

REASONS STATEMENT

Ever since I can remember, I've been interested in images. As a child, I remember stealing my sister's Kodak X-15 instamatic out of her room to take pictures. In high school, while my peers were saving for their first cars, I was saving for a Pentax K-1000 35mm camera (which I still use). I was also a member of the audiovisual team in the library so I could have access to the school's video equipment, making short films with my friends. I was a volunteer in the Milwaukee Public Museum's education division, where I met filmmaker Leon Weissgerber, who introduced me to his 16mm Beaulieu, with which I attempted to shoot a stop motion animated film.

Although I participated in these activities, I never really considered them as a career path or course of study, opting instead to enter the University of Wisconsin as an Anthropology Major. However, upon taking a summer elective, Introduction to Video, I was hooked, and changed my major soon after.

As a 1991 graduate of UW-Milwaukee's Film program in the School of Fine Arts, I've been fortunate to have been working in my area of study consistently since 1986. I've worked as a freelance crew member on various projects for multiple clients, and have run a successful visual communications company, Bartoli Filmworks.

During the 1990's, I built a client portfolio of education and nonprofit clients, and produced multiple video projects each year. However, during the economic slowdown following 9/11, much of the grant money that had been funding my work dried up. I returned to still photography, this time as a means to generate income from my clients whose budgets had shrunk considerably.

As I began working more and more with still images, I realized that I had a very narrative style. I feel that the years I spent telling stories with moving images carried forward to my still photography very well, and I began to explore this idea with my personal work. Over the past five years, I find that my personal work consists of less films and a lot more photography. I am happy with the direction in which my personal work is going, but feel that I'm not achieving my full conceptual potential without further academic mentorship, and that's the primary reason I've decided to apply to Graduate School.

My secondary reason is that I've always enjoyed teaching, and over the years have taught many seminars and workshops about screenwriting, filmmaking and photography. I'm also heavily involved with the Milwaukee Film Festival's Student Screenwriting Competition, a program in which we mentor high school students through the process of writing a short script and producing a film with local production professionals. Although I enjoy these activities immensely, I've been increasingly interested in being able to teach in a more formal setting, but am limited by not having a Graduate degree.

As I recognize the impact that filmmaking has had on my photography style, I want to further explore what that means. I'm interested in how filmmaking has informed my photo-making. Are there conventions of storytelling that move seamlessly between the

motion and still worlds? Which stories are better suited for still vs. motion, and is that because of the nature of the media or the nature of how the audience reads the material? I'm especially fascinated by the construction of time in the two media. In film, the space between frames is used to compress, extend or blur time, and I sometimes wonder if there's an analog in the making of a still image. While the notion of the photo as a 'moment in time' is common, I tend to think of it as a single frame movie, informed by what preceded it and what follows it. Constructing this past and future with only the present is, to me, an exciting limitation within which I like to work. I am looking forward to the mentorship of storytellers and image makers such as Dick Blau and Cecelia Condit to help guide my progress and ask the tough questions to help me refine and define my creative work.

Thematically, I'm interested in ideas of abandonment and loss, using the still image to suggest a story of why and how something is left behind. Incorporating these themes with a narrative picture-making style is an exciting place for me to start my graduate studies.