



Photo by Simon Shim

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO!

**An anthology of photo essays celebrating our travels
since the pandemic lockdowns**

The Escaype Collective





Photo by Felipe Silva

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Preface

Jeff and I formed Escaype back in 2014. Having just solved the problem of how to predict when the clouds would light up, we wanted to share the thrill of chasing the weather with the broader community of photographers in the Bay Area. We created Escaype as a weather service. It soon evolved to become much more than that. It has become an artistic community—one that loves to showcase the amazing work that its members produce. This book is a representation of that spirit and the second of its kind. Here's the story behind it...

Episode 1

Fall 2019—Escaype hosted its very first art show, which took place over two nights at Spark Arts in San Francisco. Hundreds of people attended. It was such a success that we immediately planned a show for 2020 and announced a new theme. Everyone was really looking forward to it!

Then the pandemic happened.

Episode 2

August 2020—It was now several months into the pandemic, and everyone's spirits needed a lift. A group of Escaypers began putting together inspiration challenges where we asked

members to post photographs related to specific themes. After one of these, the theme of which was "Hero Storytime", inspiration struck. I organized some of the submissions into a layout and showed the designs to Jeff and Dave Odisho, the organizer of the art show. We knew we were onto something. After the challenge wrapped up, I surprised the participants with an announcement: their submissions were going to be published in a book to celebrate our work! We didn't know how it would turn out. Would it be a good product? A flop? Well received?

Nonetheless, everyone was excited about the book's potential and pitched in to help cover the cost of production. Kate Beale joined the editing team, and over the next month, she, Dave, Jeff, and I worked on the book. *Heroes of Escaype*, our little but mighty 100-page book, was on its way to life! After an extensive process in which the editors and the authors checked every last detail, the book was sent off to the press.

Episode 3

November 7, 2020—The 60 some-odd books arrived, and soon after, Jeff and I drove around the Bay Area to deliver the books to Escaypers. This also gave us the opportunity to have face-to-face conversations with our members whom we love so much. The book brought

so much joy to all of us, especially since everyone had been stuck at home for many months, unsure of the course of the pandemic.

This book

2022—Having the ongoing desire to share our collective work, but facing logistical challenges due in part to our growing size (does anyone know of a venue that will allow us to poke hundreds of holes in the walls to display our prints?), we thought we might as well create another book! With this book, we created an inspiration challenge for which we announced our intentions early on. Karthik Subramaniam coordinated the logistics of this photo challenge. Without his leadership and generous spirit, this book would not exist.

The theme of this book is “*Oh, the Places You’ll Go!*” Cindi Roddan suggested this as an homage to Dr. Seuss. It celebrates the travels we have been able to undertake since the onset of the pandemic. The photos and stories we share here focus on the specific experiences that rekindled our sense of adventure and captured the joy of traveling again after COVID shut down the world.

We have grouped the stories into chapters based on themes we felt that they shared. But we chose not to name these themes so that the reader can explore the common elements on their own, and in that process, also uncover the many layers in each story.

For their help in producing this book, I want to acknowledge our three editing teams—Copy, Photo, and Layout—and the Distribution team.

The Copy Team—Bernadette Talbot, Falu Bakrania, Kevin Silveira, and Michelle Liu—put an incredible amount of work into the book. They spent endless hours reviewing each story, looking for the tiniest of errors and inconsistencies. This was a monumental task.

Our Photo Team—Alex Blackburn, Bernadette Talbot, Cindi Roddan, Jeff Lewis, Karthik Subramaniam, and Neelika Choudhury—looked over all the images for issues like dust bunnies and distractions.

Our Layout Team—Bernadette Talbot, Cindi Roddan, Gurbhej Singh Dhillon, Karthik Subramaniam, Michelle Liu, Mit Desai, and Neelika Choudhury—helped with the design of the book and ensuring all of the elements in the book were consistent.

Finally, the Distribution Team—Adam Pardee, Bernadette Talbot, Emily Cheng, Gurhej Singh Dhillon, Michelle Liu, Neelika Choudhury, Patty Henderson, Bob Shroyer, and Tanmay Sapkal—helped with delivering the books into the hands of the Escaypers who created the stories in these pages.

Lastly, a quick shoutout to Aaron Meyers and Jeff Larson for their proofreading input and design suggestions, respectively.

I am deeply grateful for all of the editors’ time and effort. If you happen to run into one of them, please give them a big hug and a high five, or perhaps even treat them to dinner.

