

Check It Out! Podcast Transcript

Episode #56

“A Rich Frishman picture isn't just a thousand words.

It's a story unto itself.”

Sno-Isle Libraries, April 20, 2020



Ken Harvey:	00:00	Coming up in this episode, we look through the camera lens of Social Justice and American Splendor and the Ghosts of Segregation with Whidbey Island resident and photographer, Rich Frishman.
Ken Harvey:	00:21	Welcome to season three, episode 56 of Check It Out! The Sno-Isle Libraries podcast for lifelong learners with inquiring minds.
Speaker 2:	00:29	The views and opinions expressed on this podcast may not necessarily reflect the official position of Sno-Isle Libraries.
Ken Harvey:	00:37	Hi, I'm Ken Harvey.
Jim Hills:	00:38	And I am Jim Hills.
Kurt Batdorf:	00:39	And I'm Kurt Batdorf.
Ken Harvey:	00:41	And we are in a wonderful location, deep within the building of the Sno-Isle Libraries administrative service center. We're in a new location. I think this is a second time that we all have been here. So I guess that doesn't technically make it new but it's called the Camano room.
Jim Hills:	00:58	I was going to say, how did you find that out? We didn't know that last time.
Ken Harvey:	01:02	Well, we did an earlier podcast taping and I mentioned that we were [crosstalk 00:01:10], when I opened the door but none of us could remember what the name of the room was. So we said from a unknown location but for this second interview, I opened the door and actually read the sign on the door. So it is the Camano room.
Kurt Batdorf:	01:25	Cheater.
Jim Hills:	01:25	Yeah.

(Continued)

Ken Harvey: 01:26 Yeah. So-

Kurt Batdorf: 01:27 We knew it as that other room.

Jim Hills: 01:28 Yeah.

Ken Harvey: 01:29 Well, we are delighted to have someone joining us today who was featured recently in local newspaper for some work that he has done. His name is Rich Frishman and he is a world famous photographer. And I would say not only photographer but through the images that he captures, he is also a Philosopher and he shows up in a wide range of private and institutional collections including the Museum of Fine Arts which I'm not exactly sure where the Museum of Fine Arts-

Rich Frishman: 02:10 In Houston.

Ken Harvey: 02:12 In Houston. Okay. And the New Orleans Museum of Art and the Amon Carter Museum. He's had his work recognized through a number of prestigious awards including two Sony World Photography Awards. The 2019 Curator's Choice Award from Review Santa Fe. Gosh, there's a list of this goes on and on and on in terms of all of the awards he's received. But he was also, way back when, nominated for a Pulitzer Prize back in 1983. So we're going to learn more about Rich but Rich, we are just delighted to have you join us for this conversation.

Rich Frishman: 02:51 I'm delighted to be here. And just to flesh out that Pulitzer nomination. That was back when I worked at the Everett Herald, the Daily Herald and it was a great time. So I feel local living on Whidbey and having lived in Everett and worked in Everett. And I know-

Jim Hills: 03:13 This is one of the reasons that I was really excited about having this interview with Rich. I arrived at the Herald, I think a year after you left in that polls for nomination. And you were a legend. I mean, you weren't there but you were everywhere in that as well. Frishman would have and well, Frishman did it this way. Frishman this and Frishman that. Who's this Frishman guy?

Jim Hills: 03:38 And finally I get to meet you.

Rich Frishman: 03:40 Well, yeah, just being a living legend, I tell you. I'm still trying to save myself some of the embarrassment that I had put my friends through during those years, anyhow.

Ken Harvey: 03:56 So Rich, you know what I remember about 1983? I was a lot younger.

Rich Frishman: 04:01 Yeah.

Kurt Batdorf: 04:01 I think we all were.

Ken Harvey: 04:03 Really? Okay. Then I'm in a very distinguished company. So, hey, Rich. I understand from our biographical notes here that you were born and raised in Chicago. You studied with artists, Reed Estabrook and Robbert Flick in Art Sinsabaugh at the University of Illinois. And that you've done lectures all around the United States and you talk a lot about the intersection of designed environment, history and social issues. You're a photographer but you're lecturing about these other things. So explain that? How did your work in photography bring you to that place where you were being called upon to talk about social issues and history and the environment?

