

Photographer Mike McLaughlin Connects Modern Architecture & North Fork Living through the Beauty of Simplicity

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by Dakota Arkin Cafourek

Photographer Mike McLaughlin has a deep appreciation for the North Fork and New York City. His landscapes and seascapes capturing life on Long Island's North Fork are distinguished by minimalism and simplicity paired with crisp focus, clean lines and absence of extraneous detail.

Most recently, subjects attracting [McLaughlin's](#) lens changed from North Fork farm vistas and saltwater horizons to a setting several miles west: New York City.



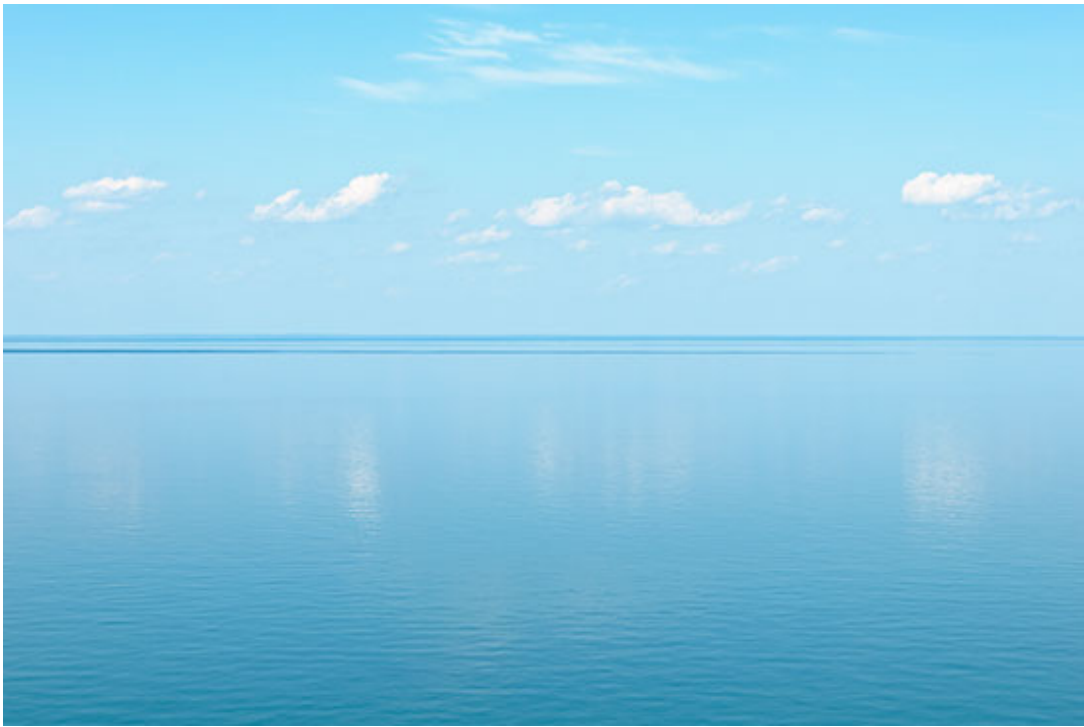
“30 Rock” by Mike McLaughlin, 2018, from “Architectural Extractions” series. Photograph, 12 x 12 inches. © Mike McLaughlin. Courtesy of the artist.

In approaching scenes found in both town and country, McLaughlin adopts a meticulous attention to details when forming the compositions for his photographs. Eschewing urbanscapes in favor of making unique portraits of Manhattan’s buildings, McLaughlin adopted the same minimalism characteristics that informed his photographs of rural life on the North Fork for his new series “Architectural Extractions.”

“A love for modern architecture has always been with me,” the artist said regarding ‘Architectural Extractions.’

Even in the urban landscape, the serenity of his compositions is constant, informed by technical precision and ordered style. A business analyst by trade, McLaughlin started photographing the North Fork after buying a home there 15 years ago.

