

## Jens Mauthe: In a Digital World Moving at Full Speed, One Richmond Photographer Chooses to Slow Down

Jens Mauthe builds a quietly growing photography practice on analog film, handmade darkroom prints, and a process-first philosophy that's earning attention far beyond Richmond's creative community.



**Richmond, Virginia Mar 9, 2026** ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - On any given evening, while most photographers are culling through hundreds of digital frames on a screen, Jens Mauthe is standing in the dark.

Literally.

Mauthe, a Richmond-based [analog film photographer](#), spends his evenings in a home darkroom he built and outfitted himself — developing rolls of black and white film by hand, printing contact sheets, and producing final photographs on fiber-based paper using archival chemistry and a traditional enlarger. It's the same process photographers used decades before digital cameras existed. And for Mauthe, it's never felt more relevant.

"I'm not doing this to be different," Mauthe says. "I'm doing it because I genuinely believe the process produces better photographs. Slowing down forces better decisions. Every single one."

Mauthe's practice — built entirely around 35mm and medium format analog cameras, hand-processed

film, and darkroom printing — has grown steadily through word of mouth, a small but loyal following, and a reputation for technical consistency that is increasingly rare in a photography landscape dominated by speed and volume. His work focuses on quiet, often overlooked environments: empty industrial spaces, aging building interiors, surfaces worn smooth by decades of use. Photographs that ask you to stop, rather than scroll.

## **A Practice Built on Discipline, Not Volume**

Mauthe came to film photography after years of shooting digitally and growing increasingly frustrated with his own workflow. “I had thousands of images and felt like I had nothing,” he recalls. “I wasn’t making decisions. I was just shooting and hoping.”

The switch to film changed that immediately. With a finite number of exposures on each roll, Mauthe found himself slowing down, studying the light, and committing to a frame before pressing the shutter. The resulting images were fewer, but sharper in intention.

He taught himself film development using library books and online forums, converting a spare bathroom in his Richmond home into a functional darkroom over the course of several months. Today, the space is fully equipped with two enlargers, a temperature-controlled processing setup, and shelves lined with chemical stock he sources and mixes himself.

Every finished print that leaves [Mauthe’s darkroom](#) is accompanied by a technical record — a handwritten or typed log that documents the film stock used, development times, dilution ratios, paper grade, and printing exposure. It’s a habit he developed early and has never abandoned.

“If I can’t explain why a print looks the way it does, I can’t make another one like it,” he says. “That documentation is the whole game.”

## **Quiet Work, Growing Recognition**

Mauthe’s prints have been purchased by collectors in Virginia, New York, and the Pacific Northwest — many of whom discovered his work through photography forums and small-press publications dedicated to analog practice. He has been featured in two group exhibitions in Richmond and recently completed his first solo show at a gallery in the city’s Scott’s Addition neighborhood, where all but two pieces sold within the opening weekend.

The response surprised him, though perhaps it shouldn’t have. In an era of AI-generated imagery, infinite digital reproduction, and photography that exists almost entirely on screens, there is a growing appetite for photographs that are handmade, physically permanent, and impossible to mass-produce.

“People hold the print and something happens,” Mauthe says. “They can feel that it’s real. That someone made it. That it’s the only one. I think people are hungry for that right now.”

He is currently developing a new body of work focused on Richmond’s older industrial corridor — warehouses, loading docks, and manufacturing spaces that are quietly disappearing as the city’s development accelerates. The project is expected to produce approximately thirty finished prints over the next twelve months.

## **About Jens Mauthe**

[Jens Mauthe](#) is a Richmond, Virginia–based analog film photographer specializing in black and white darkroom printing. He works exclusively with mechanical film cameras and produces all final prints in a personal home darkroom using traditional enlargers, fiber-based paper, and archival chemistry. His work is held in private collections across the United States.

## **Media Contact**

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