

J . R Y A N S T A N L E Y

DOCUMENTARY,
STREET, AND
ART PHOTOGRAPHY.

J R Y A N S Y A N L E Y . C O M

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As an artist, my work has always resided in the space where fine art and documentary meet. I endeavor to photograph varied communities, to better understand their worlds, to tell their stories, and to better understand what makes us all human. I hope that my work spurs questions, conversations, and understanding while showcasing the beauty and mystery between these spaces. As an artist, my work has always resided in the space where fine art and documentary meet. I endeavor to photograph varied communities, to better understand their worlds, to tell their stories, and to better understand what makes us all human. I hope that my work spurs questions, conversations, and understanding while showcasing the beauty and mystery between these spaces.

RECENT EXHIBITIONS

2022

St. Louis Community College at Meramec, St. Louis MO
The 9th Annual Peterson Photography Lecture Series.
"The Streets are Flooded with Photographers: A Photo
Flood Saint Louis", Group Show

Lucas School House, St. Louis MO
'Small Town Rural' Book Release, Solo Show

2021

Sanctioned Sneaker Collective, Chesterfield, MO
Solo Exhibition, The Art of Protest,

Egg, St. Louis, MO
Solo Exhibition, The Art of Protest,

RECOGNITIONS

PBS, Television Broadcast 2021

Featured Artist, "The Voices"
- Living in St Louis

The Riverfront Times, St. Louis Publication
"Best Photography Blog" - category
nomination

PBS, Television Broadcast 208

Found on Cherokee
- Living in St Louis

PUBLICATIONS

Self-Published Photography Book

Small Town Rural 2022

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QUOTES

"Ryan Stanley's images are somehow both keenly
- and gently - observant without feeling
intrusive. His skill in street photography ranges
from striking, unposed portraits to naturally
occurring tableaus of everyday objects and
people. For me, some of Stanley's most memora-
ble images are those that use layers of reflection
to build depth and encourage curiosity. His pow-
erful images also serve as an invaluable rec-
ord during times of protest."

-KARA VANINGER
Producer Channel 9

"Ryan's work looks to document the photographer's
own reaction to the subjects as much as the subjects
themselves. This is because the artist is searching
and investigating with his camera at least as much
as he is telling with his pictures. This is an important
distinction from work that simply wishes to document
a person, place or event; the trajectory of Ryan's pho-
tography changes according to what he learns about
and from his subjects versus crossing things off a
prescribed checklist. This is an important distinction,
and one which rewards the photographer as much as
the viewer."

-JASON GRAY
Creator of Photoflood St. Louis,
Image Rights Manager at St. Louis Art Museum

"Ryan Stanley's photo series "Small
Town Rural" has been a joy to have on
the walls of the Lucas Schoolhouse. We
showcase a variety of artistic mediums
in our gallery. Ryan's series has sparked
conversation, and shown a glimpse of
rural life that is often forgotten in the
city. We are looking forward to seeing
what Ryan does next. "

-ANDI MORAVEC.

Communication Director,
The Lucas Schoolhouse

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S M A L L T O W N R U R A L

It started in 2021 as I was rebuilding my life after a divorce. I met a wonderful woman, Leana, through an online dating site. Leana had grown up in a rural town in northern Missouri, and was now living in another small town off highway I-44.

It was a 280-mile commute to see the woman who would become my future wife. Along the way, I began to look around at the communities along that route. At first, it was because a single building or landscape caught my eye. But the more I shot, the more I began to dive more deeply into the people and the culture of these places.

I found myself noticing the differences between them and the experiences I had growing up in and around a big city. Through the lens of a camera, I learned to shed the urban context that was so familiar to me and begin to explore the culture that surrounded my future family. As an artist, my work has always resided in the space where documentation and fine art photography meet.

For this collection of images, I attempted to capture, in rough lines, the emotions I felt as I traveled through (and wandered about) rural Missouri and Arkansas between March and December 2021. I wanted to show honest and real portraits of the landscapes and the experiences in these small towns. To do this, I dove head-first into several of these communities, wanting to feature both the beautiful and the broken as they presented themselves in everyday life. When I photograph any community, I begin to understand their world a little better, and understand what makes us all “human.” Along the way, common themes emerge; it is impossible to explore these images and not discuss the issues of patriotism, poverty, entertainment, politics, religion, sexuality, commerce, and the way that the environment affects, and is affected by, all of these. My hope is that this collection can start those conversations with my viewers—and that they, too, would be drawn into understanding the life and culture of rural America.

