

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION

PHOTOS & INFORMATION

| | <u>SNAP</u> | <u>PRESS</u> | <u>MUSEUM</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| <u>information</u> | | | |
| where? | photographer | photograph | photographer, photo, perceiver |
| what? | personal | public | philosophical |
| <u>communication</u> | | | |
| how? | no communication nonologue | one way monologue | an exchange of information dialogue |

SNAPSHOTS are images that trigger personal memory. If the viewer has no connection to the content of the image then no impact is made. The photograph is not interesting. Some snapshot style photographers use this "look", but put things that are universal into their pictures that are accessible to most people.

PRESS shots are most interested in providing as much information as possible in as direct a way as possible. They do not want you to have to stop and ponder. These images provide answers to questions. This is the essence of Photojournalism and/or Commercial Photography.

MUSEUM shots ask questions. They want you to stop and think and feel how they relate to your life. Successful images make you reach into your personal experience and compare your life with what is in the image, which is the life of the photographer. The photograph is not an end in itself, but rather, serves as linkage to connect the viewer and the artist.

IMAGEMAKING

philosophy - to establish a personal point of view, to have something to say

problem - to define a particular set of points that can be discussed through images

process - to create a language, both aesthetic and technical, to discuss the problem

product - to present a body of work that articulates the philosophy of the artist

THE FOUR DISCIPLINES

| | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>hand</i> - | VISUAL | <i>how the photograph looks</i> |
| <i>heart</i> - | EMOTIONAL | <i>how the photograph feels</i> |
| <i>head</i> - | CONCEPTUAL | <i>how the photograph thinks</i> |
| <i>whole</i> - | SPIRITUAL | <i>how the photograph heals</i> |

Images that present only the visual do not go far enough. If your photographs look nice and do nothing else, then you are just decorating the world. That will not suffice. The point is to evoke a meaningful response from a viewer – one that involves emotions and ideas. You have to feel something and think something about the subject, and then try to get that into the photograph. It does not have to be something monumental and shouldn't become pretentious. It just has to be honest.

The visual is necessary to get you to this point, because it serves as the platform from which the content is presented. This is why "Form supports Content".

MYSTERY and LIGHT - Assignment #1

The widespread use of photography as a documentary medium presents photos that give it all to you without requiring a response. This is one-way communication. The goal is to impart information quickly and cleanly. These pictures will not keep the viewer's attention for very long. People are happy just to identify what it is a picture of and then leave. We are interested in two-way communication. It is important therefore, to make images that raise questions and that involve a viewer in a conversation. Meaningful images inspire their audience to compare their personal experiences with those of the photographer, using the photograph as linkage.

This end is achieved by creating images with a sense of mystery. Photographs that are filled with clues rather than facts are far more interesting. The artist must, however, be clear about these questions. If the essence behind the image is confused then the best you can hope for is a confused audience.

In general your assignment for the semester is to make photographs with mystery, passion and intelligence, using light as your paintbrush.

MYSTERY

Closeness and Fragmentation -

edit out all the unnecessary clutter from an image
cameras do not have the editing filters that your brain supplies for your vision
if you can step closer and remove unnecessary things from your image
and the image is no worse, it has been improved!
this is called "economy of means" - saying much with few words
This is the "What?" of the photograph.

Unique Angle of View -

much of our lives are spent looking at the world from 5' 6" off the ground
this is the most uninteresting angle to take pictures from
put a new perspective on things that may be somewhat ordinary
This is the "Where?" of the photograph.

Dramatic Lighting -

light is the bottom line, since you are using a box that captures light!
if you are shooting in flat light you will get a flat picture
look for great light
then eventually you will get the interesting part of the world into that light
This is the "When?" of the photograph.

PASSION

Relationships -

show connections between objects, the spaces they inhabit,
and the people with whom they interact
indicate active situations rather than passive
force people to compare their emotions with those of the photo
This is the "Who?" of the photograph.

INTELLIGENCE

Ideas -

put forth concepts not to prove a point
but to indicate other possible paths of thought
if something is "not right" in the picture, the viewer will have to figure it out
if a viewer has to think about the picture
they might realize that there is someone alive behind it
This is the "Why?" of the photograph.

MOVEMENT and DEPTH of FIELD - Assignment #2ⁱ

EXPOSURE

For the time being we will assume that your meter is relatively correct in its suggestions of how to set your shutter speed and f /stop. Follow those suggestions for this assignment.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

Shoot outside in an average lighting situation (bright shade).

