On the Cover

Portions of the following are based on interviews with the artist on May 7, 2009.

The thrill and excitement of a display of fireworks is our metaphor for the 2010 Awards Issue. Equally fitting is that this month’s cover art is by Beverly Greene, the 2009 winner of APA’s Award for Distinguished Senior Career Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest.

Professor of psychology at St. John’s University, Greene is a prolific author whose private practice informs her scholarship; she is also active within APA governance. With nearly 100 published works, including 10 books, to her credit, she has received over 27 national awards for distinguished professional contributions and papers. In presenting the Society for the Psychology of Women’s Carolyn Wood Sherif Award to Greene, Laura Brown lauded her as a visionary theorist who has transformed feminist psychology, brilliantly articulating the intersection of race, gender and sexual orientation; as an erudite scholar whose lucid integration of theory and practice has influenced academicians, clinicians, and the general public; an inspiring teacher, empowering mentor, compassionate clinician, and a courageous advocate. (“Award Announcements,” 2009, p. 15)

The eldest of four, Greene was “born and raised in New Jersey, in the shadows of New York City” and describes her childhood as “very fortuitous. . . I was part of a multigenerational household with a large, loving extended family.” Reflecting on intersectionality and the complexity of identities in her most recent work, Greene (2010) elaborated, “Family members told us many stories about our history that left me with a deep sense of kinship and connection to many family members who have gone before me and a sense of connection to something larger than myself. It also connects me to my responsibility to our struggle for rights and opportunities” (p. 454).

The fireworks burst and the individual sparks within it in the photograph on this month’s cover are also a metaphor for Greene’s energy, zest, and involvement in many aspects and elements of psychology, for her far-ranging curiosity and multiple interests and identities, and for her continual return to the uniqueness of each person. “Most people,” Greene (2009) has written, “have a kaleidoscope of identities” (p. 698). One of Greene’s lesser known identities is that of photographer. Her interest in photography developed after the birth of her nephew some 32 years ago and, subsequently, of her sister. Greene describes herself as a “doting aunt” who wanted in particular to capture the fleeting expressions on children’s faces. “I was on my internship; the camera I bought was the best that I could afford on an intern’s meager salary. I used my typical approach to things mechanical: I just started taking pictures and learned what not to do the next time from the things that didn’t work out well.”

Greene has recently become interested in what she describes as “event photos, sunsets and natural occurrences that lend themselves to being preserved or have a certain kind of natural beauty or balance all their own.” (Her photographs of an unnatural event, taken at and around Ground Zero in the days following September 11, 2001, can be seen at http://kspope.com/groundzero/index.php.) For this particular shot, Greene used an older digital camera, a Minolta DiMAGE A2 with a 250-mm zoom lens. “I found that a zoom lens allows the capture of moments without me or the camera being intrusive.” She was surprised that the photos came out as well as they did given the slow lens and the darkness of the night. “You don’t get the same feel with a digital camera that you do with a shutter. There’s a bit of delay, a few moments of uncertainty when you’re not sure of what you’ve got—and often, what you intend to take is not quite what you get. Somehow, with this burst, the combination of dark and the illumination of the fireworks themselves worked very well.”

The exact time of the photograph, 9:47, shown on the time display of a darkened business tower in the lower right corner, is where reality, art, and metaphor converge. The glow of the numbers echoes and balances the fiery bursts in the sky. Fireworks and time evanesc; art—and awards—endure.

Greene describes photography as “a way of noticing. You take in what’s around you a little differently. You must be creative within your work as a psychologist to be good at it, but this is different, less about intellect, less structured. It helps me pay attention to beauty and what I think is worth photographing . . . and takes me outside of my head.” As for the story behind the title of this image (Weezie’s Fireworks), Greene relates, “I took this photo from the balcony of my good friend and colleague’s home, at a celebration of her 60th birthday. Macy’s was kind enough to put on a fireworks display—of course in Weezie’s honor! Coincidentally, it was also July 4th!”

REFERENCES


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