

TPS TechSheet 19

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Ideas by True Redd

Introduction

Needing an idea for a quick article, the subject became quite evident. It was right there before me. "I need an idea!" — and there it was. My mind gave it to me. "Why don't you just discuss ideas? I'll help you" it said.

— True Redd

Where do great ideas come from? They are a result of conditioning our brain to form them. They emanate from our entire

existence, and the ability to imagine and create places us among the higher echelons of photographers.

Ideas should force INNOVATIONS — not IMITATIONS of the ideas of others. Striving for enrichment and amplification of our visual voices, we become aware of the foundation on which to base our personal understanding of photography. Awareness of and more extensive exposure to

visual perceptions outside our own field — grants intellectual freedom from certain influences within our own photographic environment. I've never understood why the majority of us won't expose ourselves more to the influences of creative fields other than our own. There are so many out there, with so much to learn from.

The Creative Imaging Process

All the eyes really do is gather light. The creative imaging process from that point comes from deep within us, so comprehending our own visual logic does nothing less than strengthen our images significantly. Why do WE see the way WE do? Don't you ever wonder about that?

Many of my photographic friends like to talk photography — but are most comfortable discussing technique. Subjects such as "exploring visual logic" or "the orchestration of visual ideas" puts them ill at ease. Evidence supports the conclusion that if we can articulate it — we are consequently more effective at it.

We're limited more often by our own thinking than by technology. The great ones can produce good photographs under the worst conditions with poor equipment, but weak ones with the best available still fail. The proper mindset gives a simple confidence in oneself which comes from a sound creative foundation on which to draw. That foundation should never be completed. You must continually add to it.

Ideas

Ideas CAN become subject to conscious control, and conceived on demand. Much depends on attitude. We CAN raise the level of consciousness if WE choose to raise it. So if the mind is increasingly conditioned by us, it increasingly continues to improve with the experiences emanating from the influences WE use to feed it. And of course imagination propagates motivation — and it feels so unbelievably good!!!

To use our ideas to the fullest, it helps to have a full set of tools, and of course any great image maker should be a master technician. That's just taken for granted. You've got to learn the notes before you play the tune. But technique is only one of the tools and must be used in conjunction with an ability to think. I am of the opinion ALL great photographers must feel the image itself to be the most meaningful part — and the artistic part of them really won't care about f-stops, shutter speeds or what color box the film came from. That final image articulates the essence of our subject.

An insatiable mind needs constant stimulation to perform at its peak. Perhaps that's why we dream — from an inability to use it to its fullest during waking hours. Our mind is increasingly conditioned by what we challenge it to do. We should be acutely aware of the resources at our command and learn to support and challenge its creative cravings to continually provide creative energy and conceptions.

Sometimes in my musings about art and life I realize great images are as much about the photographer as they are the subject. They are a reflection of our own ideas. They are personal outlets to share intense aesthetic experiences. A creative mind creates, and in creating heightens its ability to conceive and create again — to higher levels of awareness and excellence.



This is an image that has worked well for me. A strong design can always carry an image in black and white and in color. The design with the curves of the plate and cherries and the subtle use of lighting is nice, but what really makes the image work best is the fact that one cherry is turned. Sometimes not doing what is expected is the imaginative tool that makes one image stand out from another.

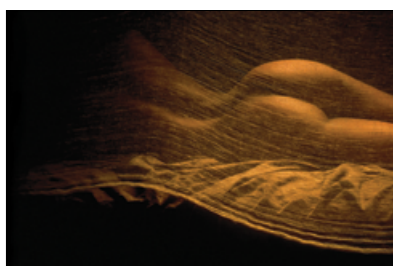
We occupy an age when there are no technical limitations. Any image in our mind's eye can be shared, so it stands to reason the more adept we are at utilizing the experience and understanding accumulated in our minds — the more meaningful our images can be. My love of music teaches me the notes not played are just as important as the ones that are. If you accept that statement as fact, how could you relate

that to the excellence of a photograph? See how quickly your mind begins its explorations when you ask it too. If you discussed that with fellow photographers, What would YOU say?

So we learn as we create these images, and what we learn influences and extends our capability to see. If we seek to identify ourselves in the full maturity of creativity, we are compelled to comprehend these resources within our control. Research shows we use less than 10% of the capacity of our brain. We

Creative Excellence

In a quest for creative excellence, obstacles do abound. Thinking we already know everything is perhaps the most dangerous



“Less is more” is sometimes a pretty good motto. Shadow detail here would destroy the simplicity and beauty of the human form.

Creative Exercises

The ability to force ideas on command. This is easy once you teach your thought muscles to do it. Have someone give you a word. Expand visually on that word. When you get good at it you should mentally be capable of imagining at least ten images. An example: “Staircase” don’t just think of a set of stairs one goes up and down, but perhaps a case with stairs in it. Let your brain loosen and expect a lot from it. Practice words: stardust, silhouette, soft, confusion.

About the Author: True Redd

True Redd owns and operates an award-winning illustrative photography studio in Uncertain, Texas. His work has appeared in major international publications, and he is a frequent lecturer and speaker at colleges, universities, workshops and professional photography organizations.

He was chosen by Kodak as one of the featured photographers in their “Visions

have an unbelievable ability to stretch our creative boundaries, and it’s our own decision to do so if WE want to.

I was asked to speak in Los Angeles on the relationship between photography and music. I also was asked to come up with the concept for a cover photograph for the convention program. I took the violin and began to light it, but without the concept as of yet. I knew my audience would be photographers, so that enabled me to use cable releases as a design element everyone would recognize.



one. Another is learning how NOT to learn, by photographing through others’ eyes instead of trusting in our own innate abilities, and allowing personal vision to show through. And as we do that we take pleasure in (and are sometimes frustrated by) a continual search for aesthetic excellence.

The more we strengthen and encourage our mind to give fresh ideas, the less risk we run of taking photographs previously seen. We gain an awareness of the subtleties of our visual vocabulary, and we form a point of view and a message that is ours. Ask yourself the question, “How much of my style is really my own?”

Thus we learn to trust our mind more — and we begin to approach that state of

having the direct relationship of the mind’s eye and the camera’s eye becoming one in the same. We expand our perceptions as our eye challenges our mind, and we come closer to achieving that magnificent moment when the distance between the viewer and our image completely disappears, and what remains is a clear and forceful expression of our feelings.

Then we know, that through photography, we have not only enriched our own lives, but the lives of others as well. We are photographers, and we who have eyes must see! I wish you the intellectual readiness to always intensify and magnify your creative abilities. May your ideas and visions be always fresh, and may they be abundant.

A limitation of equipment can be one of the greatest stimuli to our imagination. Go out and shoot with only one lens – your least favorite. That’s probably the one you should use for this exercise.

What if? What if? What if? Each time we see our prospective subject matter our brain chooses the angle of view we should photograph from. Explore opposites. If you’ve chosen to photograph the subject from above, imagine what it would be from below.

Nothing ever seems to be resolved if one is a dedicated artist. What’s the best image you’ve ever taken? Now, ask yourself, “How could I improve on this?” If you think you could not improve it, you’ve just discovered a limitation in your creativity. Every piece of work produced should be questioned, and you’ll always grow.

Life is a school, and each day is a class. Don’t play hooky. Get out there on your photographic playground and enjoy!

in View” and “Images in Progress” video programs. He was presented the Award of Excellence by the Professional Photographers of California.

True operates Caddo Lake Photographic Workshops which deal in a variety of classes taught by internationally recognized photographers. www.caddolakephoto.com.



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