

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION

PHOTOS & INFORMATION

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

SNAP shots 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 snap shot style photographers use this "look", but put things that are universal into their pictures that which 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.

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 that in the image. 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

hand - VISUAL
heart - EMOTIONAL
head - CONCEPTUAL
whole - SPIRITUAL

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, and that will not suffice. The point is to evoke a meaningful response from a viewer – one that evolves emotions and ideas. You have to feel something and think something about the subject, and then try to get this into the photograph. It does not have to be something pretentious or monumental. 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.

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 move on. In Art School we are interested in two-way communication. It is important, therefore, to make images that raise questions 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 be clear about the questions their photos raise. If the motivation behind a photo is confused then the best one 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 #2

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.

Use ASA 400 speed film to shoot.

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 maximum (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; 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 shoot all 36 exposures on your roll of film.

- For the 4th and 5th series, try starting with a slower shutter speed (maybe 125) to see how the really slow shutter speed 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 (smallest number); 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; 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 shoot at least 30 more exposures.

FOR NEXT CLASS

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

This is not stuff that you can learn by reading and listening. You can only learn it by doing. If you are confused after the lectures that explain the preceding material, that is okay. Technology does that. Even if while listening to the lectures you think everything makes sense, that is technology fooling you. It is easy for something to sound like it makes sense. Then when you go out to do it, it may get confusing again. That is 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?

DARKS AND LIGHTS - Assignment #3

The first seven or so frames of each of these two rolls will produce an exposure test. The resulting negatives will all be one stop different from each other in exposure. Viewing these will give you a good idea of how your film and your meter interact.

Shoot outside in bright shade. Write down all the exposure information!
You can only do this assignment using your camera in fully manual mode.

DARKS

- find a very dark or black textured cloth
 - set yourself up so that the cloth completely fills the frame
- set f /stop to your middle f /stop
- adjust the shutter speed until the meter says the light is right
 - LEAVE SHUTTER SPEED AT THIS SETTING until you finish these exposures
- take one shot at every f /stop available, starting with the largest (smallest number)
 - use full f /stops
 - your meter will start yelling that you are over or under exposing
 - that is exactly what you want in this case
- take another 30 shots by taking three bracketed shots of each subject (-1, norm, +1)
 - shoot situations where 80% of the image is overly dark or black.
 - make sure to WRITE DOWN the data for every shot.

LIGHTS

- find a very light or white textured cloth
- using the same procedure as above, shoot a full range bracket of the cloth
- take another 30 shots by taking three bracketed shots of each subject (-1, norm, +1)
 - shoot situations where 80% of the image is overly light or white
 - make sure to WRITE DOWN the data for every shot.

AFTER the shooting is complete, go back to your notebook and write down the f /stop and shutter speed for each shot on the plastic below each frame. Do this carefully and make sure you have the right information under the right frame. This process is very important because these contact sheets will serve as reference sheets for all future shots.

PRESENT contact sheets of these two rolls 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 book next to the appropriate negative file sheet. Remember to keep a log of every shot you take in a small notebook that you can keep with your camera. Write down the frame number, subject, f /stop, and shutter speed for each shot, and the type of film for each roll. It pays to be compulsive when doing photography.

BASIC CRITIQUE SEQUENCE

CRITIQUE 1 - INITIAL WORK

take the first steps toward learning to make good prints

take notice of the unexpected

consider proximity, attitude, and luminosity

6 prints minimum plus 2 self portraits

Crit 1 is usually in the second week after the printing demo

CRITIQUE 2 - DEVELOPMENTAL WORK

continue to experiment with what looks interesting to you

try to repeat your successes

use influences from other work you see in the lab

8 prints minimum plus 2 self portraits

Crit 2 is usually two weeks after the beginning of Crit 1

CRITIQUE 3 - SEMI-FINAL WORK

create groups of photographs that support each other

describe your inspirations for yourself and articulate them during the crit

establish strategies that support the content of your images

10 prints minimum plus 2 self portraits

Crit 3 is usually three weeks after the beginning of Crit 2

CRITIQUE 4 - RESOLUTION WORK

present at least 3 groups of photos representing different strategies

have at least 3- 11x14" or 2- 16x20" matted prints as part of your presentation

be able to verbalize the visual, emotional, and conceptual attributes of each group of photos

12 prints minimum plus 2 self portraits

Crit 4 is usually three weeks after the beginning of Crit 3

FINAL REVIEWS - REVIEW OF WORK

present final versions of your photographs

organized images so into groups that support each other

be prepared to make a statement about the growth of your work this semester

present a minimum of 30 prints

by this point you should have shown 36 prints plus 8 self portraits

edit these down to the ones that work together best

find the strongest prints and make more like them to add coherence and strengthen your portfolio

have at least 10 images matted

include at least 10 new photographs

make at least three copies of your strongest photographs

remember that several matted prints will be held for exhibition & slides

Final Reviews are usually three weeks after Crit 4

Check the printed Class Schedule for the current semester for the actual dates of all Critiques.

These dates are subject to change even during the semester. Always check you e-mail!

CRITIQUE DECORUM

Critiques are taken seriously here. A certain amount of respect is requested. There are some modes of behavior that are recommended and others that are unacceptable. Your body language is a reasonable indication of your attitude. It is in your best interest to send the right messages to your fellow students.

Arrive on time People who are showing work are expected to arrive 10 - 15 minutes before class time to hang their work. You are allowed to hang 5 minutes into class time only! Anything more than this takes away from discussion time. Everyone who is not showing should spend hang time examining the prints on the wall, picking their favorites, and formulating statements about them.

Say something The people showing will all pick their favorite print (other than one of their own) and comment on it, trying to choose a print by someone who has not been picked. Then everyone else will pick an unselected print to speak about. Finally, we will address everyone on an individual basis. Your comments are needed by each student. If you cannot find anything to say about someone else's prints, how can you expect them to say anything about yours?

Pay attention Direct your attention toward the prints that are currently being discussed. Looking or discussing other student's prints dilutes the focus of the crit. Do not, for any reason, engage in any other activities, such as reading magazines, even if they were brought in for the class to be looked at. There is a proper time for everything.

Sit up straight Slouching lazily is an indication of disrespect – toward the crit, toward your classmates, and toward your instructor. Don't put your feet up on other chairs or on the tables. This is not a convent, but it is not a bar. Body language is another way to communicate how much you care.

Keep conversations directed Nothing is more distracting than ongoing chit-chat between two or three persons on the side. Occasional comments are fine, but anything of merit should be directed toward the entire class.

Eat elsewhere Photographs and mayonnaise do not mix well. It is difficult to hold a conversation over the sound of crunching potato chips. For these reasons, please do not bring food into the crit room. Arrange your time so you will not starve through class. *Note: There are times when the preceding class runs over. The instructors teach on a very tight schedule. Sometimes they will be forced to consume food at the beginning of class rather than going out to eat and arriving late.*

Clean up After the crit is over, look around the room and discard any trash that you see lying around. Make sure you take all the push-pins out of the wall as well.

Go to the bathroom before class starts. Walking out in the middle of a conversation is disrespectful and disrupting. If you cannot hold liquids, do not drink before class.

Clear early departures with the instructor before class. If you cannot stay, you should have a good reason. A midterm exam tomorrow is not a good reason to abandon your classmates when they need your feedback tonight.

Be here Do not ever cut a crit, slide lecture, or any class, to work in the Lab.

Reciprocate The bottom line is to treat your classmates with the respect and attention that you would like to receive. How can you expect someone to give you what you will not give them. It's the golden rule, remember?