

#artinthetimeofcorona interview with Ben Huff



This is one in a series of interviews with our customers to see how they are adapting to the COVID-19 world.

Ben Huff lives in Juneau, AK and has been a customer since 2018. He is a photographer and the founder of the independent publisher, Ice Fog Press.

This is his **#artinthetimeofcorona** story.



huffphoto.com

How was Juneau affected by the COVID-19 virus? How have you been affected personally?

Here in Juneau, it feels like we've dodged a bullet to some degree. We've only had 26 total cases, and had a twenty six day stretch with no recorded cases, until two were reported last week. Juneau, and the state, have been diligent at adhering to social distancing and mask wearing, and it appears to have worked. But, as I type this the governor has lifted all restrictions today – going from phase 2 of our statewide plan straight to phase 4 – with all businesses opening without restrictions. I hope we don't soon lose our standing as the state with the least cases in the country.

Do you have a daily routine that keeps you grounded these

days?

Since the start, I've been in the studio most days. I live very close, and the building is empty, bar two tenants, so once I navigate the front door of the building, I'm clear. Most days in the studio at the beginning revolved around tending to some needed archive work, printing, working on a book mockup of a current project, and making and shipping books for my indie publishing imprint Ice Fog Press. Recently, I've been getting out to make pictures for myself, and some local clients and magazines.

Are you reading, cooking, streaming, or doing any activity that is helping you cope?

My wife and I have always cooked a fair amount, and that has now become more necessary. I've recently moved vegetable starts from the kitchen into the garden, and tending to house projects that went neglected all winter. But, mostly, to cope, I've been skiing, running, and packrafting close to home. One of the great draws to living in a small town in Alaska is that I can be on my skis, with my dog, in twenty minutes – headed for a ridge and a view, without coming in contact with anyone else. It's absolutely essential to me during normal times, and this current madness has me even more thankful to exist in this place.

With museums and galleries closed are you seeing a shift to the internet for viewing/selling art? How is this affecting you?

I was preparing for an exhibition at the Anchorage Museum when the pandemic took hold. We've rescheduled for next spring, and to be honest I'm happy to just still be on the calendar. I'll be showing the same project, Atomic Island, at the Alaska State Museum in the fall of this year, assuming that things keep on a downward trend. Initially, the lost momentum of the rescheduling of both exhibitions was really dispiriting. It's

important to me to have shows in physical spaces, but my priorities have been upended in a very short period of time. It seems everything I care about is in jeopardy, and it's difficult to prioritize in the ways I'm accustomed to.

As for sales – I don't currently have representation, so print sales generally come from recommendations from curators and other artists. It's a tough time. I don't know anyone who has a solid feel for how things are going to play out. I certainly don't.

Do you see any positive changes for photographers in a post pandemic world?

In simplest terms, artists make art. Some of my friends are working, some can't find it right now, but they will. We're all processing this in different ways, but art will be made. I don't subscribe to the idea that all great art comes from tragedy, but the artists that come out of this on the other side will have stories to tell. It's our shared history now.