

# TECH SHEET

# 1

## Making Copy Slides of your Photographs for Presentation

by D. Clarke Evans



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### OVERVIEW

Learning to make accurate copy slides can be a valuable tool for the serious photographer. Many galleries keep a selection of their artists' slides to show prospective clients. Good quality copy slides can assist you in getting a show, making a sale or winning a competition. In addition, it is easier to send slides, rather than originals, across country for initial presentation to galleries, museums or collectors. Copying black and white or color photographs is a more exact science than merely setting up the camera, focusing the image in the view finder, metering at the correct ASA (ISO) and exposing the film.

To enter TPS shows and other shows around the country, you must submit copy slides of your work. TPS typically receives over 1000 slides, and asks our juror to select only the best 40-60 images. Tech Sheet 1 is the result of seeing many slides of questionable quality entered for TPS exhibitions.

As we looked at the entered work, disregarding the artistic merits of each image, we were struck by the vast

differences in the quality of the copy work submitted. Many of the copy slides are very poor, and few of them are ever selected for the show. If the juror be-



*Missing Man Monument © D. Clarke Evans*

lieves that sloppy or inferior copy work is indicative of the quality of your final photography, your work is likely to be rejected. Interesting subject matter can be ruined by poor copy work. If your final copy slide does not look like your favorite print – you have a poor copy slide.

This Tech Sheet is not aimed at the beginning photographer. You probably are already taking good photographs. Where

you may need a little help is in a rather specialized area. This Tech Sheet is not designed to be the definitive work on copying photographs. Other books go into far more detail. My purpose is to provide you with enough information that you will be able to obtain good quality slides to better show your work.

A format for copying black & white or color prints follows. If my original is a transparency, I prefer making a slide duplicate and sending the duplicate in to be judged. The quality of a dupe, for \$1.00 or less, will exceed the quality of trying to have a custom print made and then copying that. It is best to send duplicate transparencies. Many organizations, TPS included, hold the slides of all accepted work until the image arrives. We then compare the slide to the original to see if there has been misrepresentation of the image. Sometimes prints have been rejected, as they bear little resemblance to the accepted slide. If your original is a color negative, have a high quality print made by your favorite lab, then use the techniques for copying described below.

### EQUIPMENT: Cameras

Good copy work can be obtained with virtually any 35mm single lens reflex (SLR) camera with a sharp clean lens. Fully automated point and shoot cameras are ill suited for copy work. One consideration regarding cameras is "what you see is what you get." Most cameras show approximately 92% to 96% of the image in the viewfinder. The viewfinder cuts

off 4% to 8% of the image. Therefore, exact framing and centering is a problem. Table 1 lists major SLR camera manufacturers, their cameras and the percentage of the image seen in the viewfinder. If your current camera sees less than 100%, you may need to run tests to interpolate what the camera sees versus what is recorded on film.

The following photographs illustrate the difference between a Nikon F5 (Photo 1), which sees 100% of the image in the viewfinder and a Nikon FM2 (Photo 2) which sees 93% of the image. Each image was carefully framed and centered in the ground glass. The F5 result shows the complete centered photograph, the FM2 image shows that exact framing is not

## Cameras continued

possible by relying solely on what you see in the viewfinder. By seeing the resultant slide, I can determine which direction and how far to shift the photograph to center it in the final slide. Many cameras allow you to change the focusing screen to a grid pattern, making it easier to align the camera to the axis of the print. Table 1 also has this screen listed for each camera model.

The camera should have a manual setting which will allow you to set the f/stop and shutter speeds manually. Automatic cameras will make assumptions about the predominant tones of your work and can likely overexpose or underexpose your image. I will discuss later how to work around this problem.



