



**TEXAS IN WONDERLAND**

**LYONDELLBASELL TOWER IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON**



**PHOTOGRAPHER MABRY CAMPBELL'S IMAGES GET**

**CURIUSER AND CURIUSER**

**MITRE PEAK NEAR FORT DAVIS**



**MABRY CAMPBELL WANTS YOU TO FEEL CHALLENGED WHEN YOU LOOK AT**

his photographs. Maybe lost, maybe a little bit small. And after you're done feeling those things, a sense of wonder. ¶ The Houston-based photographer's images are simple upon first glance—stark, clean, and black-and-white. Simplicity, in this case, is a clever mask for complexity. In Campbell's photos, incongruent shapes clash, then seamlessly blend; details abstract larger forms; and light and shadow make the buildings and landscapes you pass by every day remarkable. Viewers might not know what they're looking at right away, but more time spent with the pictures reveals familiar places rendered in unfamiliar ways. ¶ Campbell first became interested in photography on a fishing boat in Port Aransas. While attending the University of Texas at Austin in the mid-1990s, he would guide fishing trips on weekends for some extra money. With hand-me-down cameras, he started capturing the Gulf of Mexico and the fish in it. "That's when I started really taking photos with some intention behind them," he says. ¶ Later on, after graduating with a master's degree in business from Rice University, he worked in real estate and began photographing architecture—now one of his hallmark subjects. While that work was certainly more commercial than fine art, it's where Campbell developed his signature style of long-exposure photography. This requires the shutter of the camera to be open for a long period of time, whether 30 seconds or two minutes. The technique allows the camera to sharply capture stationary elements while blurring moving aspects. ¶ "Things like water smooth out. Clouds streak through the sky," Campbell explains. "It's really a step away from reality." The distance from actuality also explains why he prefers to shoot in black and white. "I've always liked photography that doesn't resemble real life," he says. "Since we don't see in black and white, it's just one way to remove things from reality." ¶ Campbell's ethos is clear in his photos of architecture, especially the iron and glass structures in Houston and Dallas. The buildings are quotidian to the naked eye, but through his lens they resemble fantastical works of art. He's especially inspired by the postmodern architecture of the 1970s, citing downtown Houston's Pennzoil Place as one of his favorite subjects. ¶ Even his landscape photos, mostly taken in West Texas and on the Gulf Coast, play on the idea of construction. "If you look at a road going through a landscape, you can see that road as a volume, as a shape," Campbell says. "These sorts of things I am absolutely drawn to. I'm trying to emphasize the angles and treat the landscape as an architectural form by keeping things angular and looking at it like something that was built." ¶ Campbell's photographs—on view at the Catherine Couturier Gallery in Houston—give the viewer a bit of "visual misdirection." Not knowing exactly what you're looking at, at least for the first few seconds, elicits the emotional response Campbell hopes for. "When people are looking at your work, and really start to lean in and you can tell they're not quite sure how this was made, to me, that's how I grade myself on success."

— KIMYA KAVEHKAR

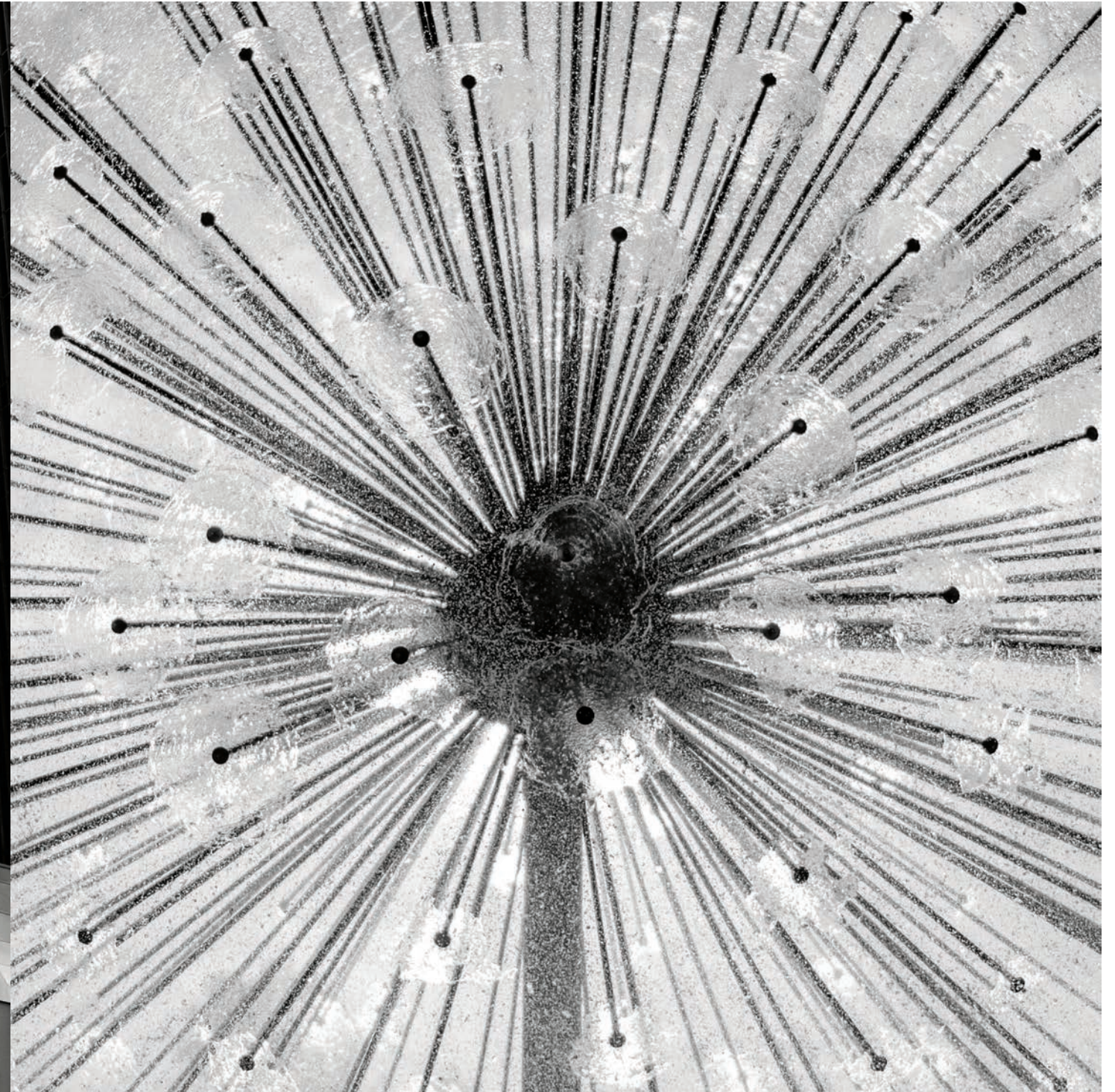


CHAPEL OF THANKS-GIVING IN DOWNTOWN DALLAS





THE TWO TOWERS OF PENNZOIL PLACE IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON



GUS WORTHAM MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN IN BUFFALO BAYOU PARK IN HOUSTON





**RANCH ROAD 2810 FROM MARFA**



**CHAPEL OF ST. BASIL ON THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS CAMPUS IN HOUSTON**





**JOHN F. KENNEDY MEMORIAL PLAZA IN DOWNTOWN DALLAS**





**JESSE H. JONES HALL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON**



**LIVE OAK TREE ABOVE NORTH BOULEVARD IN HOUSTON**





**MESQUITE TREE ALONG RANCH ROAD 2810 NEAR MARFA**



**PENZOIL PLACE IN DOWNTOWN HOUSTON**