A VIEW ON LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

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"WE PHOTOGRAPHERS DEAL IN THINGS WHICH ARE CONTINUALLY VANISHING, AND WHEN THEY HAVE VANISHED THERE IS NO CONTRIVANCE ON EARTH THAT CAN MAKE THEM COME BACK AGAIN. WE CANNOT DEVELOP AND PRINT A MEMORY."

- HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

INTRODUCTION

Since its invention scarcely more than a century and a half ago, photography has become not only a phenomenal technical means of communication and visual expression, but unquestionably the world's most powerful imagemaking system. Photography is a universal language; it speaks with more force and with greater directness than words... The role of the photographer is therefor a very important one.

In landscape photography I feel the aim of the photographer is to communicate to the viewer the experience of the landscape that the photographer has had. A photograph should have a universal and timeless appeal.

Bearing the above in mind, I have tried to capture this in my approach to landscape photography.

With this dissertation I, the Author, will try to show a piece of this 'world'. Taking it right from the early beginnings up to where we stand today - providing the reader with the history style and techniques of the old masters, and combining that with what is currently the style. The Author's own work-style, technique, influences and motivations will also be discussed.

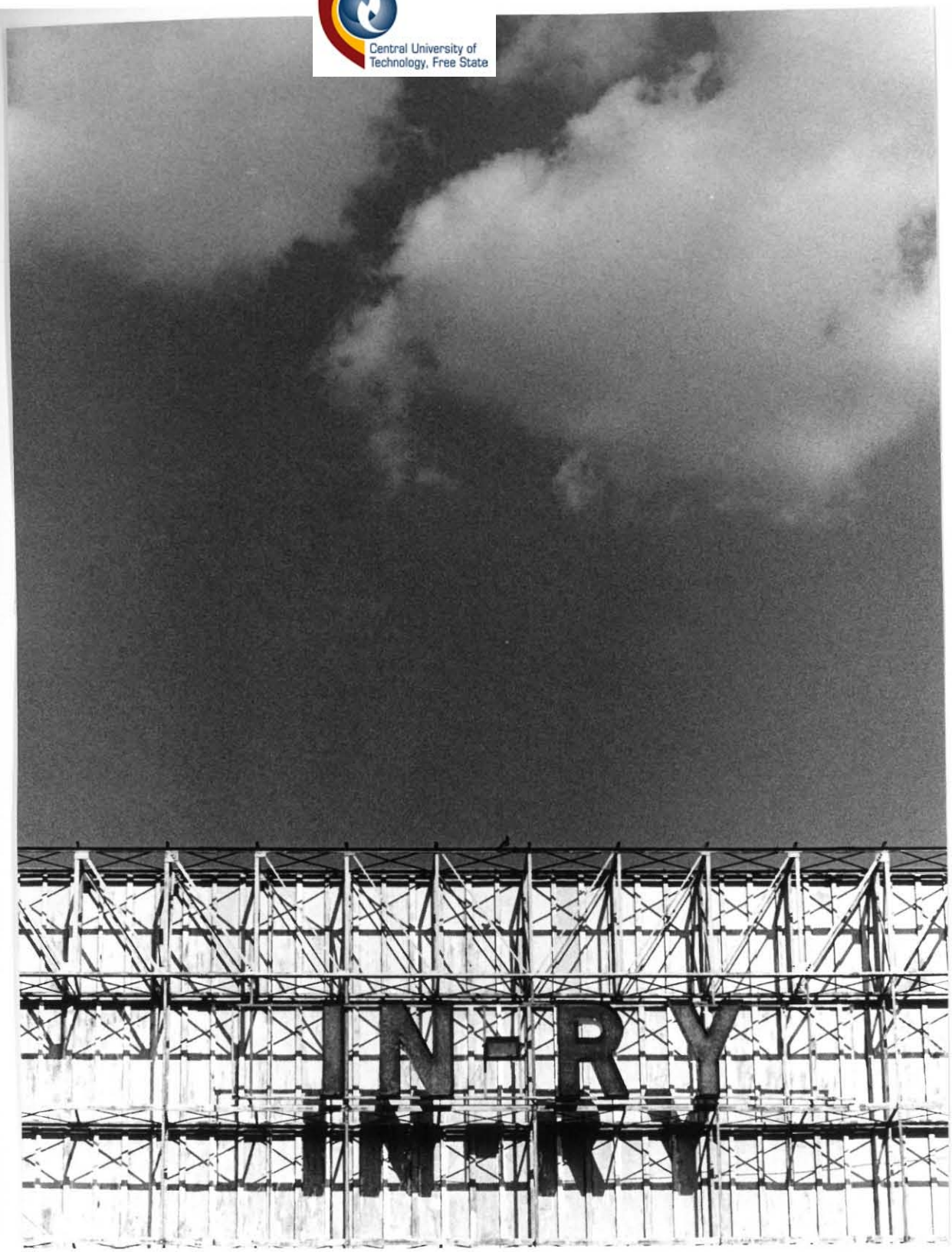


PLATE 1 : The Drive-In

Location : Welkom, O.F.S.

2. THE HISTORY OF PH[illegible]

A. THE GENERAL BACKGROUND

Of all the major inventions the world has seen, none has met with such immediate general acclaim as that of photography. At last a technique had been developed which demanded very little skill and produced permanent images of scenes, objects and people as a lasting record for posterity. It was almost bound to be a great success...

The emergence of this new art came about at a time when the growing middle classes were eager for pictures of all kinds. The resulting search for new methods of recording images led many to experiment with the effect of light on various chemicals. One of these was the Frenchman, Joseph Niecephore Niepce. It was Niepce who produced the first image in 1826.