Of course, this book would not have been possible were it not for all of the Escaypers who poured their hearts into their photos and stories, traveling near and far to capture their images. We are grateful that we have been able to produce this book; many of the stories and photographs here may not have been shared otherwise. They offer a glimpse into our worlds as people, as photographers, and as explorers who take great joy in capturing our world.

Thank you, all! ♥

Tung X. Dao
Novato, CA
December 2022

Prologue



Photo by Kelley Larsen

Over the past couple of years since the lockdowns, I have found myself spending more and more time out in the desert. It's a place that is calming and peaceful to me. A place that doesn't need epic conditions to make beautiful art. A place I go when I need inspiration or motivation. A place I go to remember why I love making pictures. I hope you enjoy this collection of the places I go, the places I know.

A Place That I Know

by Michael Hindman

Today is my day!
To share the places I go.
Today, I share a place that I know.

I had compositions in my head.
I sometimes had sand in my boots.
I drove myself
any direction I choose.
Some I traveled alone. Some with another.
And I know what I know.
That I am the guy who'll decide where to go.

I searched up and down Google Earth. I scrolled with care.
Night in and night out, I plotted and stared.
About some I said, "I don't choose to go there."
With my head full of ideas and my boots sometimes full of sand,
I'm too smart to go down any not-so-good land.

And I may not find any
I want to explore.
In that case, of course,
I'll keep going in hopes to find more.

