



One Man's Island

Brant Point Light, Nantucket, Massachusetts—this panoramic shot is among the group of works that Henry Krauzyk is debuting this year when he releases the Nantucket segment of his Coastal New England Series.

With his successful *São Miguel Series* behind him, photographer/painter Henry Krauzyk embarks on an adventure on more familiar turf. Theresa Wilson met Henry and spoke to him about his new *Coastal New England Series*.

Is there such a thing as a modern renaissance man? If there is, then I think I know where he lives.

Meet Henry Krauzyk, photographer, painter, creative director (and that merely covers the stuff he earns a living doing). During the course of this interview I discovered there are many more interesting facets to this native New Englander.

This is not the first time I have had the privilege of talking to Henry. The first time we spoke was on the release of his photographic tribute to his paternal grandmother's homeland, São Miguel in the Azores. This time Henry focuses much closer to his own home.

You've had considerable success already with your *São Miguel* series. What made you decide to do a *Coastal New England* series?

I think it was one part access and one part coincidence. I live in Coastal New England and after the *São Miguel* series it seemed the next practical step. Though that next step is harder because familiarity with the subject matter tends to blind you a little to the beautiful or interesting things. In *São Miguel* everything was a photo to me. In *Coastal New England* I have to continually be extra receptive toward potential subject matter.

What camera did you use for this series? Do you have a favorite one?

This series is different than *São Miguel* in that the current *Coastal New England Series* material that I am releasing was shot almost completely in digital. I do carry film cameras with me and I have shot a lot of black and white, but to this point I have released mostly color images. The only digital camera I am using is a Nikon D100. I have learned to love Nikons be they film or electrons!

You've visited Nantucket many times. What draws you back to this island in particular?

It is a quieting kind of place for me. It is easy for me to relax there and while it is not far from my home,

the landscape is vastly different. There are long beaches, moors, scrubland and downtown Nantucket just feels so original. I've been on Main street when there were no cars and it looked like it must have over 150 years ago. I return to Nantucket to relax. Though I am most often there during the off-season or the "quiet season", as Nantucketers call it.

When did you begin this series and what was the origin of the idea?

After seeing the photos of the *São Miguel* series, I wanted to begin something similar. Why not my home turf?

It is both practical and fertile. So, I began this series not long after I returned from Portugal. I headed to the small coastal town of Little Compton, Rhode Island and captured some material there. I've also made several attempts at grabbing material in Newport, Rhode Island but on those mornings I didn't get the light I wanted and during the day there are throngs of tourists to contend with.

In your eyes, what makes something an interesting subject to shoot?

This is a good question. I think any question I can't answer is a good question. Thinking about it, I'd have to say there are several factors. The simplest is that something is compelling or interesting and makes you want to record it. The most dramatic reason would be that I am looking for moments that make the people who will look at my work think "I wish I was there when he grabbed this". "Brant Point Dawn" is a good example. I still look at that photo and think "Wow, I was so fortunate to have witnessed that". It looked just like that. Even better actually because our eyes are far better than a camera and lens.

Who do you think this series will appeal to?

Good photos of anything appeal to everyone. I think I have several in this series so far. I'd like it to appeal to everyone. Of course my initial thought is that it will appeal to natives or visitors of the area, that is my practical side speaking. I hope that some of the prints transcend that. I'd like to think that some of the beauty forces the viewer to transcend their need to feel familiar-



Henry Krauzyk

ity with the subject matter and instead they connect to the color and light. Of course not all the prints do this and while I feel strongly about my best stuff that is a lot to expect and hope for.

You say this Coastal New England series is a work in progress. What other places are you planning on photographing?

I'd like to just keep the series open forever. Coastal New England extends from the Southeastern-most tip of Connecticut all the way North to the Maine/Canada border. There are thousands of islands, bays, fishing villages, lighthouses, tidal pools etc. I'd like to be in a position to get to many of them over time.

Do you have a favorite photo of Nantucket? If so, what makes it special to you?

"Brant Point Dawn" is my favorite photo of all time at the moment. It is special to me because I was able to stand there on the beach that morning and witness those awe-inspiring moments, and because art-wise, I think it presently represents the best photograph I have ever taken.

In contrast to your São Miguel series there are no close up shots. It seems all about the sea and the sky. Was that deliberate?

No, it is just a matter of what is catching my eye at the moment. It is hard to focus on the old signs, stones and cracked glass when the sun is bathing an entire harbor in remarkable light or when an oncoming storm casts a threatening sky against a little lighthouse. You can be sure that this series will contain its close ups.