As a lithographer, Niepce used for his experiments a portable camera obscura, a box generally used by artists to aid their technique. Niepce found that bitumen of Judea, a varnish used by engravers, became hard and insoluble when exposed to sunlight if it was first dissolved in lavender oil. He experimented by placing a polished pewter plate spread with this mixture in a camera obscura and exposing it to light for eight hours. At the end of this time, Niepce immersed the plate in a solvent and an image appeared on the plate. This process was a revolutionary discovery. Niepce called the resulting

pictures heliographs - but they were still far from perfect.

The perfection of his method was achieved through collaboration with Daguerre. Louis Daguerre was a painter and set designer who was the co-owner of the Diorama.

After three years guarded correspondence, the two men entered into partnership in 1829 to develop their ideas and skills. Though Niepce died only four years later, Daguerre went on to develop his process, using a modification of Niepce's technique.

The daguerreotype process Daguerre revealed to the public in 1839 was 'fixed' to a far greater degree than Niepce's original heliograph. After some experimentation with different fixing agents, Daguerre opted for hyposulphite.

The only process that eventually established itself to some extent as a rival to the daguerreotype was the Calotype, invented by William Henry Fox Talbot. The Calotype was the first method invented which allowed for the easy production of any number of prints from the original plate, and it was this that laid the real foundation for the medium.

While Daguerre was still researching his metal plate process, another Frenchman, Hippolyte Bayard, was experimenting with paper photography. Using paper sensitized with silver chloride and soaked in potassium iodine, Bayard had produced direct positive images. In 1850 Louis-Desire Blanquart - Evard introduced an unproved printing paper,

which gave better definition by coating the paper with albumen. Albumen paper came into general use in the early 1850's and remained in use until the end of the century.

1851 - the year Daguerre died - also marked the invention of the glass plate which was eventually to supersede all previous processes. This was Frederick Scott Archer's wet collodion process. Being both transparent and rough, collodion was an ideal medium. It's real success, however, lay in the shorter exposure necessary, and the brilliance and detail of the resulting images.

Wet plates - as they came to be called - had to be sensitized immediately after the formation of the collodion layer and exposed while still damp. Development also had to take place directly after exposure. As well as printing the negative on the albumen paper, the wet plate could be backed with black paint or paper to give a direct positive. Such collodion positives or ambrotypes, were a cheap substitute for the daguerreotype, and were especially popular in America. Even travelling photographers - the most hard pressed of whom must have been the early pioneers, were photographers like Roger Fenton or Mathew Brady - found the wet plate collodion method so excellent that they were prepared to carry entire darkroom kits with them.

Andre Adolphe Disderi, a professional photographer who had opened a studio in Paris in 1853, reasoned that if several negatives were made on one plate, the cost of printing could be cut. So he devised cameras with sets of lenses so that up to eight exposures could be made on one plate. The small photograph became known as a

'carte-de-visite', sma[illegible]heap enough to be exchanged among friends, like visiting cards.

One drawback of the mass-produced 'carte-de-visite' was that it was rather superficial and stereotyped. "There was no attempt," said the famous English portrait photographer, Julia Margaret Cameron, "to record the greatness of the inner, as well as the features of the outer man."

By the end of the 1870's, however, the wet plate itself had become obsolete. In 1871 Richard Leach Maddox, the English physician, produced the first workable plate using gelatin to hold the silver bromide; within two years gelatin emulsion was on sale, and by 1877 highly sensitive plates were available in boxes ready for use. There was no longer the need to coat the plates before, or develop them immediately afterwards.

The gelatin dry plate not only simplified photographic technique; it also led to a revolution in camera design, reducing the photographer's equipment to today's essentials. The new materials were fast enough to capture moving objects, provided the cameras were equipped with an instantaneous shutter. Manufacturers responded quickly, and over the next two decades the market was flooded with cameras of all shapes and sizes. The new breeds, light, compact relatively easy to use - were of four main types: changebox, magazine, rollerslide and roll film, and reflex.

If one man can be credited for making the pleasures of photography

available to the general public, he is George Eastman. After a reasonably successful venture in 1886 Eastman launched the 'Kodak' in 1888. It was small; the integral roll holder took a roll of stripping film containing 100 circular exposures; the cylindrical shutter was cocked by a string and fired by a button; the film was wound on by a key; it had one speed (1/25 second), one stop and a rectilinear fixed-focus lens.

"It can be employed without preliminary study, without a darkroom and without chemicals," wrote Eastman in the primer. And this was the real revolution; all the photographer had to do was take the picture. Eastman provided a complete back-up processing service. Launched with the slogan "You press the button, we do the rest," the camera was dramatically successful. "The phrase captured the world", explains author-photographer Wyatt Brummitt, "partly because it was catchy, but mostly because it was true. And modern photography was born."

Improvements and further innovations came quickly. By 1900, a new, even simpler camera - the 'Brownie' appeared. (Perhaps the most famous camera in history?) Here at last was photography for all! "Now every nipper has a Brownie," observed the photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn ruefully, "and a photograph is as common as a box of matches."

The landmarks since the turn of the century have been ones of refinement and development rather than innovation and invention. Photographic equipment and processors are continually improving - making more and more things possible for the modern day photographer..

B. THE HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

As a subject for photography, landscape is as old as the medium itself...

The first workable photographic process was daguerreotype, and some of Daguerre's first successful pictures were views of the streets and buildings of Paris. Then, within months after the process was introduced, daguereotypists were at work photographing scenery and monuments. Not only in Paris, but as far away as Egypt, Russia, and America. Their process was too slow to capture motion, and it could not reproduce the colours of nature - two disappointing features of early photography. However, it was well suited to subjects that did not move, and from that day to the present, landscape has been a fascinating subject for the photographer.

Today when most people think of landscape photography, they think first of the classic photographs of Ansel Adams and Edward Weston. These men were among the pioneers of modern landscape photography. After them, people may think of the great nineteenth century expedition and travel photographers: Timothy O'Sullivan and William Henry Jackson among the pioneering explorer - photographers of the American West; Samuel Bourne and William Bradford among the Europeans who travelled to India, China, and all over the world to record strange sights and unfamiliar places.

