

S N Y D E R M A N - W O R K S G A L L E R I E S

Richard Kagan

Bio

Born in Philadelphia, Richard Kagan is a photographer and former furniture maker whose artistic career took a curiously circuitous path. He began as a self-taught street photographer while a student at Temple University. However, after leaving college to practice Zen Buddhism under a visiting Japanese Zen Master in New York, Kagan became so impassioned by the silent eloquence of handmade objects, he pawned the camera to buy woodworking tools.

Following several years of apprenticeships, Kagan opened his own furniture workshop and founded the Richard Kagan Gallery – the first nationally recognized gallery for contemporary furniture artists. He taught at Philadelphia College of Art/University of the Arts for 10 years and exhibited furniture in museums and art institutions throughout the U.S. A chronic back condition put an unexpected end to his woodworking career and opened the possibility to return to photography, thus bringing him back to where he began.

Since 1990, Kagan has had numerous solo photography exhibitions in the United States, Great Britain and South America. In 1993, a grant from the Arts Council of Wales enabled an extended project in the U.K. and Europe culminating in an exhibition at the Royal National Eisteddfod. Not surprisingly Kagan brought to photography some of the same aesthetic concerns with which he made furniture: a quest for quiet, understated and elegant forms.

His main bodies of work include *Land-Spirit-Sky*, landscapes photographed primarily in Europe; *Iron Portraits*, a series of austere yet sensuous portraits of antique tools and objects; and *Invocations*, nighttime photographs taken on the grounds of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines in Japan. Richard Kagan's work is represented in public and private collections including those of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the State Museum of Pennsylvania, Lehigh University, the University of Delaware and the Washington Convention Center. He lives and works in Philadelphia and New York.