You've now done two major series about islands. What is it about them that appeals to you photographically?

Islands appeal to me more than photographically and to be honest I don't know why. As I think about it I begin to realize I am uncertain why. Another great question.

Islands have the potential to be cut off completely from the mainland by extreme weather...is it something to do with the isolation?

No, I don't think so. Perhaps it is just the energy of islands or the "vibe". It changes people, they seem a little different to me. Perhaps a little more indi-

vidualistic a little more "square peg". I know that is a generalization but it is my opinion.

Is the sea a big feature in your life? In your background or upbringing?

Yes, I grew up on Narragansett Bay and spent a lot of time on or about it - fishing, swimming, diving, surfing and now sailing. I could not live far from the sea. At 44 years old I realize that I have expectations regarding its proximity in my life. I could live anywhere, but I'd have to be able to see the coast within 5 to 10 minutes or I think I'd start to get this boxed-in feeling you know? I never thought about that until I was in my 30's.

Lighthouses feature a lot in this series. What draws you to them?

Nothing! Despite what my photography may reveal, I am not a lighthouse person. It is coincidental! I've thought about this a little. Presently, this series has a lot to do with the parts of the coast where the water meets the land and usually lighthouses were constructed where this happened in a dramatic and dangerous way. So usually the most interesting part of the coast is where lighthouses are built. Correspondingly, this is also where some of the easiest access to the coast is. Then of course the lighthouse is a major focal point so you can't help but use it and voila! You get a lot of photos of lighthouses. As this series develops, I think you'll find that though lighthouses play their part when interesting, the bulk of the work will not be lighthouses. There's a small cattle farm in Little Compton that is calling me at the moment. Rolling misty hills... stay tuned!

You've used both color and black and white in this collection. How did you decide which to use?

I think the subject matter and esthetic decides that for me. The Nantucket photos thus far scream for color. While the Little Compton-Sakonnet Light photos could be in nothing but black and white to me.



"Catboat and Sloop," an image from Krauzyk's Coastal New England Series, shows another side of the tiny islands many moods.

You must have done a lot of exploring of Nantucket as you worked. What challenges or obstacles, if any, did you encounter while putting this series together?

Private property is the most discouraging thing on Nantucket. Thankfully, the residents realize the need for preserving open land and are doing big things on the island to ensure that. I'll be driving around in the wee hours and from a distance see a potentially great area and spend time driving closer to it only to be presented with a chained road or a "Private Property" sign. That can get depressing. In Hawaii, all land is public property up to the high water mark. There are no private beaches and access via the coast and beaches is unlimited. I like that very much. It was very forward thinking of the Hawaiians.

What were your favorite discoveries, and how did they inspire you?

I can only speak about Nantucket here because I'd prefer not to speak about other discoveries until I release those photos. Also, "discoveries" to me doesn't mean I found them first, just that they were realizations. Primarily, my biggest personal discovery was that

the morning and early evening light are remarkable on Nantucket. I think it is because geologically speaking, the island has a low profile. This means that the earliest and latest sunlight hits more places offering more opportunity for photographs. I wrote about this in an article called "The Ghost of the Golden Hours." I suppose many flatter areas on the earth share the same properties. It is hard not to be inspired by things lit in such a fashion, there is a certain beauty and truth in color like that. I'm willing to bet you could get a beautiful shot at the Nantucket dump during those moments.

The Ghost of the Golden Hours sounds intriguing. Where is this article published?

It is in the "Press" section of my website: www.krauzyk.com

What do you like most about photographing Nantucket?

Access, it is close enough to be easy to get to, yet far enough away to feel foreign and get me to be excited about a photography safari. Also, I tend to be there in the quiet season and I don't usually have problems with people polluting the shots I want. I'm finding a lot of the images I take that I like the best have feelings of solitude.

One of the feelings I experienced when looking at these photos was that same feeling of solitude, and also tranquility. So it wasn't a deliberate theme?

No, it wasn't deliberate. It has a lot to do with those early or last moments of sunlight. There is solitude there. While I may enjoy it, I don't go out at that time for the solitude. I go out for the wonderful light.

Is there anything you didn't enjoy about this series?

There were some remarkable shots that were blown because I didn't bring a tripod on a certain day. How often do you run into a purple sky with a low mauve fog? I have some fuzzy shots with remarkable color that I keep to remind me what I missed capturing because I was too lazy to carry my tripod. Never again! I also don't enjoy the limited access on Nantucket.

