

## Interview with Taj Forer and Michael Itkoff of Daylight Magazine

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Taj Forer and Michael Itkoff are the co-founding editors of [Daylight Magazine](#) which launched the [Debut Issue](#) in March 2004 with the work of Sara Gomez, Tom Rankin, Alec Soth, Jen Szymaszek. They have followed with themed issues on [Iraq](#), [Sustainability](#), [Israel/Palestine](#), and the current issue on [Agriculture](#). In addition to being magazine editors, Forer and Itkoff have both published monographs with Charta. [Threefold Sun](#), Forer's book is on Waldorf communities in the United States and has a enlightening essay on these communities and its founder, Rudolph Steiner, by Carol Mavor. Michael Itkoff's book, [Street Portraits](#), with faces from London, Sydney, Hanoi, Bangkok, and New York is due in the US in February. Here Forer and Itkoff discuss the publication of the magazine and not-for-profit organization, Daylight Community Arts Foundation.



**MM:** What is the mission of Daylight Magazine? How has this mission evolved from the first program/issue into the multimedia organization that [Daylight Magazine](#) has become?

**TF/MI:** Founded in 2003, Daylight Magazine is the biannual printed publication of [Daylight Community Arts Foundation](#) (DCAF), a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the use of photography as a tool for effecting social change. By reimagining the documentary mode through collaboration with established and emerging artists, scholars and journalists, Daylight Magazine

has become one of the premier showcases for contemporary photography. Recently DCAF launched Fundacion Imaginer ([www.fundacionimaginer.org](http://www.fundacionimaginer.org)) based in Panama City, Panama which is dedicated to promoting contemporary art and photography from Latin America.

In addition to publishing Daylight Magazine, DCAF seeks to help underrepresented communities share their stories by distributing cameras, establishing darkroom and digital imaging facilities, administering photographic workshops, and curating local and traveling exhibitions. Ultimately, DCAF's goal is to provide these communities with access to the resources and equipment necessary to participate in the global visual dialogue.

We invite interested individuals to initiate and manage self-representative photography projects using Daylight Community Arts Foundation as an umbrella to apply for funding. By working with photographers all over the world we have built a network of successful satellite projects. Join us!

**MM:** What are your roles in the organization?

**TF/MI:** We are co-founding editors and make all of the decisions regarding the overall "big picture" trajectory of Daylight and its many programs. A dedicated team of volunteer staff members allows for our organization to work towards and attain the goals that we put in place.

**MM:** Daylight has numerous relationships with other organizations and functions as a not-for-profit organization. What is the best way you have found to receive funding for most of your projects?

**TF/MI:** Funding is the single most difficult obstacle for Daylight. There is no single source of funding that allows Daylight to function. Rather, Daylight's operational expenses are met through a diverse funding portfolio consisting of grants, tax-deductible donations from individuals and companies, subscription and single issue sales and advertising revenue. We are constantly applying for grants and soliciting in-kind donations - without the generosity of the supporting public and that of foundations, our work cannot happen.

**MM:** Daylight sponsors many programs relating to photography for rural and impoverished communities including darkroom construction in the Akwesasne Reservation and the Philippines and camera distribution in Baghdad, La Boquilla, Colombia, Mehdiganj, India and New Orleans. How did this aspect of the organization come about and how do you choose these projects?

**TF/MI:** This is one of the most important aspects of what we are trying to do with Daylight. We believe that photography promotes visual dialogue. By helping to increase photographic opportunity for marginalized communities, Daylight empowers community members to participate in the ever-growing global, visual dialogue. As members of the international community, we all want to be heard; to share our needs, successes, ideas, fears, aspirations, etc. Photography is an incredibly powerful tool for this purpose and we believe that visibility within a larger global conversation is a basic right that everyone possesses - unfortunately, this is often ignored. Daylight seeks to help facilitate inclusion in global dialogue via its programming.

**MM:** The [podcasts](#) started in 2007 seem a natural evolution from the print to digital media. To hear the earthy quality of Danny Wilcox Frazier speaking about his project on the farmlands in Driftless; the Irish brogue of John Duncan discussing the bonfires built on the occasion of the anniversary of the Protestant victory of the Catholic forces in 1690; and the youthful voice of Joseph Johnson discussing his discovery and exploration of the Megachurchs adds another dimension to the images. Why did you decide to move in this direction or did I just answer the question for you in the introduction to this question?