Rich Frishman: 05:00 Well, those aspects of life always interested me. I've always been fascinated by our culture, the history of the United States in particular and then I'm quite driven by our relationships as human beings. That was the focus of much of my photo journalism. I think what I'm doing now is still for the journalism a little, I usually refer to it as documentary photography. But my fascination with these places that I'm now photographing, really gets back to the people who were the populated these places. And the people who experienced so much often in this current project, Ghosts of Segregation. The suffering and courage and struggle that people endured. Those are the aspects that compel me to photograph these places. When I was a kid, growing up in Chicago really young.

Rich Frishman: 06:25 I started taking pictures when I was five but my dad was a contractor and on days off from school he would take me and when she was a little older, my sister as well, on his jobs. And then we'd go to see a musical or play or go to the art institute. But those curious side trips that he would take us on, he would always tell us the story behind that place whether it was Louis Sullivan's Auditorium Theater which at the time, in the mid to late 1960s, was being restored after once having been targeted to be torn down. He just explained why this was special. And then he'd go to Louie's Hot Dog Stand on Devon and talk about that place. So it wasn't just prestigious architects and grand design. It was the stories about the people who made these places.

Rich Frishman: 07:29 And I always thought, oh God, he's going to do this again but it ended up really fostering a fascination in love.

Kurt Batdorf: 07:43 Yeah. I guess I'd like to ask, is that where you could trace your interest in social justice issues?

Rich Frishman: 07:51 My parents definitely were the keys to that because they were unabashed liberals. And I was born in 1951. I got to grow up in a very nurturing and privileged environment in the suburbs of Chicago, primarily. But my parents made it a point to familiarize us with people who were struggling and people who were being... It was the early era of civil rights, the modern civil rights movement.

Jim Hills: 08:37 Right.

Rich Frishman: 08:38 And that ingrained, in all three of us kids, a sense of responsibility. I'm sure there were times when my parents regretted having fostered that more, in terms of when I had wore a rope belt and went on antiwar marches. When I was active in trying to alleviate some of the burden of inequality going into the inner city and working in schools and stuff, that was really because my parents planted the seeds and nurtured them.

Jim Hills: 09:22 Interesting. Good.

Ken Harvey: 09:24 So you mentioned, this work, the Ghosts of Segregation and some of our audiences may have thought, gosh, did I hear that right? Did he say segregation and segregation is what you said?

Rich Frishman: 09:40 Yes.

Ken Harvey: 09:42 Why don't you describe for our audience what this work is about?

Rich Frishman: 09:52 Well, first I want to say, the term Ghosts has an implication that this is past and it's not. I continue to be drawn to photographing these so-called ghosts of segregation because they are so alive for you. Just turn on the news, look online and you see something that reminds you and that the target of our cultural bigotry is flexible. It's not binary. The first place I photographed for this project, that was when I was actually engaged on my previous project, American Splendor, which also looked at the stories being told by our built environment. But it was more amused-

Ken Harvey: 10:56 And by built environment, just for the non planners out there, you mean the buildings and road structures, bridges and-

Rich Frishman: 11:09 Exactly. Just what our landscape reveals about us. So it can be just a highway through Monument Valley that follows an Indian path that once was a game park. It can be a wall where something happened that you might not stop to look at it. But when you take the time, you see evidence, almost like shards of a broken path that an archeologist might find. I often think of myself as an archeologist. Collecting data about our civilization because someday it'll be passed.

Kurt Batdorf: 12:01 Yeah. I saw you had a lot of pictures of Route 66 roadside attractions.

Rich Frishman: 12:06 Yeah. I was more sanguine. And I've been looking at those pictures recently because I've been asked to present some of those elsewhere and I thought, yeah, those were fun. But I lost a lot of the love for doing that when I realize and this is my own outlook but I am troubled by our politics. I'm troubled by the continuation of segregation whether it's the economic issues or the educational issues and so many different groups have continued to live with the burden of being considered the other.

Rich Frishman: 13:07 I just feel like that's what I'm trying to alleviate through bringing these visuals forward. I want to spark a conversation with people I may never meet directly but that these problems didn't end with the passage of any of the Civil Rights Acts. It certainly didn't end with the end of the civil war or reconstruction or the emptying of internment camps or the resending of the, Chinese Exclusion Act. I mean, we just continue to lay this on, everybody who is the other.