**Photo 1**  
*Centered framing of Nikon F5.*



**Photo 2**  
*Off centered framing of Nikon FM2.*

**Table 1 >>>>>> Cameras**

Mfg	Camera Model	Viewing Area	Screen
Nikon	F3, F4 and F5	100%	E for F5, F4S, F3/HP, F3/T, N90s, N90, N8008S.
Nikon	FM2	93%	E
Nikon	All other bodies	92%	Check manual to see if screen can be changed.
Canon	EOS 1n and 1n RS	100%	ECD
Canon	EOS A2 and A2E	94% horz 92% vert	EDD
Canon	EOS Elan 2 and 2E	92% horz 90% vert	Cannot change screen.
Canon	EOS Rebel G	90% horz 90% vert	Cannot change screen.
Minolta	600si, 700si and 900xi	94% - 96%	Screen must be changed by a technician.
	All other new bodies	94% - 96%	Screen cannot be changed.
	Older Cameras	94% - 96%	Screen can be changed, consult your manual.
Pentax	PZ-1p	92%	FG-60
	All other bodies	92%	Cannot change screen.

## Lenses

They've got to be sharp and clean. This is one of the special cases where the photographer is photographing a flat surface. This is a severe test of the lens ability to record detail in sharp focus from edge to edge. You can use a "normal" 50mm lens, although some lenses are specially designed to

photograph flat surfaces and have special correctness for flatness of field. Other lenses focus on all points equidistant from the lens – in other words a curved plane. Table 2 lists some flat field lenses from the major camera manufacturers.

In Photos 3 & 4, the difference between the flat field (Photo 3) 55mm Nikkor and the "normal lens" (Photo 4) 50mm can be seen. While they are subtle, note the curved lines at the edge of the film frame in Photo 4. The listed flat field lenses focus down to 1/2 life size reproduction; this can be useful if copying small

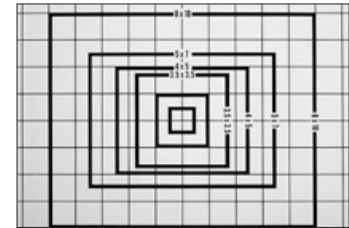
prints. I prefer copying 8"x10" prints, as they are large enough to work with comfortably. For very small images the longer focal length lenses (such as the Nikkor 105, and the Canon and Minolta

100) are an advantage as they allow a reasonable working distance from the camera to the copy work. Use a lens hood to eliminate flare. A short telephoto lens can be used as you are using the

center area of a larger image circle. Do not use a macro zoom lens; although you can get closer to the art work, they are normally inferior for copying.

**Table 2 >>>>>> New Flat Field Copy Lenses Copy Lenses**

Mfg	Lens	Reproduction	Minimum Aperture	Filter Size
Nikon	60mm f/2.8D	1:1	f/32	62mm
Nikon	105 Macro	1:1	f/32	52mm
Minolta	AF Macro Zoom f/1.7-2.8	1:1 to 3:1	f/27 (1:1) f/16 (3:1)	46mm
Minolta	AF 50 f/2.8	1:1	f/32	55mm
Minolta	AF 50 f/3.5	1/2 life size	f/32	55mm
Minolta	AF 100 f/2.8	1:1	f/32	55mm
Canon	50mm f/2.5 Compact Macro	1/2 life size	f/32	52mm
Canon	100 f/2.8 Macro	1:1	f/32	52mm
Pentax	Does not make a flat field lens			



**Photo 3**  
Taken with the older flat field Nikkor 55mm Micro.



**Photo 4**  
Taken with 50mm "normal" lens, note barrel distortion at edges.

## Lighting

We have four choices: electronic flash, photofloods, quartz or daylight. Electronic flash offers the advantage of easily repeatable results that should remain consistent over time. The flash duration is short, eliminating the problem with blur due to camera shake. Obtaining even lighting can be difficult if your strobes do not have modeling lights. I recommend using a flash meter to accurately measure the light falling all over the copy work.

