

Jeffrey Sipress: Sojourner Café

# The Call of the Wild



Zebras (Tanzania, Africa) by Jeffrey Sipress

By ERIN J. SMITH / CASA

**WHILE DOCUMENTING THE UNBRIDLED BEAUTY OF THE NATURAL WORLD,** photographer Jeffrey Sipress lives the adventures many only dream about.

"I think my photographs provide an intimate view of being in a place that others may not have been," said Sipress, whose photographs will be on display at the Sojourner Café through September 18th. "They put the viewer right there so they get the feeling of the land and the wild sensation of what it's like to be among the animals. I still get that feeling every time I look at my photographs."

After graduating from State University of New York with a degree in engineering, Sipress hitchhiked to California in the early 1970s in search of the wilderness he always dreamed about growing up in Long Island, New York. "I remember reading *Arizona Highways Magazine* growing up," he said. "I was enamored with the scenes from the west – camping in the area around New York just isn't the same." He explored the western states and eventually settled in Santa Barbara in 1975. "I had a point-and-shoot camera, but it wasn't until 1976 that I got my first SLR camera," he said. "I learned to use it to document my trips, but the photographs weren't exciting."

Motivated by the awe-inspiring images of photographers such as Ansel Adams, Elliot Porter, and David Muench, Sipress started studying photography seriously in 1995 through field workshops in the White Mountains and around California with his mentor, Stuart Scofield. When digital technology came of age with full frame pro cameras, Sipress fully immersed himself in the new methods available. He has since rediscovered the appeal of large format film and has mastered the 4x5 film camera.

For the past 17 years, Sipress has owned

Machine Arts, Inc., a high tech machining and manufacturing company. He works and lives in downtown Santa Barbara with his wife, Leslie Sipress. He has remained an avid backpacker and is endlessly fascinated by the variety of the western wilderness. "There's nothing like it: the pristine and pure ecosystems, the flora and fauna that exist at 10 and 12,000 feet," he said. "I'm happiest when I'm up there."

Sipress has had eight other shows in the Santa Barbara area and his work has been published in magazines, guidebooks, and calendars. His current show includes 19 images from recent travels to East Africa, British Columbia, the Western United States, including California, Utah, and New Mexico – all taken

within the last 15 months. In May 2008, Sipress travelled to Africa for the first time where he spent three weeks in the Serengeti on a wildlife photography safari.

"We took photographs from sunrise to sunset. All the guides were trained in wildlife management and knew just where to go to get the best pictures," he said. "We got really close to the animals. Lions walked by the vehicle and one time, we were challenged by elephants when we got too close." Sipress was also fortunate to experience the wildebeest and zebra migration, one of the most breathtaking natural events in the world where the animals travel 1800

miles in search of food and water.

"I get a chance to go to wonderful places and experience all the smells, temperatures, and sensory input of a place," he said. "Through photography, I bring these experiences home to share with other people."



Jeffrey Sipress



Bear (British Columbia) by Jeffrey Sipress

Sojourner Café is located at 34 E Canon Perdido. Hours are 11am to 10pm, daily. For more information, call 965-7922 or visit [www.jeffreysipress.com](http://www.jeffreysipress.com).