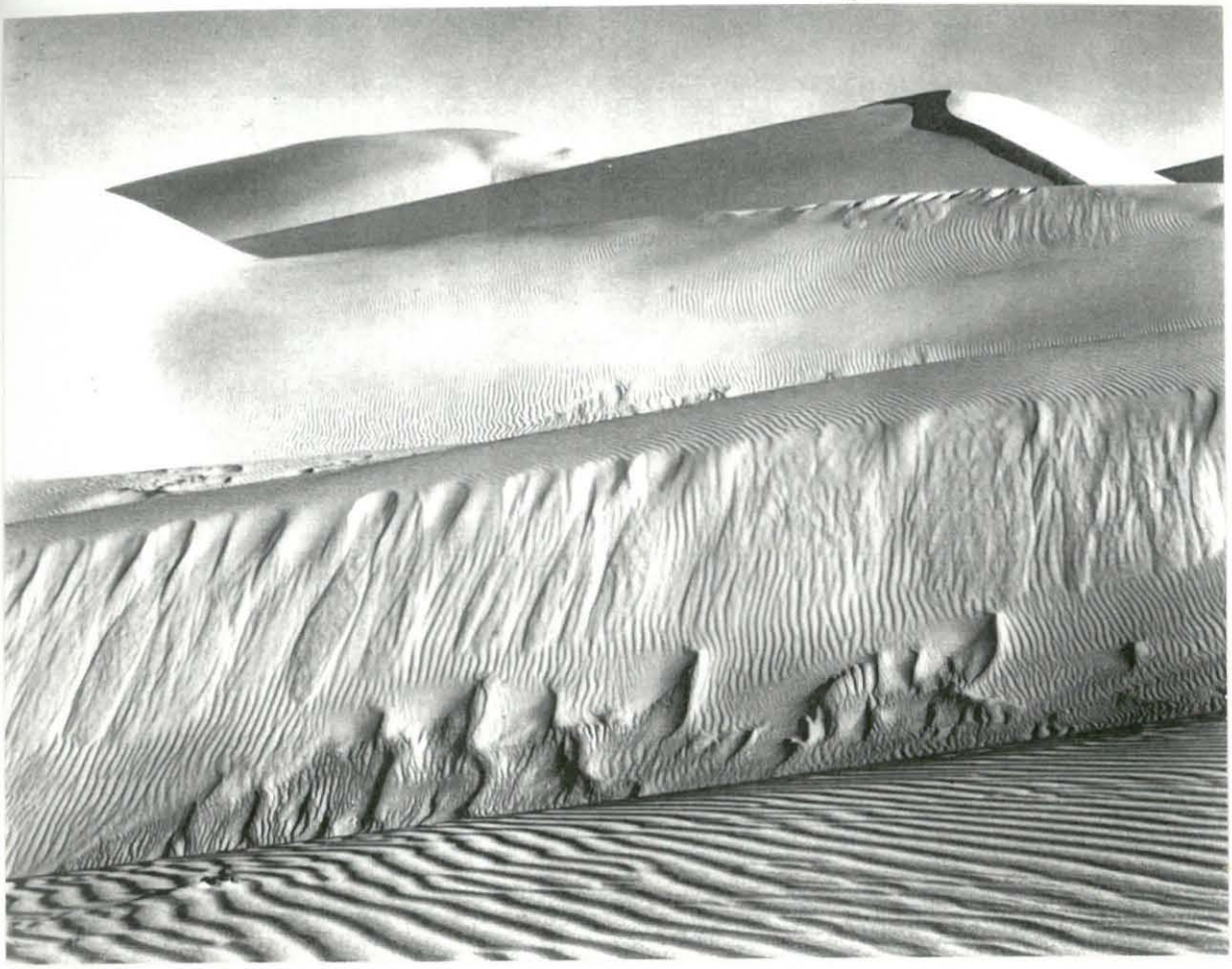
The differences in motive between these two groups of photographers, the nineteenth century explorer - photographers like O'Sullivan and

the twentieth century artist - photographers like Adams, is great and striking. The nineteenth century photographers were scientists and reporters, concentrating on places and things that had never been properly recorded before. The twentieth century masters, on the other hand, were first of all conscious artists, more interested in beauty and expression than in documentation. Despite these differences, however, the two groups had much in common. both did their work with view cameras mounted on tripods, and used a very limited array of lenses, and both worked almost exclusively in black and white.

Though today's landscape photographers owe much to their nineteenth and early twentieth century predecessors, two technical innovations of the mid-twentieth century have made great changes in the art. One is the development of the 35mm camera with its wide range of interchangeable lenses. The other is the development of modern colour film processes.