Photofloods have an incandescent filament, and are rated at the standard

color temperature (3200k) only when new. Photofloods fade with time and with this fading process, you get a gradual color shift to the warm tones. There are two types of photofloods: 1) a standard photoflood lamp – shaped like a conventional light bulb – gives off light in all directions code designated ECT and is rated for 60 hours of guaranteed color life, and 2) the reflector style photoflood has a code of EAL and a rated life of 15 hours.

Quartz lights, also incandescent and available with some copy stands, do

not yellow with age. Longer exposures are needed with photoflood and quartz illumination. Nearby walls should be a neutral color, the same with the clothing worn as light reflected off colored walls and clothing, can give your copy work a color cast.

Indirect daylight can be used with an 81A filter to obtain reasonable copy slides. Direct sunlight is unsuitable for copy work due to the harshness of the light.

## Film

Film manufacturers make two films aimed at two different markets: a Professional and an Amateur Film. Within the two categories, we have Daylight Balanced and Tungsten Balanced. Film ages and has a peak performance period when the color is both neutral and at its

maximum saturation. Beyond a certain date, the film's colors begin "shifting" away from neutral, and the colors began to fade. Much testing has gone into how long films sit on camera dealers' shelves, in your glove compartment and in your camera bag. The time

period between release by the manufacturer and the date the amateur photographer uses the film might average six months. Therefore, film manufacturers will release amateur films six months before the peak performance period.

Professional films, on the other hand, are under much tighter storage controls. Instead of releasing the film six months before "peak usage," the film typically will be released one month before "peak usage." That is why Professional Films

are refrigerated, and it is why you should keep the film refrigerated to maintain that constant 1 month period of peak saturation and neutrality. Amateur and Professional films are essentially the same film, Professional films, upon re-

lease, are the best they are going to get. Neutral film balance is the key. Your favorite outdoor film, slightly warm in color balance would not be suitable for copy work.

**Table 3>>>>>> Fine Grained 35mm Professional Films Suitable for Copy Work**

Mfg/Film	ASA Code	ISO	Color Mkt	Bal	Bias	Saturation	Suitable for Copy Work
Kodak Ektachrome Elite 50	EA	50	Pro	Day	Neutral	Enhanced	Yes
Agfachrome RSX 50 Pro	RSX	50	Pro	Day	Neutral	Accurate	Best
Kodak Ektachrome 64T Pro	EPY	64	Pro	Tg	Neutral	Accurate	Best
Kodak Ektachrome Pro	EPR	64	Pro	Day	Neutral	Enhanced	Yes
Fujichrome 64 Pro	RTP	64	Pro	Tg	Neutral	Accurate	Best
Kodak Ektachrome E100S	E100S	100	Pro	Day	Neutral	Enhanced	Yes
Kodak Ektachrome Lumiere 100	LPP	100	Pro	Day	Neutral	Enhanced	Yes
Kodak Ektachrome Elite 100	EB	100	Am.	Day	Neutral	Enhanced	Yes
Kodak Ektachrome 100	EPN	100	Pro	Day	Neutral	Accurate	Best
Kodak Ektachrome 100 Plus	EPP	100	Pro	Day	Neutral	Enhanced	Yes
Fuji Sensia 100	RD	100	Pro	Day	Neutral	Accurate	Best
Fujichrome Provia 100	RDPII	100	Pro	Day	Neutral	Enhanced	Yes
Fujichrome 100	RDP	100	Pro	Day	Neutral	Accurate	Best
Agfachrome RSX 100	RSX100	100	Pro	Day	Neutral	Accurate	Best

## THE PROCESS

### The Copy Print

The quality of the original is decisive to the quality of the copy and should be as fine grained as possible and sharp. Make an 8x10 print of normal contrast or slightly flat as the print will pick up contrast in the copy work. White areas should have a slight gray to them and no area should be completely black.

