

## Pigeon Forge Epiphany

The idea of having an epiphany in Pigeon Forge may seem like an oxymoron, but when I stopped in this town for a cappuccino while making my way to Smoky Mountain National Park to photograph some landscapes, I couldn't help but notice the landscape in this unusual town. This collection of images photographed in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, during the fall of 2011, expresses what I felt during my brief time in this town. Somehow, I sensed this struggle between the aspirations of this amusement resort town in stark contrast to the reality of its enduring struggle for economic vitality. Thus, using various interpretive techniques, I sought to explore the duality of this relationship through these images.

To capture the aspirations, I exaggerated saturation of colors, freely converted colors to cartoonish tones, stretched and morphed buildings and neon signage, all to capture the competitive notion of how these boulevard businesses beg for your attention. While using these techniques to capture the whimsical and vibrancy displayed through their structures, I also used other techniques to instill a sense of a decaying reality such as implementing a subtle distortion of the images to lend the sensation that something feels amiss. Shooting under the harsh mid-day sun to capture high contrast helped facilitate the notion that nothing is subtle about Pigeon Forge. Telephone wires and poles wrap around these islands of concrete and neon signs reminding the viewers that even the best of plans here have been well challenged by the forces of consequences.

In summary, this portfolio seeks to explore our relationship with our need for economic success versus our responsibilities and custodianship with nature. Departing Great Smoky Mountain National Park via Pigeon Forge is tantamount to departing a spiritual rejuvenation yoga class and passing through New York Penn Station.