



Craig Varjabedian's photographs of the American West and Southwest eloquently illuminate his connections with the region and its people. His finely detailed images shine with an authenticity that reveals the inseparable ties between identity, place, and the act of perceiving. For Varjabedian, the art of photography is a receptive process driven by a committed openness to what each subject offers to reveal, rather than the desire to manipulate form or catalog detail. He achieves this intensely personal vision by capturing and suspending on film those decisive moments in which the elements of a scene and the ineffable spirit of a moment come together in exceptional, often startling ways.

"The remarkable photographs by Craig Varjabedian are not only beautiful but also extremely valuable documents of architecture, culture, and lifestyle," wrote the late Beaumont Newhall, preeminent 20th-century photographic historian and author of *History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present*. From his intimate portraits to expansive landscapes, Varjabedian's images, made primarily in black and white, celebrate the drama and potency inherent in each subject's relationship to the photographer. "The one thing that never changes is that moment of recognition when I feel the play of light, shadow, and texture resolve itself into something wonderful," Varjabedian wrote in his book *Four and Twenty Photographs: Stories from Behind the Lens*. Through this process he offers viewers a new way of seeing—one that transcends mundane perception and expands our awareness of the potential in every moment.

A serious photographer since the age of 13, Varjabedian was introduced to fine-art photography a year later in a chance encounter with Ansel Adams. His 30-year career in photography began in earnest in 1975, after he moved from Canada to the United States and began studying with Phil Davis at the University of Michigan. He went on to receive a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology and later worked with famed photographer Paul Caponigro in Santa Fe, where Varjabedian has lived since 1985. Since the opening of his first major one-man show at the Albuquerque Museum of Art in 1994, he has won accolades for work exhibited in museums and galleries across the country.

In recognition of the significance and power of his images, Varjabedian has been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the McCune Charitable Foundation, and the New Mexico Humanities Council. He received an Emmy in 1991 for his work with award-winning filmmaker Karl Kernberger on the PBS documentary *En Divina Luz: The Penitente Moradas of New Mexico*. Photographs from this project were published in a book by the same name, with an essay by Pulitzer-nominated author Michael Wallis. His next book, *By the Grace of Light: Images of Faith from Catholic New Mexico*, came out of the bonds he developed with the people and communities of the Morada Photographic Survey. Recent books of his photographs include *Four & Twenty Photographs: Stories from Behind the Lens* (2007) and *Ghost Ranch and the Faraway Nearby* (2009). He is currently at work photographing New Mexico for a collection of his photographs that will be published in 2012 to coincide with New Mexico's Centennial Celebration of Statehood.

Craig Varjabedian is represented by the Gerald Peters Gallery in Santa Fe, the Afterimage Photograph Gallery in Dallas and the Joseph Bellows Gallery in La Jolla.



Craig Varjabedian Photography

903 West Alameda Street No. 115 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501 505 / 983.2934

craig@craigvarjabedian.com www.craigvarjabedian.com

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