

HANDTINTING PHOTOGRAPHY

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	i
List of Photographs	ii
1. Introduction	1
2. A historical perspective	3
2.1 History of photography	6
2.2 Painters and photographers	6
3. Hand Tinting	10
3.1 Preparation	11
3.2 The Kit	12
3.3 Digital Manipulation	13
4. Jan Saudek	15
5. The Author's work	19
6. Conclusion	38
7. Bibliography	40



LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1: Sunflower	21
Photograph 2: The Boot	22
Photograph 3: Lovers	23
Photograph 4: Banana	25
Photograph 5: Jean	26
Photograph 6: Sarah	27
Photograph 7: Fruits	28
Photograph 8: Shadow	30
Photograph 9: Landscape no. 1	31
Photograph 10: Landscape no. 2	32
Photograph 11: Landscape no. 3 - Golf club A	33
Photograph 12: Landscape no. 4 - Golf club B	35
Photograph 13: Cartier	36
Photograph 14: The Car	37

INTRODUCTION

Fortunes are not made by handtinting, like advertising of fashion, but it is still very fascinating.

For a start it is very important to understand photography and how it got started. The history of it as well as what it stands for today.

The knowledge of using a handtinting kit is important as well as the printing of the image.

The script also discusses an extraordinary man: Jan Saudek, and how he started with handtinting. In the last chapter with reference to fourteen examples, my own work will be discussed.

CHAPTER ONE

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In the fifth century B.C. in China, Mo Ti recorded light rays and their ability to project a 'duplicate' image.

The light was "writing" a description of the object. And so the story began of photo-graphy. It was translated from the Greek to "writing" (graphos) with "light" (photos).

JOSEPH NICEPHORE NIEPCE

To stabilise the picture was a very big problem. But J. N. Niepce overcame this problem by coating a metal plate with bitumen of Judea, then placing the coated plate in a camera obscura.

A camera was pointed out a window for several hours until the exposure materialised. The plate was then immersed in an oil solvent. The oil removed the bitumen that was not stuck by light. It left a lasting image.

So an image was successfully exposed, developed and fixed, an image that was directly formed by light. The discovery was called "Heliography" after "helios" which is Greek for sun and "grafos" for writing.

But with this discovery there was still two flaws. The first was the exposure time. To obtain an image could have taken as long as three days. His first image took eight hours to expose. The second problem was the way Niepce applied the bitumen emulsion. The coating of emulsion was uneven. Giving a blotchy appearance to the image.

Niepce tried very hard to overcome these problems but could not and almost gave up when a Frenchman, Louis Jacques Daguerre, wrote him a letter. Two years after the letter, in 1829, they signed a ten year partnership agreement. But four years later Niepce died.

In 1839 Daguerre gave his first demonstration of his process. Silver iodide, light sensitive emulsion, was produced by plating a copper sheet with silver and then exposing it to iodine vapours. The plate was then exposed in a camera obscura. After that 'developed' by exposure to mercury vapours, and finally "fixed" in a bath of hyposulphite of soda.

This process overcame the problems of Niepce namely: a shorter exposure time and the resultant crispness of the image.

Three weeks after this presentation of Daguerre, William Henry Fox Talbot presented the Talbot's pater. "some account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing - The Process by which natural objects may be made to delineate themselves without the aid of the artist pencil"

Although their process was very different from each other, there existed a strong competitive feeling between the two men.

The light-sensitive chemistry involved was different. Daguerreotypes produced images on metal but Calotypes were produced on paper. For repeatedly handling the daguerreotypes had to be encased in glass for the image to survive. Calotypes were relatively durable. Most important differences was that daguerreotypes produces unique positive images, while calotypes used

a negative system capable of producing endless duplicates. From here the camera kept developing until it became as we know it today.

2.1 HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

A miniature painter, Henry Callen (the Queen's drawing master) was the first person to become a licensee of Talbot and opened a studio in 1841 (Martin/Colbeck. 1989:11). The photograph of the calotype process gave an attractive base for a handtinted picture, for it was a rather pleasing warm purple brown image. In the daguerreotype portrait production, handtinters were employed by the makers of these prints to improve the quality and colour of the originals.

2.2 PAINTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Since the 1960's, some photographic artists combined art and photography by application of paint to the silver surface of their photographic prints.

Chistofer James used lightly coloured enamels to apply to the surface of his black and white photographic images. William Parker used heavy applications of opaque coloration to embrace a spectrum of artistic photographic styles were sued by contemporary artists such as Naomi Savage, Betty Hahn and Todd Walker.

