

# **ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY**

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by

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# **THE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY**

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An essay submitted for the subject  
Visual Communication III

2005



This mini-thesis on architectural photography consists of the following four essays:

1. The History of Architectural Photography
2. The Working Environment of a architectural Photographer
3. Techniques of architectural Photography
4. Discussion of Own Portfolio



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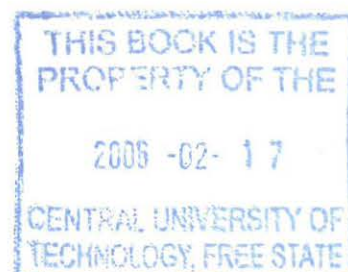
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Architecture is a combination of structure and form. Structure and form with personality. Where did architecture originate? How did it develop and improve over the years? How can photographs help us understand and appreciate architecture?

An architectural photograph consists of mood, atmosphere, technique, geometry and a personal point of view. Architecture reveals something of our history and shows how technology improved over time. Every building tells a story of the era in which it was built and why it was built. History that contributes to our understanding of who we are and where we came from. Most of the architecture photographers discussed herein started out as painters or landscape photographers. Architectural photography mainly developed when Paris was structured in the nineteen hundreds, so the area of discussion broadens from the 1910 onwards. Early photographers did not have the advanced equipment used today and most of them truly relied on “*having an eye for a picture*” rather than specialized techniques. This is what makes them a great part of photographic history. They helped to establish and shape photography into what it is today.

Architectural photography consists of photographing interiors, exteriors and architectural detail. Architectural photography is subsequently discussed in general, but on special emphasis on some photographers famous for their photographic work regarding architecture.



## 2. ROGER FENTON (1855-1869)

Roger Fenton is well-known for his coverage of war. This is a pity because it only forms a small part of his total photographic output. Other areas include architecture and landscapes. Roger Fenton was born into a wealthy family and his father was a member of the parliament. He studied photography in the studio of Charles Lucy and in 1841 he continued his studies with Paul Delaroche.

Fenton later earned a Master of Arts degree. In January 1851 he visited Paris and saw how much freedom the photographers in France had, since everybody had access to the daguerreotype process. Four years later he visited Russia where photographers weren't well-known which granted him instant freedom and fame. Fenton usually used *Straight Photography* without any manipulation. Fenton made use of the calotype process and by 1852 he was using the new refinement of the wax paper negatives. In 1853 Fenton made use of the new collodion process, which he used extensively while traveling. After returning from the Crimean War he took up landscape and architectural photography. Fenton refused to use combination negatives in any of his work, he believed it resulted in light sky areas turning characteristically white and he was often criticized for this. Agnew & Sons employed Fenton in hope of selling his photographs. Fenton produced a lot of Stereoscope photographs of architecture. He specially produced a series of photographs of cathedrals. For no known reason he gave up taking photographs in 1861 and returned to the practice of law. Some thought that this was because of his dislike for the increasing commercialization of photography. But it was mostly his bout of cholera that led to his early death at the young age of 49 (Anon (b), 2005:1).

### 3. CHARLES NEGRÉ (1820-1880)

Charles Negré was born into an Italian family in 1820. The family business was established in Grasse in 1778. As a young man Negré spent most of his time in the prosperous family business. At the very young age of eighteen his interest in art made him to enroll as a pupil of a well-known painter and artist of that era, Paul Delaroche.

Negré later completed his studies under Ingres. In 1843 he held his first art exhibition. In 1844 he experimented with the daguerreotype process and he aimed towards photography. At that time he saw photography only as a tool to help further his art career. He mainly photographed documentation; still-lives and people but later became known for his landscapes and architectural photographs of French cities. The methods he used to capture an image were precise. If he couldn't achieve the right result when taking the picture, he would retouch his negatives by means of shading areas to create atmosphere, or simply by adding contrasts. In August 1852 Negré left Grasse to photograph monuments and archeological vestiges of his homeland. He took over two hundred photographs and he compiled them under the name *u album dmidi de la France*. Negré became known worldwide for his exquisite architecture and landscape photography of French cities like Paris and Chartes. Negré later studied heliographic engravings and quit photography. Negré retired in 1863 and died in Cannes in 1880.

### 4. BERENICE ABBOTT (1898-1991)

Bernice Abbott was one of the very few women architectural photographers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and although not originally a architectural photographer, she did sculpting and various kinds of photography as well.

Abbott was born in Springfield, Ohio, in July 1898. Her name was originally Beranice but she changed it to Bernice when she moved to Paris in the 1920s and

adopted the French spelling. She was one of five siblings, her mother and father were divorced and that caused her to have a very unhappy childhood. She wanted to be a sculptor or artist. For two years she travelled between Paris and Berlin deciding what she wanted to do. Abbott met Man Ray, a fellow American, in Paris. He was looking for a darkroom assistant; she then decided to take up photography and joined him. At the age of twenty seven she was a professional portrait photographer and she had a clear sense and direction for her future work (Anon, 2002:1). She studied the 70-year-old photographs of Eugene Atget and she realized what she really wanted to do. When Atget died in 1927 Abbott purchased all the negatives (1,400 glass plates) and prints (7800) of his estate.

Abbott printed, published and exhibited his material which consisted of an encyclopedic documentation of the buildings of Old Paris. She immediately realized the value of these records and wanted to make her own pictures of a similar project. She started photographing buildings in precise detail in symmetrical ways. She paid close attention to the smallest detail, to the precise methods of capturing every shot. She was intrigued by the old and the new. Although she only planned a short trip to New York, she stayed there and documented the Big Apple's architecture. She returned to Paris to sell all of her furniture in order to pursue her new dream as an architectural photographer. Everybody thought that she was crazy to give up her successful portraiture business and her name as portrait photographer. Only a few weeks after she returned to New York the stock market crashed. Americans scarcely paid fifty dollars for a portrait photograph. Her finances looked terrifying and she started looking for new work. Margaret Bourke White recommended Abbott to the editor of *Fortune Magazine*. He hired her and although he found her objects dislikeable (Anon, 2002:2) she soon made a name in New York too and found a support group of young Harvard alumni who studied modern art.

The New York Museum was founded in 1923 and modelled on the Musée Carnavalet in Paris. This was the first American institution dedicated to

documenting a city's history. Abbott went to the director of the museum, Harding Schole, and he was very impressed with her work. Schole wasn't able to financially support her idea of documenting the city landmarks, which were about to disappear because of a lack of funds. A couple of days later an architect and historian I.N. Phelps Stokes and Schole helped Abbott to gain access to document the architecture of the Rockefeller Center construction site. She then made several historical and significant prints (Anon, 2002:2). After this experience she tried several fundraising attempts – and all failed. In 1933 she started lecturing courses at a new school for social research in Greenwich Village. In 1934 Abbott spent six weeks with a very well-known architectural historian, Henry Russel Hitchcock. He prepared one of the exhibitions at the museum of modern art and for Wesleyan University where he was a lecturer and taught photography. Her unique and unselfish style perfectly fitted Hitchcock's subject. She admired his work and learnt a lot from him.

Abbott dedicated her time to photographing New York City, a project she named *Changing New York* in April 1936. The Federal Art Project gave her hundred and forty five dollars which she invested in her work by buying two small format cameras and they also gave her a Linhof, and a Rolleiflex which is the equipment she mainly used when photographing buildings. This project was divided into three parts, namely city streets, different cultures and ethnical groups, religious signs, exteriors and interiors (Anon, 2002:3). Abbott's photographs were never politically or racially motivated. Because of this she soon gained publicity and she held exhibitions that changed New York. This work of her was also published in April 1939 by E.P. Dutton & Co., a guidebook for visitors to New York Worlds Fair. The book includes ninety seven photographs by Berenice Abbott. Her partner and friend, the art critic Elizabeth McCauseland, wrote the captions. It was difficult to publish this book, McCauseland tended to overdo the captions and Abbott's images were rarely even noticed (Anon, 2002:4). For Abbott architecture was a single mind pursuit of technical aspects and impressive bodywork (Anon, 2002:3).

