

# The Art of Photography Richard White

PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS    ON LINE GALLERY    PHOTOGRAPHY ARTICLES    HIGH COUNTRY CALENDAR

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Issue 18 December 2006



Boat Shed, Hoopers Bay, South Island, NZ

I am glad this is a photographic newsletter and not a general comment newsletter for if it was I would make comment about the way the media is reporting the fires on my back door. I would say that the story in the Melbourne tabloid paper the other day was appalling and beat up to no end. Sensationalized like you wouldn't believe. Even the CFA was appalled.

I would also tell you about how last week in Mansfield, when the fires threatened Mt Buller and I was chatting to a friend who lived on Buller and couldn't get back because the road had been closed, we were approached by ABC news for a comment. They asked Mike a few questions and then turned to me.

"How are you faring?" was the question. "Well," I began, "at present the fires are burning parallel with us and we are in no immediate danger, but (pause) if we get a North Easterly wind which is predicted tomorrow we might be in strife, but we would have to be pretty unlucky". All they broadcast was from after the pause

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to strife. Not exactly what I meant and definitely made to sound more dramatic and dangerous. So if this wasn't a photographic newsletter then I would say things like that, but it is so let's talk photography.

**Photography** to me has always been about making images and hopefully enjoying some of the ones I have made. I have most times found the technical side of things necessary, but not all that exciting. I first got interested in photography because I was very interested in motor racing as a youngster and thought by having a camera I could possibly get to take some of the images I loved in the motor racing magazines. I of course had absolutely no idea that one required, not only the right equipment to accomplish this desire, but a certain amount of skill as well. Probably just as well as sometimes when the mountain appears too big we change our minds about climbing it. But I had youthful exuberance and probably a certain amount of arrogance as well, I suppose. I was seventeen. I bought myself a camera.

My first attempt at recording motor racing events was rather ordinary because I had only a standard lens on my camera. I realized this to be an inadequacy so promptly dived into my bank account and purchased a telephoto lens. I poured over the camera manual to understand the workings of the camera and to get some basic knowledge on picture making. I worked at it to understand how it all came together. No one told me that technique did not really mean technical so I never bothered to go down that road until I had to and that was many a year later. As I learned why, the "how to" and "oh I see" became clearer and easier. There was no real fast track to knowledge or success in this business/hobby and one just had to do the hard yards if improvement in one's images was a goal.

As we all know there are different camps in photography and each of us seem to favour one or possibility two, but usually not more. There's the gadget guys, the techo heads, the image freaks, the perfecto dudes, the kamikaze image makers, the suck it and see-ers, the wet finger to the winders and no doubt plenty more. It appears some, but not all, these days seem to make it into photographic publications.

Of all the photography magazines that I have subscribed to on and off over the years, I think in general, I am disappointed with the choice and quality of the images that are used to accompany the articles. I try to take into consideration that the images may be selected to state a point, or to illustrate one of the camps listed above, but more often than not I find myself wondering about the selection. (Better Photography magazine I consider it to be one of the better ones. I also should state that I do write articles for that magazine, but still think it is a cut above the rest).

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I am seeing the same things in the Digital magazines I get, but the emphasis seems to be more on slight of hand or cleverness rather than exceptional photography. So I am wondering what is happening to the great images that I seem to recall seeing time and again in days gone by and has the general quality of photography changed?

If in my opinion this pattern of ordinary images continues for a few issues then what I usually do is turn the tables on myself and start to think that it is I who has the problem and not the magazine. But I guess one has to be moved to a certain degree by the image so this thought never really takes hold, but it continually sits there. What I find lacking in most of the pictures is soul. No communication between the photographer and the subject matter. Lacking in substance. Just a picture. I have to say that most times this occurs the articles are more about the technical side of photography rather than the aesthetics. Lots of graphs, lots of equations, nothing about the reasons for or the reasons why!

In some ways I liken it to television and some parts of the media who are pre-occupied with trivial mediocrity rather than substance. When eventually we *are* faced with deeper issues we don't respond or cope entirely. Do photographs suffer a similar fate?

