

Max von Tilzer

## Art Photography

Max von Tilzer (born 1939 in St. Anton, Austria) has begun taking pictures at age 12, first with a Rolleiflex 60 x 60-mm camera borrowed from his parents, later using his first own rather primitive camera. His mentor then was Baron Leo Haus, the son of the last Grand Admiral of the Austrian-Hungarian Navy, who was an accomplished photographer and an avid mountain climber. Darkroom work began when he, for an incredibly small sum, was able to purchase a used Leitz-Focomat magnifier. In 1963 he obtained an *Exakta Varex IIA*, the very first single-lens 35-mm camera ever built, which had been on the market since 1937. In the late 1980's, he acquired a *Nikon FA* for 35-mm film. Since 1999 he has been using almost exclusively a purely mechanic *Hasselblad 501CM* for 60 x 60-mm film, in conjunction with Zeiss lenses, ranging from 50 to 360 mm, and a Seconic Zoom Master-L 508 light meter. He thus is going "*back to the roots of photography*" by not relying on electronic gadgetry, but basing his photographic work on solid craftsmanship using the best equipment currently available. His return to the middle format was prompted by his rising dissatisfaction with photography using 35-mm cameras. Whereas his early work was in black and white, since over 25 years he has been exclusively taking colour images. However, in his view when looking at colour photographs one should not become aware of "colours", but take them as an integral part of our vision of the world around us. This philosophy requires subtlety, rather than obvious brilliance. Although in his opinion the future of photography undoubtedly lies in digital imagery, he currently still uses conventional film which, however, is digitally scanned and processed for producing images by using state-of-the-art-technology. Image editing is restricted to the optimization of colour balance and contrast, but is not used for manipulations intended to create special effects. Thus, his work is devoted entirely to "*straight photography*".

His love of nature had motivated Max von Tilzer to study Biology, with emphasis on ecology. From the outset, also his main photographic interest has been nature photography, in particular trees and waters. Photography ever since has been an integral part of this general concern with the natural environment. His involvement with freshwater and marine ecology, as well as with polar research, allowed him to travel widely. Thus he was able to assemble a wealth of images from all seven continents. Max is a great admirer of the American photographers [Edward Weston](#), [Ansel Adams](#), and [Eliot Porter](#). Among the living photographers, he in particular treasures the works of [Hiroshi Sugimoto](#) and [Michael Kenna](#).

Since the year 2001 his images were shown at numerous occasions throughout Germany. The general public and the press have favourably received his exhibitions. In his view, most people of our overly hectic age, dominated by technology and moneymaking, don't have a genuine understanding of the natural environment. An important element thereby is their general lack of feeling for the beauty and harmony of undisturbed nature. The first sign of nature degradation in his view, more often than not, is the loss of its aesthetic qualities. "*If we don't have any understanding of natural beauty we are not motivated to preserve it. As a result, we become careless towards the environment.*" On the other hand, we indeed can learn to appreciate beauty, be it in the arts, or in nature. Thus, for Max von Tilzer photography is not only an artistic activity, but also "*a continuation of my work in the interest of nature conservation by other means*".

### **Past photo exhibitions:**

“*Metamorphoses of Water*”, April 4 – December 31, 2001, Lake Constance Water Works, Sipplinger Berg, Germany

“*The Waters of Life*”; June 13 – July 12, Galerie auf der Empore, University of Constance, Germany

“*The Waters of Life*”, January 18 – March 10, 2002, Mainau Castle, Island of Mainau, Germany

“*The Waters of Life*” Town Hall, Donaueschingen, Germany, June 2002

“*Metamorphoses of Water*” Alfred-Wegener-Institute of Polar and Marine Research, Bremerhaven, November/December 2002.

“*Metamorphoses of Water*” German Lloyd, Hamburg, August/September 2003.

“*Water-Signs*”, 2 October – 9 November 2003, Christ Church, Radolfzell, Germany

“*Family-Trees – Tree-Trunks*”, Mainau Castle, Island of Mainau, Germany 10 January- 22 February 2004.

“*Growth of the Heart*”, Kues and Partners, Associate Lawyers, Konstanz, Germany, 28. April – 2 June 2004.

“*Tree Sculptures*”, Landesbausparkasse Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart, Fall 2004.

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*Further photo exhibitions are in preparation.*

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