



*"Untitled (from Mutator 1)" by Daniel Temkin [www.danieltemkin.com](http://www.danieltemkin.com)*

# PHOTO LOTTERY IS BACK!

115 EMPIRE STREET, PROVIDENCE

9/24/11

5-8PM

Every two years we host a photo fundraiser of epic proportions, where local and internationally known artists and photographers exhibit their work at AS220, and people from all over Rhode Island take a chance to win priceless pieces of original artwork for the same \$125 ticket price.

We asked NYC based new media artist and photographer-Daniel Temkin about his work, his travels and his donation to the 5th Biennial Photo Lottery!

## TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR ARTWORK:

I make photos and new media work. I'm studying at the International Center of Photography in NY.

## YOU DO A LOT OF (FOR LACK OF A BETTER TERM) DIGITAL AND COMPUTER BASED ARTWORK, BUT YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY HAS A MORE TRADITIONAL, NOSTALGIC FEEL. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT ROLE TECHNOLOGY PLAYS IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY AND PERHAPS WHAT KIND OF PHOTO EQUIPMENT YOU USE?

Although I used to work in an analog process -- medium format & color darkroom -- my workflow is entirely digital now. The traditional feel to my images is actually due partly to digitally altered color.

I've always been drawn to the look of three-strip Technicolor films (Suspiria, Wizard of Oz, etc). In my Metro Postcard series, I based the look on this palette. In context, it's read as the cheap printing used on mid-Century postcards -- but I used Technicolor specifically to give them a mediated, cinematic sense. This was all done through experimentation with color channel arithmetic in Photoshop.

The color palette of Mutator 1 came from the fading image of green bean stir-fry on a backlit menu at a local Chinese restaurant in my neighborhood. I was editing my Mutator 1 images but something didn't seem quite right, and it hit me that the color of the menu was evocative of Budapest for me. Using that palette completely shifted the contrast of my images, highlighting the lines in the faces, and revealing elements in the photos that were nearly invisible before. It gave them a brown and purple sheen that further isolated the solitary figures without overly dramatizing them. It made the images look more like how it actually felt to be there.

## YOU'VE DONATED A BEAUTIFUL PRINT TO OUR PHOTO LOTTERY FROM YOUR "MUTATOR 1" SERIES. CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT AND IS THERE A "MUTATOR 2" IN THE FUTURE?

I went to Budapest for an artist's residency. I shot the images I needed for the project I was working on in the first few days. But I was entranced by the city and continued to spend all the daylight hours wandering the streets, shooting, for the next few weeks. At that point, I was no longer thinking in terms of a project, but just exploring, getting a feel for the character of the city.

Mutator 1 came together a year later. Looking through the enormous catalog of photos, I became very interested in the expressions the older generation wore when they were out in public. They carried a sense of isolation that I didn't see among the younger people of Budapest -- something that spoke about the political history of the city and how it manifested in their personal stories.

The title came from the image of an old rotary electrical switch, sitting along with other mid-Century generators and electrical equipment behind the Hungarian Electrical Engineering Museum. It must have once said Commutator 1 and the first few letters had fallen off. I saw it as quasi-sci-fi Cold War mythology (and a lurking nuclear anxiety), a reference to the years under Communism. As for doing a follow-up, I would love the opportunity to go back to Central Europe and shoot more work!

## YOU ARE BASED OUT OF NEW YORK, BUT YOUR WORK SEEMS TO COME FROM A VARIETY OF GEOGRAPHIC LOCALES. TELL US WHERE YOU'VE BEEN TRAVELING LATELY AND SOME OF THE PROJECTS THAT HAVE COME OUT OF THOSE TRAVELS.

My photographic work is often tied to a sense of place, so I travel whenever I can.

I went to Southern Italy on a residency last year, but have not yet edited those images into a series. It seems to take me a year before I can get a sense of what I have. So if I follow the same pattern as Budapest, I should work these into a project soon!

In September, I'll be in Liverpool to present a paper on programming languages as art (esolangs) to the Rewire 2011 conference (Histories of Media Art, Science and Technology). Esolangs are a form that's been around since the 70's but are not widely understood -- something I would like to change by writing and presenting on it. I'm sure I'll take a lot of time in Liverpool to do street shooting.

## SO IF YOU'RE NOT FROM PROVIDENCE, HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT AS220? WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO DONATE WORK TO THE PHOTO LOTTERY?

I'd heard about AS220, and was thrilled to connect at Artscape in Baltimore this summer. Having grown up outside of Boston, I've been to Providence a number of times -- I'd love to spend more time there and see more of what is happening in the Providence art scene.