

The Art of Photography

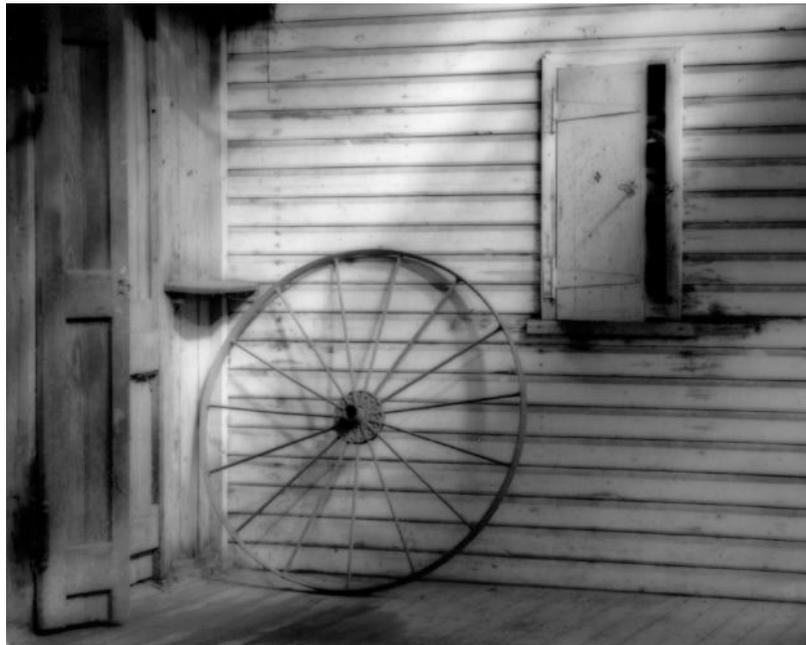
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PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS ON LINE GALLERY PHOTOGRAPHY ARTICLES HIGH COUNTRY CALENDAR

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Welcome to the third newsletter this year and the tenth overall. News that you may or may not know about is that the future of some black and white papers in Australia and around the world are very much under the spotlight.

I am sure a lot of you have heard about the problems that Ilford are encountering and the future of their black and white papers is very shaky. According to the report I read from Reuters, liquidation seems imminent. Also I have heard that Agfa is trading water with regard to their black and white paper range and up until this week Kodak were thinking of reducing their stock items in Australia and only bringing Polymax in on indent. What would be left for the casual amateur or the more prolific printers? Fotospeed papers or Forte! Having tried all of them most of you will know that I am a Kodak Polymax fibre junkie and occasionally I stray into Forte.

I do know that Kodak were casually considering looking for a national distributor for their paper, but after the recent news about Ilford and Agfa they may and hopefully will be more serious about their product and try to establish a secure outlet for it in Australia. I will continue to keep bringing the papers I use in on indent. I use mainly 8 x 10 and 11 x 14, 16 x 20 in bursts and occasionally 20 x 24. At present carton quantities are only available on indent and each carton contains 10 boxes of each size. 8 x 10 has 100 sheets per box, 11 x 14 50 sheets per box as does 16 x 20. 20 x 24 I am not sure. I will happily on sell any spare boxes I have or place a specific order for all who are interested. **(See later in this newsletter for boxes of 8 x 10" Polymax.)** If I didn't think the paper was so good I wouldn't bother. I like most have enough mountains to climb. I hope this doesn't become another one.

Some of you are probably wondering why I bother when the hard sell and heavy push is on to convert to computer generated prints. It is my firm belief that a darkroom produced fibre base print is still far superior to any alternative and as long as I am producing prints that are Photographic Art I will continue to do so. After all it is the darkroom process that I like and that is what is important for me *and* it has a proven track record. But this is just a part of the process that is way down the line. The image still has to be seen. I have had people who ring enquiring about my workshops saying that they use digital and is that okay? You know I don't mind. It is only a capture medium. The image still has to be seen. You can use a plastic lens camera or a pin hole camera to record your image, *but the image still has to be seen.*

Your vision will not be my vision and your approach and finish will be different. That's what makes it fun and exciting. The different approach and interpretation of a subject. Copying or cloning is fine to a point, but sooner or later you have to break free and go out on your own. Be influenced by all means, but don't copy forever. It is important to have your own input in a photograph otherwise you're just fooling yourself and you will never consider what you are producing to be truly worthy. Let your images show us who you are and what you think about what you photograph. I believe when this is accomplished you are on the right path.

