



# Nicolas Ruel

by  
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**A Moving Testimony to Beauty, Nicolas Ruel Photographs the Exotic.**

An artist with a ticket to adventure land, Nicolas Ruel combines the glamour of a national geographic perspective with a stunning aesthetic and the result, monumental in both concept and scale, is overwhelming - almost dizzying.

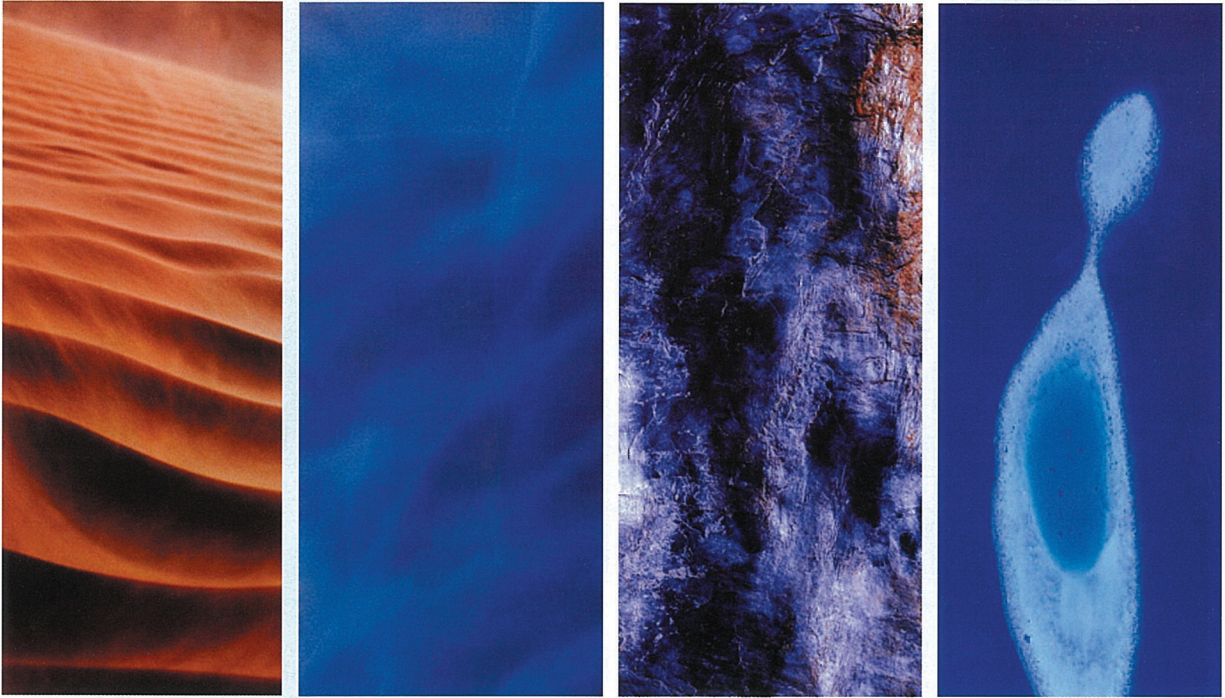
His Exhibition, opening at Thompson Landry Gallery in The Distillery District is simply titled INOX-Elements. It is an example of a contemporary vision, format and product that reaches beyond accessibility to the iconic. The gallery is making use The Fermenting Cellar, an extra eight thousand square feet adjacent to the Thompson Landry Gallery, in order to present this series in its entirety from April 26 until May 1 and then will downsize the show to be accommodated in the 2700 square foot gallery space at 55 Mill Street, Building #5, Unit 102 until May 20. The series is a testament to vitality and energy. There will be 53 works in total. Each one is big (up to 60 x 120 inches) and builds on the definition of art that hinges on beauty. Taking the four essential elements, Air, Water, Fire

and Earth, Nicolas Ruel uses INOX, stainless steel, as the ground on which to place his photographs.

