

Eric T. Kunsman (b. 1975) was born and raised in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. While in high school, he was heavily influenced by the death of the steel industry and its place in American history. Exposure to Walker Evans's work during this time hooked Eric onto photography. Eric had the privilege of studying under Lou Draper, who became Eric's most formative mentor. He credits Lou with influencing his approach as an educator, photographer, and contributing human being.

Eric holds an MFA in Book Arts/Printmaking from The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, an MS in Electronic Publishing/Graphic Arts Media, a BS in Biomedical Photography, and a BFA in Fine Art photography, all from the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York.

He is a photographer and book artist based in Rochester, New York. Eric works at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) as an Assistant Professor in the Visual Communications Studies Department at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf and teaches additional courses for the School of Photographic Arts & Sciences. In addition to lectures, he provides workshops on topics including his artistic practice, digital printing, and digital workflow processes. He previously provided industry seminars for the highly regarded Printing Applications Lab at RIT. His photographs and books are exhibited internationally and are in several collections. He also owns Booksmart Studio, a fine art digital printing studio that specializes in numerous techniques and services for photographers and book artists on a collaborative basis. Eric also serves as a board member for CEPA Gallery in Buffalo, NY.

Eric is a recipient of the 2025 CENTER Santa Fe's Callanan Excellence in Teaching Award, 2025 Center for Photographic Art Grant Recipient- Juror's Choice, and 2024 JGS Fellowship for Photography Recipient from The New York Foundation for the Arts. He was a 2022 nominee for Prix Pictet- Humans and named one of 10 B&W photographers to watch of 2018 by BWGallerist; B&W Best Photographers of the Year 2019 & 2021 by Dodho Magazine; won the Association of Photography (UK) Gold Award for Open Series in 2019 and a finalist in 2024; Critical Mass Finalist Top 200 Critical Mass 2019, 2020, 2021; Top 50 Critical Mass in 2022; Top 15 Photographers for the Rust Belt Biennial; and LensCulture's New Visions Award 2025, Critics' Choice 2022 and B&W Jurors' Pick 2021. His Project Felicific Calculus was also awarded a Warhol Foundation Grant through CEPA Gallery in Buffalo, NY.

Eric has held over 40 solo exhibitions internationally. His work has been exhibited in over 250 galleries and museums and featured in Bloomberg Businessweek, Harper's Magazine, LensWork,

Loupe Magazine, Dodho, B&W Photography, Analog Explorations, All About Photo, Black+White Photography (UK), The Washington Post, and Dek Unu. He has also been featured in online articles by All About Photo, F-Stop Magazine, Analog Forever Magazine, Catalyst: Interview, PetaPixel, Texas Photo Society, and many others.

There's no "given," formula for what demands Eric's focus as a photographer. Eric is as drawn to the landscapes and neglected towns of the American southwest as he is to the tensions of struggling rustbelt cities in the U.S. northeast. Eric is attracted to objects left behind, especially those that hint at a unique human narrative, a story waiting to be told. Eric's current work explores one of those relics: working payphones hidden in plain sight throughout the neighborhood near his studio in Rochester, NY. Associates suggested they signified a high crime area. This project's shown Eric something very different.