equated content, something almost linguistic, an easily built bridge, and that behind that bridge are qualities like splendor. That, in a way, transcends, or are a second level within the same object. Those

things are all there, but there is another level to it. To think that it exists as it were only on one level is not to be open to the transcendent quality that is also there. So, I don't remember where this fragment or idea comes from, but I think it is from a German philosopher or poet who says that poetry consists of subsists in the meaning behind words, in the words behind the words.

**BA:** Or the imagination behind the words.

**EG:** Yeah. Where the words open the imagination into something that is not so defined, and yet sharply reminding. You know, one is sharply reminded...a precise way of what one is feeling. You are reminded as though through a feeling. Anyhow. Callahan represented a kind of dedication to practice that I really liked, and that would have kept me going almost, well I don't know how long. That would have kept me going a long time. I don't think I ever felt I was finished with that, or that I had learned enough. Harry had an aversion to being too clear. It was almost as if he was afraid to be too clear. It needed to stay in a mysterious place. Fred was afraid to put words out on the table.

**BA:** But his words are always about a mysterious place.

**EG:** Right. His words are about a mysterious place, but he will tell you a story, or he would spell something out in a way, in an attempt to sharpen your perception of the thing that seems direct, or simple, or whatever. He is always looking for the next level in the old thing. It's odd. He never pursued a discussion of his own work in this way. Nor did he pursue discussing my work in that way. We knew each other for several years before he even asked to see something of mine, and after he looked at two or three things, he said, "You know, it's really pointless for you to be showing me these things. We can just go on being friends, and I really don't need to be worrying about what you are doing."

**BA:** How did that feel at the time?

**EG:** I understood it. I understood it. I'm not sure that I could have told you right that minute why. It didn't necessarily feel gratifying. Because I might liked to have shown him something and have him say, "Oh this is really wonderful!"

**BA:** It seems in a way it's kind of him saying that already understands what you are making.

**EG:** It is in a way, that is probably what he was saying. And there are lots of ways to assume that you can understand something. But, in this sense, it made great sense to me. A little bit like thinking of a chess player, and someone is learning the moves. Maybe they win all their games anyhow. But if you are really experienced and you watch there openings and you watch some of their moves, it might be excruciatingly painful, if you are really experienced, because you know the agony that is going to come from those first moves. You would think, "You will probably get out of this, but what a bad place to start." And I sort of realized that he was saying, "I can't help you get out of this, you are just going to have to do it."

**BA:** Well that seems like an interesting analogy too, because his work and his words have always seemed so puzzle-like or labyrinth-like, in a very cryptic or arcane way.

**EG:** Yeah. Yeah, and I have been reminded of that various times. I always have to make an allowance there, because like my feeling about William Blake – with whom I equate Fred, at least in a superficial way – once I began to take Blake seriously, ever from the beginning, it seems so transparently clear what it was about. I never experienced it as something that was densely, mysteriously inaccessible. It seemed to me that I felt...it was by feeling that I knew exactly what it was about. I couldn't tell you all of the details, but I knew it as a feeling.

**BA:** As I've pieced together this project, most everybody involved has called you a kind of mentor. I am curious as to what you think that means, or how you respond to that.

**EG:** I guess I don't know exactly what they mean. But I know how I felt about having bad teachers and good teachers, and I had some of both. I really did feel that some of them really believed in something that was important, and others – and this was the kind of teacher that I really didn't care very much for – who claimed to know everything but didn't believe in anything. Their behavior was in full contradiction of what they claimed to understand. And I had always made such a distinction between what you profess and the way you behave. I suppose – I don't know exactly what they could mean – but I think that I never thought that I knew much more than they did, unless it was something to do with something that I had experienced for myself first hand, and that I could tell. It wasn't an answer for them, but it was what the experience had been like for me, and that I was always happy to tell. Because it still didn't quite give them the answer...I guess this is one of those things that I haven't figured out. Isn't mentoring just being open and available? Isn't it just not pretending to know what you don't know?

