

Hello Rob and thank you for sharing your images with LensCulture

You have chosen a wonderful subject, the gathering of people coming together to commemorate an ancient event in an (unfortunately) contemporary way. I cannot say how often I have been at miraculous sites, the ruins of Greece at sunset, the Mona Lisa at the Louvre, even Disneyworld (!) for that matter, only to have the experience marred by masses of worshipers trying to capture a fleeting memory on film or other devices... Hoping to make private, to contain in a box, an event so publicly mobbed, that the attempt is ludicrous.

Disneyland is one thing, but Stonehenge thus desecrated is a little more terrifying. Nothing it seems can evade technology's voracious hunger to record. And because humans are enslaved by it, it is in fact the new religion. Your images allude to a religious gathering, and one would be correct in wondering who the god might be....the sun or the iPhone?

All this to say that you have a relevant theme on your hands. Others have explored it. As with all such cases the question is how do you want to present it in a way that is uniquely yours. Photographer Martin Parr who I am sure you are familiar with, presents shrines, vacation sites and famous landmarks as graveyards of capitalist consumption. He mocks consumer society and the bourgeois middle classes that seek to colonize these experiences the way they would devour a piece of pie. By extension, he trivializes the experience.

I think you have to take a cue from him... take a stand on your theme while not being scared to express it with

determination and focus. I do not see a series here so much as one photograph which you are trying to flesh out. In your images there is a sense of respect for the event, telling me that this prehistoric wonder, as well as its worshippers are holding you in awe. The nighttime photograph as well as the one with the dancer remind me a bit of the concert photography from Woodstock in the sixties, there is a hand-holding sense of solidarity there, as such a moment should exhibit. Then in some of the color photos you realize that the wonder has turned into a spectacle. Both takes are good ones, but it would help if you were more decisive so I could understand your point of view. Likewise there's a little bit of black and white, a little bit of color....a photo of a single person (4) and then photos of the crowds, a documentation of the dancers, then some repeating images of the climax (sunrise).

For me, image #8 is the keeper. I think everything comes together in this shot: the sense of performance, the miracle of history and nature, the pagan communion of worshippers, a bit of hand-holding, the hippy couple in the middle, a bit of awe, but also the heathens with their cameras. If you can economize, say it with one image, why add the rest? To make this image into a series, you will have to explore other options: could be other sites where people congregate, could be Stonehenge at different times of the year...or it could be one of the themes mentioned above , developed in a whole new way. A portfolio is a non repetitive yet consistent body of work where each image packs the same punch as its neighbor, with a similarity of vision and style throughout.

Keep shooting with passion and your instincts will take you where you want to go.