## 5. BRASSAÏ (1899-1991)

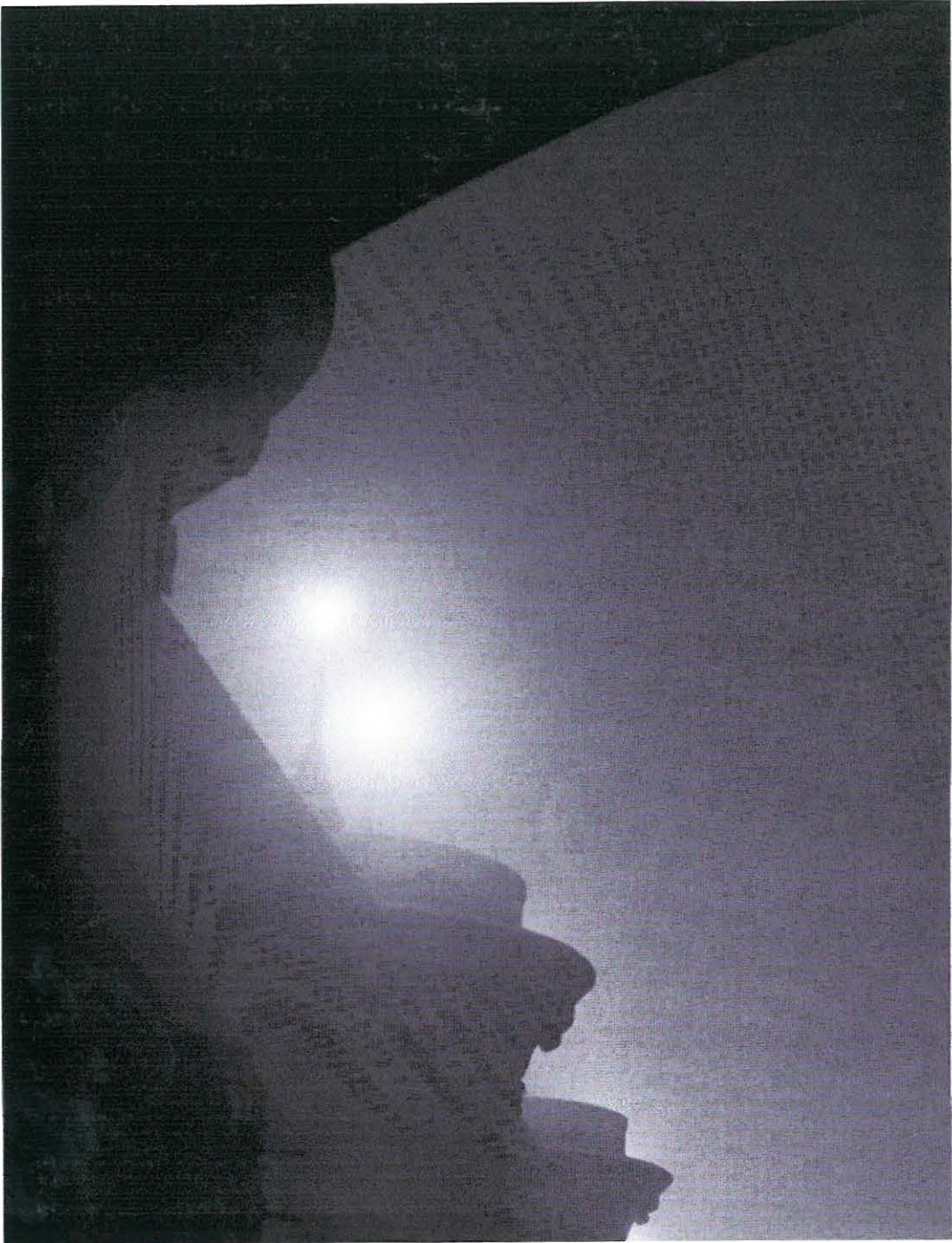
The political changes during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century had a major impact on photographers in both Europe and America, although there were some European photographers who were able to avoid the horrors of World War II by immigrating to America. One of these photographers was Brassai.

Brassai was born in 1899 and he was one of the first emigrants to come over from Europe to America to widen his horizons in art, rather to concern him with the political changes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He published sixty-two black and white photographs, in a spiral bound, soft-cover book called *Paris by Night*. His images mainly consisted out of the dark shadowy underworld of the thirties, images that were scandalous but original for that time. These images gave other photographers a whole new perspective on photographing people and buildings. He tried to capture the unfamiliar beauty of a dark city. Some critics admired his technical and artistic techniques. Brassai's images capture streetlights in mist and a mosaic of the buildings uneven paving stones.

Brassai's work was straightforward a chronological study of work relating to culture and history. Brassai believed that he was no surrealist unlike some people would say. Brassai said that "*A photograph cannot change its nature, manipulating it however one may, it will never be anything other than a transcription of the world in black and white in dimensional space*" (Sayag, 2000:15). He never captured anything but reality for which he used his way of seeing. His aim was to create something out of the ordinary, something striking and fresh out of an everyday scene. Brassai also manipulated his images in the darkroom to ultimately create the right mood and atmosphere needed to fit each image taken. He explained that a negative does not count that much in his type of photography: it's the artist's print that counts. He usually cropped his negatives to try out different formats. He printed two to three different prints of the same negative (Sayag, 2000:16). In *The Secret of Paris* Brassai portrayed the insides of

small café's documenting back street alleys and people. Although he didn't specialize in photographing architecture itself, he mostly old buildings with character as background mainly to enhance his photographs. He took a couple of architecture pictures, namely *The Point Neuf in Fog* (Appendix A) in 1934. This picture is a Silver Salt print of about 24 x 18 cm. He also took *The Passage du Palais-Roall*" (Appendix B) in 1932 which is also a Silver Salt print and 24 x 30 cm. In these images you can see precise control over light and darker areas. Lines all moving in the same direction creating a clean, abstract image, patterns forming on the floor creating some sort of balance. One of my favourite works of Brassai is most certainly a night scene called *Glacier Metro Station* (Appendix C). The picture was taken one evening when all the trains had already left the station and only some homeless people sleeping in the empty station were left. He took the scenes just as it was and manipulated the contrasts in the darkroom to create these magnificent effects.

Streetlights and building lights fascinated him and in a few photographs like *Pigall's American bar* and *Bal du Moulin Rouge* one can see all the lights he captured in each image: dark buildings with great light detail. He loved to capture lovers in small café's, hotel rooms and bars while taking interior photographs, but using the interior itself only as a background. I absolutely admire the picture he took in 1949 called *An Evening at Maxims* (Appendix D). The picture consists of a big dining room with lots of people. Brassai captured the people reflecting in huge mirrors across the wall, adding a feeling of space. The detail he captured on the interior is extraordinary sparkling glasses and silverware, lights creating mood, everything just melts together to form an excellent image. *The Tour Saint Jacques* (Appendix E) he took in 1932 with the help of the Commission Nationale a Photographie. The image is a Silver print and unique in the way in which angle is used. The only light was the moon; the branches of the trees added to create balance and creativity. Considering the technology of those days and the images Brassai created, it is no wonder that he is one of the best photographers known worldwide for his contribution to great historical photography.



**Appendix A**  
*The Point Neuf in Fog 1932*  
**Brassaï**  
(Sayag & Lionel, 2000:39)

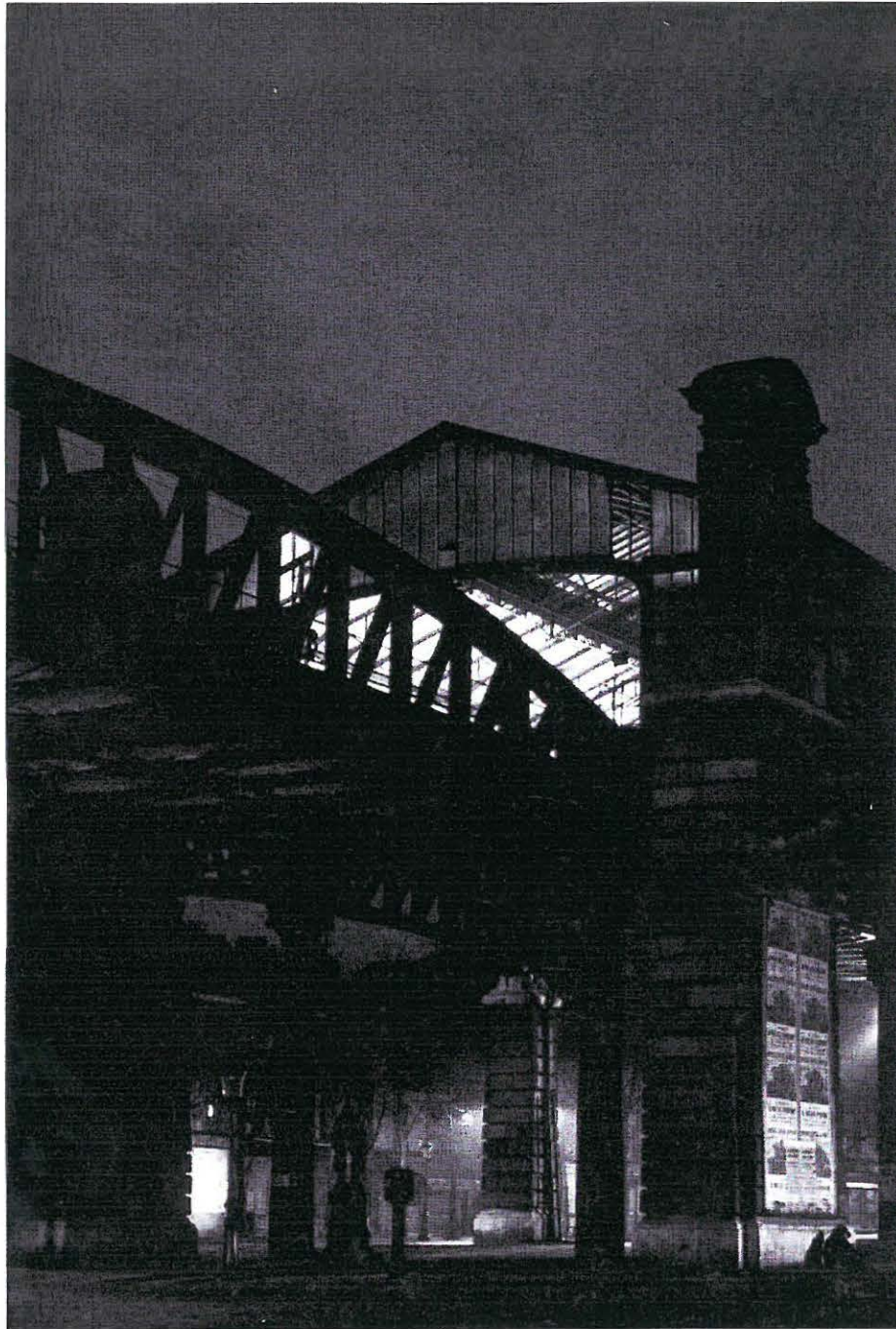


**Appendix B**

*The Passage du Palais Roall*

**Brassaï 1932**

**(Sayag & Lionel, 2000:42)**



Appendix C  
*Glacier Metro Station*  
Brassaï 1930 – 1932  
(Sayag & Lionel, 2000:45)