You've also written some interesting essays about some of the photos in this collection. Have you ever considered doing a photographic essay book?

I like purging my thoughts writing about things, its cathartic. I've got a cookbook I've done something similar with. I suppose there is a danger of boring people with too much info though, no? Perhaps you end up putting the viewer in a perspective less pleasurable than the one they would have chosen? It is hard to say. You know, it has never dawned on me to even consider essays. Thank you for the suggestion! That said, I suppose this is something I'd like to do in the future as more material presents itself. I usually have too much to say about everything, why not write a collection of essays about some of these photos. I'm sure I could get my family and friends to take a serious disinterest in reading it! I like this idea Theresa, I may move on it.

A cookbook! Is it published?

Yes a cookbook, I cook for my family and friends and I started creating all my own recipes. In the process of organizing them for my own use or maybe my children's use, I just started writing stories for the recipes and the next thing you know it is over 100 pages and grows a little every year. I wrote it for family and friends, and there is little of my photography work in it. It is not published but I'll post it on my website in the press section if anyone is interested in it. I make no guarantees though!

You are also a painter and graphic designer. Does this influence your photography? If so, in what way?

I suppose it all falls under esthetic desire and preferences. I am positive everything influences everything else

in that respect. Good basic design is evident in anything that aspires to a high visual esthetic be it painting, photo or flier. I just always hope I'm doing the best I can no matter what avenue I'm taking. I also prefer the painting and photography over the creative direction on a catalog! No one is going to frame a catalog.

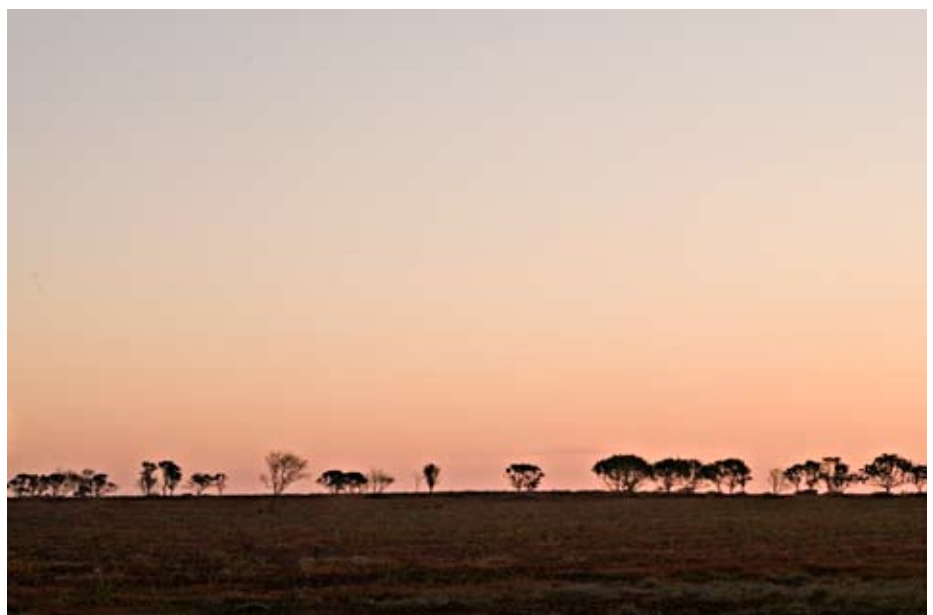
Is it difficult to juggle all these different artistic methods of expression?

No, not at all, in fact it is quite the opposite. It is liberating to be able to take different directions of expression on a whim. There's no juggling involved. Rather it is like carrying a tool box and have the choice of the right tool for the right job. I know I am blessed to be able to express myself in a creative fashion. I'm able to get pleasantly "lost" in something in which the end result is a keepsake or an article of value for myself and at best for others. Where's the difficulty in that? I'm thankful for that. Think of it as being able to speak several languages, Theresa. You could romance your lover in French, swear at a bad driver in English and sing in Italian! That's liberty!

So, take a different direction yourself, liberate yourself from the ordinary and cast your eyes on the extraordinary.

Henry Krauzyk's latest series Coastal New England – Nantucket is being exhibited at the:

Cherry and Webb Gallery in Fall River, MA. The exhibition opens on March 15 and runs until April 8, 2007.



"Big Sky," a previously unreleased image from the Coastal New England Series offers another unique glimpse of Nantucket.