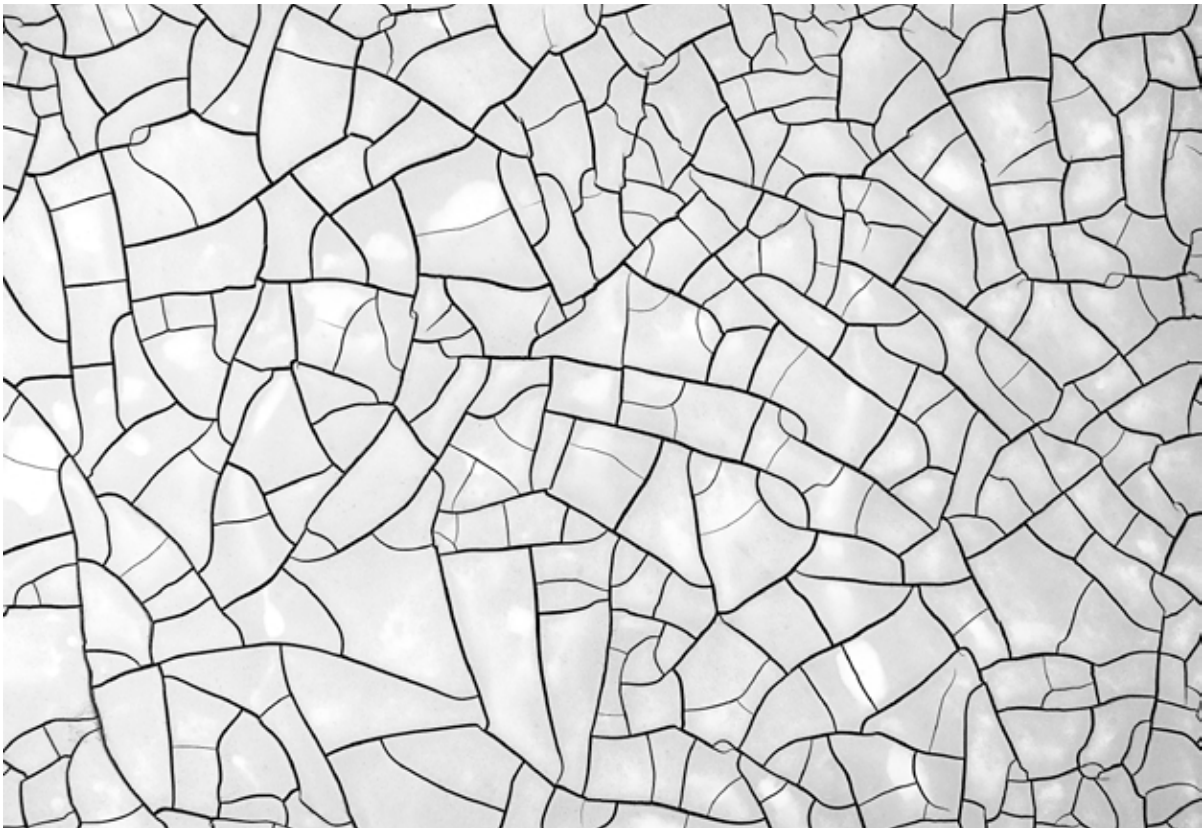
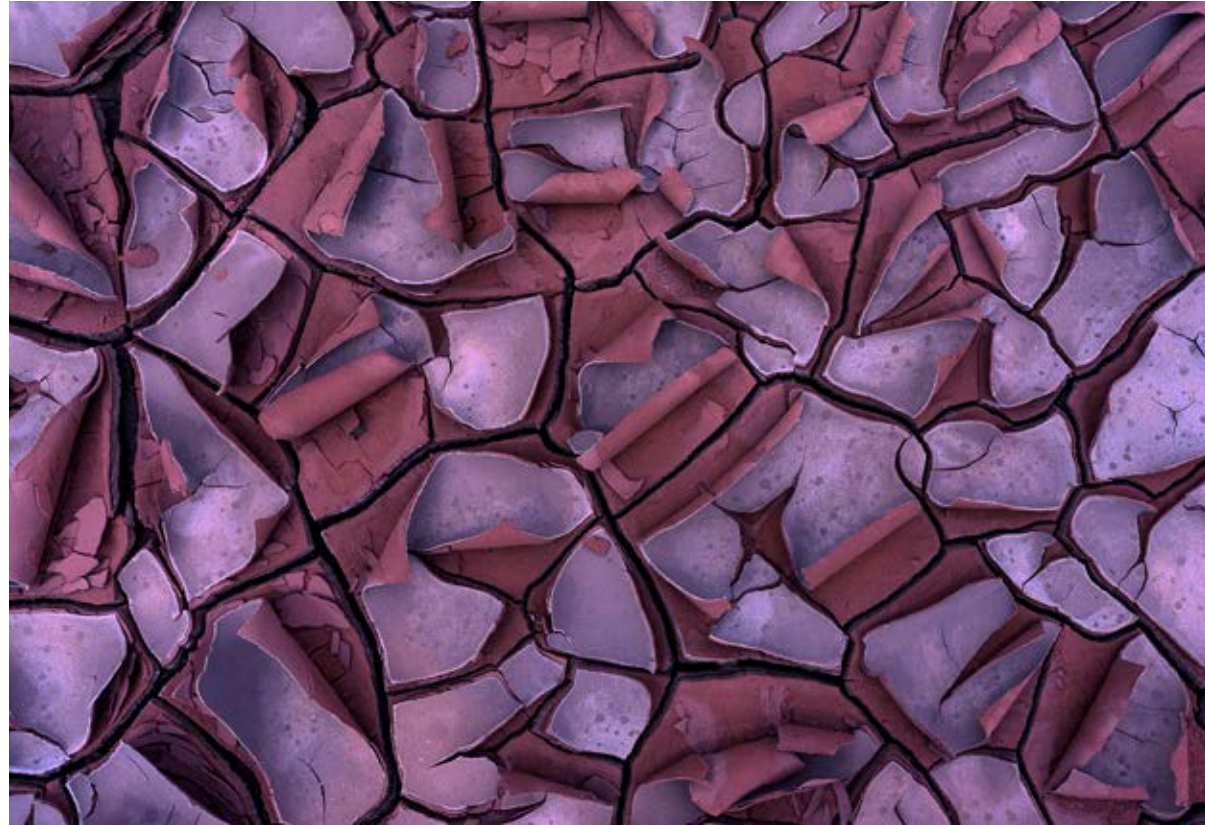
To the desert I go,
a place that I know!

Out there, even if skies are clear,
and they frequently are,
There is plenty of galore
for you to explore.

Some they call bad,
others full of sand.
A few dried and cracked,
but all magnificent land.

And when things start to happen,
And it will take time. Don't stew.
Just continue right along,
until I find where I belong.

OH!
THE PLACE I KNOW! 🌵



Four Seasons

by Chao Zhang

After COVID hit in 2020, I ended up staying at home without traveling for quite a while. Even though this gave me valuable time to stay with family, I missed the days when we could freely explore places around the world. Starting in the summer of 2021, everything seemed to be back to normal, and I decided to pick up the camera and get back to landscape photography. The following images were taken within the last year and a half and are my impressions of each season.