**BA:** I have this sense, my immediate response to what that word means would be something about a commitment, but I think outside the frames of the classroom. A commitment about personal well-being.

**EG:** Right.

**BA:** And I think it also is a little bit about guidance and less about tutoring.

**EG:** Right. I think you are right about those things. I do know that even Intro. Photo, which I teach every semester, if I didn't incorporate every kind of thought that flows through my mind when I am seeing things or we are having discussions, or when, whatever it is, whatever the subject at hand is, or whatever is transpiring, I feel really free to take whatever direction comes up, and treat it as if it is just as important as where we think we are supposed to be. In a way that is a reflection on how one deals with one's own life. Because a lot is at stake – and this is a funny thought, and it's an unhappy thought in a lot of ways – but of recently I've had a very sad awareness of someone who is quite young, and yet has not long to live. One of my really close students of the same

year as Fazal already died. I don't know, something that had happened in the class this year caused me – we were talking about something inside the frame and outside the frame, the way in which we react to certain things, and I just had this odd sense, that you think people in prison are serving a life sentence, but what do you think you are doing? We are under a life sentence too; we are just not in prison. We are free, we think we are free, but we are serving a life sentence.

**BA:** The operative words, “we think...”

**EG:** We don't perceive it the same way. We know our freedom is not being denied to us, and yet, every decision we make, everything that we do, is part of a very limited life. It should matter. It should be apart of our self-consciousness all the time. We haven't got time to waste doing trivial things, or to say things just hear ourselves be smart. It should somehow contribute to life what we have to say, what we are about, what we are doing. Okay, so you are not in prison, but you should be contributing to life in your own natural way, and that if somebody who was in prison found out about what you were doing, it should lift their spirits. It should hold something that could be of interest to them. They wouldn't be sad to see that you are living the way that you are living. They probably have plenty of reasons to be sad about the way that they lived, but it shouldn't be a recrimination to you if they were able to look over your shoulder and see what you're doing. There's a poem by Wendell Barry where she says, “Try not to do anything that wouldn't please a pregnant woman.” This is some point of reference, and it would be different, because there are all kinds of psychologies and all kinds of people, and different ideas of what is really valuable or precious, but that struck me.

**BA:** It seems like a really wonderful metaphor that works on many different levels.

**EG:** Yes, yes, yes.

**BA:** One in terms of moods or quick tempers or something, but also the whole idea of regeneration.

**EG:** Yes.

**BA:** Or a commitment to regeneration, or nurturing.

**EG:** This is truly taking the moment and just using it the way we do in class. I just read a prospectus for an outsider art symposium for Lehigh University this fall, including people like Mr. Imagination. The topic is something to do with the apocalypse or the end of time, and this being a good time for a new beginning. So they were taking this idea, and so many of these people have a kind of religious twist to what they are involved with, and lot of them really do believe in a limited time on earth, and a sense of coming to the end of time. I thought that was a really clever way of turning that around, to think of running out of time is the time to begin all over, to experience a transformation, to be born new.

**BA:** I've actually studied a lot of Hindu art, and I am really fascinated by Hindu philosophy, and one of the things that I like a lot about their ideas is that the end of life, or that death, is a cause for celebration, because it is an alleviation of suffering, it's, ideally, as continue to change or evolve spiritually, becoming spirit and not substance, and that's the ultimate goal...And I guess the subject, or where we are now in the conversation reminds me of another question I have been curious to ask. As I recall, your father was a minister, is that correct?

**EG:** Yes.

**BA:** How has that played into how you understand yourself and your responsibilities as both an artist and a teacher? Or has it?

**EG:** I probably don't know the answer to this, but it does amuse me to think that you start life with strong ambitions to be totally different from – you know, to put aside behaviors that didn't please you, or you thought were....

