

# The Art of Photography

Richard White

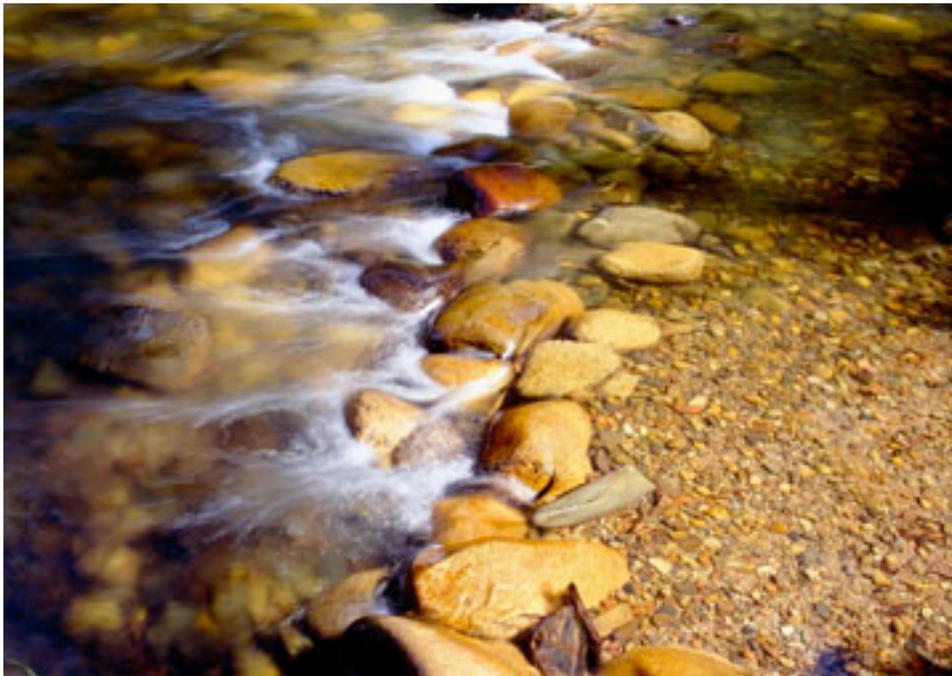
PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS    ON LINE GALLERY    PHOTOGRAPHY ARTICLES    HIGH COUNTRY CALENDAR

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King River 1986

Towards the end of 2005 I had a meeting with a couple of the people at Kodak and we discussed everything from “where to now” to “in your opinion, which is better?” And we weren’t discussing exactly what you are thinking. Although we did briefly cover print quality, we were more concerned with storage and general output of images. Or should I say lack of it.

A number of years ago one of the major sources of income for the big companies was supplying paper to mini labs and film sales. Now in this present day both are down and one more than the other, paper. There is no doubt amongst those in the know that this was one of the things that contributed to Agfa’s demise. It seems now that most people will print their own prints at home or leave them stored on their computer never to see the light of day.

A little while ago you may remember a rather large ad campaign trying to get people to print out their images either at home or take their CD to a minilab and have them do it for them. This was to serve two purposes. One was a genuine attempt to get people to have hard copies of photographs to look at not only for now, but for future generations as well. The other was to stimulate ink jet paper sales to generate income for the companies. Both I would say are valid. We as photographers need companies to produce products for us to use which ever our medium is. With regard to this there was also a very good article in the Melbourne Age's Green Guide back in about mid 2005 I recall, stating pretty much the same as many of us have been saying for awhile. Storage of digitally kept images is an issue. Print it out or still use negatives. The fear is that they will be lost and a record of our families, our own times, will not be available. Some people pooh pooh it, but why are so many who are in the industry of "survival" concerned about it. If all you have are images on the computer, then edit and print out the best on archival paper and inks. You will never be sorry.

Probably the most common scenario at present is capture of images onto film, scan to the computer then either print it out or just save it to the hard drive or a CD. Then comes digital capture, download to the computer etc. Even the people at the Big 3 (use to be Big 4) are a little concerned at the ability in the future for us to be able to read the current storage systems. This is one of the reasons I still enjoy film. It's somewhat permanent and it can be "read" at any time. Also I can feel it, look at it and it's tangible. My preference, I guess for the time being.