“I was so enamored with the farms and seascapes,” he said in a recent interview, adding “In order to capture the beauty of the North Fork after we moved there, it just seemed natural to pick up a camera.”



“Long Island Sound” by Mike McLaughlin, 2009, from his “Sea” Series. Photograph, 12 x 18 inches. © Mike McLaughlin. Courtesy of the artist.

In the beginning, photography was his means to share this beautiful setting with far away friends and family. Positive feedback encouraged him to improve and advance as a photographer; or, as he said: “That made me want to get better at it.”



“Three Barns” by Michael McLaughlin from his “Land” Series. © Mike McLaughlin.
Courtesy of the artist.

McLaughlin’s instinctive eye for defined lines and empty space, as evidenced in his photographs, is rooted in his quantitative nature. “I have a strong need for order in all aspects of my life,” he explained, “order and simplicity.”

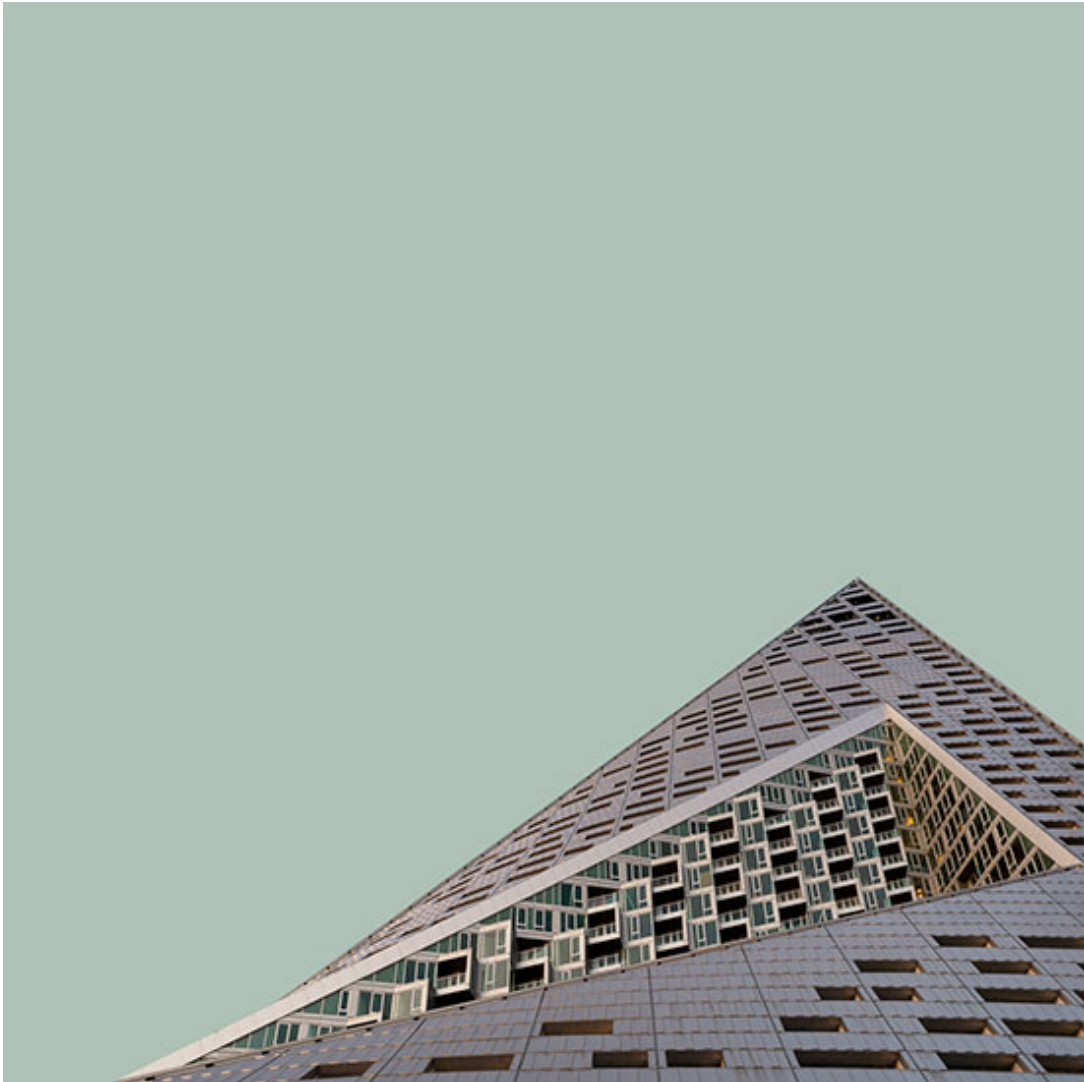
The artist continued honing his skills and took courses at New York’s International Center of Photography. “In this way,” he said, “I transitioned from being a complete amateur to something more.”