**BA:** So that you are not your parents.

**EG:** Right. And those things we understand them in terms of psychological stages, of differentiation and so forth, but I am sure that I thought, "Oh my, this is not my trait at all. This as far from me as anything could be." In some way, I am much more connected to what he was doing that I might have ever thought I would be.

**BA:** Listening to you now, you seem to be talking about a moral responsibility, or a social responsibility, or at least an emphasis on social and personal integrity, and using that as a subject for a conversation about photography.

**EG:** And I may do that more than I realize. Somehow, I have the really strong sense that all of our really important decisions grow out of how we feel, and what we have required and assimilated and synthesized as feelings. You know, that analysis and rote learning do help, they provide the perfect comeback, or an answer for something, but ultimately most of the really key things, when we face something that is very uncertain, we resolve the dilemma in terms of how we feel about it. How we would feel if we turned the proposition over, it was going the other way. If we were not the perpetrator but the subject, the victim not the person in control. So, I suppose all that comes out of Christianity in many ways.

**BA:** I think there was also that moment you were talking about at the SPE Conference when you were at Yale and started quoting scripture to the graduate students.

**EG:** I know what I was at Yale that I was pretty safe, that in that particular photography classroom no one had read to them from the Gnostic Gospels. Within the last couple of months anyhow. I would have been happily surprised if that weren't so.

**BA:** Saying a couple of months is probably pretty generous.

**EG:** I think it's very generous (laughs).

**BA:** There were probably people in the classroom who didn't know what the Gnostic Gospels were.

**EG:** I expect those kids to be pretty smart. It's a really interesting thing, because a lot of those people at Yale, like the Princeton students, come of very strong backgrounds, and they have had those experiences and they are very curious, like yourself having studied Hinduism or something, but they often compartmentalize that and separate that from what they do when they go into a studio class, or when they feel themselves to be apart of the art market or whatever.

**BA:** That is one of things that I admire most about Frederick Sommer's work, is the synthesis between that type of arcane or occultist learning – that I think you even made reference to – and how much that is apart of his visual sensibility. It doesn't seem like those are two different things for him and his work

**EG:** And in a very real way. What I say that we act out of feeling, that is what I mean. That peculiar mix of what is arcane for somebody else but central to us. That is exactly what informs and makes our work what it is. It is also the potential of appearing to others somewhat original. If nobody reads the Gnostic Gospels, to read it is an original act. Or it appears for a moment to be quite daring. It's not daring, at all. If you follow through on what really moves you, preoccupies you, seems to have something relevant to say, it can come as a big surprise. That's interesting. Whenever anyone comes along and does something that is supposedly new in the art world, it's not at all hard to see that it also must have its antecedents. It doesn't come from nowhere.

**BA:** It seems that to acknowledge that in the art world would be a mistake, but that is one of the things that I find most gratifying – knowing nothing about Frederick Sommer but feeling like I can relate to him because I understand his photographs. I love that exchange, that history. William Blake, for that matter, being from a different century, but still feeling that there is something about him that I relate to or understand. I think that is a really important part of how we learn, or how histories are created.

**EG:** And it is also how we find out who we are. Because not everybody relates to the same things. It's a very individual act of faith, to acknowledge what starts as a sort of tentative openness towards something – that just sounds like it might have something to it – to a point where you become wholly absorbed into it. Quite rightly, because we found a part of ourselves that as it were missing. Maybe not so much missing, but unamplified. Fred said a really interesting thing along those lines when he was in Princeton, because people would ask him, "Why don't you photograph more often?" or, "How often do you photograph?" And he never took a picture unless he absolutely had to. He said, "But dedication does arise where you see something, and to walk away from it would be liking cutting off your hand." It would be like counteracting some essential quality in your character.

**BA:** That seems like a thought only a photographer would understand.

**EG:** Right.

**BA:** Or at least a poet maybe.

**EG:** But in that what you have seen is a manifestation of something that you've been longing for, or involved with for so long. To not react would be real physical pain. You would wonder about your sanity, because right there in front of you is something that is really speaking to you. And to not listen, not participate, not take the chance of acting in concert with it would be a denial of your hopes and dreams.