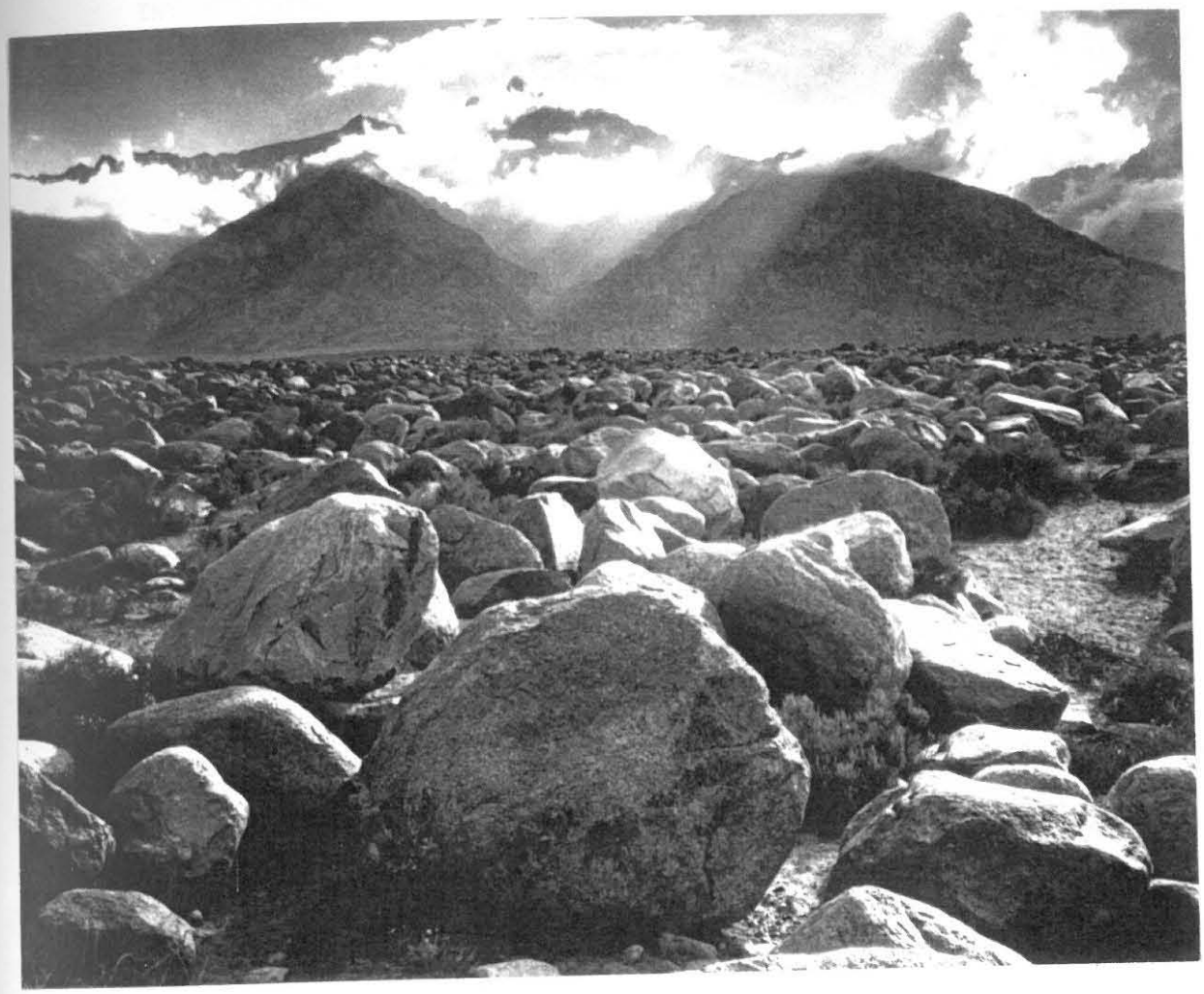
When hand-held cameras became readily available in the 1920's, photographers went on an orgy of experiment, snapping away at every visible object from every conceivable point of view and in every possible light. They went too far, perhaps, but once the novelty wore off, photography was left with a new flexibility of composition and approach. Something similar started in the 1940's when new advances in film made colour photography outside the studios easy even for casual amateurs. People went around snapping everything that had lots and lots of colour. It took a while for the excitement to die down to the point where colour could be used for a purpose.

When, however, both of these innovations had been absorbed, a new type of landscape photography emerged. In composition it is freer and less formal than the classic photography of the past, and is the basis of modern landscape photography.



EDWARD WESTON : White Dunes; Oceano, California

Taken from : Newhall, B. History of Photography, p 187



ANSEL ADAMS : Mount Williamson - Clearing Storm

Taken from : Newhall, B. History of Photography, p 192

3. ASPECTS OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

The natural world strikes a cord in all of us...

A landscape of some sort is always available in a way that most other subjects are not. For most photographers it is as close as the nearest window. There is something in human nature that is attracted to broad, sweeping views, so that they have a universal appeal in photography.

Landscape work is one of the most exciting aspects of photography; it is also one of the most difficult. Ansel Adams, one of its greatest masters, has succinctly described it as "the supreme test of the photographer - and often supreme disappointment."

Photographing landscape has no fixed rules, but by taking a look at the 'aspects of landscape photography' namely (a) the selected view, (b) the changing light, (c) horizon, depth and scale, (d) the sky, (e) water, and (f) the urban scene we are able to get a better understanding of what eventually makes a good landscape photograph...

A. THE SELECTED VIEW

"To quote out of context is the essence of the photographer's craft. His central problem is a simple one - what shall he include, what shall he reject? The line of decision between in and out is the picture's edge. While the draughtsman starts with the middle of the sheet, the photographer starts with the frame."

- John Swarkowski

In approaching landscape photography, composition is one of the most crucial factors, since it is under the photographer's direct control.

Composition is simply the arrangement of the graphic elements of an image so it is enhanced, or it creates a deliberate impression. In practice, every photograph is composed - just the act of pointing the camera selects and organizes the components of the picture - and whether this composition is deliberate, intuitive, or even unwitting, it is a vital factor in the power of the image since landscapes are fixed and so allow you time to work, they permit more careful composition than most subjects.

In photography, the elements of an image that can be altered are points, lines and shapes. However, the simple, two-dimensional patterns that these make are overlaid in any photograph by the significance of the subject itself. In this way, composition in photography has to take into account the interest of the different elements as well as their graphic appearance.

Most textbook discuss osition focus on a system of proportion usually called the Golden Section. This is a way of dividing lines and the frame of the picture so as to give what is generally thought of as a pleasing composition. Although you do not have to make the division exact, the principle is that the ratio of the smaller section to the larger should be the same as that of the larger section to the whole. Some feel that the rule of the Golden Section should always be adhered to, which is not at all true. It is simply an observation from the experience of many photographers that most people find it to be an aesthetically pleasing way of dividing up a picture. In practice, most people tend to compose images this way without consciously thinking about it.