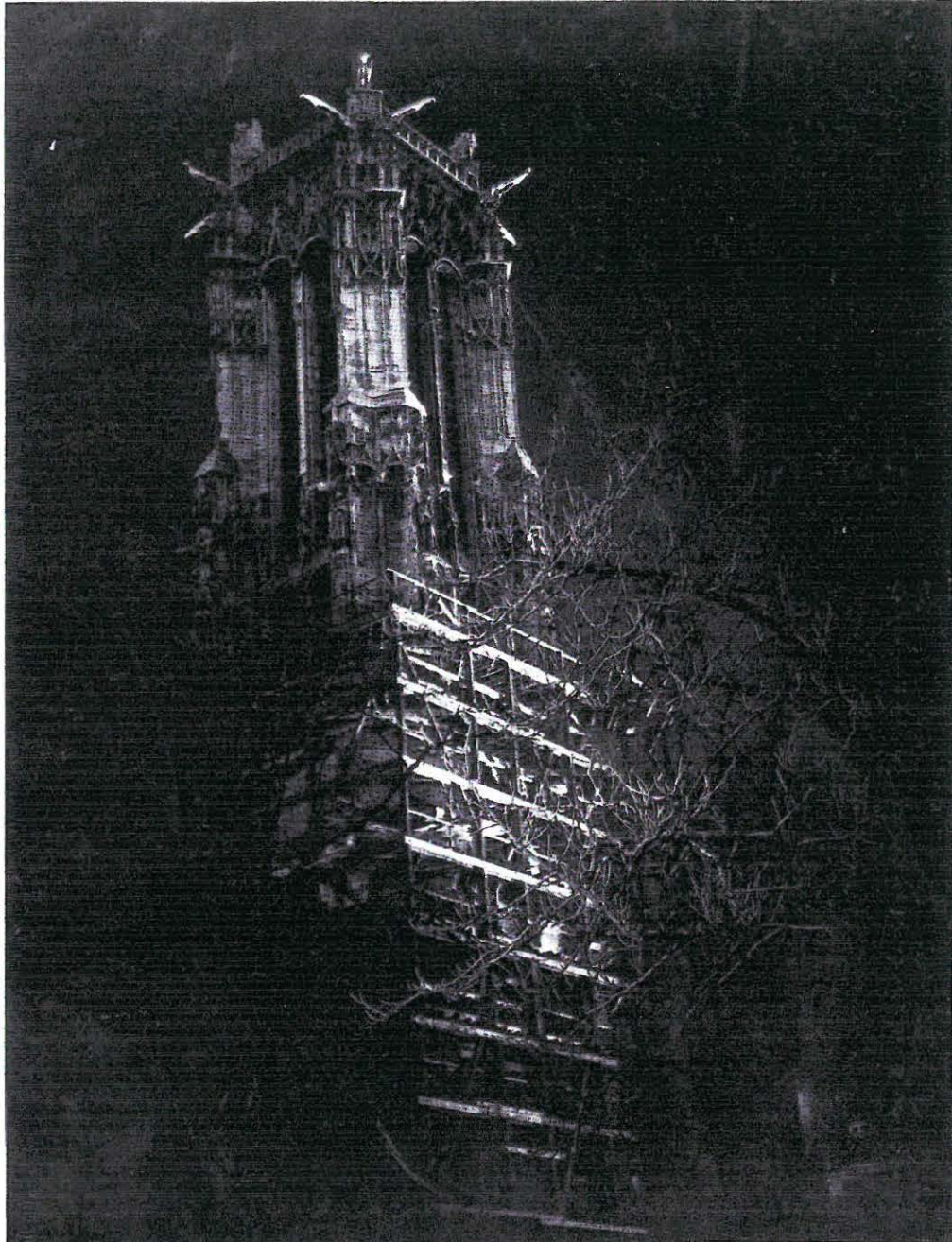


Appendix D

*An evening at Maxims*

Brassaï 1949

((Sayag & Lionel, 2000:94)



Appendix E

*The Tour Saint Jaques*

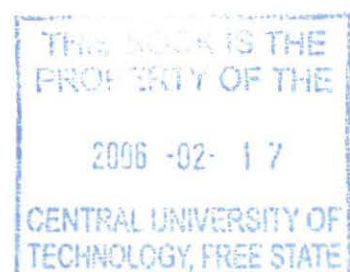
Brassai 1932 – 1933

((Sayag & Lionel, 2000:14)

6. EDWIN SMITH (1912 – 1971)

Edwin Smith was born 15 May 1912. He was an only child and had a very unhappy childhood. He grew up and spent most of his childhood in a house in St. Paul's Road, Camden Town. His father went to World War I and he and his mother then had to stay in two small first floor rooms in St. Pancras. When Edwin Smith reached the age of twelve, he left school and learned building crafts like plumbing, laying stones and carpentry at Northern Polytechnic in Hollywood. He later struggled with his eyes and after thorough testing it was found that he was very short sighted (Cook, 1984:6). Doctors felt that he was going to be blind before he reached adolescence, but miraculously he did not become blind. He used his gift of seeing by catching great and beautiful scenes and putting them down on paper. Architecture was more in his liking as he appreciated detail. He soon was interested in the art that architecture served. In 1928 he went to the Architectural Association and completed a degree (Cook, 1984:6). He wanted to design St. Patrick's .....and worked as a designer for R. Myerscough Walker. It occurred to him that photography can be a profitable sideline and he could still paint. Edwin Smith, one of the greatest Architecture photographers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, always saw himself as "*an architect by training, a painter by inclination and a photographer by necessity*" (Cook, 1984:5). He was inspired by Eugene Atget's work. He saw the photographer's work after his death in 1927 when it was reproduced in *The Architectural Review*. He mainly painted and cared little about photography. He barely had any photographic equipment. He used antiquated cameras and he never had a proper darkroom. He eventually built a darkroom but still wasn't fully committed to photography. In 1967 he finished the darkroom and he only then added a tap with running water (Cook, 1984:5). He admitted to be a professional photographer only in 1971, the same year he died. Smith produced more than sixty thousand negatives. This includes intimacies of architecture, nature and still lifes. His most famous photograph is called *Camden town bedroom, London* (Appendix F).

In the image one can see his painting background in the way the light shines through the bedroom window engulfing all objects in the room. He used shadows and contrasts between fabrics giving a feeling of life and warmth to the image. Later on in his career he purchased a Zeiss Ikon that produced two by two and a half-inch negative. He started photographing interiors. He would cover each corner of the room paying close attention to every little detail. Smith started to explore the different types of photography but every time came back to photographing buildings. In 1950 two authors, Thames and Hudson, wanted to publish their first series of books on architecture and landscapes, and they paid Smith to take the photographs they needed for this publication (Cook, 1984:9). It was the greatest event of his life because he could concentrate on his field of expertise. He had to photograph London's churches and cathedrals. With this assignment he purchased a heavy half-plate bellows camera of mahogany and brass with a truly massive mahogany tripod. The camera was maneuverable which gave full control over every possible detail. While making the correct exposure he would gaze fixedly at the subject. He seldom used a meter; instead he usually "*whispered cat one, cat two, cat three*" (Cook, 1984:10). That usually led to under or over exposure. That's why Smith kept logbooks of all his exposures used with plate cameras and it also gave the necessary details of glass and negative film. He used natural light and daylight but seldom used lamps, only when photographing two-dimensional works of art. Interiors especially of churches needed long exposures. Smith had a twenty-seven and a half-minute exposure in St. Lawrence Bradford. From the late fifties onwards Smith was deluged with requests to illustrate books on historical architecture. In 1971 he completed thirty volumes and after his death they found even more. All Smith's photographs of the 1950's and 1960's showed skillful manipulation of the medium that is far more than statements of documentation. Smith always chose the right lens, filters, length of exposure and selection of paper. Despite his special gift, he was an excellent artist and having an historian like him enriches photography and us.





**Appendix F**

*Camden town bedroom, London*

**Smith, E**

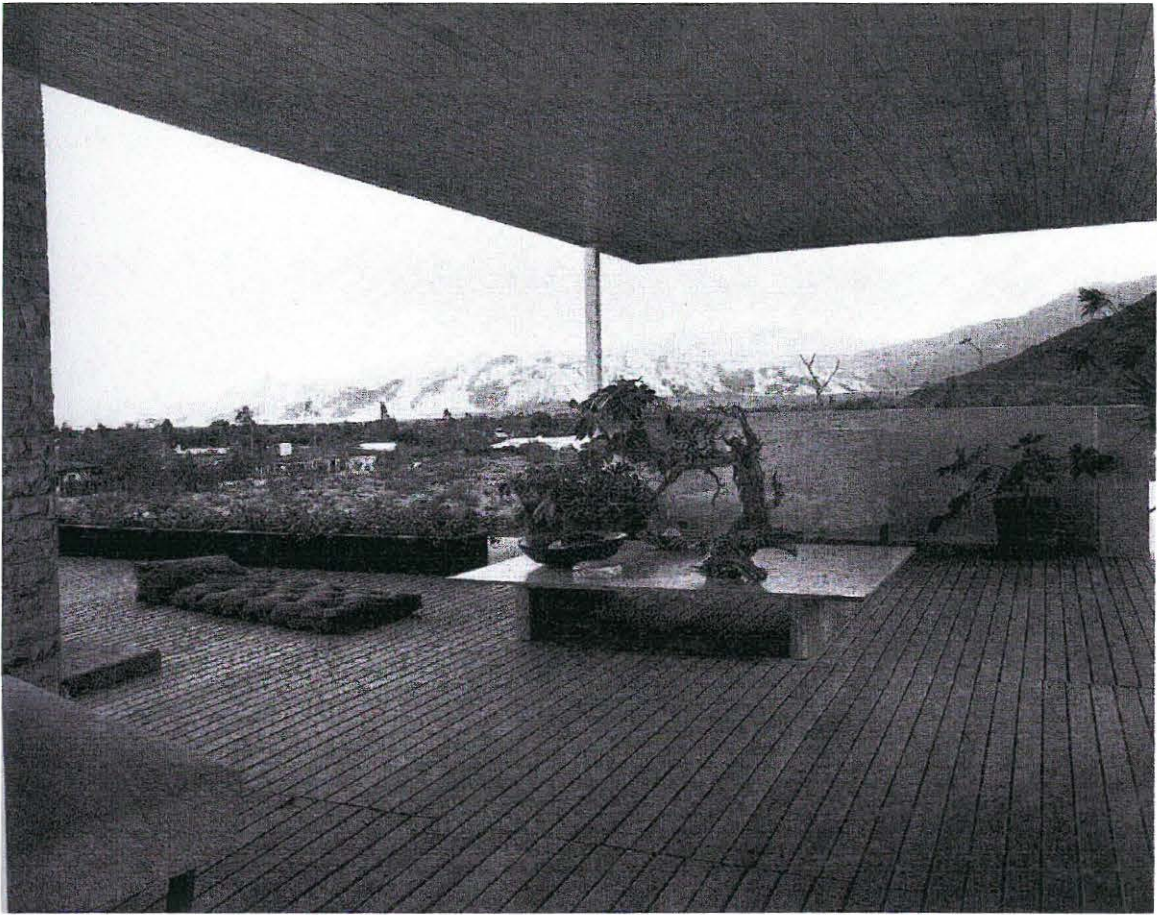
(Cook, 1984:130)