### The Set Up

The copy work should be placed on a black background to eliminate flare and provide a black background for the finished slide. The copy board and the film plane must be parallel to avoid distortion. A good way to achieve this is to use a focusing screen that has a grid pattern etched on it. You can more easily line

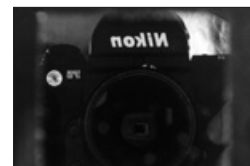
up the photograph by marking the half way point on the vertical and horizontal axis of the photograph and stretching strings between the two points (see Photo 5), or this can be checked with a mirror (Photo 6 and 7). Place a mirror on the center of the copy board, the image of the camera should be seen on the ground glass. If the image of

the lens reflected is not in the center of the ground glass, then the lens is not centered on the copy board. Adjust the camera or copy board as need be. When composing the image in your viewfinder, do not frame the image completely to the edges as the slide mount will crop the frame slightly.

**Photo 5**  
*Squaring up with strings.*



**Photo 6**  
*The image is squared up as we see the camera reflected.*



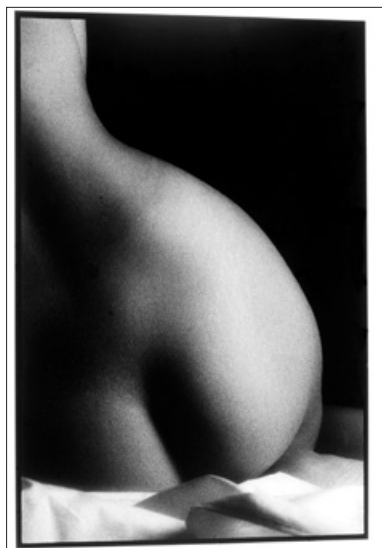
**Photo 7**  
*The camera is not squared-up.*



## Method One: With Direct Illumination

### Vertical mounting on a wall

This is probably the most difficult of the three methods. A problem with wall mounted copy work is the leveling of the camera on a tripod making it perpendic-



**Photo 8**  
*Parallax problems caused by not centering the camera on the image.*

ular to the copy work. This is a trial and error method of small adjustments to center the tripod-mounted camera on the image. Only with careful leveling and centering can one avoid the obvious parallax problems caused by not centering the camera to the image. (See Photo 8)

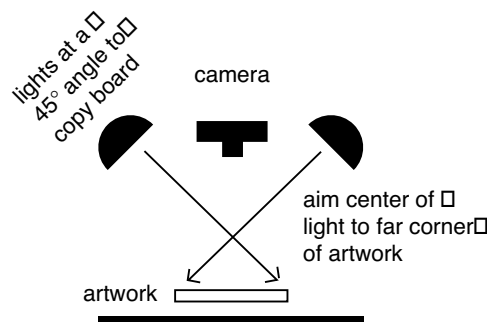
A standard method to adhere the art work to the wall is using masking tape folded double on the back of the print. I do not stick my image directly to the wall, but to a flat black mounting board pinned to the wall. You can purchase a metal mounting board with magnets in most camera stores. Either method works well.

I prefer to use studio electronic flash to copy paintings and photographs. The lights I own have a built-in UV filter that eliminates the slight blue shift seen in some copy work. Place the lights at camera height and the same axis as the camera, at 45° angles to the copy work (Diagram 1). Aim the center of the light at the far corner of the photograph; this will help even out the light across the

photograph. Use a large, steady tripod to precisely focus and compose.

### Horizontal mounting with a copy stand

Leveling of the camera and copy work is not a major problem with vertical mounting as the camera is perpendicular to the copy base. The basic set-up is essentially the same – place the lights at camera height and the same axis as the camera, at 45° angles to the copy work. The lighting is the main difference as most copy stands use tungsten lighting.