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On another matter, I was chatting to a friend who is a wood turner. He makes hand carved bowls, candle sticks and a plethora of other things. He hasn't made anything for more than a year. When he starts up the lathe he says it takes him quite awhile to get his skill level up again and because he makes mistakes as he goes, the frustration level increases. Do you liken this to your own photography? If we don't keep at it we will go rusty. Idleness will not help the talent. There is no point kidding ourselves that we can pick up where we left off a few months ago and still produce the same quality. Like any skill that emanates from within practice is the key to improvement. Ask any golfer, tennis player, musician. Oh, but photography is different! Yeah right!

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I went to view the Dutch Masters exhibition at the Art Gallery in Melbourne last year and was amused by a byline next to a painting done by a student of Rembrandts. It stated that, at that time, the work was considered fairly ordinary because Rembrandt had become passé and the art world wanted something different.

Of course the bozos that dreamed up this notion forget that Rembrandt was a brilliant painter and just because THEY had had enough, didn't make him or his work passé. To view his work today is a treat to the eyes.

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About a month ago I returned from another successful trip to Nepal. Again we trekked in the Annapurna region, were treated to some great hospitality and witnessed one of the strangest things I have seen being carried in the hill country. A blue fridge. It was all boxed up when we first noticed the man carrying it, but we happened to arrive for the night at the same time and the same place it was being delivered to. Size I would estimate to be about 175 to 200 litres. Quite a weight for one ageing Nepali. He would have carried it for 2 or 3 days. Wow! That night we had cold beer!

The weather was kind to us and the views were, as always, spectacular. Again I took a mix of colour and black and white images and feel I have a few shots that will last the test of time. This time apart from my medium format Bronica I also took a 35 mm SLR camera with me. I found this in the market places and at times along the track very handy. The problem was on the last day of the trek it began to play up and died completely when we arrived back in Kathmandu. The camera doctor back here said forget it and bury it with honour.

So now I have to decide what to do about buying another camera. I have been searching the web for updated information on cameras, both film and digital and think I have decided to actually buy a digital SLR. Heresy to some of you I am sure, hypocritical to others, but as the Dalai Lama says “Open your arms to change, but don’t let go of your values”. Doing some soul searching tells me that for a few jobs I do a year it would actually be better than a film camera, clients wouldn’t have to wait for film processing, and having played with a couple over the past month or so I can see some advantages. Now will I be black banned from the Fast Image Light Management group? Sent off to purgatory and told to wash my mouth out with D 76? Well we shall see. In Sydney at the end of this month there is the usual Photographic trade show going on so I will be an avid chatterer at the major companies who sell cameras. Knowing me, if I am in doubt and can’t decide to buy a digital or a film camera, I will buy both. That way I can hedge my bets.

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

If you are interested, this magazine is now available for subscription within Australia. I have subscribed to this magazine for many years now. Although occasionally ordinary, most times useful and very informative. If you are interested in trying it out then 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, unless they have changed their format, 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.

## **NEWSLETTER PRINT OFFER #7 100% guaranteed**

The seventh offering, colour for the first time, is again the photograph I have presented at the head of this newsletter, **King River, Victoria.**

These photographs 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 April 30, 2006.**

Photographs are offered in sizes that I feel are appropriate to the image. This may 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 1986 using a medium format camera on Fuji RVP reversal film.

This above image will be offered in a image size of 240 mm x 350 mm (9 1/2 x 14"). Overall matted size will be 407 mm x 508 mm (16 x 20")

The image will be printed on Kodak Type C paper and butterfly hinged to rag board ready for framing. As always only the finest materials are used in the production of the images.

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

It is just possible that working with materials you know and love will bring out the best in you. Give it a try.

Till next time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard". Below the signature is a single horizontal line that starts under the first letter and extends to the right, ending under the last letter.