

Monday, October 05, 2015
3rd Bonnie Nichol Lecture Series

An Evening of Travel & Adventure Photography

by
Michelle Valberg



Art has the power to speak to people in a way mere words cannot. I am committed to being a conduit for that message, both as an artist and a member of my community. Through my work, I hope to challenge both myself and those around me to be more aware, more engaged and perhaps more open to the creative power of photography.

As a photo artist, it has been my goal for the past 28 years to capture the notion that simple beauty is a deeper reflection of humanity. I have pursued this ideal by maintaining the purity and integrity of the subject, focusing on the soul and the spirit—no matter what the subject matter.

Nature has always been my first love. I remember vividly the deep desire I had as a teenager to capture the beauty of every flower, bird and rock that I observed. Then, as now, I believe that nature mirrors what we see in ourselves — our beauty, our simplicity, our complications, our responsibilities. My favourite images are those that simultaneously reveal the dichotomy of nature - its simplicity as well as its complexity.

Portraiture followed nature as a focus for my lens. Whether the subject is a struggling family in Belarus, a young patient at CHEO, a rising executive

or a supermodel, the assignment is always the same — to reveal the soul within – to communicate the person’s story, with its passions, strengths and weaknesses.

People have given so much to me, by revealing their souls, their hopes and dreams, triumphs and failures. As a way to give back, I donate my work and time to charities and public institutions as well as to my own northern projects.



Biography

Michelle Valberg is one of six Canadians named as a Nikon Ambassador Photographer, the only woman in Canada to be awarded this title.

Valberg was 18 years old when she first saw the world through a camera given to her by her father. With an insatiable quest for adventure, meticulous attention to detail, and an unrivalled eye for the unique, Valberg became a globally recognized and celebrated wildlife, landscape and portraiture photographer. Her stunning and, at times, haunting photographs have received international accolades and are sought-after by art collectors the world over.

In addition to exhibits across North America, (Los Angeles, New York, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal), her photographs are regularly featured in publications such as *National Geographic*, *The London Tribune*, *More Magazine*, *Canadian Geographic* and *In Style Magazine*.

Acclaimed for her Arctic photography, Michelle has made over 30 trips to Canada's Arctic, as well as to Antarctica. She has attracted an ardent following of travel companies such as Adventure Canada and Abercrombie & Kent as well as private clients.

A tireless philanthropist, Valberg founded Project North in 2009, a not-for-profit organization committed to delivering education and sport-based opportunities to youth in Canada's Arctic. Since its inception, over \$650,000 in new hockey equipment has been delivered to more than 20 Inuit communities.

Valberg has self-published four books: *Look Beyond -The Faces & Stories of People with HIV/AIDS*, *Dare to Dream - A Celebration of Canadian Women* and most recently a children's book about Canada's north entitled *Ben and Nuki Discover Polar Bears*, a coffee table book, *Arctic Kaleidoscope - The People, Wildlife and Ever-Changing Landscape*.

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