

ROCKY SCHENCK

*"It's like I'm floating in space,
waiting to get to my final
destination, whatever that is."*

Aperture: Why do you choose to photograph landscapes?

Rocky Schenck: Well, it's almost like therapy for me. It gives me peace of mind. I love going away by myself, just disappearing and being left alone with my thoughts and my camera. I look at it as a journey to find things out about myself—and in the meantime, I take pictures.

A: You took these pictures in many parts of the world, yet they all have a similar quality—why?

RS: They could almost be manufactured landscapes, because of the way they've been manipulated. They're really landscapes from my imagination. I can manipulate them into almost whatever I want. They could have been taken anywhere. I just go by my instincts and keep working on the photographs until they have the right kind of emotional impact for me, and create the mood that I want.

A: Is the mood that you're after ever religious in nature?

RS: Well, sometimes, since my belief is that there are guiding angels watching over me—I can't speak for anybody else! I feel like they're friendly spirits. I do talk to them occasionally, but they don't talk back.

There's also a water influence. I tried to figure out why I'm fascinated with waterfalls and fountains and pools of water. One thing that comes to mind, which I might have completely created in

my head or created with several therapists, is the fact that my parents had me baptized three times, which made me feel that I was never quite good enough—that it would take several baptisms to cleanse my soul.

A: When did you first start taking pictures?

RS: I'm a filmmaker also, and I started taking photographs on the sets of my experimental films in 1972 or '73. I made short super-8 films. I started making them in Dripping Springs, Texas, which is where I'm from.

A: Does the feeling you were trying to evoke in your films show up in your photography?

RS: Mostly, I think, in these landscapes. To me there's something dark and disturbing in a lot of the landscapes. Maybe it's my constant journey to figure out why I am the way I am. It's like I'm floating in space, waiting to get to my final destination, whatever that is.

A: Why do you photograph statues of angels?

RS: Well, I think it would be difficult to photograph a real angel. Maybe they're standing out there somewhere in that field of sunflowers.



Opposite: *Guiding Angel*, 1990
Right: *In Between*, 1990