Jim Hills: 13:58 Yeah. So it's clear listening to you, Rich, that these are deeply held values and perspectives. But I am really curious about how you go about immersing yourself in, perhaps a culture? Or a geographic area that you may not be familiar with. You might be intrigued by those values. But the place where you go to choose to tell that story is maybe not some place that you're familiar with, initially.

Jim Hills: 14:31 For the Ghosts of Segregation, I think, you went to areas that geographic areas that you weren't necessarily familiar with but then found a way to tell that story. How do you do that? How do you start from wherever you start from and end up with the depth of perception and commentary that your images bring?

- Rich Frishman: 14:55 Thank you for asking. I've always been fond of research. I see the value of it. When I worked on newspapers quite strongly, I mean, then it was expected. When I moved down to freelancing, it wasn't expected so much but I continued to do it because I want to understand the people and the issues and the places that I'm going to be photographing. So now as I'm doing this self-generated work, I will look at where I know I'm going to be traveling.
- Rich Frishman: 15:42 For example, I have a business, an opportunity in Houston in a couple of weeks. I start looking at where I might go and as soon as I see like Jackson, Mississippi, was one of the places that I targeted two years ago when I began this project, I was also going to be in Houston and I had only one picture at that point, which was from Gonzales, Texas.
- Rich Frishman: 16:19 I started mentioning that earlier but I get off on my own side tracks. So I would then do a lot of online research in this case about Jackson. I look at the Mississippi State Historical Preservation website. In that case, that was very informative and blackpast.org. I read a lot and that I read books. The Warmth of Other Suns and I just finished Stony The Road.
- Rich Frishman: 17:02 And I gain information which inevitably, leads to something else. So the first thing I was aware of about Jackson was Medgar Evers and the NAACP offices there. I'm old enough to remember when Medgar Evers was assassinated. I always get in on Google maps, ultimately get in the Google car, not the auto driving one but the one that you take on the internet. And I see what is there now in this location.
- Rich Frishman: 17:49 And is it something that hearkens back? And then that'll lead me to something else like in Jackson. I also knew that there was a quite stunning Greyhound Station that was part of the Freedom Riders torment. And there were places in the green book that were mentioned in Jackson and the green book was like the AAA guide for people of color back in those dark days.
- Rich Frishman: 18:30 It was what you had to use to be safe if you were black. And often, I will use the term colored because in a lot of communities it didn't matter if you were African American or Asian or a Hispanic or native American and now it continues that way. Muslim LGBTQ. In some places I think democrats, so I'm not sure. But I have been in many places where I have felt like I was the outsider and it's not a good feeling. I get to skip by most of the time.

- Ken Harvey: 19:19 So when Rich and first chatted on the phone, I told him that I had a particular interest in having him on the podcast because I had lived in Jackson, Mississippi twice in the 60s and early 70s. And so the work that he had done on the Ghosts of Segregation and the images that he had selected really spoke to me because they, in some ways, reawakened some memories of places and things that I had seen and experienced.
- Ken Harvey: 20:01 Tying this back to Jim's earlier question, how do you find the place? There's the power of the image and then there's the power of the place of the image within a place. You essentially said you've done a lot of research and now with some of the modern tools of like Google maps and things and it can help lead you to certain places and then you can start to circle from around there. I'm also just fascinated, as an award winning photographer, how do you know which image out of the dozens or hundreds that you may capture even of single place? Which is the image that why a particular image is chosen?
- Rich Frishman: 20:59 Well, I do a lot of that selection before I even pressed the shutter the first time-
- Ken Harvey: 21:08 Which it means one shot, one award winning image or? Like a sniper? One shot, one kill.
- Rich Frishman: 21:19 I don't always know initially what will be the best picture. But I will set up and consider what is it in front of me that I feel is pertinent to show and how should I show it? Should I light it dramatically or should I be completely low key about it? And the way I shoot requires me to do a lot of planning in advance because those pictures online, the pictures in all these museum collections, all my photographs are actually constructed images.
- Rich Frishman: 22:05 Each one has at least 50 separate images in it. And some of them have hundreds. Some of them take, I think, the shortest one was about half an hour to shoot. But some of them I've spent years photographing going back for different seasons and then incorporating it. I still have a journalistic ethos. What I photograph has to be what I feel that place really is.
- Rich Frishman: 22:43 I don't move people into photographs. I don't take parts of different buildings and reassemble them. I want maximum detail in the prints and make that, hopefully, those details help evoke both interest and contemplation. For example, the picture I started talking about, I think and you had asked this. The first picture I took for this project was a Segregation Wall in the saloon in Gonzales, Texas.