Many good landscape photographs contain a single element that is the main focus of interest - something that, by virtue of its colours, tone, shape or recognizability, attracts immediate attention. It might be a solitary rock on the horizon, a distant river glinting in late afternoon sunlight, or one flowering tree in a forested valley. Often, however, a landscape contains more than one strong element, so that the composition must reconcile different points of interest.

Choice of viewpoint is directly linked to composition. What sets a successful landscape photograph apart from a stereotyped postcard view is the appreciation of which components make the view interesting and the ability to emphasize these. Composition is your chief control in doing this...

B. **THE CHANGING LIGHT**

"Landscapes are never the same twice. It is the light that changes them and gives them a new meaning every time."

- Sonja Bullaty

Little remains constant in a landscape. The continual change brought about by the light, the time of day and the seasons of the year, combine to produce an endless variety of pictorial opportunities.

Unlike other types of photographs, landscape images are illuminated by only one source of natural light; the sun. The light cannot be moved or changed to suit the photographers needs.

It is common to see in a scene a compelling image, which when revisited a few hours later, will have altered or perhaps even disappeared altogether. Similarly, a sudden change in weather or light can reveal a superb view that had gone unnoticed before.In addition, there are the wider but more predictable changes wrought by the seasons. The sky changes continuously, at one time brilliant with summer sunshine, at another tempestuous with winter storm clouds.

Lighting technique in landscape photography is divided into three factors - direction, quality and colour - but it is impossible to generalize about lighting since each pictorial possibility and each desired effect presents different requirements. No photographer, of course, should automatically accept the first "favourable" lighting situation. "If the light is not right I try to wait for it, "says

landscape photographer Angelo Lomeo, "or, if I can, I return as many times as necessary until conditions are right."

Although many landscape photographers prefer to work mostly in early morning or later afternoon - at those times sunlight is quite hard and strongly directional, revealing a high degree of form and texture - other times of day can also produce compelling results. Bright sunlight is by no means essential; the soft light of a dull overcast day can yield atmospheric images of delicate tones and colours. Rain, snow, mist and fog can, with careful thought, actually enhance or dramatize a scene.

The important factor is awareness. It is easy to become oblivious of the potential in landscapes or to be too impatient to wait for the right conditions...

C. HORIZON, DEPTH AND SCALE

The elements of an image that can be altered are points, lines and shapes....

The position of the horizon - the line where the earth and the sky appear to meet - is nearly always a dominant factor in landscape photography. It divides the picture into two distinct areas, and the relative proportions of these areas will help govern the composition, balance and mood of the photograph.

If the horizon appears nearer the top of the photograph than the bottom, the land will be the main point of interest; if it is in the lower half, the sky will tend to dominate. For this reason it should seldom run exactly across the middle of the picture, except when the composition and purpose of the picture is dependent on symmetry.

The position of the horizon can be adjusted by tilting the camera. A view camera, though, will allow the horizon to be altered without tilting.

The line of the horizon is usually broken by trees and buildings, and these will in turn affect the position and the balance of the image. As a general rule, the line should be interrupted before it meets the edge of the picture by selecting a viewpoint that includes an object to mask some part of it.

Perspective affects both the feeling of depth in a picture and the

relative scale of objects within it. A distant scene will show objects in proportion to their actual relative sizes, but the introduction of the foreground, while increasing the feeling of depth, will also falsify the relative sizes of the near and distant objects.

This dual function means that a decision has to be made in landscape photography as to which of the two qualities - depth or true relative scale - is more important.

D. THE SKY

The sky can be a dominant feature in a landscape photograph - or it can be totally irrelevant.

While houses, trees and fields remain essentially the same, the sky (like the light itself) can alter continually and make striking differences to a landscape.

A dramatic or interesting sky can do a great deal to increase the impact of an image and also to contribute to the mood of a photograph.

Beautiful images can be produced by emphasizing the shape and patterns of the clouds, and by exploiting the colours of the sky. Sunrises and sunsets are popular subjects for this sort of photography.

A strong blue, cloudless sky is ideal as a backdrop for strong colourful shots. This sort of sky lends itself to being used in conjunction with other strong colours.

Tones of clouds can be changed by over- or underexposure. You can therefor strengthen them so that they appear deeper and more powerful.

Another way of exploiting the sky is to artificially alter the way it appears on the final photograph. However, a quicker and simpler way of transforming the sky is to use graduated filters. Coloured graduated filters will alter the original appearance of the scene. They can create a blue sky on a cloudy day, give the appearance of a

sunrise or sunset, or they can introduce a completely unreal appearance. Such filters can be effective when used at the right time, but can become tedious when used constantly.

Besides, sky and clouds offer plenty of natural scope for experimentation...

E. **WATER**

Water can have a hypnotic quality. Its presence in a photograph invariable adds a considerable degree of both interest and impact to the image, partly because of its visual qualities but also because it has an emotive appeal to most people...

Water has many moods ranging from the quiet still quality of a calm sea or a lake scene, to the very powerful and sometimes frightening nature of a heavy sea or a fastflowing river. These moods can be a powerful element in a photograph.

The visual quality of water is largely dependent on three factors. The most important is sky, which gives water much of its colour. The blue of the sea, or of a river, is intense when the sky is very blue, while the same sea or river with a grey sky can be almost without colour.

The second factor is reflection. In addition to reflecting the sky, water will also mirror other tones and shapes around it.

The third factor is movement itself. Movement on the water's surface can create many unusual effects. A still, unrippled surface will create a mirror-like image of the sky and its surroundings, whereas moving water will create a variety of tones and colours in a more abstract way.

These three factors, when combined, can give one the visual quality

that can be used as an important element in landscape photographs.

In addition to the more obvious ways of incorporating water in a photograph - it can also be effective to use it in a more abstract way, creating patterns and textures from the rippled reflections in a lakeside or canal scene for example or using the sparkle of backlit water as an element of composition.

