

# The Art of Photography

Richard White

PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS    ON LINE GALLERY    PHOTOGRAPHY ARTICLES    HIGH COUNTRY CALENDAR

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Mountain Ash & Fog, Mt Stirling 2004

As a new year begins it appears that there have been no new developments re the availability of black and white papers in Australia. Apparently Ilford are producing orders they had, but once they are complete there may be a reduction in products they sell that's if they survive. It's a wait and see game. Kodak apparently are looking for a distributor for their B&W products so that they will be readily available. That's a step forward. Such a great paper as Polymax deserves a permanent home.

There is of course no shortage of inkjet papers for the home computer so those who only dabble in this area should be quite happy. In fact I recently did what I did years ago with fibre base papers. I bought several inkjet papers and tried printing the same image on each of them. I was amazed at the difference in quality and colour. It just goes to prove that oils ain't oils.

Back to Polymax for the moment. In the last newsletter I mentioned how Polymax paper was toning much quicker than it use to. I wrote:

*"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".*

Well you may be interested to know that I went a little further with my investigation and was told that if the formula had changed then certain people would know about it and *"they knew nothing"*. A few weeks prior to Christmas I was asked to produce an 11 x 14" print of one of my images for a customer. I was out of 11 x 14 paper as I assume most of you are. So in order to get the print done I cut down some older stock of 16 x 20 paper I had from the "old" emulsion and made the print on that.

Not only was the paper slower, but when I came to toning with my new toning dilution the paper hardly toned at all. So as I said last month, make of it what you will!

And while I am talking about toning it has always been a practice to dilute Selenium Toner with working strength Hypo Clearing Agent, use it a few times and then dump it. The reason you need to dump it is that Hypo Clearing Agent oxidizes reasonably quickly and so causes the Selenium solution to be less effective. Selenium if I recollect sells for around \$30 a bottle (946 ml). If you dilute at 1:10 as I use to you can go through a bottle quite quickly.

Now the good news is that you can use Selenium Toner without diluting it with Hypo Clearing Agent and you can go on using it for ages. Just dilute with water. These days I dilute Selenium 1:30 and tone between 3 and 4 minutes and I change my working toner every 6 months. It works a treat and I am saving money and helping the environment. I have been doing this for about 4 years now. Give it a try.

Also, it may be worth mentioning that if you are someone who bleaches part of their prints or is considering doing so then make sure you bleach before you tone otherwise you will get a colour shift where you bleach. Usually a slight pink or rose type colour. It can sometimes be effective, but in a rich black and white can look a bit ordinary to say the least.

In an up and coming article in Better Photography I have raised the question about limited edition prints. Although I usually try not to duplicate things I cover in this newsletter and my articles in Better Photography, I feel it is worth mentioning briefly only because I have had a number of people ask me about this in the last few months.

Usually there are two questions. "Do you limit the number of prints you sell and if so how many is the edition?"

In the beginning when I started out selling my landscape photographs I would put a number on them. One of 49 or 1 / 99 and I only did this because most others did and I thought that this is what you are supposed to do.

Well this is fine if you only ever sell 5, 10 or 20 prints in your lifetime, but when you get into the high thirties or the forties you begin to get a little nervous especially with the 49 edition. You start wishing that you had a higher number on them especially when you feel that you probably have been under pricing your work for awhile.

Anyway a number of years ago after many a discussion with a number of other photographers and partly for simplicity I decided to just sell prints that were numbered, but had no edition number to them. Since that decision I have given the matter little thought, where I use to agonize over it quite a bit.

Part of my rationale was that in other creative fields such as music, for instance, sheet music is not limited to a print run, nor are vinyl records or now CD's limited They are pumped out as fast as people buy them. The written word, such as novels or poetry, is not either. So why have we, as photographers, been forced in a sense to restrict what we produce by attaching a number to it?

Part of the reason is to create a desire, to make people respond quickly for fear of missing out and part is to feed the snob factor. What I really hate is having different prices for the higher the number of prints sold. But that is just me and some will have no problem with that concept. The bottom line is that if you feel okay about how you price and sell then great. If not and you do sell prints then maybe it is time to have a rethink.

## **View Camera and Camera Arts Magazine**

I mentioned in the last newsletter how these magazines are now available for subscription within Australia. I have been subscribing from the US for nearly 7 years, but delivery was a little erratic. Try it for a year and see what you think.

Mainline Photographics in Sydney are the distributors. Their web site is [www.mainlinephoto.com.au](http://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.

## **EMAIL DARKROOM EDITIONS #4                      100% guaranteed**

The forth offering in the Email Darkroom editions is again the photograph I have presented at the head of this newsletter, **Mountain Ash & Fog, Mount Stirling.**

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 February 14, 2005.**

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 during a workshop earlier this year. We were snowed out of the route I wanted to take so headed off down the Circuit Road. The fog was quite thick and there were scenes everywhere. In the 15 to 20 minutes we were there I think I made 3 images. This was my favourite and one I ended up using in my High Country calendar for 2005.

This above image will be offered in **11" x 14" only**.

The image has been printed on Polymax Fine Art Fibre Base double weight gloss paper. The print has also been selenium toned and washed to archival standards 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. Remember photography is a hobby and not a chore so have fun whilst you do it.

Thanks and cheers till next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath it.