Kurt Batdorf: 23:27 Is that the Dr. Pepper?

Rich Frishman: 23:29 Yeah.

Kurt Batdorf: 23:29 Okay. Yeah.

Rich Frishman: 23:33 I had never seen the Segregation Wall and I wasn't planning on going in into a saloon. I traveled to Gonzales for other reasons for that previous project and somebody offered the suggestion and that it's often helpful. So I went into the saloon and looked around it what history it held, the thing that was never mentioned was that wall. As we were done, I asked the bartender, who was my guide, tell me about that. Well, he said it was a Segregation Wall. It's about a seven foot tall partition protruding about eight or 10 feet into the room, has a Dr. Pepper logo on it and as you Kurt mentioned.

Rich Frishman: 24:27 His grandmother had to sit behind it until 1964, 65, the enactment of the Civil Rights Act. In Gonzales, Texas, there were not a lot of African-Americans but anybody of color would be consigned to the back. They'd have to enter the saloon from the back and remained behind that wall. So I looked at that. I tried to think how can I convey the power of this? And for two of the sloop, on the other wall of this saloon, they had a big screen TV and Mitch McConnell came on to oppose to obstruct the nomination of Merrick Garland by President Obama.

Rich Frishman: 25:23 Just like my parents, I am a proud liberal. I'm beyond that... And I thought this shows how the process continues. So I knew that that was the vantage point I needed to use and it helped me construct the picture. I'm not sure if that sufficiently answers it. I do come back with pictures that I ended up being disappointed with. And if I don't have an alternative, I just have to go back and often that means going thousands of miles on some future trip. I've been to Clarksdale, Mississippi on three separate occasions because I keep finding more stuff.

Ken Harvey: 26:25 Well, boy, we are just eating through our time. Thank you so much for this conversation. We are talking with Rich Frishman who is an award winning photographer. He has been talking to us about a couple of the works that he's done. One, American Splendor and the other, the Ghosts of Segregation. We're going to take a short break and we'll come back and we're going to explore his work and him even deeper when we return.

Speaker 6: 26:55 Want to get the latest business news and solid financial advice from the experts for free. You can, with your Sno-Isle Libraries

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Ken Harvey: 27:27 Enjoying this episode of the Check It Out! Podcast. Head over to the iTunes store, Google play music store or most other podcast stores. To subscribe, rate the podcast or leave a review. Your rating and review will make it easier for others to find the Check It Out! Podcast wherever it's available.

Ken Harvey: 27:55 Well, we're having a conversation. Fascinating conversation with Rich Frishman who is world-known, I'd like to say, he's blushing and chuckling when I say that. World-known and award winning photographer, previously known as a photo journalist. But now just an amazing photographer who approaches his work from a photo journalist's perspective. And we were having a great conversation about some of that work before we went into the break. Jim you have any wanted to share something?

Jim Hills: 28:31 I do. So Rich, you were talking about how you go back. You find a place of significance, you've researched it, you know what's there and maybe it doesn't present to your camera immediately. It takes a while to tease that out. I wanted to share an experience that I had just this past fall in St. Louis where I found the same thing. I'm curious, I would love to hear your perspective a little more on how you show your emotion that you feel. So I was at a conference in St. Louis.

Jim Hills: 29:11 Coming from the airport to the hotel which was in downtown. I'd never been to st Louis before and I've had a very sheltered life. I've hardly ever gotten out of the Northwest. So St. Louis was a revelation to me and I had an older African-American gentleman was my taxi driver from the airport into the hotel. And he ended up being my guide or the next three or four days around St. Louis and showing me a lot of things. One of the things he pointed out to me was that a church that was kitty corner from the hotel, right in front of the St. Louis Arch. And you pointed out to me that on one corner of that church was a platform where the slaves had been sold. I have personally never been to a place like that.