**Diagram 1**  
*Copy work – the set-up.*

## Method Two: With Indirect Illumination

Not everyone has the time, inclination or money to purchase the equipment required to obtain top notch professional quality slides. You may be able to get satisfactory results by doing your copy work in open shade such as a porch. Find an area with light shade on a sunny day. An overcast day would work as well. Light shade as opposed

to "dark" shade meaning deep inside a garage. Open shade should illuminate your photograph fairly evenly. You may need to place a bounce card under the copy work; this will even out the light as in open shade all light is coming from above. Use an 81A filter, with the daylight balanced film of your choice. Open shade is blue light, the 81A will warm

the scene slightly, giving you a more neutral balance.

You can mount the photograph at the top of a large board and angle the board slightly. Using a tripod, adjust the camera until it is parallel with the art work. Meter the scene, with the 81A filter on the lens, by holding a gray card in front of the art work. Bracket on either side

of the meter reading 1/3 stop increments.

With this method, I urge you to underexpose your film 1/3 of a stop and overdevelop (push) 1/3 of a stop. This will help "clean-up" highlights.

Photo 9 is an example of a typical "open shade" set-up.



**Photo 9**

*Typical open shade set-up. Note bounce card at bottom of photograph. This will even-out the light as all open shade light comes from above.*

## METERING/EXPOSURE

### > REFLECTED

**For use with incandescent lights or outdoors in open shade.**

The SLR camera/meter reads the light being reflected off the subject. These meters are all calibrated for a medium gray tone. What you point your camera at and meter, the camera assumes that the subject matter is medium gray in tone. If your subject is black, the camera/meter assumes the subject is medium gray and will give you an f/stop-shutter speed combination that will result in a medium gray print or slide. Likewise, if your subject matter is white, the camera/meter combination will result in the final photograph being medium gray. Whatever you point your camera at and meter – the final product will be medium gray in tone. Fortunately, typical outdoor scenes average medium gray in tonality.

If the image you are copying has predominately dark tones (low-key), and you rely solely on a reflected

meter to set your exposure, the final image will be overexposed resulting in a medium gray copy slide or print. Likewise, if your original has predominately light tones (high-key), by relying solely on the reflected meter, the finished image will be underexposed and result in a medium gray finished product. Whatever you measure (point



**Photo 11**

*Low-key image exposed by metering off gray card; it is too dark.*

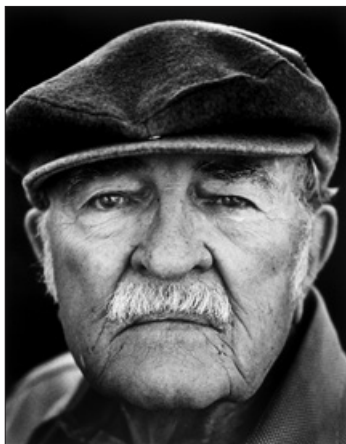


**Photo 13**

*High-key image exposed by metering off gray card, it is too light.*

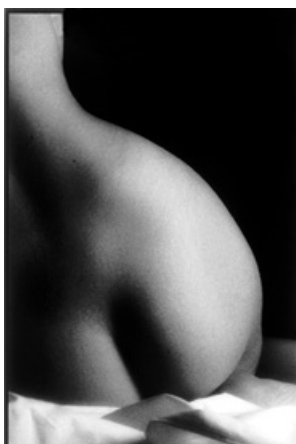
your reflected meter at and set your exposure controls accordingly) will be medium gray. As fine as our equipment is, we have to out think it. That is why we use a "gray card." By holding the gray card in front of the copy work and metering off the gray card, we can obtain fairly accurate exposures. We can still have problems with low-key and high-key originals though.

Photos 10 through 14 visually illustrate the problem. Photo 10 encompasses the tones from deep rich blacks to bright highlights, although the majority of the photograph is mid-tones. By metering off a gray card and exposing accordingly, we can obtain a good copy slide. We do not need to adjust exposure. Photo 11, with predominately dark tones, is metered the same (from the gray card), but the finished slide is too dark. Film cannot capture the nuances in shadow and highlights that our eyes see. While we can see the dark and light tones, the film will not be able to record them. When copying low-key photographs, overexpose the image from 1/3 to 1/2 of a stop; see Photo 12.