Summer

As a Bay Area photographer, summer is probably the busiest season of the year for me. I continuously keep an eye on all the webcams across the Bay, anxiously monitoring fog reports and forecasts, and then quickly head out and tirelessly drive long distances to chase the fog when the conditions are right. I got lucky that night where everything aligned. This is a special place to me not only because I shot one of my favorite images here, but also because it's where I made lots of great friends who share similar interests and passions.

Spring

This is a season when the earth shows its vitality. We are treated to blooming flowers and pleasant green colors. I decided to drive up into the forest, and captured a scene of rhododendrons with redwoods in the background. Luckily, the fog came in and added a sense of depth and atmosphere to the image.



Fall

The most magical season of the year, a time when we can see all different colors—green, yellow, orange, and red—at the same time. An image of vibrant fall colors with mountain peaks in the background has been on my bucket list for a while, and this year, I decided to pull the trigger. Here is the image I got this past fall with amazing light and low clouds. (BTW, we had two consecutive nights of active storms during this trip, so I did a bit of storm chasing, but that's a different story for next time.)

Winter

The weather is starting to grow cold, and snow is the symbol of winter in my opinion. We rarely have snow here in the Bay Area, so I traveled to the Southwest and took an image of canyons covered in snow. I just love the color contrast in this shot and would like to explore more places during winter in the future. 🌨️



My Little Adventure Buddy

by Zetong Li

My family treated the pandemic fairly seriously from the start because we had an 8-month-old child. We washed our hands more frequently. We used Instacart to avoid grocery shopping in person. We kept our masks on all the time when not at home. Most regrettably, we stopped traveling. We took our daughter out in her stroller for walks around the neighborhood, and that was pretty much all the “traveling” we did in 2020.

Only in 2021 did we start to get out of our zip code. In the summer, Yilin was then about 2 years old. We frequented downtown Mountain View and San Jose, where she could run around on the grass in the parks. She drooled quite a bit, so this was also the time she needed to wear

a bib all the time. It was cute and funny that we needed to change both her bib and mask every hour or so.

While Yilin seemed to be pleased with whichever local playground or park we took her to, I was struggling with the monotony. I suggested a weekend trip to Santa Cruz. My wife Tina was not excited about it. She was intimidated by the amount of preparation and the work involved with traveling with a toddler, especially during the pandemic.

I suggested, “Why don’t I take her with me to Santa Cruz for the upcoming weekends to give it a try, and you can take a break, since you’ve been burned out with the new job and parent duty?”





This time, I packed a healthy picnic, and Yilin was very happy with the fruit and yogurt.

In March 2022, I joined Escaype. Not surprisingly, I've attempted to go out for photography much more often ever since, and there have been trips that Tina, Yilin, and I could all participate in, including Banff, Sequoia National Park, and Muir Woods.

There were also (quite) a few I took by myself just for taking photos, which meant that Tina had to spend more time dealing with Yilin alone. As Tina listened to my explanation one afternoon that there was likely some nice fog flowing at Mount Tam, she told me "Not unless Yilin goes with you." So I packed my gear and rushed over to the daycare.

I asked Yilin, "Would you like to see some nice clouds, and be above them?" I didn't think Yilin understood fully what that meant, but

She said, "Deal!"

After picking her up from daycare on a Friday afternoon, I embarked on my first journey with the little one on my own, confident in my parenting skills. The trip came out great. For the first time, she played with sand on a real beach rather than in a sandbox. She also discovered the joy of throwing pebbles into the water of a creek. The only regret I can remember was that food from Chipotle may still be slightly spicy, even when you tell their staff to put in everything, except anything spicy. So is the gochujang sauce that goes with bibimbap. My advice to new parents: Avoid feeding those to your kids.

Very soon, the season for fall colors rolled around, and we took a trip to visit Napa. On the way back, we took a detour to Point Reyes.

I knew she would joyfully say yes. As a 3-year-old, she has now seen fog waves at both 1,000 feet and 2,000 feet from different spots over the course of three trips to Mount Tam. Perhaps more importantly for her, she enjoyed the snacks while watching the clouds. And I'm sure next time, she will remember it's not a good idea to touch daddy's tripod.

In October 2022, the two of us went to see the fall colors together again—this time, to the Eastern Sierra. There's a lot more work involved when taking a toddler along on a photo trip. I may also have to miss the sunrises. However, when Yilin runs towards me with her smiling face, hugging me and showing me the beautiful leaves she's just collected from the ground, I think it's all worth it. 🍂