Set your camera to ISO 400.

Write down the subject matter, shutter speed, and f /stop specs for all shots.

MOVEMENT

Find a scene or subject with consistent movement; get close enough so the moving part of the subject fills the viewfinder.

- Set shutter to the high (1/1000th sec.); set f /stop so the meter says okay; shoot one frame.
- Reset shutter speed one stop slower; reset f /stop to compensate for the loss of light; full stops: 1000 . . 500 . . 250 . . 125 . . 60 . . 30 . . 15 . . 8 . . 4 . . 2 . . 1 shoot again.
- Continue taking the same picture at every shutter speed until you run out of f /stops.

Find another scene with consistent movement and repeat the above procedure until you have shot 8 sets.

- For the 7th and 8th series, try starting with a slower shutter speed (maybe 125) to see how the *really slow* shutter speeds appear.

DEPTH OF FIELD

Find a scene with depth, rows of things not too far apart; get close enough so the closest thing is only a foot or so in front of you; focus about one-third of the way back;

- Set your f /stop to maximum ($f/4$ typically); set shutter speed so the meter says okay; shoot one frame.
- Reset aperture one stop smaller; reset shutter speed to compensate for the loss of light; full stops: 2 . . 2.8 . . 4 . . 5.6 . . 8 . . 11 . . 16 . . 22 . . 32 shoot again.
- Continue this process, taking the same picture at every f /stop on your lens.

Find another scene with depth and repeat the above procedure until you have shot 8 sets.

FOR NEXT CLASS

Bring all the pictures into the next class for examination and discussion.

Contact sheets of these shots will be handed in to the instructor.

This is not stuff that you can learn by reading and listening to lectures. You can only learn it by doing. It is okay if you are confused after the lectures that explain this material.

Technology does that. And even if you think everything makes sense while listening to the lectures, that is technology fooling you. It is easy for something to sound like it makes sense. But then when you go out to do it, it may get confusing again. That is perfectly okay.

Photography is learning how to dance with your camera. Once you have learned how your camera deals with all these technical concerns, you can forget it all and work by instinct.

This is the function of discipline. So stick with it, get used to it, learn it, and then forget it. Okay? Okay.

DARKS and LIGHTS - Assignment #3

The first seven or so frames of each of these two assignments will produce an exposure test. The resulting pictures will all be one stop different from each other in exposure. Viewing these will give you a good idea of how your meter and your sensor interact. Shoot outside in bright shade. Write down all the exposure information!

You can only do this assignment using your camera in full manual mode.

DARKS

Shoot a Dark tone test strip:

- find a very dark or black textured cloth
 - set yourself up so that the cloth completely fills the frame
- set f /stop to the middle f /stop on your camera, typically $f/11$.
- adjust the shutter speed until the meter says the light is right
LEAVE SHUTTER SPEED AT THIS SETTING until you finish these shots
- take one exposure at every full f /stop available, starting with the largest ($f/4$)
use full f /stops, if the camera displays one-third f /stops,
move three steps between frames
full stops: 2 . . 2.8 . . 4 . . 5.6 . . 8 . . 11 . . 16 . . 22 . . 32
your meter will start yelling that you are over or under exposing
that is exactly what you want in this case

Shoot some more examples:

- shoot 12 sets of pictures, taking three bracketed shots of each subject
(-1, norm, +1) of situations where 80% of the image is overly dark or black.
make sure to WRITE DOWN the data for every shot.

LIGHTS

Shoot a Light tone test strip:

- find a very light or white textured cloth
- using the same procedure as above, shoot a full range bracket of the cloth

Shoot some more examples:

- shoot 12 sets of pictures, taking three bracketed shots of each subject
(-1, norm, +1) of situations where 80% of the image is overly light or white
make sure to WRITE DOWN the data for every shot.

Make a contact sheet of all exposures. Then go back and write down the f /stop and shutter speed for each shot below each frame. Do this carefully and make sure you have the right information under the right frame. The exposure data is also stored as part of the Metadata on each shot. You can see this in Adobe Bridge. This process is very important because these contact sheets will serve as reference sheets for all future shots.

PRESENT contact sheets of these shots plus contact sheets of the depth-of-field and movement shots from last week to the instructor. When returned, file the contact sheets in your loose-leaf binder. It pays to be compulsive when doing photography.