

Photographer takes a bite of the Big Apple

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A PHOTOGRAPHER has exhibited in New York - after first picking up his camera while he was unemployed and living near Brecon.

Maguel Ahliksander started taking photographs along the Brecon and Monmouth Canal as a hobby after the Llandrindod Wells company he was working as an accountant for went out of business in 2011.

"I would go down to the canal in Brecon and take photos and that kind of saved me," said the 54-year-old who lives in nearby Llanfrynach.

"It gave me hope when I was at my lowest point and I was able to discover something new."

Self-taught Maguel, who still works part time as an account at another company in Llandrindod, soon found success with his fine art photography in which he often manipulates colour and was invited to exhibit locally and also won local photographic competition.

He also set up a website, [maguel.com](#) to showcase his work and said that is what led to the invitation to exhibit at the Agora Gallery in New York's Chelsea art district.

"The exhibition opened on November 7 and I flew over there for the opening and I think there were 34 other artists from all around the world there and the exhibition runs until November 24.

"I had an email back in February from the gallery and it said they had seen my website and I was invited to submit my portfolio and I was pleased they will now represent me.

"The email came out of the blue. I had kept the website updated and someone had got to see my portfolio. You don't know who will see your website, where they are or how they got to see it" said Maguel who was born in Tanzania and worked for corporate giants KPMG in South Africa for 30 years. He moved to the UK as his parents had settled in Llanfrynach.

Despite only concentrating on art in his middle age, Maguel, who has also been invited to exhibit in Bologna, Italy said his second career has been rewarding.

"I got into accountancy not because I really wanted to but because of pressure from my parents but I now get to do something I'm passionate about, it has evolved from getting the opportunity.

"It goes to show it doesn't matter what age you are. I hadn't had any training in art or photography, I just picked up my camera and started doing something I'm passionate about. If you believe and love what you are doing opportunities can come."



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