Another way in which water can be used to create an interesting effect, is by the imaginative use of shutter speed. When moving water is photographed using a very fast shutter speed - the result is an almost frozen quality. On the other hand, if a very slow shutter speed is used - water will appear as ethereal, smoke-like tones in the image, making static elements such as rocks appear in strong relief. Also giving an impression of speed and power.

This approach is dictated as much by the combination of light conditions, lens and film as much as it is by personal preference.

F. THE URBAN SCENE

The word landscape conjures up a romantic picture of inland scenery with hills, trees, rivers and fields. There is an alternative landscape, however, one equally worthy of the photographers' attention. Created by man - the urban landscape may seem even more beautiful or more dramatic than the conventionally rural one. Urban landscapes provide the photographer with a wealth of visual contrasts and comparisons.

Juxtaposition of man-made and natural scenery can give an added force to the picture. The comparison may be as simple as clouds above a row of houses; or it can be obviously dramatic - the sun behind an industrial wasteland. The time of year, time of day, the weather and the light obviously affect the urban as much as the rural landscape. The weather is useful to reinforce a mood - gloomy sky over grimy cotton mills or contradict it: try showing the same view in brilliant sunshine. The unexpected is always intriguing.

The urban landscape also affords an opportunity for the photographer to make a social comment by emphasizing the beauty or ugliness of towns and the excitement and sadness of living in them.

The relationship between man and his environment is an obvious theme for the urban photographer. The human figure, so often out of place in the rurality of a conventional landscape, is a natural element in scenes of street life.

4. EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES OF A LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHER

Most landscape photographers agree that the use of modern equipment gives them great freedom and flexibility of approach. The great flexibility made possible by lightweight modern equipment and faster, cheaper, more convenient film has also led to changes in the way that landscape is conceived and composed.

A wide range of cameras and lenses are available to the modern landscape photographer - depending on the requirements of the photographer. These smaller, more portable cameras have encouraged the use of eccentric framing and unusual points of view. While many prefer to use 35mm SLR cameras because of their flexibility, some still prefer the medium and large format cameras - with their undeniable quality.

The choice of lens has a significant effect on landscape composition. Focal length, from very wide angle to telephoto, imposes its own graphic rules on the image. With a wide range of lenses, photographers can zoom in or away from their subject without moving the camera. Wide angle views tend to show the broad sweep of a landscape, emphasizing at the same time, details to the camera. This allows the inclusion of foreground elements close to the camera position in the picture, offers greater depth of field, increases the impression of depth and, of course, enables a wider angle of view to be shown. It will, however, alter the apparent scale of objects. Also, because of this wide angle of view, such lenses nearly always show the horizon, making conscious control over the position of the

horizon line important. The longfocus, or telephoto lens, on the other hand, allows a more distant viewpoint and elements of a scene to be isolated; it reflects a more truthful relationship between the size of objects in the picture, although the effect of depth is considerably reduced. These qualities make it possible to compose with a telephoto lens in a graphic and sometimes abstract way. By moving the lens only slightly, the arrangements of shapes and lines can be changed significantly, while the flatter perspective gives a more two-dimensional image. If you want to make a set of variations in composition, a long focus lens is the most useful additional item of equipment you can have.

The modern tripods are much more flexible instruments than the tripods used by the nineteenth century photographers, and when used, give the photographer more control over his subject. "A tripod turns almost any camera into a precision instrument," says landscape photographer Harold Sund. "It enables you to achieve more control over composition and take full advantage of your equipment's potential for speed and sharpness."[1]

Although most photographers express a desire to capture nature's colours as they are, without falsification, some still choose to use filters. These are available for both colour and black and white photography and each is used to achieve a chosen effect - from 'emphasizing existing colours' to 'substantially changing light.' One example of these filters are graduated filters, available in neutral density and in a range of colours. These affect only half of the image and can be used to reduce the exposure of the sky without

affecting the foreground. These filters can be obtained in a range of shades which add colour to the sky area of the image as well as making it darker. This can be particularly useful with sunset pictures, when a straight-forward, unfiltered picture can often produce a somewhat less exiting result than the original.

When the sky is blue and the photographer is shooting away from the sun, a polarizing filter can be used with colour film to darken the tone of the sky without affecting the quality of the other colours.

With black and white photography, blue skies and the contrast of the clouds can be more effectively controlled by the use of yellow, orange and red filters - yellow having a subtle effect, orange somewhat stronger (rendering the blue sky a mid-grey) and the red filter producing a dramatic impact, converting the blue sky into a dark grey with the white clouds in strong contrast.

Equipment, as seen above, plays a very important part to the modern photographer. What he decides to use, and how - work hand in hand to determine the final image of the photograph.

1. "Landscape Photography", Amphoto, 1984, Page 12

5. LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHERS

Yuan Li, Sonja Bullaty and Franco Fontana - the three landscape photographers whose works I have chosen to discuss, were chosen because of their many differences in style and approach.

They are not a close-knit group of artists from the same area who share common goals and work in the same style. Most of them do not even know one another.

These three photographers also occupy different places in the photographic community. Sonja Bullaty is a globe-trotting professional whose assignments keep her moving from one part of the world to another and at times take them out of the field of landscape. Franco Fontana, began as an amateur, and only later achieved professional status. One, Yuan Li is still an amateur in the sense that he makes his living in a field other than photography.

All, however, have achieved widespread public recognition, and despite many differences, they have one major thing in common - they all love to photograph landscape.

The landscape is one of photography's oldest and most venerable subjects. But seen through the eyes of these three modern masters, this traditional subject takes on a dazzling freshness...

A. **YUAN LI**

The starkly simple landscapes of Yuan Li convey a sense of mankind's smallness and insignificance in the face of nature.
"There is a certain metaphoric connection between landscape and the inner self of a human being," says Li, and what he tries to do in his photographs is give it expression.[1]

Although he admires the work of Eliot Porter, Yuan Li's only teacher was the late Helen Manzer, whose classes he attended in New York City. "Mrs Manzer made me aware of the need to give a photograph a well-defined and clearly stated theme", he says. His photographs have been published in 'Arizona Highways' and 'Camera 35', among other magazines, and he has exhibited in New York, San Francisco, and Princeton.