Jim Hills: 29:59 As soon as he dropped me off, it was 25 degrees at night. I went across the street and just walked around the block imagining

what was there, knowing the significance, trying to take pictures. I tried to take pictures several times during that conference period, day and night. And it never seemed to capture what I was feeling. At the same time as we were driving back out to the airport he points out, from the freeway, he goes, well, we're driving through Ferguson right now. And you know that McDonald's, that was a big part of that riot? Well, there it is. From the freeway.

Jim Hills: 30:42

And to me the is this is like the ghosts thing that you were talking about earlier that it's not past. It was there across the street from the hotel where the slaves were sold. It was there next to the freeway at the McDonald's where the Ferguson Riots. And I'm just so curious about your work, how you go in and see that connection from then and now and capture the emotion that you must feel at a place of significance. How do you do that?

Rich Frishman: 31:16

Well, it is a difficult goal to achieve. I spent many hours in places struggling with that and sometimes I leave empty handed. Other times I leave with the germ of an idea. And so many places I do return to because I either misread what would work in my own mind. I think the key for me is to think about the people and what their experiences might have been in the subtle aspects of what this place represents.

Rich Frishman: 32:08

So one place that I depicted when I was in Mississippi almost two years ago was a theater entrance in Tylertown, Mississippi. It was the segregated entrance to a theater that no longer exists. The building is there and it's just a palimpsest of bricks in an alley.

Rich Frishman: 32:39

Growing up in Chicago, the inequalities and prejudices were demonstrated in much more subtle ways than in the states of the former confederacy where it was allowed to codify the segregation. You could build separate entrances during Jim Crow. I looked at this particular mysterious set of bricks that didn't fit in the wall and I knew what it was because of the research that I had done and I always make sure that it's been independently verified by someone.

Rich Frishman: 33:28

I then imagine what it was like to be standing in the alley waiting to see a movie in the 1940s or 1950s where all the other people get to walk under the grand Marquis. And you're on this sloping concrete surface with water and mud and it's just a subtle dehumanization. That was my focus and how do I bring that out? I look for all the photographic opportunities that I have. In this case, what angle am I going to shoot?

Rich Frishman: 34:16 Well, I want to shoot, in this case, where I can see the happy street but also this mysterious wound. I wanted to incorporate all the lines of the rusting power lines and the dirt and the rodents. And so that informs my approach.

Jim Hills: 34:50 Sure.

Kurt Batdorf: 34:50 Yeah.

Rich Frishman: 34:52 There are places I mentioned Jackson earlier. One place that I tried to photograph, it took me three separate trips to Jackson and that's far from Whidbey Island, Washington.

Kurt Batdorf: 35:06 Yeah.

Rich Frishman: 35:07 But I wanted to photograph where the Summers Hotel once stood. I don't photograph places that are completely disappeared very often but this called to me because of the surroundings where once stood and I knew where it was. I had several copies of the green book with me. I had driven that Google car right by it. I went there twice and failed to get the pictures. And on this last trip in June of 2019, I knew I needed to be there at a certain hour. One day it was pouring down rain that didn't work. Next day was beautiful. I could be there at night and I got the picture that I wanted which I hope evokes a sense of the souls who pass through there. And it's a mysterious looking image but it didn't happen the first two times.

Ken Harvey: 36:13 Well, speaking of getting the picture, the four of us sitting here are all photographers and-

Jim Hills: 36:21 One of us is a photographer and there are three of us who take pictures.

Ken Harvey: 36:24 I don't care. All right. Well, so you've been a photographer for decades now. Well, you've seen the technology change.

Rich Frishman: 36:40 Yes.

Ken Harvey: 36:41 So when did you take the hesitant step from film to digital and what was it that finally moved you in that direction? Because once you answer that question, I think we've got several others that are around technology or the techniques of the craft.

Rich Frishman: 37:02 Well, I made the transition probably about 2004 and I remember one of the propelling incidents was photographing an Apple Cup in Pullman. And-

Ken Harvey: 37:17 So we're talking about the football game between the Huskies and the Cougars.

Rich Frishman: 37:22 Yes. And it was a bitter cold evening. And when I went up to the press room, I was accosted by an old friend of mine from the Seattle Times, a former Everett Herald photographer, Mark Harrison who said Frishman, you are the only one here shooting film. And I realized he was right. They were all on their laptops, typing up captions. And I had manila envelopes from sports illustrated that I was stuffing actual... A lot of people don't remember paper and pen but I still use it occasionally. That's what I would ship. So it was shortly after that I thought, okay, I'll give it a try. There were a lot of things I didn't like about it but I love it now because I think I can do things I'd never would have done before. And it helps me tell the stories that I want to tell more effectively.