“Riverside South” by Mike McLaughlin from his “City” series. © Mike McLaughlin. Courtesy of the artist.

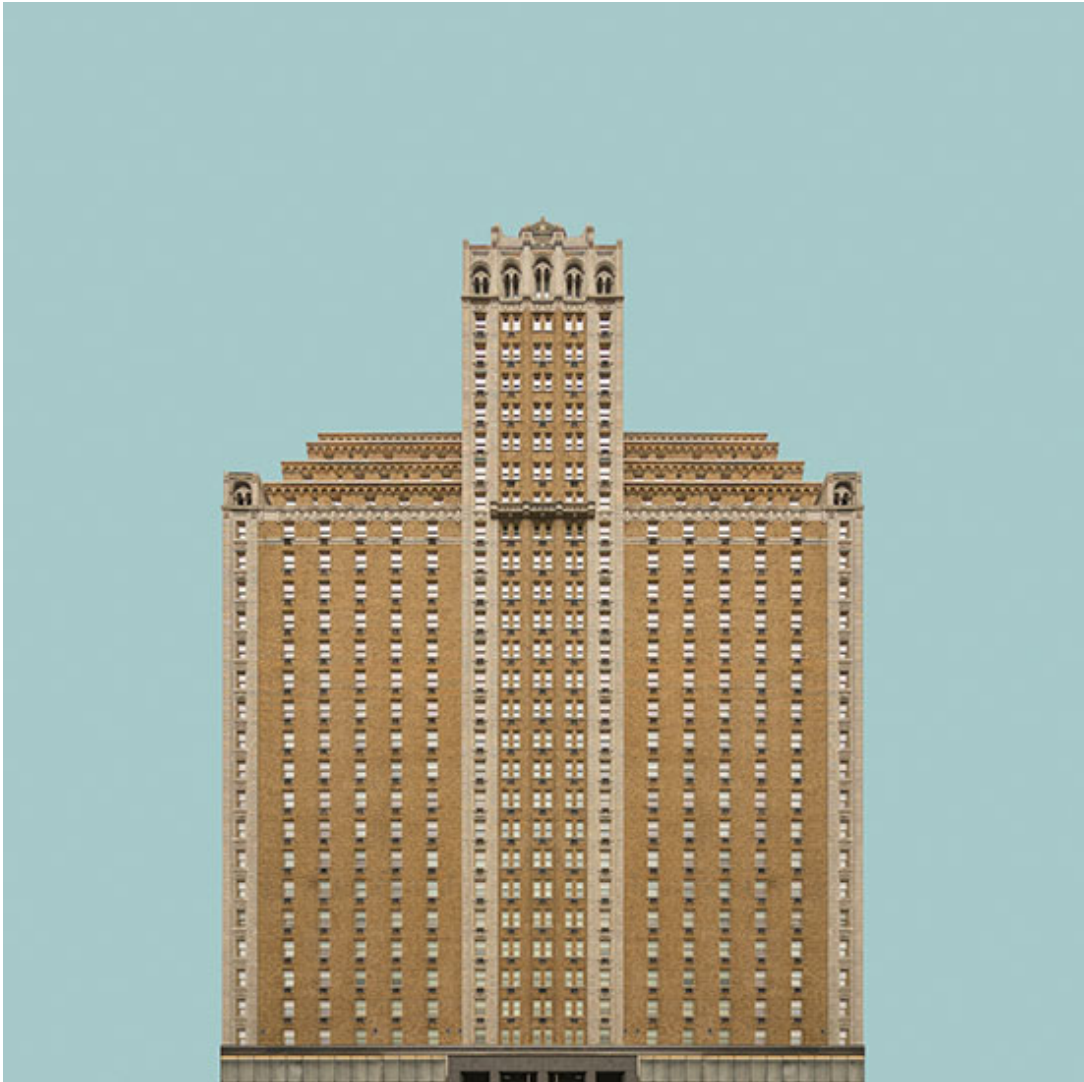
In “[Architectural Extractions](#),” McLaughlin’s subjects—buildings in Manhattan—depart further from previous images made from NYC skylines. These images are extracted from their surroundings and are presented independently from crowded skylines, busy streets or even a hint of surroundings. Instead, New York City’s iconic buildings are rather pieced into fragments, taking on a new persona as they no longer interact with the city at large.