## 7. JULIUS SHULMAN (1910-1952)

Julius Shulman was most certainly one of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's most talented architectural photographers. He was born in 1910 on a small farm in Connecticut. Since childhood he found the changes of light from dawn to sunset very interesting. As he lived on a farm he discovered nature and the impression it made on him was so strong that he later used it in his photography. He was only ten years of age when he and his parents moved to California. He used a Brownie Box camera at the young age of seventeen. He did not become a photographer by choice but rather by chance. A draftsman named Richard Neutra hired Shulman to do work for him under strict guidance and Shulman graduated to a view camera. Shulman started to use creativity combined with architecture. He photographed the work of Los Angeles architects such as RM Schindler, Raphael Soiano, Gregory Ain and Harwell Harris. Aside from Neutra's help he had some pointers in "dynamic symmetry" which he studied to help contribute to his photographic career in architecture. He learnt this from his cousin, who was an art teacher in Detroit and he also studied in Berkeley at UCL. He had an obsession with light and he usually concentrated on this aspect of photography. He believed that light could transform just about any old building. Many of his photographs were printed as postcards, and were put on sale at Berkeley while he finished a seven-year course at UCL. He took his photographs to editors in the east, they rarely saw this type of photography there and he showed them how to do photography and what to see in western design. Shulman knew how to place people in architectural photographs. He also used a person in his photographs for perspective and to give scale to buildings. *"There is one famous photograph of Shulman's that he uses an eye witness for a different purpose. In the twilight shot of Neutra's Palm Springs Kaufmann House"* (McCoy, 1989:11). This image was taken with a forty-five minute exposure, he wanted to use light playing with the water in the swimming pool. He knew how light blessed a building and this one shows his eye for great detail (McCoy, 1989:11). Shulman always took his pictures with great definition on the ground,

furniture inside and outside as well as the outside of a building with the sky and light. In 1948 Shulman started to write for magazines contributing to arts and architecture.

He made regular trips to New York to meet magazine editors and this way he did a large amount of architecture publications. In 1947 Shulman started to work for a famous women's magazine "*House and Garden*" (Rosa, 1994:54). He met other architects outside Los Angeles who hired him to ensure visual consistency, which placed him in a league above other photographers. Besides producing good quality photographs Shulman impressed many editors. His work was always on time and produced relative to the subject matter. Shulman never used bracketing and in 1937 he stopped using a light meter when taking his photographs inside buildings, he purely relied on experience and mostly instinct. He never took more than twenty photographs per day per subject allowing him to have more than one assignment per day. Since 1950 Shulman did assignments expanding to ceramics, sculptures as well as manufacturing of building supplies (Rosa, 1994:63). From 1958 onwards he wrote two books on photography and also wrote on architecture. From the 1960's onwards he held seminars on photography at numerous universities. In 1969 Shulman received an award for his contribution to the photography of architecture interior and exterior, namely the Architectural Photography Medal. Shulman demonstrated timeless elegance in each image he ever took. Shulman mainly used 4 x 5 inch cameras and a 8 x 10 inch format camera. He also used shadows to emphasize the characteristics of each building. In all of his images there is a difference between shades and contrasts, as he mainly used available light sources (Rosa, 1994:74). He was made an honorable member of the Cultural heritage board of Los Angeles and they credited him in 1987. His house and studios were landmarked by the Cultural heritage Board of the City of Los Angeles as the only unmodified Soriana home designed from steel. Shulman realized that times had changed, buildings became more modern and as he wanted to produce photos of historical architecture, which was no more found, he retired (Rosa, 1994:67).



Appendix G  
*Julius Shulman Interior*  
Shulman, J  
(Joseph Rosa, 1994:5)

## 8. CONCLUSION

Whole new generations of photographers were discovered, what they did and how they saw it through, despite the lack of photographic equipment. I for one am deeply inspired by all of them. I am glad that I have had the opportunity to go back in history and discover how my love and appreciation for architecture evolved over the past decades. I am not surprised that all of these artists were mostly painters, as art is a great part of photography if not the most important aspect thereof. As Terry Hope said: *The viewer gets a real feel for what it must have been like to stand in front of the place, to experience the atmosphere, and the result is far more emotive than a mere record shot could ever be* (Hope, 2001:1). Photographs of interiors draw one back into eras of wealth and poverty. Eras that changed and could never again exist in exactly the same way; that is why proper documentation is so important. I hope that in a hundred years from now, people can and will go back into history and find my pictures and get the feel of how it felt to must have lived in our era. I was inspired and would love to inspire other young people to appreciate our heritage and to protect it for years to come like our ancestors did

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# **THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT OF AN ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

**by Lucinda van der Merwe**

An essay submitted for the subject  
Visual Communication III

2005

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As an interior photographer one has to put oneself in the market to get proper work. This means starting out as a freelance photographer and working oneself up to having one's own business and studio. There are many ways of getting one's work noticed and sold. In the following section some of these methods will be discussed in more detail. In architecture and mostly interiors, a broad spectrum of external factors can influence the taking of any image, mostly because most interiors are built relative to the angle of the sun, and typical interiors and exterior details usually include structural features, for example junctions of walls, roofs, windows and floors. In the next couple of pages, the working environment of an architectural photographer will be discussed. This includes how to find the right photographer, the photographer's timing and schedules, costs, fees, contracts and copyright. All of these factors must be considered carefully before being able to make the perfect location or studio shoot. After a couple of personal shoots one will probably have enough images to start up a personal portfolio. A portfolio represents the photographer and that is why great care must be taken when putting a portfolio together. Many photographers use their portfolio to establish their own personal websites and are most successful in selling pictures.

## 2. FINDING THE RIGHT ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHER

In a specific field like architecture, it is difficult to get noticed and the market is very competitive. A client or magazine may hire a photographer after seeing examples of his or her work via the internet, catalogues or on recommendation, if his or her work is well-known. For a newcomer in the field of architectural photography it is better to establish a personal website displaying some of his or her personal work. Another way that one can introduce his or her work to clients is by signing up as a member of a photography club, as clients usually call the agency to recommend one of their professional photographers in a specific field. After a photographer has been selected, it is a good idea that the client and photographer have a personal meeting allowing the client to go through the photographer's portfolio. The market of architectural photography is very broad and usually magazines like *House and Leisure* and *Garden and Home* request architecture photographers. A photographer must be flexible when he/she becomes a freelance photographer. Travelling is a necessity; that is why timing and scheduling in advance is very important for the perfect and well-planned shoot.

## 3. TIMING AND SCHEDULES

An architectural photographer unfortunately has to make many compromises when it comes to schedules, as the most interior and exterior shoots rely on good weather conditions. Therefore, an architectural photographer needs enough extra time, so that if any unexpected weather changes should occur, the photographer will still have enough time to have a successful shoot. It is advisable to photograph newly built buildings that has a clean feel and that is without scattered items. Certain types of buildings and especially interiors quickly lose their clean, fresh appearance and should be recorded as soon as possible after completion. In other cases, like photographing a house in a suburban center, the site may look better after a year or two if the garden was properly landscaped. All these factors must be considered very carefully (McGrath, 1987:11). An architectural photographer may be more in demand in certain

seasons, like in spring when everything is green and flattering. Autumn also produces nice images with brightly covered leaves everywhere. The other major seasonal consideration is the angle of the sun, creating shadows and excluding details. Contrasts and tonal values may be too dull or too bright. The weather is one factor that no one has control over. That is why an architectural photographer's schedules must be mutually suitable, meaning the shooting date should suit the client as well as the photographer. If the shooting date was changed in less than twenty-four hours, some photographers charge a cancellation fee. Typical postponement fees vary depending on the amount of advance notice given. Postponement fees may levy equal to fifty percent of the daily rate. Most architecture assignments have enough deadline flexibility to let the photographer wait for the right weather conditions, although a professional photographer should be able to shoot without perfect weather conditions (McGrath, 1987:11,12). Interiors may take longer to photograph than exteriors, more equipment that is expensive is used, and that is why the photographer must establish costs, fees and contracts before doing the shoot.

#### **4. COSTS, FEES AND CONTRACTS**

Most architectural photographers quote daily rates, while others quote for the specific job and the difficulty or duration. A photographer experienced in his field will usually not charge under R7000. Overtime should be discussed beforehand and rated. Travelling costs and accommodation must be stated in a contract as well. If an assistant is used, the contract must state his/her fees. Also state the fees applicable in case of cancellations. The fee must include the basic number of photos required stating the number of originals or duplications and the required format (McGrath, 1987:13). When the photographer works for a different client than a designer or architect the fees may vary. The American Society of Magazine Photographers publishes an excellent, regularly updated guide, *Professional Business Practice in Photography*, which is relatively inexpensive and available to anyone. It is very comprehensive and includes information on suggested rates for use of photographs in books and for a variety of other purposes (McGrath, 1987:13). Client and photographer should be aware of

applicable tax regulations. Value Added Tax are calculated at 14% on the total billed amount, all expenses like airline tickets included, except when it is paid directly by the assigning client, then only will it be excluded. Most architectural photographers require contracts from their clients before assigning to the assignment. Others do not prefer contracts as they are established business people with honorable reputations and they prefer flexibility. Although some photographers do not prefer contracts, the copyright must be stated in a mutual agreement.

