



Windows to New Worlds

From celebrity photographer to fine art “scene” stealer

There is nothing boring about Oliver Pojzman.

For one thing, he's French. There's something exotic about a photographer with Parisian roots. Next, Pojzman doesn't like pretty. A sunny California sky doesn't turn him on. What does? A cloudy one—preferably with a hanging gray overcast sky that's about to open up and drench us all.

“I like when the sky is dramatic,” says Pojzman. “A blue sky is...well, boring.”

In like style, snapping celebrities for a living is nothing to fawn over. In fact, while thankful for its opportunities, Pojzman was craving something less antiseptic, a more natural assignment. “Creativity is limited” with celebrity and advertising shoots, he says, adding that “there's usually an art director standing behind me.” In front of the camera: members of the “A-list” crowd (Paris Hilton, David Carradine, Queen Latifah, usually in their homes), or corporate advertising campaigns for companies like Apple, Porsche, and Sony.

As he sought more creative freedom, Pojzman didn't know what form that would take until about four years ago. He and his wife moved to a beautiful new home in Venice, California. But there was no suitable art to cover his new walls.

“One morning, I walked down to the ocean and began shooting scenics,” he

says. “It happened very randomly.” His beach gear that first day consisted of a medium-format Hasselblad with a Phase One digital back.

“I began shooting the view, but I couldn't grab everything I wanted in one shot,” says Pojzman. So he began formulating composites of 15 to 20 images. They became large-scale panoramics

and a painting,” he says. In fact, many of his clients can't tell they're images. At the same time, the images' realism fools the eye—they can seem like a window with a view. These panoramas allow one to “be immersed into the outside world,” no matter how much concrete and man-made materials are surrounding them.

But make no mistake. The “painterly” quality to the images is not achieved through massive manipulation. The images are true originals. Photoshop is used to adjust the contrast or add a bit of saturation. “I don't ever go too far,” he says.

The proper compositing technique takes skill and hours of labor. On average, he spends 25 to 50 hours per picture putting the frame together to make everything in the photo work seamlessly. The prints range from two feet to 15 feet long. “I'm looking at it like a cinematographer when I'm out there,” he says. “I look through the viewfinder as I'm turning on my feet to get a full 200- to 250-degree portrayal of the scene.”

While the technique is something like assembling a video or film, the determining factors of a powerful shot are not unlike shooting a celebrity portrait or ad campaign. Pojzman pays attention to the time of the day—he prefers the early morning light, as well as the end of the day, and looks at the angle of the sun. Other than that, he tries not to think too

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SAMPLE

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—Oliver Pojzman

of some of the most “scenic” beaches, mountains, and countryside.

He then began working with the Giclée technique of printing. For this process, the oversized panoramas are printed on cotton canvas and stretched like paintings. The results are works are art that lie in a murky place medium-wise. “It's like you fused together a photo





much about the image. Each seems to have a formulaic perfection as to where the horizon is situated—sometimes nearly two-thirds of a photo is sky, sometimes it's mostly sea. Still, Pojzman contends it's more of a subconscious process and a product of being in a constant state of awe.

"As a foreigner, I look at this country with different eyes," says Pojzman, who moved to the U.S. as an in-demand shooter in the late 1980s. "I am awed by the beauty and the vast size of it." He is providing us with "a window to the outside world," which he loves so much. Perhaps his work can inspire us to appreciate it as well.

FENG SHUI-CERTIFIED IMAGES

In addition, these images are certifiably good for you. Discovered by a feng shui master when he was tapped to go through Pojzman's home and

studio, the entire collection is feng shui-approved. The work's warm tones, water, and sunsets got it noticed. This

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Frenchman has acclimated very well into his new surroundings. "What can I say? I live in California now," he laughs.

Currently, the collection is on display at the James Coleman galleries in Santa Monica and Beverly Hills. His fine-art work is now half of his photography income; his work is being snapped up for interiors, corporations, hotels, and now feng shui masters. Pojzman is also working on a coffee-table book of his California panoramas.

He believes anyone can follow in his footsteps. It's all about finding that "business aspect" or "niche" within one's dream. Once you find something you like to do, "do it over and over again," he says. ◆

FOR MORE OF POJZMAN'S FINE-ART WORK, GO TO THE WEBSITE WWW.IRISWORK.COM.

Images: (from top to bottom, pg. 32) Utah, Valley of the Gods; Venice Beach, bicycle; (from top to bottom this page) Annecy Lake, France; Dordogne, France; Kansas

