

A photograph of a hobbit house with a large, round, blue door and a smaller arched window. The house is built into a hillside and is surrounded by a lush garden of various flowers in pots. In the background, a large, snow-capped mountain rises under a cloudy sky.

A Visit To The Shire

Jerry Grasso

Welcome to Middle Earth!

At the end of October, 2018, my wife, Jayne, and I visited the [Hobbiton movie set](#) situated on a family run farm near [Matamata](#), in [Waikato](#), New Zealand. As a fan of Peter Jackson's "Lord of the Rings" films, I wanted to visit as many of the [filming locations](#) as time permitted. [Hobbiton](#) was an example. Jayne, however, had never seen any of the movies, and wasn't quite sure of the value of spending the time and the money to visit a place in which she had little interest. On top of all of this, the day we arrived at the movie set, it was literally pouring rain as we entered the lot. Suddenly, the rains passed and we were left with broken clouds to view the magnificent grounds, "mecca" for a fan of the films.

But what we found most amazing in this bucolic setting was the [attention to detail](#)! Peter Jackson made it easy to fantasize about what the Hobbits found important and necessary in [daily life](#), right down to the ornaments in their window decorations!

Traveling throughout [New Zealand](#), it became apparent to me the reason why the films' locations were chosen. The beauty and mystery that surrounded us truly gave a glimpse into the fantasy world of the Hobbits in [Middle Earth](#)!

I hope you will enjoy your stroll through this mythological setting as you become transported back in time to the fairy tale land of Middle Earth! And remember, [Mount Doom](#) is always nearby!

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Enjoy life!





Shire 2











Shire 7





Shire 9



































Shire 26



Shire 27









My Artistic Mission

Child-like wonder and inquisitiveness

are qualities frequently put aside once we become adults. We tend to slowly become sterilized by our right-or-wrong kind of world which too often has too little time to explore the what-if's and the what-could-be's. I believe we all need to re-connect with these qualities to re-enrich our lives. A first glance at a photograph of an onion often reveals the fact that, indeed, it is an onion. But what also lies beneath its surface? We won't know until we peel back its layers.

Animation innovator, Walt Disney, recognized this and tried to bring back the power and importance of imagination. Inspired by his spirit, my mission therefore is to encourage the use of viewer imagination. My work attempts to explore and suggest what often lies hidden within the personalities and mysteries present in the world that was, and the world that is around us.

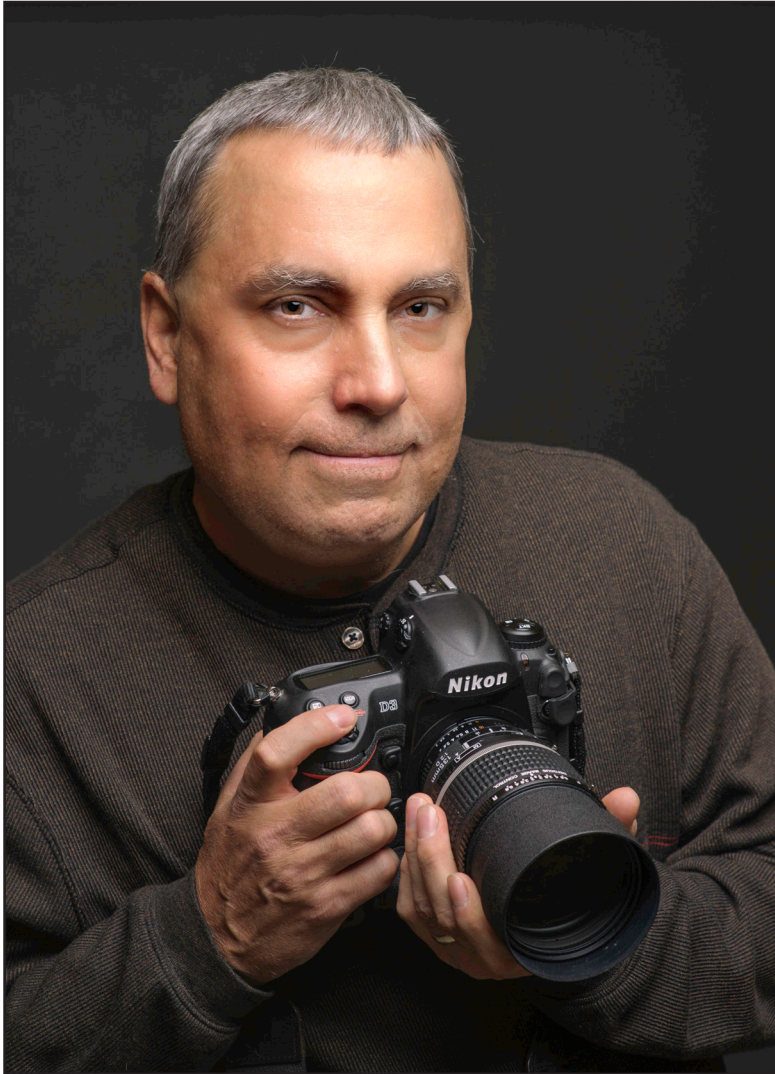
For me, my photography often is not so much about the decisive moment. Rather, it is about creating an awareness of place and a sense of history, with an aura of mystery. It is the starting point for my artistic journey, not the destination. I try to use what I produce

as personal metaphors for my reactions to what I saw and felt. My favorite motivational quote is that "Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone." My works attempt to reflect this as I probe the emotional, mind's eye after-image that was captured by both the eye and the heart, and which often defies logical explanation by the mind.

My goal is that my projects will serve as a springboard into inventiveness and exploration with the hopes of awakening my viewer's inner child. I try hard to show the connections and implications of things that others may not readily see. My hope is that my work may also help viewers discover the beginnings of their attempt to understand and perhaps even learn to tolerate and sympathize with the human condition and the world in which we live. I will try to do whatever I can to make viewers linger longer in front of my works so as to ignite their imaginative response through discovery and inquisitiveness.

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Enjoy life!



JERRY GRASSO has been an award-winning, international fine art photographer and visual artist since 2002. He has mentored locally with photographer, [Mallorie Ostrowitz](#), and then with internationally-renowned visual artist, [John Paul Caponigro](#). Photography is only the starting point for many of his projects. His favorite motivational quote is that “Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone.”

In addition to his travel photography, Jerry specializes in the intimately abstracted architectural photography, the photo essay, and the photo composite series.

Jerry’s mission is to awaken his viewer’s inquisitive inner child by creating an awareness of place and a sense of history, with an aura of mystery.



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