## 5. COPYRIGHT

“On January, the first, 1987, a major law change was made which resulted in the transfer to the photographer of many photographic rights”. The owner of an image can only refer to a photograph as his/her belonging when signing an agreement to do so, this law is also currently applicable for South Africa. (McGrath, 1987:14). This can be done before an assignment or afterwards. The architectural photographer signs a contract that uses the term “work for hire” only then is the copyright transferred to the client. Copyright laws allow the owner to publish his own work and grant permission to people to download the work or to make use of his work. Copyright protects the content from misuse and alteration. The article of the photographer must have a notice of copyright printed on the first page and on each page there after. This also applies when an architectural photographer does freelance work for any magazine or brochure. “The international Berne Copyright treaty states that copyright lasts until fifty years after the death of the author”. This law only applies for countries that signed this treaty. South Africa however is a signatory state to this treaty to prevent illegal copies of artistic works (Anon a,1996:2).

## **6. THE WELL-PLANNED SHOOT OF AN ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHER AND HIS WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

### **6.1 LOCATIONS AND ROOMS**

When all these precautions and rights of the photographer are asserted, the photographer can start his/her shoot. The subject matter of the architectural photographer is the structure of buildings, both inside and out, for which there is a wide variety of demands. The more time the photographer can devote directly to the image the better the quality will be. One good question a commercial photographer should ask himself is “what am I trying to sell?” Is it a bathroom, a suite, restaurant or a stately furnished home. The photograph is rarely the thing being sold (Hicks, 1995:13). Most pictures of interiors are shot on location and mostly have their own lighting and feel. Any good photographer must make at least two visits to the location before the shoot. During the first visit the photographer must get an idea of the location and the size of the place as well as which angle will suit the place best. The planning of lighting equipment is also very important, as daylight normally is not enough to shoot indoors. The photographer must take note of available power points and electricity. The photographer must then go back for a second time to use the equipment he decided on and take sample pictures for test strips to establish correct exposures. If a designer is doing the shoot with the photographer, undesirable items may be eliminated in the photo session. If there is no designer present, it is up to the photographer to decide if furniture should be removed, added or modified. These decisions should be made at the first visit before the shoot to avoid unpleasant surprises on the day of the shoot. The photographer must do a spot check on missing light bulbs, or mismatched fluorescent lamps, also controls over curtains and blinds. The photographer must look very closely for any detail that might ruin his image, like creased linen. Tablecloths must be clean and spotless with no wrinkles, cutlery must be clean without watermarks or stains. The conditions of plants and/or trees should be noted. And then the finer details like empty bookshelves, stains on carpets,

missing ceiling tiles and blemishes on the walls should be looked at with a very critical eye. The photographer then must decide what kind of mood will suit the specific room and use props and special lighting techniques to do so. When working on interiors, scale should determine whether people should be used or not (McGrath, 1987: 37). There is, however, one major problem when using them in a picture, namely to make them appear natural for they are usually very self-conscious and uneasy in front of the camera. If a model is to be used, it should be arranged before the shoot and a legal document should be drawn up for the release of the picture. Large interiors include open-plan office areas, factories, industrial warehouses and churches for which a lot more equipment is normally used. There are three ways of dealing with such interiors. Firstly only relying on the natural light and using it, secondly is using a specific camera that allows you different angles and flash units and thirdly using techniques which will be discussed in the next section of this thesis for interiors such as bathrooms and small kitchens one can simply choose the right composition and angle and shoot with the widest possible lens (Harris, 1995:73). Clip testing is often used by professional interior photographers as is done in professional laboratories. This helps the photographer to determine what kind of lens, film and format to use for the specific location. Empty interiors are often a challenge. This is where the photographer has to make use of structure, juncture of walls, ceilings, doorways and windows. Stairways and stairwells almost always appear dull and uninspiring from ground level, but once again tells one a lot about a building when using the right angles and equipment. Interior light and exterior light must always be balanced and this is the most difficult part of shooting inside any building. When build an interior set in a studio, the studio must at least be 1,850 sq. ft. and have large windows and the proper equipment. When shooting interiors one needs lots of help to have precise control over equipment. This is why most photographers use assistances from well-trained people and are referred to as “the team”.

## 6.2 THE TEAM

The team consists out of the photographer's personal assistants. These assistants usually work for professional photographers and have a good background of photography and photographic equipment and most of the team are photographers themselves. They are capable problem solvers in the studio and quick handlers of natural light location photography. They are also mainly photographers fresh out of college and use opportunities to work with professionals to get extra practical training, and are usually recommended from one photographer to another. Most interior photographers prefer to work alone, because photographing with a large format camera is normally time consuming and unnecessary assistance is money wasted. In normal location interiors, the photographer can manage on his own but, when building a special set lots of help is needed and a well-sorted team is set up. When building a set there are usually set builders. There may also be stylists and without any question interior designers and decorators. Usually there are also art directors and the client might be there too (Hicks, 1995:15). It is quite common to work with an assistant because of the complexity and quantity of lighting used. Becoming a part-time assistant or part of the team will help one to gain practical information on photographic equipment and how to deal with clients. It is a good start for any new photographer in a specific field like interiors to build up contacts before applying to magazines or starting an own business.

## 7. PRESENTATION TO THE CLIENT

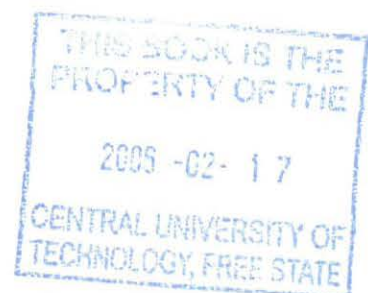
When the shoot is finished it is time to present the final product to the client. This is the most important aspect as one must deliver on time and the work must be neat. First impressions last and the client pays a lot of money to see professional presentation of the final product. If the project was shot on transparencies it is now time to edit and mount the transparencies either in black mounting board or in black mask transparency sleeves or in clean acetate sheets from the laboratory. These are fine ways to present

the final image to the client. When sending the image to the client the photographer must make sure that he/she adds a paper describing each image and giving each image reference numbers. One must also sign each individual photograph. Then on the envelope one must clearly mark the details of the contents and print the clients name and address. The envelope should always be new and a size that matches the content. One should also remember to place your personal adhesive labels on the back of the envelopes to indicate from whom the package has come. In addition, if the envelope should be delivered, always remember to add a label that indicates that it should not be folded. The photographs must always be sent first class and one should always keep the proof of the receipt.

## 8. PORTFOLIO

The photographer should always make reprints to keep in his/her personal portfolio. A portfolio is a photographer's personal advertisement to potential clients and they may on the standards of his /her portfolio decide to hire him/her for further photographic requirements. The portfolio consists out of the best images taken in the area of interest of a potential customer.

There are various ways of displaying a portfolio, and the choice will depend on budget and preference. The portfolio case can range from a personal briefcase to a simple plastic carrying case. Within any portfolio briefcase transparencies should be mounted in black mask, transparency sleeves selected in groups that matches and that ranges from the best quality images to lower quality images. Published work should form a separate part of the portfolio. This can be presented in either brochure form or can be selectively edited in black mounting board and laminated. The lamination protects the images from fingerprints, scuff and crease marks and the black framing gives the image more impact. To a portfolio one should also add a personal business card with one's name and contact number, to leave with the client as a reminder of one's work should the client be in need of a photographer again. As a portfolio not only presents the



photographer's work but the photographer as well, a personal presentation should suit the portfolio (Harris, 1993:95).

## **9. EXHIBITIONS**

An exhibition is an excellent way for a photographer of getting his/hr work noticed by other photographers who already have an established business of their own. In other words, it is a good way of putting oneself on line and in the market place. Putting together an exhibition is one of the most satisfying ways of using one's pictures, whether it is in a big gallery or simply on a street corner. Before starting an exhibition one must really be sure that one wants to go public with one's pictures and that one will be able to handle critique good or bad. Then one firstly has to decide on a theme for specific pictures and has to be sure of one's own style. The next step is selecting the images that one wants to use for one's exhibition. It is better to make some rough prints of one's work and then to choose from them the best images. This also helps one to see how one's images will fit together in colour and in composition. When one has a rough layout it is better to get someone one trusts to give one their personal opinion and feedback on one's layout. Nevertheless, it is a necessity that one has the final say about one's work and not letting the committee choose all the images and layouts. After all, it is the photographer's exhibition and he/she has the final say. When one has set a time and date and a personal layout is finished, one is ready to show one's work to the world. A photographer may use his/her personal portfolio to start a website which is a nice way to introduce and sell some work but always keeping in mind copyright laws.

## **10. HAVING ONE'S OWN PERSONAL WEBSITE**

Nowadays any type of publication of an architectural photographer's work is more than welcome. That is why using the Internet and establishing a personal website displaying personal work is an excellent way of marketing pictures. It is not only

exciting but an effective way of showing photographs and it is cost effective. All one needs is a computer, scanner and a modem connected to the World Wide Web. To start a personal website one has to design a webpage and add pictures and text. Then transfer files to the Internet by registering with an Internet service provider. If one has a site name registered, one can begin to transfer images to a personal web space. Make sure to add a category like architectural photography, as there are many similar sites under photography, which make it difficult for people to find a specific website when browsing the Internet. The website should be unique and different from everybody else's to draw more attention. Finally, one must include one's e-mail address on the website so that people can contact one for any architectural photo shoots (Hope, 2001:135). Internet users are not allowed to scan materials or transfer photographs without the knowledge of the owner, or post them anywhere else on the Internet. The owner of the personal website can sue for damages. It is rather important to have an access counter to see how many people visits one's website and if the website is still productive.