Jim Hills: 38:29 So, yes. As you were telling the story of the theater, taking that picture, I was struck by how patient you were for the image you wanted. And one of the things that I know in shooting digital, I don't have to be patient. I can take a 100, I can take hundreds of images and I hope something gets right. I don't have to be patient. I can just click it again. I'm wondering if, however long you hung onto film, if part of that is still part of your eye when you're looking.

Rich Frishman: 39:09 Yeah, that's a very good observation. It is. I mean, digital fosters the sense that you can change anything you want which is really unfortunate. I mean, I have pictures where I feel compelled to say and that rainbow was really there, that is not a photo shop. I did learn that patience in shooting film and I learned it so many times that just waiting for the light usually was the issue. So in that picture that I mentioned, if Tylertown, Mississippi, I stood in the same spot for about three and a half hours, primarily because there was a car that was in the shot that I wanted not in the shot. And I knew I could take it out but I wanted to move because I'm a journalist. And finally they did. So-

Jim Hills: 40:20 There you go.

Rich Frishman: 40:21 Yeah.

Ken Harvey: 40:22 Did they have a ticket? Parking ticket?

Rich Frishman: 40:25 I don't you call the cops. I think that, in a way, I'm cheating by waiting so long but I'm not cheating as much as if I just digitally removed it.

Ken Harvey: 40:41 Well, you know what's fascinating, Rich is that we had a guest on for another podcast who, had written a book called Sasquatch Seeker's Manual. And so it was hunting Bigfoot and one of his admonitions to those who are out searching for Bigfoot is the three P's. Planning, Patience and Persistence. And it seems like what I've heard from you are the same three P's for a lot of the work that you've done.

Rich Frishman: 41:16 Those three PS. I'm going to use that. I'm going to use it to remind me of what I need to do because I'm not always so patient. And I also know I've made some great plans and they don't always work out the way I was expecting. So-

Ken Harvey: 41:36 Well, I'm wondering if you have a great story and if you don't, just say I don't. But going after a specific photograph of specific image and you had planned it out and whether it was for the Ghosts of Segregation or American Splendor or any of the other work that you've done, where you had it all planned out and it just simply did not happen.

Rich Frishman: 42:10 Well, if I reflected hard enough, I would come up with dozens from Ghosts of Segregation, I'm sure. But the first thing that comes to mind is from American Splendor. I had set aside, this is really weird but I took a two month break from my obligations as a husband and a freelance photographer to drive around the United States looking for more material for American Splendor and I had a bunch of pins in my Google map and a whole big database of places.

Rich Frishman: 42:54 One of the places I came upon was the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. At that time, I knew that they had about 80 foot tall sculpture or statue of the couple from American Gothic. And it's a hysterical send up of that. The artist, I'm sorry to say, his name is escaping me right now. He deserves credit.

Jim Hills: 43:31 We'll put it in the show notes.

Rich Frishman: 43:32 Okay. He did a wonderful job of modernizing them by keeping them the way they were. And I had an idea of shooting this, with these the buildings from the state fair in the background. When I arrived with my son, who I'd picked up the day before, in Kalamazoo, Michigan from college. We're driving back to Seattle. There was an event taking place right around this statue that completely messed up the shot I had planned.

Rich Frishman: 44:16 My first reaction was somewhat selfish anger. Why are these people reading my picture? And then as I looked at it I thought,

well, this is much better because it's not just what I imagined. Reality is often that way. Much better than what I imagined. This told a story about American culture.

