

# Monica Joy Henry

Fresno, California

Artist Bio

A photographer, looking at life within me and about me in abstract, candid, and not-so-obvious points of view

Monica Joy Henry and a photographer I am. I am also the newest member of the Downtown Community Arts Collective, a studio for artists to showcase their creativity. More so, DCAC is a haven for at-risk youth and adults to come into their own through various mediums as guided by mentor artists. I am quite honored with the position bestowed upon me, as it is a perfect fit for the person I have become ~ a woman with a passion for art (and taking pictures), for life, and for being the change in the world I want to see.

So how did I get here? At age 7, I was given my first camera, a hand-me-down from my mother ~ a small and boxy Kodak Brownie. With my first attempts at taking pictures with it, I was hooked. Ever since, I have been the family historian and I have clicked away at all that has captured my eye. I later graduated to an Insta-matic then to a Pentax 35 mm. I have had no professional training, but along my way, I took photography classes each year of high school, a few photojournalism courses in college, and a class or two at the adult school. Not too long ago, I made the huge leap to digital and I continue to learn. I have had pictures published and have earned numerous awards, including 'Best of Show' at the Big Fresno Fair in 2008. My greatest joy, however, is when one of my photographs touches another as it did me.

By profession, I am a social worker who interconnects daily with broken families and who works toward making them safe, nurturing, and whole. I see people making awful, rash decisions that lead to abuse and neglect. I also see these same people becoming aware, making amends, and coming to be positive influences on themselves and others. My personal life has also been touched by a tragic, impulsive decision made by another. I lost my younger brother, Mark, to suicide. It has been years and his loss still has an impact on me. I truly appreciate life and who and what is around me. As I have done in other arenas, I turned my grief into a gift by embracing others touched by such a death and by educating people about signs of depression and means of intervention. I have come to appreciate my middle name, and thus seek joy in what I do and with whom I intersect along the way.

DCAC allows me to share my photographic vision of the world, to support and embrace all about me, and to influence the most vulnerable by means that are positive and creative. I look forward to what is to come.