**Photo 10**

*Photograph with predominately mid-tones.*



**Photo 12**

*Low-key photograph overexposed 1/2 stop.*

Correspondingly, with high-key subjects, adjustments must be made to the final photograph. Photo 13 is the result of a "normal" meter reading from a gray card, it is too light. Photo 14, has been



**Photo 14**  
High-key image underexposed 1/3 stop, note highlight detail.

underexposed 1/3 of a stop. The final slide will have good detail in the highlights.

**> AUTO EXPOSURE CAMERAS**

If you only have an auto exposure camera, you can still meter off the gray card to determine a correct exposure. Use the auto compensation dial to change the exposure back to what you metered with the gray card. Those dials are normally marked in 1/3 stop increments. If the gray card reading were, f/11 @ 1 second and at the reading off a low-key photograph were f/8 @ 1 second (remember that an in camera reflected meter would turn the dark photograph into medium gray, overexposing it).

Set the compensation dial to -1 stop exposure. The actual picture would be exposed at f/11 @ 1 second.

**> INCIDENT**

The above is also true when metering with an incident light meter. Incident meters measure the light falling on a subject. They are not swayed by the tones of the subject matter. That is why many professional photographers use incident meters – the tonality of the subject does not matter. Whichever meter you use, the final exposure settings should be the same.

The initial measurement of light (metering) to determine exposure is a base measurement which is then adjusted for tonality and filter factors.

**Table 5 >>>>> Metering Examples**

REFLECTED METERING				INCIDENT METERING			
Subject Tone	Reading Off Gray Card	Adjustment	Final Exposure	Subject Tone	Incident Reading	Adjustment	Final Exposure
Medium gray	1 sec @ f/11	none	1 sec @ f/11	Medium gray	1 sec @ f/11	none	1 sec @ f/11
Dark tones	1 sec @ f/11	open 1/3-1/2	1 sec @ f/8.5	Dark tones	1 sec @ f/11	open 1/3-1/2	1 sec @ f/8.5
Light tones	1 sec @ f/11	close 1/3-1/2	1 sec @ f/11.5	Light tones	1 sec @ f/11	close 1/3-1/2	1 sec @ f/11.5

**> PERSONAL TRICK**

After taking into consideration the above adjustments, I like to underexpose the original slide by 1/3 of a stop and over-develop (push) the film 1/3 of a stop. This will clean up the highlights instead of leaving them a slightly muddy gray, and provide good detail in the shadows.

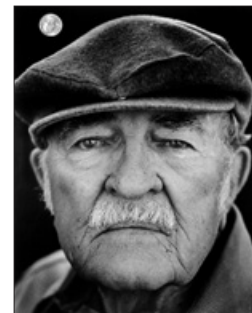
**POLARIZERS**

Reflections off non-metallic surfaces can be minimized with the use of a Polarizing filter. This can be especially useful when photographing textured paintings. The polarizing filter controls reflections, increases the saturation in color copying and can increase contrast. Originals that are not shiny surfaced will not fully polarize the light as it is reflected. Maximum polarization can be obtained by placing polarizing screens over the lights and a polarizing filter over the camera lens. This is called double polarization.

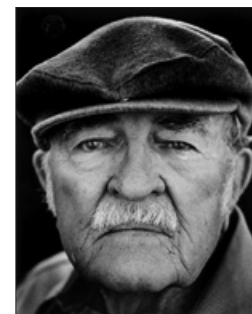
To use, the polarizing screens should be placed over the lights first, taking care

to align the filter's axis. The polarizing filter on the camera, should then can be rotated until the reflection is minimized. Placing a coin on the copy board helps to detect the effect of the polarization. Photo 15 was taken without the light being polarized. Note the shiny coin. The image is slightly washed out in appearance. Photo 16 was taken with polarized light; note the coin. The finished image shows slightly richer black and an increase in contrast. Since polarizers typically block 2 stops of light; one must compensate for this with more light or a longer exposure.