- Rich Frishman: 44:43 There was a car club with all these old hot rods and restored vintage automobiles clustered around the statue. And I decided I'm going to photograph that with the statute. That says a lot more about American culture than just what I had in mind. So my plans went out the window and I was given the gift of something much greater.
- Jim Hills: 45:10 Yeah. So is there any of the technology that you love? New stuff that maybe in your cameras or the software or something that you find that really enables you to do some things that you wouldn't be able to do otherwise?
- Rich Frishman: 45:25 Well, there is so much to love in the technology of today. But I'm not a big technology guy. I'm driven by the subject and the art and the stories. I have been lucky enough to acquire great equipment over the years. And what I really appreciate about it is how it allows me to approach my subjects more effectively now.
- Rich Frishman: 46:04 Back when I was shooting analog, when I shoot in film, the range of exposures that you could get with so much more confined that I'd have to do a lot more to lighting and then I couldn't shoot in the way that I do now constructions.
- Rich Frishman: 46:21 So that picture I mentioned of the Segregation Wall really is successful because of the tremendous dynamic range that I could incorporate both through the technique that I use and the technology that allowed me to capture it. And I know my camera now. I think it has 16 times the dynamic range of Ektachrome and Kodachrome which I used to use. So I can milk details out that I think are important that would be lost.
- Jim Hills: 46:58 You said a word in the middle of that construction. What does that mean?
- Rich Frishman: 47:03 All of the photographs in my current work are composed of dozens to hundreds of separate detail images. And because I still have the sensibilities of a photo journalist, I mean and I want to be documenting reality, not my fantastic imagination. It's just not as fantastic as reality itself. That's how I find it. So in order to capture all that realism, I photograph in great detail and then assemble the pictures to create a supremely high resolution canvas, essentially. And when you look online-

- Ken Harvey: 48:00 So Rich, can I just jumping in for a second. Are you stitching those together or are you layering them on top of one another or both?
- Rich Frishman: 48:08 Both. Primarily, I'm stitching them together using a combination of software and just tediously going in and working on each image so that where they overlap, they actually blend. But when I'm shooting something, it is important to me that it be authentic to the place. So that Segregation Wall that I mentioned or the segregated entrance to the Tylertown Theater, well, it might be composed of 200 separate photographs that come together like pieces of a puzzle. I want that to be something that you could have taken more or less with an iPhone, with a single frame.
- Rich Frishman: 49:05 I don't want to make it bogus. I want it to be, that is what I saw but it didn't look like that. We build our memories based on not just a thousandth of a second but so much whether it's the sounds that we hear or the smells or the sites. And that's how I build these pictures. I just try and incorporate a lot of detail and keep it honest. Did I answer the question? I go on after about five minutes, I want to go, what did you ask?
- Ken Harvey: 49:45 Well, I think the photographers and those who love taking pictures and the audience really appreciate it.
- Jim Hills: 49:52 Yeah.
- Ken Harvey: 49:52 What you said and all of them got something out of it. And I just want to just remind those of you in the audience that if you're fascinated by what Rich talking about, in just in terms of learning the craft of taking pictures, there are a number of resources available through the Sno-Isle Libraries website in our collection that you can find through our catalog and certainly would invite you to do that. But Rich, if someone is very interested in actually seeing your work, where should they be pointed to?
- Rich Frishman: 50:29 Well, it depends on what your travel budget is, I guess. My normal travel budget would be look online and you can see this work on my websites, in particular, I would direct you to ghostsofsegregation.com and that is plural, ghostsofsegregation.com or richfrishman.com or [frishphoto](http://frishphoto.com), [R. I. S. H. P. H. O. T. O.com](http://R.I.S.H.P.H.O.T.O.com).
- Ken Harvey: 51:04 And we'll have all of those in our show notes so that people can click on them and go there.

Rich Frishman: 51:08 Absolutely. And then if you have a travel budget, you can go to New Orleans and visit the new Orleans Museum of Art or the Museum of Fine Art in Houston or the Amon Carter Center in Austin. And that's a lot of Texas, isn't it? In the South. I'm trying to diversify and hopefully I'll have something closer to the Northwest.

Ken Harvey: 51:35 Well, if they go to those places and they see your work there, they will not be seeing, correct me if I'm wrong, they will not be seeing postcard sized reproductions of your work there. Then what size should they expect?

Rich Frishman: 51:54 Well, because of this technique that I use-

Ken Harvey: 51:58 Well, let's just say smaller or larger than the Mona Lisa?

Rich Frishman: 52:00 Larger, much larger. da Vinci had enough talent that he didn't need to go big. I like going big to make up for other deficits. Actually, I'm very proud of this work and I'm saddened by its necessity. So the prints at the New Orleans Museum of Art are about four feet by five and a half feet. And some of the images that are available, if somebody that's interested in acquiring, are even larger than that.

