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ELIOT PORTER

We have written a number of emails about Eliot Porter regarding his life and work (see our website). Today, rather than focus on the person as the father of color photography, we will talk about our relationship, mentorship, and friendship with Eliot and his wife, Aline Porter, and what he chose about.

Janet's time assisting Eliot encompassed cataloging his over 7000 prints, (with pencil and ruler), curating, conceiving, and assisting with the publishing of several books: *Eliot Porter's Southwest*, *Mexican Churches*, and Nature's Chosen. While cataloging Eliot's prints Janet discovered large bodies of work that were unknown to her and the general art population. The first "discovery" was of Eliot's early Black & White photos, which date from an 8 x 10" view camera. The Southwest from the early 1940s through the 1950s ending with a few images in 1963. Impressed with the work of Ansel Adams, Eliot had initiated a monumental project photographing the entire state of Utah, and was doing the same in the Southwest. Eliot's work was so good that Ansel Adams wrote the introduction to Eliot's *Conservation of the World*, 1962, brought his work to the world and from then on he was known mostly for his color work. When asking Eliot if he thought there would be interest in the southwest work, he wasn't sure. But there he continued the work to his friend and agent, John Macnie, it was met with great excitement. The work was a revelation for the photography community and contributed to within the history of photography.

The Mexican church work, done in collaboration with Ellen Auerbach (see last week's post) was also Eliot's passion for 15 years of his life. Again, Eliot was uncertain of the interest in the work. Janet, so inspired by the work knew that others would be as well, and helped him place calls, and was met with great enthusiasm, resulting in the publishing of *Mexican Churches* by UNM Press.