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# FORCE OF NATURE

Photographer Robert Rodriguez Jr. captures the magic of Northeastern landscapes and translates them into stunning fine-art prints using Canson Infinity papers



Robert Rodriguez Jr.

I'm very inspired by painting and specifically the Hudson River School of painters, who celebrated nature and the Hudson more than 150 years ago. Their use of allegory and symbolism is something I try to learn from each time I make an image. I had these artists on my mind when I made this photograph, "River of Ice," close to my home in Beacon, New York, on the Hudson River. Since chunks of ice on the Hudson are nothing unusual for anyone who lives here, my challenge was to capture something that goes beyond the ordinary and inspires someone to see winter differently.

As a nature photographer, I live for that experience of being totally present and in perfect balance with the moment, when I forget how cold I am or how difficult it was to get to a particular location. Nature inspires gratitude in me, and sharing that is really a passion that exceeds all others. I want others to appreciate what truly extraordinary moments happen around us each day and how, if we just stop and look, they can have a positive effect on our lives.

The paper I print on is a crucial component of translating what I see and feel. I use Canson Infinity papers because they're extremely consistent in both color and tonal accuracy, which means every print from a box or roll will be identical, and because there's a wide variety to choose from. My favorites include Baryta Photographique, which I love for my black-and-white prints, and Platine Fibre Rag, which is particularly good at preserving deep shadows with incredible Dmax. I printed "River of Ice" on Rag Photographique 310, which always yields vivid colors; I also love its matte feel and texture.

I teach fine-art printing workshops, and at the end of each one, the students get to take home a print of their work printed on a Canson Infinity paper of their choice. This experience helps them understand the difference paper can make in producing prints that are true to their vision. In my own work, when I'm determining which paper to use, I always go back to how I want to interpret the photo. Sometimes a matte paper will take the edge off of an image, for example, focusing the attention on another part of the composition that conveys warmth or emotion. The great thing about Canson papers is that I can create these subtle changes without worrying about the overall quality of the print. Ultimately, the medium must be second to the message, and with Canson, I can present my photographs knowing the message will be direct and clear.

*Robert Rodriguez Jr. is an award-winning landscape photographer specializing in landscapes of the Hudson Valley, Adirondacks and New England. His images have appeared in publications such as The New York Times and have been used by many nonprofit organizations, including the Audubon Society and Scenic Hudson. A respected educator, he conducts photography workshops in the region on a regular basis.*



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