Of course by making such comments I run the risk of recrimination myself by you who read and look at my images. Indeed masochism seems to be alive and well on the end of my finger tips.

This thought process is nothing new with me. I have lived with it for years, but have never thought to make comment about it. Obviously the planets are not lined up!

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Another thing that I have discovered over the past few months is the quality of my own photography with regard to some commercial jobs I have been doing. As I have been mentioning in the last few newsletters I was trying to decide whether or not to buy a digital camera or another film camera after the demise of my film SLR. Well I did go ahead and buy a SLR digital and have had some moderate success with it and a little disappointment as well.

About a week after I got it I volunteered to photograph the opening of a series of new buildings at a school that one of my sons goes to. Not really my scene or kind of work, but I thought it would get me acquainted with the camera. The shots worked out fine mostly. I did spend some time fine tuning many of the images in photoshop, as one does, burnt the pictures to a CD and handed them over. They offered me a knighthood for services to the school, but pointed out that they did not have the

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authority to actually give me one so would a big thanks do instead. What could I say? I came home thinking that the money I had outlaid for the camera wasn't so bad after all.

I then did another small job, a paid one this time, in which all they wanted was 6 x 4 prints that they could use in some local advertising. I remember again spending a bit more time, this time on the tweak knobs in photoshop before sending them off to my lab for printing. My frustration of time wasted on the computer to get the photos right was exacerbated by the fact that I realized that if I had shot this job on film, sent it in to the lab, they would colour correct and analyze the negs and print them all fine. Cost wise it would have only been a few dollars more, film included and for me no time spent on the computer. Knowing that negative film has wonderful latitude I lamented on my recent purchase.

In airing my thoughts to a photographer friend he promptly sent me a film body he wasn't using that would take the same lenses as my Digital SLR and so I now have the best of both worlds. I could pick and choose which camera for which job. This I thought is the best option.

Another thing also worth mentioning from my own experience is print quality. Another job I have done in the past few weeks was quite straight forward and simple. I had to photograph a group of people, about 15, and then supply a 5 x 7" print for each of them. A momento of their time together at a "Boot Camp". I took the shot on a medium format camera, using a 6 x 6 format. I would crop the negative down. Now I also made a few exposures on my digital SLR using the best J-peg file available on my 8 meg camera.

The prints were done from the medium format negative and I also had a print made from the digital file. Apart from the slight colour shift between the two, which was down to me not adding enough yellow I think to the digital file, the prints appeared identical. At closer inspection the medium format prints were better quality. Only slightly, but enough that I could see in a 5 x 7" print. My comparison was conducted with what most people would have in regard to lenses. Now if I had the best type of lens on the 35 mm camera, meaning the L series lenses (at about 3 times the price tag) and if I had unsharp masked the digital file then with these additions I would think that possibly comparative quality would be there. I'll have to check it out. All I need is an L series lens.

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## **Black & White High Country Calendar 2007**

As in past years I have produced the High Country Calendar for 2007. I have been able to keep the price the same as for the past 3 years which is \$29.50. The calendar can be found, if they have any left, at most good book stores, ABC shops and some newsagents. If you would like a copy sent directly from me, send a cheque or postal order along with your name and address to P.O. Box 425 Mansfield Vic 3722 and I will post a copy back to you. If you would like it personalized just ask. Overseas orders add \$10 for NZ and \$15 for the rest of the world.

## **NEWSLETTER PRINT OFFER for issue #18            100% guaranteed**

The print offering for this issue is the photograph I have presented at the head of this newsletter:  
**Boat Shed, Hoopers Bay South Island NZ**

These photographs are designed to give you the opportunity to purchase one of my photographs at a reduced rate. This will apply **only** to receivers of this electronic mail.

**This offer lasts till December 31, 2006.**

Photographs are usually offered in the image size of 11 x 14" (27 x 35 cm) approximately. The size may vary slightly depending on cropping of a particular image.

### **About the image**

The image was made in 2005 on TRI-X 4 x 5" film with a Linhof Technika.