The designation of 'element' to the subjects that he chooses to use is tangential rather than typical. For Air, for instance, he has photographed the movements of Rajasthanis in such a way that the sparkling fabrics and intense dyes are recognizable despite the movement having transformed the image. Ruel began by staging the movement, taking two or three second pans and then moved from there to more candid examples, photographing folk dancers or crowds in the streets. India is a surround of inescapable presence. The magic of this location is comprised of a vibrant miasma of exoticism

Air, Water, Fire and Earth  
Thompson Landry Gallery  
102 - 55 Mill Street, Building #5,  
Show April 26th to May 20th





"Based on what could be described as an intuitive photographic practice, my art is initially inspired by the material with which I work: Inox (Stainless). My body of work consists of large format images printed on sheets of stainless steel. I try to develop a collection of portraits of places photographed around the world, of abstract or minimalist images with bold tonalities and dramatic contrasts. Although my work refers to the very beginnings of photography in the 19th century and to the daguerreotype, it also calls on a unique process using cutting-edge technology. In other words, it is an invitation to discovery which is, itself, timeless."

that could be lost in the interpretation. The addition of movement grants the illusion of having stopped time enabling a sense of possessing that series of movements. If the grand aim of art is to bring to mind the wonder of life rather than an attempt to imitate life, then Nicolas Ruel has succeeded in fulfilling this ambitious enterprise.

His background is from the cinematic fields and although he is now freezing the movement and thus capturing time within the frame of his still photograph, the experience and presence of vitality has been caught and thrown back at the viewer with a resonant flash. Ruel uses illumination from both sides of the art piece; he captures the light within the full flare of the spectrum and then bounces back as ambient light from the viewing environ, in this case the Thompson Landry Gallery, as the stainless steel reflects and also heightens the applied colors.

His disciplined work ethic, built on an awareness of time as a precious element in itself, is meticulously managed in order to accomplish great things. He plans his itinerary so that his shoots in foreign lands maximise his exposure to his proposed subject matter. For the most part, Nicolas travels alone assisted often

by guides or drivers. For Water the driver was a pilot and it is a matter of interest that all of the water is seen from the air. This cross-over throughout the images clarifies the integration of the elements. The crusty surfaces photographed for Earth are patinas. The subtle interactions between elements creates the final product as water forms rivulets, rust and deposits on surfaces; wind erodes the soil and crusts walls; or the fire of the hot desert sun cracks and dries the earth. The desert sands of the United Arab Emirates, blown into wavy rivulets of light and shadow are the subject matter of Fire as the sun's glowering casts a burning veil on the shifting dunes. The work is optimistic, positive, holistic, and inspirational - all adjectives that could also be used to describe spiritual states. The wonder of life has nothing trite or ordinary about it and the reclamation of a crumbling façade is revitalized by the artist's eye.

Ruel's fabrication process has all of the professionalism and crafting of a mega industry. He shoots with two cameras with a polarizing filter and different lens on each. The pieces are direct photographs, the choice of thousands of images shot. The actual printing process is complex, overlaid with technical subtleties and the result is a phenomenal object, a combination of

quality, expertise and a fine eye.

Nicolas Ruel's work can be found in the following galleries: Thompson Landry Gallery, Toronto (the only venue where INOX-Elements can be viewed in its entirety from April 26 until May 1); Lacerte, Art Contemporain in Quebec City and Galerie Orange in Montreal. A catalogue is being produced by Lacerte Publishing and will be available at the Thompson Landry Gallery.

There is an allusion to an equally glorious life style behind the work, one that is able to be vicariously lived in the viewing of the handsome photographs. Nicolas Ruel is playing the lead in a romantic and adventurous version of an artist's life. Soaring into the clouds with nothing more than the camera slung over his shoulder, he collects glimpses of a horizon far broader than the picayune perspective of our quotidian rounds. He brings the spectacular into view. He solidifies ephemeral, fleeting beauty and stops it before it disintegrates or ages. He walks only on the high points.

Nicolas Ruel does what he wants to do. He sees what he wants to see and has just one hope for the future - "I work in order to keep on doing it." This is the chant of a true artist.