## 11. CONCLUSION

All of these factors are very important when searching for work either for a magazine or as a freelancer. The working environment is relatively boring for an architectural photographer as it mainly consists out of location shoots. However, there are so many finer details to consider before signing any contract when applying for a new job, the photographer must know his rights concerning his photos before signing a new contract for a job. It is of utmost importance to stay in competition by means of applying constantly for work at magazines or competing at competitions and keeping all on's work up to modern trends. I have learned that one has to start out small to end up as a well-established and honourable businessperson. Architectural photography demands love for buildings and architecture. One does not need to have a well-trained eye to make every shoot a success. One only needs two basic passions: the first is for architecture and the second simply the love of photography. Not everyone is able to see a building in all its phases of beauty, one has to know and appreciate art. I appreciate the art of beauty and seeing how interiors become rich and luxurious. The working environment changes every day, buildings moved away from an era of comfort to a whole new era of simplicity, which makes it even more difficult to work on a perfect shoot without using expensive equipment and specialized techniques

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# **THE TECHNIQUES USED BY AN ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

**by Lucinda van der Merwe**

An essay submitted for the subject  
Visual Communication III

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## 1. Introduction

An interior photographer must study an interior and decide what type of techniques and equipment he or she should use, to capture on film the essence of an interior. This takes a whole lot of planning to express the specific interior, which is a three-dimensional atmosphere to its best advantage on a two-dimensional sheet of film. In the pages that follow, author discusses the photographic equipment needed to photograph an interior. Interior photography is mostly plain forward without using too many techniques, as the equipment one uses is mainly dictated by the technique involved or applied. The way in which one captures the interior can vary; that is why the photographer must make each interior unique by knowing his or her equipment and using it in a different way.

## 2. Cameras

There are a lot of cameras and accessories available for the interior photographer. Therefore, one has to choose the right equipment to prevent unnecessary expenses. One simply has to restrict the kind of work one undertakes to fit one's choice of camera. Most interior photographers prefer to work with a medium format camera, a 35 mm SLR camera or simply a large format camera. The 35 mm camera is rather unsuitable for high quality interior work. Its small film size renders a poorer quality image than large format cameras. In addition, it lacks interchangeable film backs, which makes it even less practical to use. Medium format cameras have a negative of about 6x7 cm and large format negatives are usually 4x5 inches or 10x8 inches, which make them perfect for interior shots. The larger the format, the smaller the depth of field for given aperture; with a greater light output the better it is to use in an interior with low light conditions. The medium and the large format camera have an independent magnifier to achieve perfect focus. The large format is the best choice as the camera can shift movements, Scheimpflug adjustments and can tilt and swing. The movements of the large format can be divided into four categories: rising shifts, cross shifts, swings and tilts. The former two are generally known as shift movements and the latter two are known as Scheimpflug adjustments. Every movement can be done individually on the front standard that holds the lens panel, the back standard that holds the focusing screen, or both, depending on the result one wants to achieve. The two shift movements are generally more used in interior

photography. Shift movements are parallel movements of the front or rear standards. Rising shifts are shifts in vertical plane and are used to eliminate converging verticals in exterior work, or diverging verticals in interiors. When the lens are parallel to the focusing screen and is shifted up or down it is in a neutral position with the lens board; the subject and the film plane meets in a general point and so the whole subject is in focus. This also gives perfect verticals, which is very important when photographing buildings with parallel and horizontal lines, like interiors. It means that if there is too much ceiling in the interior when viewed through the camera at eye level, the film back or lens plane can be shifted either up or down to include more foreground and less ceiling. This is a great technique to use as it avoids one from having to change camera position by tilting, leaving one with verticals that diverge. Cross shifts are shifts in the horizontal plane. This technique is usually used when shooting a mirror or a highly reflective area or object. This way one can use one's camera head on with the image without oneself reflection in it. The shifted image is now just to the side instead of the front of the camera. Scheimpflug adjustments are able to swing and enable one to do tilting movements. Swings are usually employed for some detail shots in certain interiors. By swinging the lens around the vertical axis just a few degrees so that the subject plane, the focal plane, and the lens plane meets at a common point, one can maximize the depth of field. Tilting works in the same way as swinging except around a horizontal axis and not a vertical axis. Scheimpflug adjustments can only control depth of field across one specific plane of focus. Depth of field is the most commonly aspects used in interior shots; most interior photography is fully three-dimensional, making Scheimpflug adjustments rather useless. There is no use when the floor is in focus and none of the furniture is in focus as nothing above the floor surface would be in focus. The best way to achieve focus is by reducing the size of the aperture. The large format camera is the most flexible and convenient camera to use when requiring great results with less hassle (Harris, 1993:11).

### **3. Lenses**

The type of lens the photographer uses is even more important than the selection of camera he or she chooses. The interior photographer needs the best lenses to avoid distortions. The lens should be multi-coated to make the colour retention as accurate as

possible (Mc Grath, 1987: 28). Shift lenses are known as “perspective control” lenses, and are designed for 35 SLR cameras to give these cameras limited amount of shift movements. In other words, one can just shift the lens sideways when one wants to eliminate an object instead of moving one’s whole camera. Photographers usually use this lens when they want to achieve a certain result. Wide-angle lenses are mostly used for architectural photography as these lenses enable wide coverage of interiors. However, distortions are visible and this becomes more obvious the closer in angle one gets to the corner of a building. In architectural photography, one does not necessarily need a lens with a fast shutter, as the camera is mounted on a tripod. What all interior photographers however require from a specific lens is the “ angle of view”, lens movements and the greatest angles of coverage possible.

#### **4. Lighting**

Lighting is the most important aspects to consider when documenting interiors. If there is no light then there can be no photograph. Changes in light resemble mood and atmosphere and become the intrinsic element of composition. Daylight is usually described as the amount of light that is available within a building; it is also referred to as available light. When there is not enough available light in a building one should use one of two types of artificial lights, which will be either tungsten or fluorescent light. An interior photographer has no control over daylight or available light. That is why the photographer should carefully select the time of day to take the photograph. The sunlight constantly changes as the day moves on, and sunlight may penetrate the room, which is desired, or not. Sunlight will make the room much brighter than artificial lights and this will result in a very contrasty image. An overcast day will produce a softer light, with less contrast between darker and lighter areas. When using daylight one has to determine whether it is warm, yellow/red or cool blue/green. A developed scale measures the different light sources in Kelvin. This is called “colour temperature”. It is important to use the right film for the right colour temperature, otherwise the colour will be different on film as the original scene. The shape of the room should also be considered as well as the brightness of the room. A long room with a window at one end will be very difficult to photograph, as one end of the room will be darker as the other side of the room closest to the window. Then the colour of the room is also very important as white walls reflect

light and darker painted walls absorb light. When using only available light, it gets very difficult to create the right atmosphere. If all of the factors named above fails and one struggles with light that is not suited for the specific job at hand one should consider using artificial light to help. Colour film is balanced for daylight as well as tungsten light sources meaning that by using this light one can produce light that seems natural. There are however two disadvantages. Firstly the bulbs get very hot and can burn flammable materials and secondly they are very high energy users. Tungsten is a great way to make artificial sunlight in a room with darker areas. The other advantage is that when the light is left on in daylight situations or used with flash, it will create a yellow colour cast which makes the room feel warmer. If daylight and tungsten are well mixed together, it will result in a pleasant picture (Mc Grath, 1987:40). Fluorescent light is more difficult to deal with as most film is normally not balanced for this type of light, as fluorescent light is neither compatible with daylight or tungsten. The film will have a blue or green colour cast. This makes the interior looks cold which can be applied as a technique. However, if one really wants to get rid of the blue colour cast, one can use colour correction filters, which is very handy for correcting interior lighting. When one has to use tungsten and fluorescent together one has to make a two-part exposure using appropriate filtration for each part. This is very time consuming and the technique is not recommended to amateurs, as correct exposures are seldom found. In this condition, it is better to use supplementary light.

Supplementary light falls into two categories: flash light (strobe) or tungsten lamps. All cameras nowadays have electronic flashes, but one would need a greater powered flash to photograph a whole room. Small flashes leave terrible shadows and usually blow out the foreground losing detail. An interior photographer should choose a flash that is the most compatible with daylight. This type of flash will also help the photographer to balance interiors and exterior light. It is the only method to achieve this during daylight hours with the exception of blue flash bulbs. Electronic flashes can be divided into two categories, namely hand-held flashes and portable electronic flashes. Whereas hand-held flashes can be moved with the camera, portable electronic flashes use a sync cord and are connected to the lights. The advantage of using electronic flash is the fact that it generates little heat (Mc Grath, 1987:44). Tungsten lights are much more flattering to skin tones than any other alternative light source. Human skin tones are much softer and

glowing and fabrics, jewellery and furniture are better presented. This is why one can rather use these lights to create a technique of soft focus. Tungsten lights are mostly used for these simple reasons and for the fact that, unlike electronic flash, it is a continuous light source and much easier to use. All integral flash units have a hole through them from one end to the other, which acts as a socket for attaching umbrellas for reflectors and diffusers. Tungsten lights are used to create artificial daylight in dark rooms and usually outside windows when it is cloudy or overcast. When photographing an interior it is important to show the shape of furniture and the colour of the furniture, while still creating the impression of sunlight streaming into the room through the windows. This one can accomplish by using two standard lights bounced from reflectors at floor level and a diffused light to camera right. Always try to close shutters on windows if possible to create softer and warmer tones of light. When one photographs an interior exterior, one should always try to balance the interior light with the exterior light to prevent blown-out window spaces. One has to overexpose or underexpose exteriors if one does not want them too bright. One should use lights that bounce off the ceiling, this way it will not cause any shadows.

## **5. Films and Materials**

Nowadays digital cameras are mostly used, but in certain circumstances it is still better to use film. However, if one is still using film there is one golden rule that applies and this rule is to keep one's film choice simple.