It was made in the South Island of New Zealand near Dunedin. A workshop I had been leading had finished and I was scouting for possible locations for 2007. (see details later in the newsletter) Made just after sunrise with a 210mm lens 1 sec @ F 45 using an O21 (orange) filter.

The image will be printed on my dwindling stocks of Kodak Polymax Fibre base paper mounted to rag museum board and over matted ready for framing. As always only the finest materials are used in the production of the image. The print will be over matted to an overall size of 407 mm x 508 mm (16 x 20").

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

### **Cost of Print**

**The dollar value is the same as the country you live. ( Aust. NZ, USA, Canada, UK will be as US \$ i.e.:**

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If you live in Australia A\$300, if you live in the USA, US\$300)

The normal print price for this size is \$295.

**The 11" x 14" Newsletter Edition Print will be \$220.**

(A\$220    US\$220    Can\$220    NZ\$220)

**The print price is inclusive of post and packing.**

**100% Money Back Guarantee**

I also understand that buying a photograph from a computer screen can cause some to have sleepless nights, so with that that in mind if you do purchase a print and are not completely satisfied I will refund your amount in full, provided you return the photograph within 14 days of receipt in the same condition it arrives. This is a 100% money back guarantee.

If you would like a print, send me a note with a cheque, money order, direct deposit or international bank transfer, ( Pay Pal is close to working) for the correct amount along with your name and address and contact details. Ordered prints will be sent out 4 – 6 weeks later.

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

An alternative to some of the Australian or British magazines or an addition to what you already get. If you are interested in trying it out then Mainline Photographics in Sydney are the distributors. By being distributed locally it makes it easier to receive and you get it on time. I have tried it both ways. Their web site is [www.mainlinephoto.com.au](http://www.mainlinephoto.com.au) and then look for the subscriptions and books area, quite simple really. View Camera is obviously for Large Format and Camera Arts is for medium format and 35 mm. Both magazines talk freely about all capture mediums. Mainline is also a large format specialist.

## **For Sale**

A friend of mine in Melbourne, John, has some items for sale. If you are interested contact him directly. His phone number is 03 9882 1345 or Email: [mail@johningham.com.au](mailto:mail@johningham.com.au)

Mamiya RZ 67 outfit comprising:

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Mamiya RZ 67 Camera body \$600  
3 120 roll film backs \$200 each  
1 polaroid back \$100  
110mm/2.8 lens \$300  
180mm/4.5 lens \$450  
50mm/4.5 lens \$450  
65mm/4.0 lens \$350  
ext. tube #1 45mm \$200  
motorized film advance winder \$100

all mint condition, prices neg. for purchase of more than one item

Manfrotto tripod #055 suitable for roll film and 35mm cameras \$150

Gitzo tripod heavy duty model, suitable for cameras up to 8"x10" \$350

Enlarger Durst 138 S free standing, 50, 80, 100, 300mm Schnieder lenses  
converts to 8x10 with Aristo cold light head, also includes Ilford Multigrade  
head, and original Durst condenser head for negs up to 5x4. Timers neg  
carriers etc. \$600

Jobo ATL 2 fully automatic film processor. Includes drums for processing  
all formats from 35mm to 8x10, and colour prints up to 20x24.  
One owner, very little use, excellent condition \$1200

Also another friend has an enlarger for sale. Contact Christine at [christinegil@westvic.com.au](mailto:christinegil@westvic.com.au)

The enlarger is a Durst CLS1000. It goes from my floor to the ceiling!! It takes large format,  
medium format as well as 35mm negs and has all the lenses to suit each size. It is in  
excellent condition. I bought it second hand for approx. \$3500 including lenses. Will sell for  
\$2000. I used to use it mainly for printing my 6x17 negs from my panoramic camera.

And I have 2 Jobo CPE processors for sale. One has a lift. One is good and the other sometimes  
erratic. Spares was what I thought it best for. Also some tanks and things. \$200 for both. Contact me  
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## Workshops for 2007

My new workshop program is out and the list of workshops follows. Again I think that there is a nice selection to keep most of you happy. If you would like a hard copy then drop me an email along with your address and I will mail you out one or if you would like a PDF sent then again just email me.