Rich Frishman: 52:36 I think my longest single print is about 12 feet, four by 12. But I also have smaller images and I'm hoping that I'll be able to have some up at Sno-Isle Libraries in the future because I view this current project, Ghosts of Segregation, as a very important topic that needs to be considered by everybody, adults and kids.

Rich Frishman: 53:11 And then allow those images to inform us. I value the educational opportunities inherent in photography and I'd like to see a traveling exhibit of this work going throughout the country.

Ken Harvey: 53:29 That would be okay.

Jim Hills: 53:30 Yeah, that would be wonderful.

Ken Harvey: 53:33 Rich, what a pleasure.

Rich Frishman: 53:35 I enjoyed this very much. Thank you for this honor and this opportunity.

Kurt Batdorf: 53:42 That's been our pleasure. Absolutely.

Ken Harvey: 53:44 And nice to see a reunion of folks from the Herald.

Rich Frishman: 53:47 Yes.

Ken Harvey: 53:49 All right. Thanks again rich.

Rich Frishman: 53:50 Thank you very much. All of you.

Speaker 6: 53:54 Hey parents and grandparents. Is there a child in the family who's latched onto a smartphone or tablet computer? Help them put that screen time to good use by downloading fun and educational magazines from Sno-Isle Libraries like Highlights, High Five and American Girl. Every magazine packed with age appropriate content like crafts, quizzes, experiments, poems and wholesome stories. And each issue is free to download with a library card from Sno-Isle Libraries.

Ken Harvey: 54:31 Rich was and is an amazing photographer.

Kurt Batdorf: 54:38 Yeah.

Jim Hills: 54:39 What he brings, the commitment he brings to each of his images is just amazing. He knows what he wants to get. He's open to whatever presents itself even if he thinks he knows what he's going to get and then he's committed to getting that. And if it takes him 10 minutes, if it takes him-

Kurt Batdorf: 54:58 Four days.

Jim Hills: 54:59 Four days or multiple trips, a couple of years, he's committed to getting that. Yeah.

Ken Harvey: 55:06 I have to admit that was probably one of the most eyeopening parts of our conversation with him. Just the amount of energy and patience he has to essentially create a work that is so high resolution that you could blow it up to five by 10 or 12 foot by whatever and just stand up to it and still not see any degradation. No pixelization-

Kurt Batdorf: 55:35 Yeah. And no stitches.

Ken Harvey: 55:36 Yeah.

Kurt Batdorf: 55:37 Yeah.

Ken Harvey: 55:39 But his work on Ghosts of Segregation, I think, real important.

Jim Hills: 55:43 Very important.

Kurt Batdorf: 55:44 Captured, yeah.

Ken Harvey: 55:45 Of what segregation bringing out the, I don't know, the ugliness of that part of our history.

Kurt Batdorf: 55:55 And that it's still part of our history.

Ken Harvey: 55:57 Absolutely. Yeah. And I think one of the things that the audience may appreciate is, as Richard said, those ghosts are still with us. We discussed after we had stopped rolling that, some of that hurtfulness of the past and the inequities of the past are still with us and they extend beyond just individuals who are African-American and in our society. They certainly felt by the Japanese community here in the United States, the Chinese community, native Americans and so this is a very relevant topic.

Jim Hills: 56:52 After we finished the episode, we were talking and I was taking some notes and this was something that I wrote down that Rich said about, we're talking about how you go about seeing it and he said, if you keep your eyes open, you get clues of the difficult history that we continued to write. And he is clearly keeping his eyes open.

Kurt Batdorf: 57:16 Yeah.

Jim Hills: 57:16 And witness.

Ken Harvey: 57:19 Yeah. One thing that we had asked him if it was something that he really wanted to as a take away. He had written something and I just wanted to read it here. And it says, our collective responsibility is to speak out for what it's right, to honor our shared humanity and to help those less fortunate.

Kurt Batdorf: 57:39 That's beautiful.

Jim Hills: 57:40 Those are words to live by.

Ken Harvey: 57:42 Absolutely.

Jim Hills: 57:43 And he is.

Ken Harvey: 57:46 Thank you for listening to the Check It Out! Podcast. For free resources and materials connected to today's guest and topic. Head over to the library's website and search for the word podcast. The library's website is sno-isle.org/podcast.