

## JANE FULTON ALT: “...BEING WITHOUT INTENT...”

By Aline Smithson August 23, 2010

*Lenscratch is on vacation this week and I asked fellow photographers to contribute a post or an essay. This is one Jane posted on her blog in 2008 and is utterly appropriate to the last days of summer.*

Last October I spent 2 weeks at Ragdale for an artists residency. My home was the Beach Room in the Barn.



Next to my bed was a notebook in which previous artists shared some thoughts about their time spent at Ragdale. There was an essay on the word “squander” written by Johanna Keller on July 15, 1999. I was so taken with it that I photocopied it and have had it on my bulletin board for the past 9 months. I just unearthed it and with Johanna’s permission, would like to share it...

“squander

v., to spend wastefully or extravagantly (according to the Webster’s New Dictionary on the desk in the Beach Room)

In art, as in nature, nothing is wasted.

Cherish the hour lost to the shimmer of cottonwoods rimming the prairie, the afternoon swimming in the lake, the croquet game at dusk. Let yourself be a child bedazzled by the town fireworks on the Fourth. Write of love-making on the creaky bed. Search for dusty treasures in the attic. Rock on the screened porch reading a book that serendipitously came to hand, a book you didn’t bring with you, one that wasn’t on the planned list.



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Plan?List?—those are words left behind, words for the architects of the busy world, for the makers of cities and maps, for the times when it is necessary to know the destination and estimated time of arrival (and there are those times in the creative life).

But, in this long month of summer, I don't know where I'm going. I confess to allowing myself to drown in a sweet delirium of sensory experience. The result has been new and strange poems, daring essays, and odd drawings whose purpose and place in my manuscript are unclear to me as yet.

I don't know my path, but I'm traveling extravagantly.

Art spends us extravagantly, demands we lavish our lives on it. And in return, at the times when the deepest impulse is gathering force, we experience a blessed state of being without intent.

We enter a space previously unimaginable, surprising, dangerous, uncharted on any map. This place of impressions is very like the tangled and subtle prairie with its unplanned glories of wildflowers, tall grasses, cattails, dragonflies, birds, sky. And at the center of it, we find the source. Encircled by stones laid by other hands many years ago, brimming with liquid light, the wellspring is a small eruption, a rupture in the earth, the location of correspondence. It is here where what lies underneath comes to the surface, where the invisible is transmitted into the world of the senses. It is here the unseen becomes known to us.”


*Thank you so much, Jane. Her terrific website is [here](#).*


Tags: [Jane Fulton Alt](#), [Ragdale](#)

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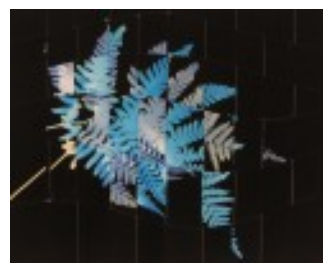
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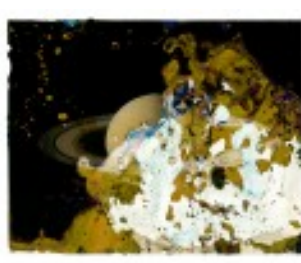
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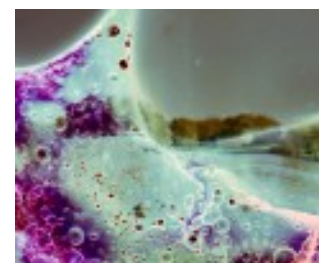
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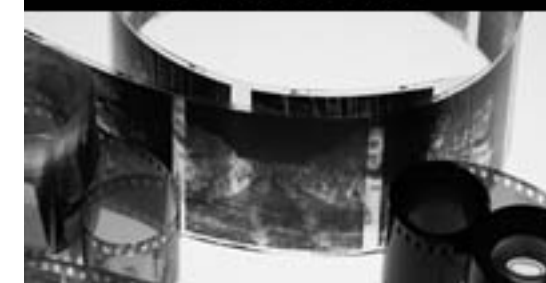
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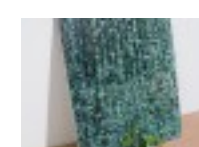
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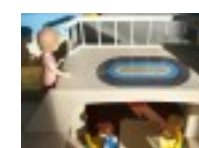
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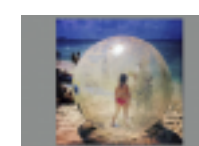
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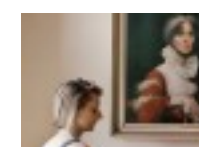
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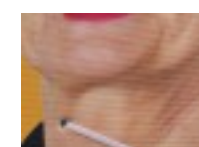
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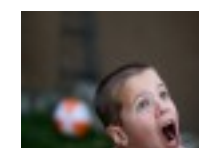
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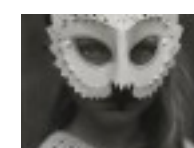
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