### **Tasmania Workshop March 17 – 25 2007 A workshop with Bruce Barnbaum and Richard White** **Workshop Fee: \$1200**

This workshop is full. You can still apply and be placed on a waiting list.

This workshop will be conducted in some of the most spectacular places this island has to offer. Noted American Photographer and master craftsman Bruce Barnbaum will join me on this much anticipated workshop. Cradle Mountain, Freycinet National Park, the Tasman Peninsula and the Port Arthur Convict settlement are just some of the places we will visit on this nine day workshop. Beginning in Launceston and ending in Hobart, what a time we will have in between. We will have a mix of Australian and American photographers which will make an interesting workshop for the sharing of ideas. This will be a rare opportunity to learn and photograph with Bruce Barnbaum, one of the world's finest photographers. To view his images visit his web site [www.barnbaum.com](http://www.barnbaum.com)

### **The High Country Workshop April 13 - 16 2007 Workshop Fee: \$430**

We are back in the High Country around Mansfield and will conduct this workshop at Mount Buller. We will visit Craig's Hut, the West Ridge and Mount Stirling. This is the home of the film The Man From Snowy River. A beautiful part of the world to indulge yourself in photography for a few days. We will awake to great views each day. What a way to inspire oneself. Lodge accommodation.

### **The Portrait Workshop Marysville April 27 - 30 Workshop Fee, Accommodation & most meals: \$645**

The workshop looks at making Portraits in whatever situation you come across. From studio lighting set ups using one light or two or even three, to window light, indoors or outdoors using any camera you wish. There are basically no limitations on making a portrait and we will look at many ways to accomplish this. Our venue will be a 1930's guest house where we will photograph, discuss, eat and sleep. The cost is inclusive of workshop fee, accommodation and most meals. Co instructor is Anthony Browell, known for his unique style of portraiture.

### **Beechworth & Bushranger Workshop Early May 11 - 14 2007 Workshop Fee: \$430**

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Field workshop focusing on the lie of the land, colonial & unique architecture and a chance to photograph "Ol' Ned himself before they hang him!" Great location and great subject matter. Jeff Moorfoot will be my co-instructor for this workshop, bringing his unique photography and his quirky sense of humour with him.

## **Daylesford Foto Biennale                      June 2 to July 1    Details: [www.daylesfordfotobiennale.org](http://www.daylesfordfotobiennale.org)**

During this month long event I will conduct a one and a half day workshop on the long weekend of June (8th & 9th) entitled: "Finding a Photographic Direction". The workshop will concentrate on having a vision and an intent, whether digital or analogue or a combination of both and how to bring it all together. Also on the same weekend I am giving a talk on the state of photography today. Where does Fine Art Photography fit into the equation? At this stage the workshop is scheduled for the Friday night and all day Saturday and the talk on the Sunday.

Of interest to some of you along with Ellie at Gold Street Studios, (Trentham East) on the first weekend of the Biennale, June 2 & 3 we are planning a **Large Format** get together. The purpose will be to discuss, talk about and photograph with large format cameras. 4 x 5" and up. We have a plan that on the first day we will meet and discuss large format photography in the morning, have lunch, do some photography in the afternoon within the township of Trentham, (beautiful old buildings), have someone develop the film, choose the negs, have someone print them and then exhibit them for the duration of the Biennale. Most who do large format develop and print themselves as I do so if you are worried by this either take 2 negs or just photograph and don't do the rest. Anyway if you are interested drop me an email.

## **The Fine Print (Advanced darkroom practice) June 22 - 25 2007. Workshop Fee: \$450**

This workshop will begin Friday evening and ends Monday PM to allow plenty of time to demonstrate all the new techniques you will learn. You will be encouraged to print from one or more of your negatives under my watchful eye where we will look at applying some of the new techniques. This is not a workshop for the newcomer in the darkroom, but someone who has either completed one of my introductory Black and White print workshops or has been actively involved in print making for some time. There will be portfolio reviews as usual and lots more. The workshop fee includes paper and chemicals. Limited to 6.