Most of Li's landscapes were taken with a 35mm camera, usually with a zoom lens. He finds too much equipment hampers him and causes him to lose the fun and spontaneity of photography. He now owns, and uses, two cameras - a Canon A-1 and Canon FT, but, until recently, did all of his work with one. He favours Kodachrome 64 for its warmth, and he does not use filters. Li often uses a tripod to compose his pictures more carefully and obtain greater depth of field. He prefers later afternoon or early morning light because it provides better contrast and warmer tones, though on occasion an overcast sky or even a storm will help him create a dramatic image. Yuan Li also agrees that landscapes should be photographed in colour. "The world is full of colour", he says, "why should I make it artificially black and white."[2]

In taking a picture he tries to steer a course midway between spontaneity and control. "On the one hand," he says, "a successful photograph must convey the impression that the photographer is in full control of what is in it. However, too much control can rob the picture of life."[1]

Although Yuan Li photographs other subjects, landscape provides him with the best opportunities to express the connection he feels between external nature and the inner spiritual world. And modern photography, "with its unique capability to reproduce what is in front of us in minute detail," is the ideal way to record " a feeling moment that is captivating and inspiring."

Once he finds an area that appeals to him, Yuan Li tries to let the landscape itself determine his approach to it. He often finds it necessary to go back frequently to a favoured area because the first impression, though important, can be superficial.

Li often emphasizes the abstract element of landscape, for instance, by eliminating the horizon line and concentrating on the landscape below it. However, he does not insist that this approach is always the right one - even for himself. "Any creative process would cease to be creative if it became a routine repetition of fixed steps."[1]

Yuan Li's work I feel was best described when he said... "When I see a landscape, I feel there are so many poems in that landscape so I write a poem about it, with my camera..."

SPRING FIELD AFTER THE RAIN,

NEAR PETERS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

The greatest influence on Yuan Li's work is probably his Chinese heritage. He approaches landscape photography as a subject for contemplation and a source of inspiration, as well as a means of expressing his own thoughts and feelings. Here, the delicate mood of this misty California landscape takes on a very oriental feeling.

B. **SONJA BULLATY**

The varying effects of climate, weather and season play a major part in establishing the mood of Sonja Bullaty's landscape photographs. The seasons - "and there are many seasons," she says, "not just four" - are a subject of which she never tires...

Sonja Bullaty is best known as part of the team Bullaty and Lomeo, and she and her husband Angelo Lomeo, often work together out of their apartment. But each came to photography by a different route.

Sonja Bullaty was the only member of her family to survive the war, and after the war she was taken on as an assistant by Joseph Sudek, Czechoslavakia's best known photographer, who taught her, she said, that "photography can be more than a profession, that it is a way of life." By the time she came to New York and met Lomeo, she was an experienced, though self-taught photographer.

Bullaty's work has been shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the International Center of Photography, both in New York, and the Museum of Modern Art, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Bullaty uses 35mm single-lens reflex cameras, usually (though not always) without a tripod, and she may use any lens from an extra wide angle to a zoom depending on the requirements of the picture. She works primarily in colour, but she has worked extensively in black and white, and still does on occasion. She thinks of colour and black and white as different but complementary means of expression.

Occasionally she uses a warming filter or an ultra violet or polarizing filter, but she does not use filters to radically alter or distort nature's colours. "I prefer not to manipulate things," she says. "The world is exciting and to capture what is there is a tremendous challenge."[1]

Although Bullaty photographs people and cities as well as landscape, landscape is for her "a very important way to express what I feel about the world." She enjoys photographing the landscape early in the morning and just before and after sunset. And while she prefers an overcast day for increased colour saturation, she finds that there are landscapes that only come to life in full sun. "It depends on what mood one is in or wants to express." Summer is the most difficult season for her to photograph, while winter, when "everything is reduced to basics", is her favourite.

Extensive travel has taught her to size up a new subject quickly, and to realize that a first impression can be as valid as one based on longer acquaintance. In any case, Sonja Bullary tries to approach each subject with an open mind. "Even if I go out there with a preconceived idea, what is out there in nature will determine the image..."[1]

1. "Landscape Photography", Amphoto, 1984, Page 50

SPRING THAW, HIGH SIERRA

"The photographer," according to Bullaty, "should try to distill symbols so that the picture represents universality as much as possible." This photograph of deep winter snow giving way to spring is a fine illustration of Bullaty's words. Surely the idea of awakening could not be better expressed.

C. FRANCO FONTANA

In Franco Fontana's landscapes, the infinite variety of the visible world is often reduced to a few bands of colour harmoniously arranged within the picture space.

His approach is so extraordinary that they hardly seem to be landscapes. By careful framing and choice of location, Fontana manages to achieve a remarkable simplicity in his picture. All distracting detail is carefully excluded from the frame and the landscape is reduced to almost pure colour and form.

"I try to show landscapes in their essence - their roots, their primitive forms - outside time and space," explains Fontana. "Some of my pictures could have been taken 5000 years ago or the day after tomorrow. Perhaps it's abstract in the sense that it's abstracted from all extraneous or human influences which place the photograph in time. They have no scale or dimensions."[1]

Fontana never studied art and he taught himself to be a photographer. However, he is now internationally known as an artistic photographer. He had his first one-man show in Modena in 1968, and has published several books of photographs, including a portrait of his city, "Modena una citta" (1971), and photographs of the Italian countryside "Terra de leggere" (1974).

Fontana's equipment is simple. He uses basic Canon 35mm SLR cameras and even with the electronic A-1 or AE-1 he prefers the manual mode.