**TF/MI:** Yes you did thanks! Certainly it is a natural evolution and our desire to showcase work outpaced by our publishing schedule. It is so simple yet so profound to be guided through a portfolio by the artist her/himself. The Daylight Podcast offers an experience that, in most cases, the public is unable to have in person. How often do we find ourselves in a gallery with the artist who produced the work on exhibition? It is a real treat to have access to the artists' stories as we examine their work. Our podcasts attempt to bring this intimacy into the living room, office, studio, airplane (via the ipod), theater, gallery space; wherever the podcasts are viewed which, in this day and age, is extremely almost anywhere.

**MM:** Do you accept submissions for the magazine or website or proposals for projects for individuals? Do you fund any of the projects?

**TF/MI:** We have an [open submission policy](#) (weblinks only please). We do not fund projects but do, when appropriate, take on projects proposed to us and offer editorial / curatorial support. And, of course, we do fund the publication of works featured in print.

**MM:** Who does the design work for the organization?

**TF/MI:** Daylight Magazine and its supporting advertising and promotional material is designed by Ursula Damm, our website is designed by Ethan Cluset, our podcasts are designed by Aaron Greenhood and Jody Sugrue.

**MM:** How would you recommend a photographer get funding for his or her project aside from personal funds?

**TF/MI:** Unfortunately this is not our area of expertise but there are a lot of private and public foundations that regularly accept funding proposals for artistic projects. Check out your local arts council or see if the university or college that you may be affiliated with has access to online grant databases. There is a lot out there, it's just difficult to find...

**MM:** Who is your favorite photographer or one who has impacted your life and work?

**MI:** Joel Sternfeld, hands down.

**TF:** Sternfeld, hands up in praise.

**MM:** What blogs do you read? Magazines?

Blogs: [Conscientious](#), [Asian Photography Blog](#), [Politico](#), [Modern Art Notes](#), [ArtForum Diary](#), [Brian Ulrich's blog](#), Alec Soth's blog before it went away to the great sadness of the photography world... Magazines: PDN, Source, Aperture, Blindspot, ArtForum, Art in America, Orion, The New Yorker.

**MM:** What is your favorite book, photo or otherwise?

**TF:** I can't narrow this down to a single book (I assume you mean photography book) but would have to say: [William Eggleston Guide](#) (William Eggleston), [American Prospects](#) (Joel Sternfeld), [Fish Story](#) (Allan Sekula), [Let Us Now Praise Famous Men](#) (Walker Evans, James Agee). I also have to say that I am influenced by much art that is produced by non-photo-based artists and need to mention: Joseph Beuys, Alfredo Jaar and Felix Gonzalez-Torres as being very important figures for me.

**MI:** Tough call really but I would pick Robert Frank's [Americans](#). Also a huge fan of Misrach's [Bravo 20](#) and other topographical projects. These days I have been quite interested in Tillman's, Etheridge and Fulford. Daniel Eldon's collected journals 'Journey is the Destination' had quite a big

influence on me as well.

**MM:** Do you have an odd or funny photography related story to share?

**TF/MI:** About once a year we are able to take a small trip together to attend a photography fair or portfolio review. These journeys are great fun and always involve a bit of madness. In Paris last year a Parisian friend suggested that we check out his favorite club, Club Rex while in town. Little did we know, a huge VIP party was currently underway for Paris Photos when we arrived around midnight on evening. Memories of the rest of the night are shrouded in Jager, heavy European dance beats and the blurred faces of many famous photographers...

**MM:** Do you have any other comments to make about your organization?

**TF/MI:** We are in a perpetual state of funding need. Any donations to [Daylight](#) are fully tax-deductible and we encourage anyone interested in our work to donate or spread the word to friends, family and colleagues regarding Daylight's need for in-kind donations. If we can establish just a few significant, annual corporate or private donations it would help solidify the future of our work. Also, please subscribe and the spread the word in general! :- ) Thank you!

this entry was cross-posted from [Melanie Photo Blog](#)