

# The Art of Photography

Richard White

PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS ON LINE GALLERY PHOTOGRAPHY ARTICLES HIGH COUNTRY CALENDAR

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The Angels of Mount Wilson, Canadian Rockies

Hello again and welcome to the fifth issue of this newsletter. As you can see I am sticking to my inconsistency with release times as I said I would.

The photograph I have shown here was used in an article I did for Issue #21 of Better Photography Magazine back in the year 2000. You know the year when everything was going to collapse on every computer ever made. Some say we got conned by the Y2K bug. I am sure some are still complaining and some still laughing about that one. It just didn't bite hard enough!

Anyway the reason I have shown this photograph is because just a couple of days ago I was talking to Craig Richards, a Canadian Photographer, who just happens to have an identical negative to mine. The only difference is that off one of the ledges, somewhere in the middle, there is a very small avalanche just beginning. Now this picture was made in the year 2000 when I was visiting Craig, who lives in the Canadian Rockies. We were taking a drive up the Columbia Ice Fields Road towards Jasper and I suggested he pull up because I had seen another shot just to the left of this one. It was on my side of the car.

We were out in minus 15 degree temperature feeling it a little as you can imagine, when this appeared. Both of us were using 4 x 5" cameras, I had a 360mm lens ( equivalent to about a 120mm on 35mm ) and Craig had a 400mm.

When I printed mine I cropped in a little on the right hand side and he printed his full frame. It is just uncanny that both prints look almost identical. How often is it that when you are out photographing with others that you would end up with the same photograph. In fact in the middle of June I was conducting a workshop up in Sydney

and we were out early on the Sunday morning photographing around the Opera House. As we approached I stopped and framed up a shot and made a picture. I invited a couple of the people who were nearby to have a look and they in turn set up their cameras. I then went around and looked at what they had framed up and all three shots were very different. This to me is usual. Most of us just don't see the same. That is why I found it fascinating that both Craig and I have almost identical images. We did compare prints several months later, when he was visiting Australia. His image now hangs on the wall in the Whyte Museum in Banff for many to see. I told Craig that I want half the copyright and royalties on it!

Another interesting thing to come out of this is that although we stayed out of the car in - 15 degree Celsius temperature for at least 20 minutes to half an hour photographing ( the conditions around the peaks were changing quite a bit ) we just didn't feel the cold. We were so engrossed and the adrenalin was running wild. The moment itself was enough to keep us warm. This I think is always a good sign that you have snared a good one.

How often do you make a picture and feel very little excitement? That negative just sits in your file with hundreds of others never to see the light of day again. If only the magic soared with every image we took. I guess this is what makes those special images so special. They seem to have a life of their own, a magic that transcends reason as to why that particular shot is head and shoulders above others. Why do some images attract people like flies to food yet others just limp along? I guess this is one of the mysteries of photography and one of the added mysteries of Black and White photography. We have a Black and White scene that we easily identify with, yet are removed from, because *of* its lack of colour. The actual lack of colour is what draws us to the image, what transfixes us and holds us to the picture.

Do you think there is a way to cut back on the dud images? Try this. Slow down. Mount your camera on a tripod and study the scene before you. Study the view finder and check the edges. Look at what you have framed up and ask yourself what is it a picture of. You may be surprised at the answer. This of course only applies to one type of photography, but it applies.

### **The Digital Debate**

Well it doesn't go away. At a recent talk I gave at the VAPS 50<sup>th</sup> convention in Ballarat several people came up to me after and asked where do I think digital is going. The answer is who knows. We know a few things for sure and some are just hearsay. One thing seems to be certain according to all the experts I speak with that the quality is still a long way behind the conventional film to paper treatment. Film to digital printer output is very good. Ilfochromes or Cibachromes at home seem to be dying which is such a pity, because just about nothing beats a good Ilfochrome print. Like nothing beats a silver rich fibre base print. For the sake of photography don't settle for lesser standards in your work. It will only demean what you have strived so long to achieve, quality that many drool over. If you do a fibre base print in the darkroom and an inkjet print from the clatter machine and you can't tell the difference then make an appointment with an Optometrist. I might suggest that something on either side of your nose needs adjustment. Silver is silver and pixels are pixies and them that live at the bottom of the garden have a long way to go.

If you think I've been in the dark too long, you may be right, but then again....!

### **Workshops**

The workshops are in full swing and don't forget if you would like a fully illustrated brochure in living black and white then just drop me an Email with your name and address and I'll post one out to you. The workshops deal with both colour and B & W photography.

Until next time,

Richard