He almost always uses a zoom lens. "This allows me to move easily, isolate the space according to my interpretation, and to give the landscape a two-dimensional impact, depriving it of all perspective."

He always photographs in colour because "when I open my eyes I see colours; for me it is natural to interpret reality as I see it." Fontana usually uses Ektachrome 64 Professional Film. He does not use filters, but he does underexpose to improve colour saturation. He photographs in all seasons, and likes the afternoon light on clear days for its warmth and for the contrasts between light and shadow which it creates.

Nevertheless, though technique is an important part of his work, Fontana continually stresses the importance of personal style. "My personal style doesn't change. No matter what the subject, I seek to delete everything that might render the picture too descriptive. A photograph is always an interpretation, not an illustration."[1]

1. "Landscape Photography", Amphoto, 1984, page 82

LUCANIA (BASILICATA) REGION,

SOUTHERN ITALY

This photograph is another example of Fontana's rigorous, almost abstract composition. Beyond the immediate compositional value of the forms, Fontana sensed the dimension of time. The contrast among the varied tones of green and yellow gives a feeling of things continuously changing, and the tree is like a fixed point, expressing a deep emotion to be infinitely interpreted.

6. THE AUTHORI'S APPROACH

Each photographer starts out with a personal conception of what a landscape photograph should be, a conception that determines what sort of subject he will seek out to photograph and how he will photograph it. These conceptions are deeply personal and differ from one photographer to another...

I am attracted to the simpleness of a landscape, and this is what I try to show in my photographs.

In nature colours exists in all their completeness - I want to show them for what they are. The simpleness of nature - in its true form and colour. This is the reason why I only photograph in colour, I want to show the world for the colourful place that it is.

I prefer working early in the morning or later in the afternoon - when there are gentle colours and soft shadows. I don't have a favourite season to photograph in. I feel that each have their own qualities, and I try and show them for what they are.

My approach to landscape photography, that is, my personal style, remains the same; I try to depict nature as it is. No matter what the subject, for me it is natural to interpret reality as I see it. What is out there in nature will determine the final image...

EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUE

I have a preference for the 35mm camera because of its versatility - in handling and the availability of lenses. I use a Minolta X700 and a Pentax K1000, each with a standard 50mm lens and a zoom lens. My favourite lens is the 70 - 210mm which I use for most of my shoots because it gives me the freedom to isolate the space according to my interpretation.

I also made use of the medium format 6 x 7 camera. When it comes to quality, the RB 6 x 7 is ideal. It is a lot bulkier than the 35mm camera, but this doesn't cause too much of a hassle when photographing landscape.

I do use a tripod at times, but not very often. Using a tripod allows me to use a slow shutter speed, which I do on occasion to achieve different effects. It also enables me to shoot slow for sharpness, and in different lighting situations.

I don't use colour filters, because I believe landscapes should be shown in their true colours; filters damage these colours. For this same reason I only photograph in colour, and not black and white. I have used both Agfa and Fuji colour 100ASA print film.

Equipment plays an important role in producing the final image, and I have tried to use my equipment to help produce the best image.

7. THE AUTHOR'S WOkk

A. EXAMPLES OF THE AUTHOR'S PHOTOGRAPHS

I have chosen three of my photographs which I think are fairly representative of my style and my abilities.

EARLY MORNING IN FISH HOEK (Plate 2), as the title indicates, was shot in Fish Hoek. The photograph was taken at sunrise during the December - summer holiday period. I used my 35mm with my 70 - 210mm lens, without a tripod. A Sun 'star filter' was used to achieve the 'star-like' effects of the lights.

The colour of the photograph adds to the mood. It wouldn't have worked as a black and white print. A sunrise - I feel - is all about its striking colours. And I think this photograph is a good example of this.

PLATE 2 : Early Morning in Fish Hoek

Location: Fish Hoek

THE TREE (Plate 3) was shot in the Kirstenbosch forest outside Cape Town. What first caught my eye was the unusual colours of the 'blue' trees in contrast with the brown and green and this became the important subject in the photograph.

I used my 35mm camera with a standard 50mm lens, without a tripod. The photograph was shot on a relatively fast shutter speed of 125th/sec.

This photograph, I feel, is a good example of how I let the landscape speak for itself. It is very simple and direct, and with its unusual colours works well.

PLATE 3 : The Tree

Location: Kirstenbosch forest, Cape

THE BRIDGE (Plate 4) is another example where I have allowed the landscape to speak for itself.

Again I used my 35mm camera, this time with my 70-210mm lens - which gave me more control of the composition of the photograph, and allowed me to isolate the scene. I had to shoot on a slow shutter speed because of cloudy weather, and therefor used a tripod. No filters were used in taking this photograph, I wanted to reproduce the colours as I saw them.

PLATE 4 : The Bridge

Location: Tulbach, Cape

PLATE 5 : Untitled

Location: Tulbagh, Cape

PLATE 6 : Untitled

Location: Llundudna, Cape Town

PLATE 7 : Untitled

Location: Tulbagh, Cape Town

PLATE 8 : Untitled

Location: Llundudna, Cape Coast

PLATE 9 : Untitled

Location: Outskirts of Welkom, O.F.S.

PLATE 10 : Untitled

Location: Wellington, Cape Town

PLATE 11 : Untitled

Location: Outskirts of Cape Town

PLATE 12 : Untitled

Location: Kimberley, Northern Cape

8. CONCLUSION

I have worked in the 'landscape field' for most of this year, compiling photographs and information for the writing of this dissertation, and taking landscape photographs for my own enjoyment. It has been a very interesting year and has allowed me to grow in various areas as a photographer.

I feel I have achieved what I set out to do in my landscape work and am happy with the final result.

I think landscape photographer Angelo Lomeo sums it up quite nicely. "When a picture turns out the way I first saw it in my head, when I can show others something they may not have seen for themselves, then I am happy with my work."[1]

1. "The Photo Magazine", The Photo, 1982

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