One should only use two to three film types and learns how they respond to different lighting types. To photograph interiors on film one does not need a high-speed film that gives large grains in lower light. One can simply use a normal speed film, as one's camera will be mounted on a tripod and with a long exposure and sometimes even on bulb functions. One should be careful when using a long exposure as this can result in "reprocity law of failure". This law states that exposure remains constant whatever the chosen equivalent combination of exposure time and aperture. This normally results in a shift of colour balance (Harris, 1993:28). This occurs when the three layers of emulsion in colour film reacts differently to the long exposures given. This also gives great results if used as a technique. The only problem is that one cannot control the final product and

end result. A high quality, fine grain, colour transparency film is the best film to use for interior work, as one can purchase it in either daylight or tungsten balanced. The film requires no filtration when daylight and tungsten lights are mixed.

One can use black and white film that is processed and printed in the darkroom. The advantages of these films are that one can print it by hand and in this way one has total control over the amount of manipulation as well as control over the sharpness, grain, and contrast. When printing in the darkroom one can correct light colours by burning in and one can lighten darker areas by simply holding back on the original printing time. One can make the grain very grainy by simply pushing up the contrast and so make each print unique. Instant film is not suitable for interior photography but is a great advantage to determine the correct exposure time. One can see the image in only ninety seconds after taking the photograph; because of this one can check to see if one used the correct exposure time, unwanted flash reflections and colour balance.

## 6. Filters

When one has the right camera and a variety of lenses, one can use other equipment like filters to advance and make one's photographs even more creative. Filters are round, coloured discs of glass, plastic or gelatin. One simply put the filter in front of the lens; light passes through the filter onto the film plane, changing an ordinary image into an extraordinary image. There are a variety of filters and special effect filters available. Colour correction filters are filters that mostly control the warmth of an interior. Yellow filters give a room a warm, cozy feel while using blue filters gives one just the opposite effect. These filters are used in interiors to balance the colour temperature of a particular light source that produces different types of discharge lighting which are mostly fluorescent. Then one gets colour compensating filters that are similar to colour correction filters but have a wider range and are available in the six colours of the photographic process, namely red, green, blue, cyan, yellow and magenta. These filters can vary the colour balance of any sort of lighting situation when used with a colour temperature meter. Other filters to use for employing a technique are special effect filters. Nevertheless, in interior photography one should keep it minimum and simple and not overdo it as any interior must look simple and plain at all times. One important filter

that can be well used is the ultraviolet absorbing filter. The filter looks like a plain piece of glass and is mostly used to protect the camera lens. This piece of glass is coated like a pair of sunglasses to filter out ultraviolet rays that can not be seen by the naked eye, but cause a visible haze on film. The polarizer filter is a dark grey piece of round glass or gelatin (Harris, 1995:35). When using this filter it is very important to increase a two-stop exposure as the filter may reduce some light from the subject. This filter is excellent to use on highly reflective surfaces like water and windows. The filter can be turned normally to  $33^\circ$  and the grids inside the filter will eliminate the shiny area aligning the light waves parallel. The filter can also be use to darken a blue sky or to enhance the contrast between sky and clouds. The filter is great to use indoors, especially near tile floors, windows and mirrors. Graduation filters are filters that are half clear and half toned and are available in different strengths. There are a variety of diffusion filters; these filters are used to make direct light appear softer (Harris, 1995:37). The starburst filter can be used to reflect direct sunlight off a window creating a very dramatic indoor screen.

## 7. Composition

To form a perfect interior photograph one has to use precise composition and this is called symmetry structure. There are three main elements of composition: structure, line dynamics and perspective (Harris, 1995:43). Symmetry is when both sides of the images are identical. Symmetry is the only technique one can use to balance the picture. Using symmetry is very tricky and only some interiors should be photographed in full symmetry. If it is not done skilfully, it may look dull and unimaginative. Symmetry is well suited for a large and open grand entrance. When one uses symmetry, one should always stand in the doorway and find the precise central point of the room. This shows the interior of the room exactly as the architect planned for one to see it. The law of thirds is still applicable. The picture is divided into six little identical frames. The main subject should be placed on or near an intersection of thirds. Some other element should lead the eye into the frame to the main subject. Lastly, the main subject must differ in either contrast or colour from the background. Line dynamics mean composition is viewed in a two-dimensional abstract way. This gives one the feeling that the image is three-dimensional in space. When one photographs a staircase at  $45^\circ$  it looks like it is

exaggerated, and this is exactly the result one wants to get. Perspective is a very handy technique to use in interior photography. Perspective creates illusions of depth of field on a two-dimensional surface. All the parts of composition deliver quick results when one is using it correctly. Creative angles can mostly be used in more modern environments like commercial reception areas. One of the nicest ways of photographing such an interior is to shoot at the entrance approximately at eye level of the viewer. The second way to shoot an extremely creative interior is to break all the rules and shoot downwards. This create extremely wide angles that leads the eye into the main frame.

## **8. Special effects used for interiors**

### **8.1 Painting with light**

When one has a large, very dark interior and one cannot use flash as it would spoil the whole image with blown out white light or hot spots, one can simply use painting with light. Painting with light is a very easy method to create even lighting. This creates less shadows and illuminations of the image. All one has to do is to turn one's camera on bulb function, then choose a long exposure and simply walk around the room firing the flashes from within the picture area itself. However, it is very important to determine the correct exposure time while planning the shoot. As author mentioned earlier when the photographer walks around in the picture area and fire of the flashes, the one golden rule is to wear very dark clothes close to the foreground; normally black clothes so that the camera will not pick up the photographer or create an artificial burn-out on the image. Normally one fires a flash twice for the shorter distances and four times for those further away. It has it weaknesses, however, and that unfortunately is that one cannot determine the accurate exposure. Bracketing is essential to use when applying painting with light, because it is very difficult to get the right exposure the first time.

### **8.2 Creating a night scene**

It is very easy to achieve a night scene during daylight. When shooting a night scene all daylight should be eliminated from the room, and artificial lights should be the dominant lights in the scene. That is why the curtains should be drawn and the lights must be

switched on to create the feeling of night-time. The flashes must never be placed head on with the image but used from the sides and only as fill in light to make the scene look dreamy. One can then put a tungsten light in the centre of the image throwing enough light onto the centre of the image like a diffused spotlight. This way the light will differ from the other light in the room and thus giving one the impression that one is looking at a night scene.

### 8.3 Highlighting

In some photographs it is better to highlight a certain element as it brings out some significance of the specific room that are being photographed. One can create highlights in different forms and shapes by placing a variety of snoots and diffusers over the lights. Diffusers concentrate a controlled shape onto the specific image. Barn doors can also be used to concentrate a direct patch of light onto a specific area.

### 8.4 People in interiors

The most interiors are usually empty when they are photographed, but author found that when using people in an interior one can create a brilliant atmosphere as well as scale. This is a brilliant technique to use, especially in a dull image. People show the use of the specific building, for example, people drinking coffee give the impression that the place is a coffee shop or a restaurant. It is very difficult to photograph people as they are mostly conscious of the camera and they usually pose, which is not desirable you want a clean and natural environment that explains why the people that is captured in the photograph.

### 8.5 Editing

The final technique that one can apply to an interior photograph is using digital manipulation by means of the computer and programs like Photoshop and Corel Draw. This should be applied only as a final option. When using one of these programs one can correct exposures, crop an image or simply apply a special filter over the image. Of course one needs a computer and must know the programs. Author is of the opinion that

it is better to take the image right in the first place than to spend time afterwards to manipulate it digitally.

## **Conclusion**

There are so many techniques to use when photographing an interior. It is however best to keep the majority of interiors original, meaning simple. Simplicity shows the clean purity of an interior leaving the beauty of architecture in a three-dimensional form. Author only discussed some of the basic techniques that fit interior photography, but should never be used to better the quality of the image or try to save a poor image. Techniques must be used only to enhance certain areas of the interior or to place claim on a very interesting item within the interior. Author discussed cameras, lenses and filters that may not be a technique available to another type of photography, but in architecture, namely interior, this is the best equipment to use and with proper use it will result in some great ideas. The greatest technique in photography, however, is the creative mind of a photographer.

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## Conclusion

This is my completed thesis about an architectural photographer and the job itself. I truly hope from my heart that I have inspired a young entrepreneur like myself to follow their dreams and to become someone that is inspired by their work but mostly enjoying their work. I must admit I also learned a great amount while writing this thesis as I had to do a lot of in depth investigation on all kind of scenarios and this information I found helped me to understand my work better. The best lesson that I have learned thru out the three years of my studies is simply perseverance and commitment. Commit yourself to practice than you will learn everything you will be inquired to know and secondly commit yourself to get better at what you love and then the result can only be you as a successful photographer. As our parents always said, “practice makes perfect” and if you put your mind to it, everything is possible. As you have seen I love simplicity throughout my work with natural calming colours, every building is unique it just depends how the photographer makes this shown in any photograph.. I want to leave you with a thought.. If a building could talk, how much will it have to say about the pictures everybody took of it over the years, and will that image be unique and excellent, true to the character of the building?

