

## Artist Statement

*Don Iannone*

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Creativity has been the throughline of Don's life—a way of seeing, a way of making sense of the world, and ultimately a way of sharing meaning with others. His artistic journey began with photography in high school in the late 1960s, where he captured the Ohio Valley's farms and factories. Over the years, his lens evolved along with him, culminating in ten photographic essays, five of which are books, reflecting both the outer landscape and the inner terrain.

His diverse photographic work has been selected for exhibition in several Northeast Ohio photo shows, and many of his images have been purchased as art by major U.S. corporations and hospitals. Several of his photographs were included in national commercial and journalistic publications. In 2011, a set of his photographs was exhibited at University Hospitals Ahuja Medical Center in Beachwood. His *Human Trafficking Exhibit* was included in two public education programs co-hosted by local and federal law enforcement officials in 2013. Don curated the *Ashtabula County at Work Photographic Exhibit* in 2014 at the Ashtabula Art Center, showcasing the county's industrial diversity. Also in 2014, he and Cleveland photographer Stuart Pearl co-hosted the *Cleveland Sense of Place* photography exhibition at the Beachwood Public Library, where both displayed their work. His Cleveland Air Show photograph "Take Off" was included in the Swiss International Photography Show in Geneva in 2015. Since 2021, a permanent exhibition of his large-scale photographs has been on display at the Auburn Lakes Clubhouse in Auburn Township, serving as an ongoing reflection of his evolving artistic vision. Two of his portrait photographs were selected for inclusion in the Cleveland Photo Fest's 2025 Portraiture Show.

Poetry emerged during his college years as another vital expression of inner life. Since 2000, he has published eleven poetry collections, many of which explore the intersection of the spiritual, philosophical, and personal. Retirement in 2016 from a long and accomplished career in economic development and public policy opened new doors—for fiction and nonfiction writing, and most recently, for painting. Don has given many talks on his books in Northeast Ohio and elsewhere. In 2020, he began working with acrylics on canvas, discovering a vibrant new language of color, texture, and intuition through painting.

Across all media—photography, poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and painting—Don is drawn to the layered nature of truth and perception. His creative vision is to illuminate what often lies beneath the surface: the sacred in the ordinary, the mystery in the familiar. His academic background, particularly his doctoral degrees in divinity and philosophy, has deeply informed this vision, providing both structure and depth to his work.

Don has served on several governance boards, including the Artists Archives of the Western Reserve, Ohio Economic Development Association, National Council for Urban Economic Development, American Economic Development Council, Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit Authority, and the Ohio Governor's Export Trade Council. Currently, he serves on the board of directors of Seeds of Literacy, a Greater Cleveland nonprofit advancing adult literacy.

Originally from Martins Ferry and St. Clairsville in the Ohio Valley, Don spent formative college years at the University of Arizona in Tucson before settling in the Cleveland area in 1972, where he continues to live and create. Don and his wife Mary, a retired Cleveland Clinic executive, live in the Chagrin Falls area. They have two sons and three grandsons.

Don is available for talks on his creative work, including his photography. Two of his favorite talks are "Seeing Between the Lines: Photography and Poetry as Twin Lenses of Truth" and "Frames of Meaning: Writing the Invisible in a World of Images."