**Photo 15**  
Non-polarized image.



**Photo 16**  
Polarized image, slightly richer in tone. You can barely see the coin.



## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The first several times you copy your work, you should keep notes as to the setup and the exposures. If you always copy 8" x 10" prints, your camera and lights should be in the same place every time. You can mark the floor or draw a small diagram of your set. Be sure and measure how far it is from the wall to your camera and to the lights.

Keep records on your metering and exposure and any filters you use. Meter carefully using the gray card if you don't have an incident light meter. Take into consideration filters and the tonality of the image and calculate the exposure.

Remember for low-key (darker) images you will need to open up 1/3 to 1/2 a stop and for high-key (light) images you will need to close 1/3 to 1/2 stop.

If you photograph your copy work prior to mounting, you can have a black board as the background. This makes the photograph stand out when projected. If your photograph is already mounted, you will have a white border around the print. If you did not get close to the original when copying, you will have a large expanse of white space around the image. When the slide is projected, the harsh white light can be irritating to the eyes and distract-

ing to your image. Many photographers use a silver mylar tape to carefully mask off the white area. This looks much better when projected. As a final step you could use one of the commercial computer programs to neatly type name, title, date and any other information requested on slide labels.

The process of copying one's photographs need not be difficult. By paying attention to detail, one can easily obtain consistently repeatable results. Your copy slides will be accurate and indicative of the quality of your finished print. Good luck!

## SUMMARY: Elements of Good Copy Work

### Equipment

- 35mm SLR manual camera.
- 50mm – 105mm Macro flat field lens.
- Sturdy tripod.
- Lens hood.
- Grid screen.
- Cable release.
- Professional film.

### Copy Print

- Clean original.
- A slightly flat original, not contrasty.

### The Process

- Original parallel to the film.
- Suitable framing in viewfinder.
- Uniform light appropriate to film.
- Lights same height and axis as camera. Use gray card or incident meter to determine exposure.
- Adjust exposure for tonality.
- Accurate focusing.
- Use polarizers.
- Processing at a professional lab.
- Make labels with your computer.

## For Further Reading

Cooper, Joseph D. and Abbott, Joseph C. Close-up Photography and Copying: Nikon Handbook Series. New York: AMPHOTO, 1979.

Copying and Duplicating in Black-and-White and Color. Rochester: Eastman Kodak, 1994.

Hart, Russell. Photographing Your Artwork: A Step-by-Step Guide to Taking High Quality Slides at an Affordable Price. Cincinnati, Ohio: North Light Books, 1992.

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D. Clarke Evans, is a commercial photographer living in San Antonio, Texas, is recognized for his architectural, sports, and corporate photography. He has a Bachelor's in Arts degree from Brooks Institute in Santa Barbara, California and a Master of Arts in Museum Science from Texas Tech University in Lubbock. He is President of the Texas Photographic Society.



*D. Clarke Evans with Pooka.*

## ABOUT TPS

### Mission & Membership

The Texas Photographic Society, founded in 1985, is a nonprofit organization of amateur and professional photographers whose purpose is to "support contemporary photography as a means for creative expression and cultural insight. TPS focuses on the education and artistic development of its members and the community by providing exhibitions, publications, education, and outreach programs." It sustains over 600 active members from 24 states.

### Tech Sheets

In a continuing effort to expand the programs, TPS institutes Tech Sheets – a quarterly publication dedicated to exploring a variety of photographic issues and topics. Tech Sheets will be authored by known experts in their field, from throughout the state and country. Tech Sheets will be available individually for \$4.75 each which includes shipping and handling. Tech Sheets are © by the Texas Photographic Society. All Images © by D. Clarke Evans.

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