

## Never a Still Life

Ryan Lockwood, associate editor

Chiropractor. Photographer. Consultant. Entrepreneur. Gary Auerbach, DC, is constantly in motion. Dr. Auerbach, the founder of the World Federation of Chiropractic, is a successful photographer and chiropractic consultant. Dr. Auerbach has attended the World Health Organization (WHO) General Assembly annually since 1985. He is a delegate of Life University for the WHO Tobacco-Free Initiative, and just returned from the WHO's fourth session of the International Negotiating Body in Geneva, Switzerland, March 18-23. On the home front, Dr. Auerbach has raised three children, helps run the family pistachio business and even ran for Congress in Arizona in 1993-1994.

Not a Still Life.

Dr. Auerbach grew up in New York but was drawn to the mystique of the American Southwest, where he studied accounting at the University of Arizona. With a BS in accounting, Dr. Auerbach worked as an accountant in San Francisco and Davenport, Iowa, for Palmer College, where he earned his chiropractic degree in 1975.

"I had a realization one day that instead of seeing a chiropractor, I could be a chiropractor," he says.

After taking over a successful family practice in Tucson, Dr. Auerbach helped create the WFC in 1988, and served as president for the following three years. He was also a member of the board for the ICA from 1984-1989.

Life after Chiropractic

Dr. Auerbach injured his wrist in 1990 performing an adjustment, and was forced to refocus his career after 16 years in practice: "I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do with my time and I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do with the practice," he remembers. The resulting midlife crisis propelled him into making a career in the field he had always had an interest in - photography.

To get started, Dr. Auerbach reviewed his previous work and discovered to his frustration that the images were already showing signs of deterioration after 25 years. He realized then that he wanted all of his future work to be recorded in a medium that would last much longer than traditional silver-based prints, and wouldn't fade over time.

As a result, Dr. Auerbach's focus is on "platinum contact prints" - high resolution black-and-white images of near-perfect quality that last for as long as a millennium. Platinum printing was one of the original forms of photography, but all but vanished in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the high costs of necessary metals. In the 1960s, platinum printing re-emerged as a form of black-and-white photography.

This photographic method utilizes the noble metals platinum and palladium instead of silver. The

resulting prints are much longer lasting than traditional prints, which deteriorate through oxidization. Platinum lasts as long as the paper it's printed on.

Dr. Auerbach's method involves shooting large-format negatives and using sunlight to develop these images on paper, which he has already painted with a light-sensitive platinum medium. He says he prefers archival-type work, such as architecture images and heirloom portraits. Inspired by the black-and-white imagery of photographers like Eduard Steichen, Edward Curtis and Alfred Steiglitz, he has established himself as a widely-known photographer of Native Americans, including the Apache and Arapaho nations. The large-format 8x10" and 11x14" plates he uses were easy to master, having used similar plates for x-rays while practicing chiropractic.

"My familiarity with large-format x-ray film gave me an immediate comfort zone dealing with large-format field photography," he says.

Dr. Auerbach owns and operates a photography business in Tucson. His works appear in the private collections of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Walter Cronkite, and the museum collections of the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. This is significant because the Library of Congress generally only creates files on photographers who are deceased. Also, on May 4 of this year, the Amerind Foundation in Tucson began a one-year exhibit of his platinum photographs.

Work of "The Highest Order"

Dr. Auerbach's goal is to do as much as he can for chiropractic and photography. He asserts, "My photography is the highest order that I possibly can make it ... and I'm doing work with the World Health Organization, that, as far as I'm concerned, is the highest order of work that I could be doing to help chiropractic grow internationally."

"Many countries around the world are interested in health-care approaches that are cost-effective, that have limited negative patient responses to the approach itself, and that can impact the socioeconomic status of the local family, the community, and the country," Dr. Auerbach says.

He hopes to continue working with the Smithsonian, photographing Native American tribes previously photographed by Edward Curtis, famous for documenting over 80 American Indian nations from 1900 to 1930. Dr. Auerbach says these cultures should be recorded in a more stable, long-lasting medium.

While he plans to develop collections of his photography for an array of museums and the Library of Congress, he insists that he won't lose focus on his efforts to advance the chiropractic profession.

"I'm doing something that very few people are doing in both areas. There are very few people documenting Native American peoples using archival methods, and there are very few people working in the area of international health regarding the growth of chiropractic," Dr. Auerbach says.

Despite being an active photographer, Dr. Auerbach continues to attribute his philosophy on life and health, the people he has met, and the places he has experienced, to his chiropractic roots, and plans to remain an active promoter of chiropractic ideals in the future.

"Chiropractic is not only a practice - it's a way of life," he offers. "So don't forget what you've learned."

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Dr. Auerbach's works can be viewed at [www.garyauerbach.com](http://www.garyauerbach.com). He can be contacted via e-mail at [gary@platinumphotographer.com](mailto:gary@platinumphotographer.com).

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