It's not supposed to be easy. If you consider what you are producing *is* Art then be prepared for some kind of difficulty. Horowitz didn't learn to play the piano so brilliantly in a session. Monet toiled his whole life to output his art and Weston was always looking for ways to improve or be inspired. Are we any different? Just because we have all the so called creative tools at our disposal it doesn't make the task any easier. We still have to produce. We still have to come up with the goods.

On a personal note, each year for my calendar I have to come up with 12 images that I like personally and then in turn hope will be accepted by those who buy it. It ain't easy. I toil long and hard over the choices. Whatever medium I decided to use would not make it any easier. I am sure self doubt and anguish are all part of the creative process.

Returning to the paper issue for a moment I have noticed recently that Kodak Polymax FB paper is toning much more quickly than it used to and also it appears that the speed of the paper has also increased. It still seems to deliver the same high quality prints that I am used to, but I would bet that the recipe has changed without us folk being told anything. Apparently the coating of the paper is now done in Brazil. It used to be Canada. The Canadian factory has now closed. Maybe the different location has attributed to the difference.

I had been diluting Selenium Toner 1:10 for as long as I remember and toning for around 3 to 4 minutes. Now I dilute at 1:30 and tone for 3 minutes. If I tone a little longer I only get a slight tone change so it just goes to show that slow toner is best and more controllable. Usually the more silver in the paper the longer it takes for the toner to work. Perhaps the silver content has been reduced or some of the other components

that contribute to the make up of the paper have been altered. I have been assured that this is not the case, just the change of location. Make of it what you will.

View Camera and Camera Arts Magazine

Some good news I received recently is that a magazine I have been subscribing to for nearly 7 years now from the US is being distributed in Australia by Mainline Photographics in Sydney. Their web site is www.mainlinephoto.com.au and if you scroll down the main page you will come to the information about both View Camera and Camera Arts magazines. View Camera is obviously for Large Format and Camera Arts is for medium format and 35 mm. It is worth trying it for a year at least.

I have been subscribing directly from the USA, but the consistency of delivery was just a nightmare. They would ship by sea and arrive, if at all, two to three months after the release date. When I didn't get a magazine for 3 months I would ring them in the States and tell them and they would send again by post and I would usually have it within 10 days. I did exactly that last week and the magazines arrived just yesterday. I have attached an order form to make it easier or go to the web site if you are interested.

EMAIL DARKROOM EDITIONS #3 **100% guaranteed**

The third offering in the Email Darkroom editions is again the photograph I have presented at the head of this newsletter.

The darkroom editions are designed to give you the opportunity to purchase one of my photographs at a highly reduced rate. This will apply **only** to receivers of this electronic mail. **This offer lasts till September 30, 2004.**

Photographs are offered in sizes that I feel are appropriate to the image. This will differ from image to image as some shots, in my opinion, only deserve, or work better in a particular size.

About the image

The image was made in Gunnedah mid western NSW (near Tamworth) when I was up there this year teaching a workshop. The old wool shed was just fabulous and the light was very soft. The previous day we were in there photographing portraits. A great venue for all sorts of things.

This above image will be offered in **8" x 10" only**. The reason is I have printed this image slightly differently than I usually do. During the enlarging stage I have added some diffusion to the print which gives it a soft, eerie look. I hope it's evident. This is to go with the soft light that was present when I made the photograph. I am keeping it to 8" x 10" because of the price I am offering it at this time.

The image has also been printed on Polymax Fine Art Fibre Base double weight paper, but **Semi Matt or Semi Gloss** whichever way you look at it, When I print this way I usually use this type of paper. The print has also been selenium toned and processed to archival standards.

The print is mounted and over matted on museum board ready for framing.

Details relating to the image and print number will appear on the back of the mounted photograph.

Well that's it for this time. Make sure you enjoy the photographs you take, because there's always a possibility that others won't.

Thanks and cheers till next time,

Richard