



A Creative Approach Growing Your Vision

WEEDING OUT THE STINKERS

Let this process begin after about six months. You need a body of work to begin to figure out which images are really part of your personal inner make up. In order to have something to weed out you have to continue to make images and continue to shoot that roll of film every week. When you begin editing don't be too rash in throwing out what you think might not be great. Often I leave in images to see how others will react to them or for the fact that I just happen to like them.

I have had experiences with images in my diary that I made about 3 years apart and

then a magic moment happens and there in front of me and I have a new image that makes perfect sense with an image that I made years earlier.

In the editing process I look at the journal every time I have spare time. That could mean at lunch, sitting on a train or a plane, first thing in the morning, whenever. I try to look at my journal in varied and different situations because when I share it with others, I'm never sure how or what mood they might be in. Or, you can choose not to share it with others. I enjoy sharing mine because it is funny; there are some wonderful moments in my journal, and I find it to be a source of inspiration for those that see it.

Another thing that visual journalizing has done for me is help me keep track of a life that at times appears to be moving way too fast. I do not remember the technical aspects of certain photographs, but I remember the distinct moment of creation.

The greater the artist, the greater the doubt; perfect confidence is granted to the less talented as a consolation prize.

– Anonymous

Things to Think About When You Make a Photograph

What does the light look like? How can I better use it?

How can you use the elements of the camera, focus, depth of field, and shutter speed to create your photograph?

Can the colors of the subject help me create a more interesting image?

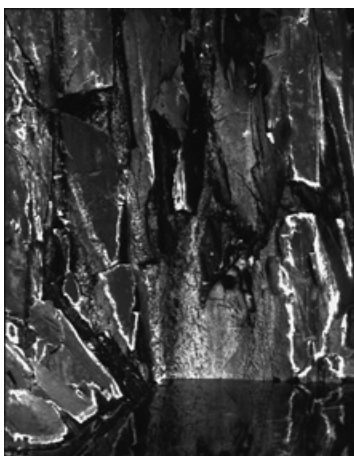
What about the composition? Should I change the angle, framing, near/far relationship, or are there some other elements that might create a more impact? Is there a more interesting way to take this photograph?

Remember, everything you include in your photograph is your statement! Is this really the message you want to get across?

There is nothing in this world without its decisive moment.

– Henri Cartier-Bresson

Steps to Becoming a Fine Art Photographer



Cattail Falls, Big Bend National Park
© Richard Newman

in Winona, Texas²⁰⁰ Desiring to travel down the fine art road is, I believe, where we all start with photography. Some of us drift off into separate disciplines, but for those who strive to endeavor to crack the fine art photographic realm, I would like to offer these simple suggestions.

1. Begin by looking at all types of photography to determine where your real passion lies. Find the type of photography that really turns your screws – landscape, abstraction, portrait, digitally manipulated, photographs – and determine which artists are considered leaders in that discipline.

2. It is in every artist's best interest to find a mentor or someone whom you really

respect, and familiarize yourself with that person's work.

3. Part of every artist's development is imitation; embrace this part of the process until you are comfortable enough with your techniques, materials, and what you think you have to say. When it's time for you to start making your own statement, you will know.

4. Get a bracelet that identifies you as a fine art maniac.

5. Find photography everywhere – buy photographic books, go to the library, museums, galleries, but most of all, look at as much photography as you possibly can.

6. Find and support your local photographic artists' associations (such as TPS, the Newsletter for the Photographic Artist) or local camera groups. Doing this helps you end the isolated artist syndrome. The symptoms of this syndrome include, self doubt, overly critical feelings when you look at others' work, sleeplessness, and the feeling that no one will ever see or appreciate your work.

7. Keep a written journal and actually write in it! This helps you remember that you really are making progress in your endeavor.