“I had the desire to minimize and totally eliminate ambient noise,” McLaughlin said of his desire to highlight each individual building. He effectively silences the backdrop to spotlight a building’s own unique contours, sometimes transforming entire backgrounds into solid colors.



“VIA 57” by Mike McLaughlin, 2018, from “Architectural Extractions” series. Photograph, 12 x 12 inches. © Mike McLaughlin. Courtesy of the artist.

“I have a specific goal when it comes to what I am shooting. A particular building will appeal to me,” McLaughlin explained of his process. “I will end up going back to it time after time, to capture it in different light conditions or different visual clutter conditions. Mostly I return to look for the light that I want.”



“Hotel Lincoln” by Mike McLaughlin, 2018, from “Architectural Extractions” series. Photograph, 12 x 12 inches. © Mike McLaughlin. Courtesy of the artist.

“The shift evolved naturally to focus on individual buildings and my current series,” he said of shifting his focus from quiet country vistas to an urban center. He added thoughtfully, “I never stopped loving the North Fork and loving to capture it. It’s just not as exciting right now as the city stuff, not to say that it won’t be again.”

Despite spending his entire career with data and numbers, McLaughlin said that he has always been a visual person. He retired from his corporate life four months ago and shifted his focus toward his second career in photography. “First and foremost, I really do this for my own enjoyment,” McLaughlin said, “and I love it when other people like it too.”



“Potato Truck” by Mike McLaughlin, 2009, from his “Land” series. Photograph, 12 x 18 inches. © Mike McLaughlin. Courtesy of the artist.

Dakota Arkin Cafourek of Hamptons Art Hub followed up with Mike McLaughlin via email to further explore his current series, “Architectural Extractions” on view through September 16, 2018 at Alex Ferrone Gallery in Cutchogue. [Click here](#) to read McLaughlin’s insights into the making of his new photography series on architecture portraiture in New York City.

BASIC FACTS: Selections from Mike McLaughlin’s “Architectural Extractions” series are on view in the group show “Urbanesque Exhibition” through September 16, 2018 at Alex Ferrone Gallery, 25425 Main Road, Cutchogue, New York 11935. www.alexferronegallery.com.

Next up, selection from the series will be exhibited on Long Island from October 13 – 28, 2018 in “[Eclecticism - Alex Ferrone Gallery presents Fifteen Artists](#)” at the Jeanie Tengelsen Gallery, Art League of Long Island, 107 E Deer Park Rd, Dix Hills, NY 11746.

To see more of Mike McLaughlin’s photography, visit www.mikemclaughlinphoto.com.

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