## **The Streets of Melbourne, Film & Digital comparisons August 3 - 5 2007 Workshop Fee: \$350**

We begin Friday evening and finish up Sunday afternoon. This workshop will look at comparisons between the two mediums and how to work with both or a combination of both. Working from a studio in Melbourne we will look at finished prints side by side and explain how the final results were achieved, either via

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photoshop or via image transfer to light sensitive paper. A field trip around the unique parts of the city will compliment an interesting and thought provoking workshop. Portfolios reviews are covered as well. Co-instructor is John Ingham. Someone who has made the switch from film to digital quite successfully.

## **South Island New Zealand October 13 - 19 2007 Part 1 & October 20 - 22 for Part 2** **Workshop Fee Part 1: \$650 and Part 1 & 2: \$ 825**

Another week photographing in the beautiful South Island of New Zealand. As has been the case on our two previous trips the route will be a different one that will deliver stunning views every way you turn. Beginning in Christchurch we will head South to the Moeraki Boulders and then inland through the Mainiototo Plains of Central Otago. Although this would be enough to excite us for a week we will head on to Queenstown and once again discover the beauty of this wonderful area.

The first part of the workshop will begin in Christchurch on the Saturday and conclude the following Friday in Queenstown making it a stimulating week of exploring and photographing in one the worlds most spectacular places. You then have the option to fly back to Christchurch and home or to stay on and make the journey to Milford Sound for a few extra days. The drive to Milford Sound is one of the most spectacular in the world. The mountains will still be snow covered as the spring weather takes hold. We will then return to Queenstown to end part two of the workshop.

Pre booked accommodation at all locations will keep us comfortable and prepared for each day's adventure. Fine food and healthy photographic debate, as well as a thorough review of all work that participants wish to bring will help develop new ways to look at their own style.

## **The Great Ocean Road Workshop    November 10 – 13 2007 Workshop Fee: \$430**

Based in Port Campbell we will photograph the rugged coastline of Loch Ard Gorge and the Twelve Apostles, parts of the Eastern side of the Otway Ranges and the picturesque waterfalls and awesome Sequoias of the Otway State Forest . Many field trips are planned to the most spectacular places this area offers. Our indoor and evening sessions will as usual be informative and fun as will be my co-instructor Jeff Moorfoot. Such a great place for a workshop.

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## **Introduction to the Darkroom - Printing the traditional way**

This workshop will be on demand. To be held over a weekend of either June, July, or August 2007. The workshop is designed to introduce you to the wet darkroom and to make prints the more traditional way.

Through various demonstrations and discussions I will show you how to make adjustments that reflect your vision by maintaining consistency in your negatives so they are printable everytime. How to choose the right grade of paper to begin printing with. Where and how to dodge or burn a print effectively. How to have tonal control over the print in all areas. I will also show you how you can effectively use the computer to print an image in the darkroom, before you have printed it.

Participants will be encouraged to bring along prints for an informative and helpful critique session which offers suggestions, ideas and ways of changing or improving their work. Also the workshop will be tailored to suit your needs. Cost of the workshop will depend on numbers attending. If you are interested contact The Art of Photography Workshops for dates and pricing. Minimum 3, maximum 6.

And finally:

## **Looking ahead to September / October 2008**

### **The Landscape of Scotland**

I will team up with noted English photographer and nice guy Joe Cornish to lead a group of adventurous people to the Scottish Highlands to photograph in the area around Ranchoor Moor and the nearby coast. This week long workshop could be part of a longer trip that you plan.

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The workshop will take place pretty much in Joe's back yard. He has lived in North Yorkshire since 1994 and has photographed that area and Scotland extensively. The workshop will be rich photographically. You will enjoy the challenging landscape which will in turn challenge you. Your biggest difficulty may be understanding the accent! To familiarize yourself with Joe's work have a look at his web site. [www.joecornish.com](http://www.joecornish.com)

Contact the Art of Photography for more details or stay tuned to the web site.

**One last thing. I will be changing my email address soon. You will be notified prior to it happening with a simple email.**

Well that's it for this year. I hope you have a great Christmas and that the new year brings harmony to all.

Till next time.

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