# **Discussion of Own Portfolio**

**by Lucinda van der Merwe**

An essay submitted for the subject  
Visual Communication III

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## Introduction

Architectural photography is a very difficult and challenging field to start out in as an entrepreneur. There is no formula to use like in portraiture where you use the same studio settings over and over again, every building has his own unique colours, atmosphere and design. The lights conditions vary tremendously from one room to another, as the interiors are build in different ways of facing the sun. This is the main reason why you have to be very specific in the type of equipment you use. In the next chapter I am going to discuss ten of my photos in detail, where I took the image, why I was inspired to take the specific shot, what type of equipment I used and what type of special techniques I used to make my photograph. I prefer interiors with a wide-open and clean space, an image where you can see the entire room. This gives the viewer the idea that he is currently in the room, when only viewing the image. I prefer to work with neutral colours in most of my interiors, the only reason for this is that colours create a sense of mood and atmosphere neutral colours create a clean calm and relaxing atmosphere. Staircases are definitely one of my weaknesses, as you will see I love the feeling it gives of three dimensions. I wanted to create a sense of longing and need from my viewer, they must look at the image and their imagination must take them away to the place in the photograph. I strongly believe that any image that is successful will deliver these results and that if you as photographer can create such a strong desire you can definitely rest assure that you have succeeded. I love modern interiors with minimal scatter, with tile floors arches large pillars leather glass and mirrors. Simplicity is always captured in my photographs I believe that less is always more. I took all of my photographs in Bloemfontein in the Free State. Mostly on a film camera or on a digital camera. I often made use of natural light but some additional light was added in some situations. I mentioned that I only took interiors in Bloemfontein and you may ask yourself why I didn't, travel the reason is simply I wanted to show viewers how much Bloemfontein as the center of the Free State has to offer and then people would realize how much more South Africa had to offer. A holiday in Bloemfontein can be the same as an expensive holiday overseas. During my quest to phot photograph interiors, being rejected and sometimes being chased away, I still did not give up. My interiors represent and a sense of style no ordinary person can afford. The feel of my photographs has a desire, desire to has and create a home that is interesting and stylish with a few expensive items added.



Plate 1:

“The Staircase to Heaven”

Lucinda van der Merwe

This image was taken at the Halevy Heritage Hotel this is a very expensive and luxurious five star hotel situated in the city central business area of Bloemfontein. I took the image with a film camera (Nikon F65) on a tripod. My exposure was 1/30 of a sec at an f. stop of 5.6., I used a standard 28mm to 80 mm lens. There was no extra lighting present, I love to keep my work simple, and that is why I only used natural light from the left side windows. I especially chose the specific angle of view to create the effect of infinity at the back of the staircase as your attention is immediately drawn to the lighter area at the top of the staircase and your eye is led up the stairs. This is the main reason why I named my image the “staircase to heaven”, your eye is led up the stairs to the light representing heaven. The image also consists out of plain earthly colours reds, yellows, browns and different arrangements of creams. This creates a soothing effect on the mind of the viewer. Making you feel calm and relaxed.



Plate 2:

“The Lounge”

Lucinda van der Merwe

This image is a follow up on the previous image at the same hotel in Bloemfontein. I used the same camera the only difference is that I used a wider angle lens with a wider angle of view and an extra Elenchrom 250 light to add some additional light from the side of my camera. On the right side of my camera was a large window, as I took the image early in the morning the natural light from the one side of the room created dark areas in the photograph. This is the reason why I had to balance out the interior exterior light with some additional light from the left hand side of the camera. This was quite a tricky job as there was a large mirror present and flash would ruin the reflections in the mirror. Nevertheless, I took the image and it was successful. The same colours are present as in the previous image but here I tried to put in some contrasts between the fabrics of the couches you can see the wool effect on the one couch and the stripy effect on the other seat. The wood also appears heavy and solid but balances out the room. Every single element in the room contributes to the final product representing a lounge that you can feel at ease with and make you feel as if you are at home watching your favorite soap after a long and exhausting day.



Plate 3:  
“Mirror Reflections”  
Lucinda van der Merwe

I took the image at the President Hotel in Bloemfontein one afternoon. The image was taken with a digital camera namely a Canon EOS 300 D. With an exposure of 1/13 of a second and a f-stop of f5.6. I put the camera on a tripod, as I did not want to throw any excessive light onto the ceiling, which consisted out of mirror. This is the main reason why I did not use flash. One day I sat in the same chair while waiting for an appointment and suddenly realized that it feels like the mirrors can see into your soul and immediately I ran to my car took out my camera and took some photographs. I wanted to place a person into the photograph but as mervys law wanted it no one passed by me at that moment, so I had to take the image as it was right in front of me. I had a lot of trouble to prevent myself from reflecting in the mirrors an that is why I called the photograph “Mirror Reflections”.



Plate 4:

“Mythological Dream”

Lucinda van der Merwe

This image was taken at Steward Guesthouse, I used film camera the same Nikon F65 camera. My exposure was 1/30 of a second and I used a f. stop of 2.8 on a 400 ISO film. When I first walked into the room I realized how small I feel in the room and I wanted to let the viewer feel the same, that is why I chose a vary low angel of view to exaggerate the specific feeling. I actually laid down flat on my back and shot upwards towards the ceiling, that is why you can see some sort of distortion. The colours attracted me and the pictures looked like something out of a storybook. I usually do not like cluttered images but this room was truly something out of the ordinary. The pictures on the wall tell a story where the angels of love, peace and friendship join hands and dance with each other, and the angel of lust is left in the opposite side of the room. The story behind the paintings explains how short life actually is and that there are no place for lust in a triangle of hands held between friends.



Plate 5:  
“The Angels Place”  
Lucinda van der Merwe

This is one of my most favorite shops to visit whenever I have some spare time on my hands. This image was taken digitally with the same Canon EOS 300 D camera as the third image the “Mirror Reflections”. The photograph was taken at 1/250 of a second and at a f-stop of f3.2. The chandelier on top of the ceramic angel drew my attention instantly from outside the little shop. I also love the separate lights in each of the pigeon holes at the back displaying all sorts of modern art. The entire little shop is furnished with dark brown ornaments and several types of lights and even a bunch of candles. I loved the yellow warm effect it creates. I could have used some additional lights to prevent the yellow cast but as I said sometimes, you simply have to know the rules to use them to your advantage. I personally think that the yellow cast added to the atmosphere of depth.



Plate : 6

“Peaceful Dreams”

Lucinda van der Merwe

There is nothing in the world that can inspire anyone’s imagination like a peaceful night of rest. Your dreams can take you onto flights of imagination. When I saw the room, I immediately felt like I was already in dreamland, it looked so soft, comfortable, and dreamy with feathers and pure white clean linen. I wanted to capture the image exactly as I felt at that specific moment. I focused directly onto a main subject in the room the bed, but you can still see the rest of the room in the mirror next to bed, this creates a slight illusion because of various reflections, if you look closely. I took the image with a digital Canon EOS 300 and I used flash. I diffused the flash and just created a little softer lighter on the pillows and on the drawer next to the bed; I would have lost a great amount of detail if I just used natural light.



Plate 7:  
“Infinity”  
Lucinda van der Merwe

This image was taken in the late afternoon at a hotel in Bloemfontein. I took the images on a tripod with a digital camera the Canon EOS 300 D on an exposure of 1/60 of a second at f5.6. What captured my intention immediately was the repeating lights at the back of the wall, it seemed as if they were going on into infinity, secondly I just wanted to look through the light hole in the ceiling as this was the only light that came into the room. These light wholes in the ceiling also repeated after itself and together with the lights that repeated I decided to call this photograph “Infinity”. Again, you can see simplicity in the design of the room squares that repeats all over the room even onto the ceiling. Natural warm colours can be seen in the square tiles on the floor, the squares on the walls, (a light cream brown) and the carpet that is a little darker that also creates that little bit of contrast needed.



Plate 8:

“The Square”

Lucinda van der Merwe

I was inspired to take this image from above the room as every piece of furniture represented a square from the angle of view I chose. I took this image digitally with the Canon EOS 300D. I decided to use a standard lens as the space was very small and this is the reason why I got some distortions on the walls. My exposure was 1/40 of a second and I used a f-stop of 5.6 to get maximum depth of field. I liked the chandelier and wanted to emphasize it by making it look bigger than it really was, to do so I had to crop it at the side of the picture to prevent it from being in front of the couch. An African atmosphere is created, by the ostrich eggs shape lamp fitting on the chandelier. The colours of the room contribute as everything is decorated in neutral browns and animal patterns can be seen on the chair in the corner of the room. The image is simple that is the main reason why I chose the most creative angle of view possible.



Plate 9:  
“Waves of Luxury”  
Lucinda van der Merwe

This is probable one of my most favorite pieces of work. As I said earlier, I simply love to photograph staircases. I specifically took the image at this angle of view as it leads your eye to the top of the image, right beside the chandelier. I took this image at a guesthouse in Bloemfontein. Again, I used the Canon EOS 300 D but I also had to use two lights at each end of the staircase, as it was very dark. I wanted to emphasize the glass on the arm rail as the patterns were so strong. The rest of the room can also be viewed through the specs of glass. I struggled to reproduce the same colours and to prevent the colours from being blown out. The colors are still a little bit lighter on the photograph. This image represents total modern times of today through glass tiles, metal work, and leather.



Plate 10

“The Spiral”

Lucinda van der Merwe

Shapes colours and forms are so beautiful to me I simple fell in love with this staircase. You cannot see where it begin or were it ends. All you can see are the forms repeating over and over again. I took these images on a Pentax MZ 60 film camera with an ISO of 400 and an exposure of 1/25 of a second at f5.6. The stairs are modern yet they give you that Victorian type feel of the fifties. I wanted to see where the stairs go and I could not keep my eye from wandering to the top. Once there I realized that the ceiling was made of wood and the walls were painted with some kind of sponge effect. Yet again, every detail was covered in browns, whites and metals. Heaven for an interior photographer like myself.

## Conclusion

This is my completed thesis about an architectural photographer and the job itself. I truly hope from my heart that I have inspired a young entrepreneur like myself to follow their dreams and to become someone that is inspired by their work but mostly enjoying their work. I must admit I also learned a great amount while writing this thesis as I had to do a lot of in depth investigation on all kind of scenarios and this information I found helped me to understand my work better. The best lesson that I have learned thru out the three years of my studies is simply perseverance and commitment. Commit yourself to practice than you will learn everything you will be inquired to know and secondly commit yourself to get better at what you love and then the result can only be you as a successful photographer. As our parents always said, “practice makes perfect” and if you put your mind to it, everything is possible. As you have seen I love simplicity throughout my work with natural calming colours, every building is unique it just depends how the photographer makes this shown in any photograph.. I want to leave you with a thought.. If a building could talk, how much will it have to say about the pictures everybody took of it over the years, and will that image be unique and excellent, true to the character of the building?



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