8. Show your work to every person you have the opportunity to meet. And then after you have shown it, take some time and reflect over the comments. Don't take the comments as gospel; just listen to them. Don't bring your friends over for a promised tequila party and then haul out the slide projec-

tor. This is cruel and you could find yourself in the middle of a weggie party if you don't deliver the said tequila.

9. Exhibit your work every chance you get. I don't care if it's a gas station or a wall in your home. Put your pictures up and look at them. Is this really your BEST work? Is it you? Is it what you want to say?

Croppers Anonymous

I spent the better part of my first 20 years in photography believing I had to show the black line around my prints. I think the reason I did this was I felt unsuccessful if I didn't capture the image perfectly when I made the picture. I would throw the negative away. I was deluded! I believed a lie! Now, I've come out of the fog and I realize there are many other photographers with the same problem. After my recovery I decided to form a support group: Croppers Anonymous. Here are my 10 steps to recovery. Join me, fellow photographers!

1. I can use any part of the negative at any time.
2. I can still print the black line, but I have power over it now.
3. I changed my mindset from the decisive moment to the decisive edit.
4. I allow myself the space to experience the moment rather than worry whether I have the proper lens on the camera, or am in the perfect camera position.
5. I accept that I might not have made the best picture at the decisive moment, that I could have been involved in the moment.

6. Photoshop® is an option.
7. I do not always have to crop my image.
8. It is possible that cropping makes a better picture.
9. I strive to create the perfect image, but I can now accept my shortcomings.
10. I am free of the restrictions the black line placed upon me in the past.

Get out of the BOX!

Don't Let Your Creativity Get Blocked Up!

Here are some blocks to your creativity. Think about them and apply them to your photography. Ask yourself these questions if you are feeling stale or stagnant.

- Ignore your fear of failure!
- Don't have a reluctance to play!
- Think it's a kooky idea. Give it a try!
- Do you have resource myopia?
- Are you trying too hard?
- You have an underdeveloped fantasy life?

- Are you stereotyped in your reaction to your subject matter?
- Don't give up so soon; look at the subject a little longer.
- Do you do things in a traditional or ritualistic way?
- Is your fear of "how will it look" keeping you from making the picture?
- Are you reluctant to exert your photographic opinion?

- Are you afraid to insert your emotions into your photographs?

Remember: Shakespeare worked without knowing that he would become "Shakespeare." – Anonymous

Assignments

These exercises are simple and you'll probably think they are dumb, but give them a chance when you lack motivation. Remember, think of these as your photographic scales.

25 STEPS

Load your camera. Find a field, your street, or anywhere. Take 25 steps and take a picture; take 25 more steps and take another picture, get the picture? You'll think it's the dumbest thing up to about frame 20 and then you'll start to enjoy it. Remember that

film is cheap. This is an exercise that makes you look very hard no matter where you end up. Try to find the best picture on each step, and stay out of the street! Review and edit the roll and use it for your roll a week if you need to.

PICK A LOCATION

Pick a location; give yourself 2 hours at this location. See how many different ways you can make it look by incorporating outside influences such as people walking by, traffic, the light changing, but the key to this

assignment is "notice" the location. "Notice" how outside influences can change the photograph you are about to make. "Notice" how your emotions affect the way you want to take the picture. Minor White has written: "Self discovery through a camera? I am scared to look for fear of discovering how shallow my self is! I will persist however... because the camera has its eye on the exterior world. The camera will lead my constant introspection back into the world."

About the Author: Richard Newman

Richard Newman's work has appeared in numerous magazines and is in many private collections. Richard has led workshops sponsored by Santa Fe Workshops, Hasselblad, Ilford, TPS and The Calumet Institute. His personal work is represented

by the Ansel Adams Gallery in Peeble Beach, CA and the Swanstock stock agency, in Tucson, AZ. Richard is on the Advisory Board of the Project Workshops in Santa Fe NM, the Center for Photographic Art in Carmel, CA and the

Texas Photographic Society. Currently, he is the Marketing Specialist to the Fine Art market for Calumet, Inc.