



Fig. 50. Transient Rain  
Sanna Kannisto

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OUT THERE

## Flight of Fancy: Sanna Kannisto's Field Work

TIME Photo Department

Apr 26, 2011



Sanna Kannisto is known for exposing the methods used in conventional nature photography. In her newly released monograph *Field Work*, the Finnish photographer documents her process, her relationship with her subjects and their relationship with nature.<!-- more -->

In an exclusive interview with TIME, Sanna shares her approach and inspiration:

*Where did your interest in nature photography develop?*

I was fascinated by rain forests and tropical research when I learned about the enormous species richness that exists there. I have been living near nature all my life.

*What inspires you?*

I think my inspiration comes from various things: science; biology; natural history; voyages of discovery; still-life paintings of 16th and 17th century; cabinets of curiosities; Romanticism; conceptual art; Surrealism; history of photography, out-doors life of my childhood and walking in the forest.

*What about when you're in the field—what inspires you there?*

Walking informs a large part of my work in the forest. It is a good way to observe, to explore, to get one's thoughts 'into gear' and to see whether the landscape meets one's expectations. I have always been fascinated by nature's different phenomena.

*How do you chose your subjects?*

I make notes while walking in the forest and later return to those same locations to photograph. If I find an interesting animal, or collect a plant to photograph, I will then usually go straight to my 'field studio' to take pictures. Plants wilt quickly and animals should be returned to their habitat without delay.

*What is unique about photographing nature?*

I think for me it has been the fact that you can learn new things every day. I often feel excited about my work when I'm in the field even though it's physically very tiring most of the time. The beauty of the forest is overwhelming and I feel privileged to be able to experience that.

*Why hummingbirds?*

I became interested capturing action in photography because it makes the subject—the flying bird—so sculptural. These images reveal things which ordinary sight could not perceive. I like the chance or the unpredictability of the moment when I'm shooting the hummingbirds.



*How do you orchestrate these images?*

The birds are captured with mist nets and then are placed in studio set-up. There is nectar water for them to drink inside the studio box so this is always what the birds are drawn to. After the birds have been photographed they are quickly released back to the forest. It's unpredictable how the images turn out. The hummingbirds

challenge the limits of photography.

*Field Work* is on view at [Aperture Gallery](#). To see more of Kannisto's work, visit website at [sannakannisto.com](#).