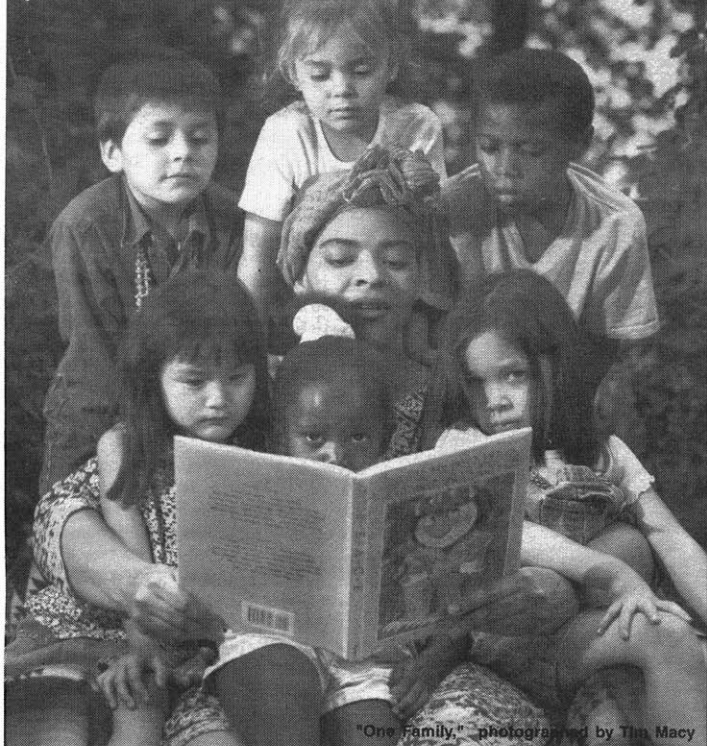


The man Bahai' the camera

Photography with a voice

By Diane Rechel



"One Family," photographed by Tim Macy

Tim Macy doesn't want to talk about himself. He wants his photography to speak for him.

Now it's speaking loud and clear at his new display at Macy's European Coffee House and Bakery at 14 S. Beaver.

Besides being too large to miss, the 30-inch by 40-inch photographs are packed with possibilities. Even the busiest customer rushing for a latte stops and ponders them. Macy's photos get their attention with diverse models and staged scenes that tell stories.

"This is my way of using my creative energy to communicate," he says.

"One Family" shows a woman reading to a group of six children. Each child represents a different race. Together they look into the pages of Maurice Sendak's "The Big Book of Peace." Through gentleness, the photo pleads to give peace a chance.

All of Macy's messages are from his belief in the Bahai' faith, which promotes equality and love.

"I get a vision in my head and I can't settle down until I create that image," says Macy, who uses a turn of the 20th century 8-inch by 10-inch camera. Visions come to him through dreams or are inspired by people's character. Historic Flagstaff is the backdrop.

Ameeta Vora posed with her daughter,

This is my way of using my creative energy to communicate.

Nikita Purcell, in "The Long Road Home." Mother and daughter look out the windows of a rustic abandoned truck. Their beauty fills the desolate scene with hope.

"Tim is relentless in trying to get his scene right," says Vora. "He gets a vision and runs with it."

Macy, always comfortably clad in a colorful Hawaiian shirt, opened Macy's 23 years ago. It's a friendly coffee house and veggie restaurant with chalkboard menus and thick wooden tables. Live music, garlic and cinnamon fill the air. People read books and take their time.

Macy is not comfortable talking about how he was once a professional golfer and discovered Flagstaff while on a golf tour. "I'm such a different person now," says Macy, who fell in love with the area's natural beauty and made it home.

He began seriously shooting photographs more than a year ago. "I borrowed a camera and when I heard the shutter click, something else clicked inside me, and I've been taking photos ever since," he says. He works primarily in black and white because he likes the tone it creates.

The one color shot in the show, "Emancipation," features a bleak fire escape full of women in ethnic costumes gazing at the heavens. This rainbow is Macy's way of conveying the need for equality among the sexes throughout the world.

Unity is also the theme in "Universal Child," a photo of a baby held in the air by hands from different cultures.

Macy brings his images to life in the darkroom at Flagstaff's Hidden Light Photographic Printing Lab with owners Corey Allen and Stephen Saunders. They use traditional wet developing processes and various sepia and selenium toners to change the look of the print. Each print is an individually created piece of art, hand printed on fiber paper. No two prints are the same. No computers are used.

Allen says, "I love being a part of Tim's creation. It's challenging to do 30-inch by 40-inch handcrafted prints. The exciting part is we plan to print even bigger."

It took three different superimposed shots to make "The Decision," in which a diaphanous devil and angel hover above a woman having her tarot cards read.

"We are always faced with choosing between right and wrong," says Macy, who plans to donate half the proceeds for his photography to a cause "promoting world unity." The photos are also available in various sizes, framed or unframed.

Ali Partridge, a longtime customer says, "These photographs look old world and earthy. They look like they are from another country. You can tell Tim Macy put his heart and soul into them."

Macy's is open from 6 a.m.—8 p.m., Sun—Thu, and 6 a.m.—10 p.m., Fri—Sat. For more information, call 774-2243. 