**BA:** That's really wonderful.

**EG:** And that is the sense that I hope people got from that poem that I quoted from that Sufi poet, Rumi, in my talk at SPE. If you are living faithfully, if you are not with us faithfully, you are causing terrible damage. I think the sense of that is if you are not paying attention to your own real hopes, if you haven't opened yourself to your own needs, how can you help anybody else? So, if you are not listening attentively to your own deepest needs, how can you presume that what you do can even be interesting to anyone else? You have to be interested.

**BA:** I find myself thinking now that that seems to answer the question I asked, what does it mean to be a mentor. I think that's exactly what it means. I think that is the first thing you talked about when I asked you about Callahan or Sommer, was that type of commitment, and integration of action and belief.

**EG:** Yes, absolutely. That way you said that is absolutely perfect, "the integration of action and belief." So that when it is time to act, when something is there before you, you are not the least bit ambiguous or choked up about it. I think that that kind of proper answer, how do I feel about those two people dying, these two heroes, and I think that's the answer to it, when it's time to act it's time to act, and it's time to lay down and leave this world it's time. And so, they lived within a realm of action as long as they could, and then it was time not to act. That also can be a profoundly gratifying thing, just to give in, just to let go. For young people to speculate about it, it always must be strange, to anybody listening in, but in a deep way it is a kind of rehearsal for how we deal with these things ourselves.

**BA:** I actually have one more question. How do you think you would like to have people remember you as a teacher? And is that different from how you would like to have people remember you as an artist? I think have spoken a lot about this integrity, and an honest exchange, but how does that transpire over time? Or what kind of relationship would you like that to build both in work habits, but also in terms of a personal relationship?

**EG:** I do get every once in a while a letter from a student who just been through a beginning class. And of course, I can always tell when they got it, because they will talk about it, in a sense, that what we created in the class was an atmosphere, which believes in the individuality of each of us, as full of potential, full o something that only that person knows. That at that moment they are in front of it, fact to face with it, with a choice, face to face with a feeling. And I got such a note from a student at the end of this semester. I think that is exactly what I would like people to remember. In a sense, that there is not really that much difference between us. In fact, they are way smarter than I am. If I am ahead of them at all, it's that I have let go of some of the needs that I had when I was younger. I don't have to do quite as much espionage; practice so may deceits, self-deceits. But that's not the answer. One thing I k now, is that to be I in the class is to be in accord with the joy of ideas that you really love, and the beauty that is in images whenever there is that subtle level of coherence when things in an image come together to make something that is whole. It doesn't make any difference who made it, or how young they were, or whether they actually understood what they were doing. I think you feel that same sense of participation in that even if your part is only to proclaim, "Do you realize this is really beautiful? This is what we are all looking for, something like this, something that is really beautiful, and this time it happened for you." And that makes you feel like you are participating in something that is worth doing. Because you are not always going to be here, and you are not always going to be able to make the picture that someone else needs, and besides you can never make the picture that they need to make. That must emerge from their own uncertainty, as a mix coming out of everything that they have ever dreamed about, wished for. It's really one of the most amazing things about photography as a practice, is that the person with the camera was in a way the only person there when the picture was made. And they are the only one who realizes how out of touch or in touch with the reality they really were, and they synthesize that when they experience the picture. When it really has something to offer, they realize that they have most total element of surprise, because they see the difference between what they felt and saw when they were there. And how they feel and see now.

**BA:** And they know when it is integrated in the image.

**EG:** And that process of integration is never quite over with. You see that in parents, that sense that they are never really finished with their children. I met a parent once who was telling me, "I don't think you know what you have done for my child, and I don't think you know how much this means to me indirectly, because I see what it means to them." And I thought, it is really simple, I hope that somewhere, someone is doing for my children what I am doing for yours. It's really that simple.