

Hal Eastman: Business Executive/Photographer

“Photography opened a whole new avenue of learning and excitement for me,” says Hal Eastman, a prominent businessman who divides his time between Boise, Idaho, and Carmel, Calif.

Eastman graduated from Stanford Business School and enjoyed a long, diverse career as an executive in various industries before shifting priorities to devote most of his time to photography. “Eighty percent of what I do now is photography,” he says. “I’m doing projects that I really care about.”

After working hard as an executive through his early fifties, Eastman says, he decided that he wanted to do and be something different. “I had in mind that I wanted to explore the artistic part of life instead of business at that point,” he says. “At first I didn’t think of photography as an art form; to me it was just recording what was there.”

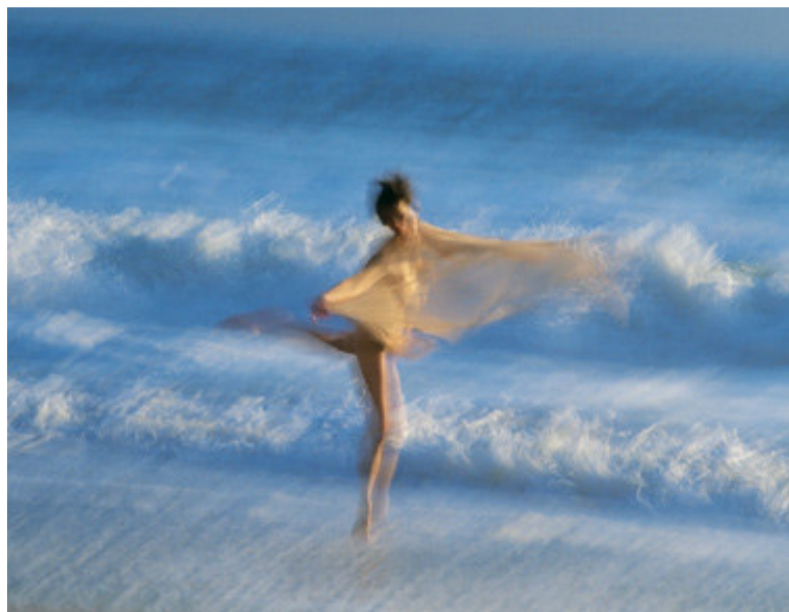
His eyes, however, were opened to the artistic possibilities after he started taking classes. In 1995, he began to take photography seriously, starting out as a nature photographer and spending time in the remote areas of California, Idaho and Hawai’i.

“A defining moment came for me when I was photographing one of the big islands in Hawai’i,” he says. “I noticed a woman skipping down the street.” Eastman was impressed with the fluidity, grace and beauty of her movements. “I took a chance and approached her and said I admired the way she was skipping, and asked if I could photograph her.”

That encounter piqued Eastman’s interest in dance and movement. “I became so fascinated that I wound up taking a night class in dance at Stanford,” he says. Today, his photography focuses primarily on dance and movement. “I love the power and strength displayed by women dancers,” he says.

His first book, “Natural Dance,” showcases the elegance and spirit of the dance as an art form. The photographs have the look and feel of Impressionist art.

Two other projects, “Dancessence” and “Venice Dance Projects,” are currently being developed. “Dancessence” will capture dance movement in a softer way, sans flash photography.



“Out there in nature, I’m not being scrutinized by my peers,” says dancer Amy Sugar Carter of her photo sessions with Eastman. “I’m just free to be, to move.”
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“It was very liberating to discover that somewhere inside there is still a bit of who I am outside of the ballet company,” says dancer Jennifer McNamara.
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He donates part of his earnings from photography to various dance studios. “Dance has given me so much,” he says. “I try to give back to some dance studios that have trouble staying afloat.”

Eastman says that he’s been fortunate to have had many great teachers along the way, including Sam Abell, a shooter, as well as famed dance photographer Lois Greenfield.

Now that he is spending most of his time as a photographer, what was the transition like? “It’s both frightening and exhilarating,” he admits. “It’s a big step, but you learn more when you’re a little scared.”

Eastman says that he loves being able to devote so much time to photography, but some of his former business friends aren’t so enthusiastic. “Sixty percent think that I’m crazy, 20 percent don’t understand and 20 percent are jealous.”



“My dance soul is exposed in these images in a way I have never witnessed, except in my dreams,” says dancer Juliet Kerr. Copyright © Hal Eastman

Eastman’s work can be viewed on his website at <http://www.peregrineimages.com>

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