Photographs in paintings and paint on photographs. What a nice combination.
"We are...wondering over the photograph as a charming novelty: but before another generation has passed away, it will be recognised that a new

approach in the history of human progress dates from the time when He who - never but in uncreated light Dwelt from eternity - took a pencil of fire from the hand of the "angel standing in the sun" and placed it in the hand of the mortal."

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

Burton Holmes

A travel photographer, Burton Holmes, worked between 1883 right up to the 1960's. He gave lectures which filled theatres throughout the United States. Photographic slides were used to illustrate tales of his travels, but he sought different and unusual ways to spice up his slides - this included handtinting them.

His early slides were made of glass. The Eastman company developed his process. They patented a sensitized paper on which pictures could be taken, developed and cut into a single negative. Glass plates were then used to transfer the image on to measuring 9 x 11 centimetres which were coated with collodion. One of the first countries he explored was Japan, and it was also in Japan that glass slides like these were extensively handtinted. For this delicate work which involved the skilful application of watercolour paints to the actual glass plates, a team of women artists were employed.

In later years Holmes trained a team of handtinters in the United States who hand painted his slides. Burton Holmes travelled the world and continued to travel and lecture till his death in 1958.

GOLDEN AGE OF POSTCARDS

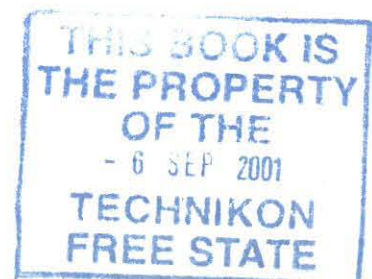
In the early days, nearly two decades prior to the First World War, the photographic image which appeared on the cards were coloured and in those days the only way to do this was by hand.

Francis Firth and Company produced a collection of cards which consisted mainly of views from around the British Isles. In the 1850's, the founder of the company caused a sensation with his photographs of the sites of Egypt. The views of the West Country was one of the companies most popular handtinted series. Stencil process was used to handtint their cards by a large team of women.

Another company was Valentine and Sons Limited who owned and used printing works in Dundee and places as far away as Melbourne and Cape Town. They employed over six hundred people and used fifty printing machined (Martin/Colbeck, 1989:18). Different departments were used for each of the processes involved: handtinting, glazing, plate making and so on. Over forty artists were involved in the preparation of the cards.

In the thirties the portraits of the stars of Hollywood was the new thing to put the interest back into the postcards. These postcards were produced before the invention of colour film, therefore the so - called Hollywood greats were only seen in colour on postcards.

Hollywood - self took the glossy, promotional pictures, lovingly handtinting then and reproduced it on to postcard size.



In the late thirties and during the forties handtinting lost its means because of the colour film. F. H. K. Menrion is one of the founding fathers of handtinting as we know it today (Martin/Colbeck, 1989:21). He used the most dramatic effects through the use of handtinted, superimposed photographic images in the days before colour photography.

In 1938 he produced one of the first handtinted photographic posters in existence. The poster was for the Post Office. The photograph was printed on a 10 x 8 inches (25 x 20 Cm's) paper, used for the background. A postman was then placed in front of the picture in black and white. Techniques were used to combine these two images.

He also produced a series of advertisements between 1943 and 1944, for Marella, a large textile manufacturer. From there he designed the covers of the fashion magazine Harper's Bazaar over the next four years. Handtinting was used everywhere.

in the eighties handtinting was unique in it's ability to give old - fashioned feel to modern subjects. But handtinting did not stop there, it was now also being used for videos and film.

CHAPTER THREE

HANDTINTING

3.1 Preparation

It is critical to choose a suitable print in the creation of a successful handtinted image. The composition should be interesting but a good tonal range is needed as well.

The choice of film is just as important, for one gets fast, medium and slow film according to its sensitivity to light. The fast film gives the print an interesting background for handtinting because one gets a grainy effect from the fast film. The same grainy effect one can also get from infra-red film.

Filters can be used, for example, red filter, which will allow only infrared radiation to pass through with the result that these areas appear lightest in tone, though it tends to make areas like the sky, for example, darker.

The choice of paper is very important for it will effect the tonal values achieved in the print. The paper surfaces available are glossy, semi - matte and matte. The semi - matte surfaces have a more subtle tone separation and matte surface are dull and flat which actually work well with high contrast negatives. It is ideal for prints to be made for handcolouring.

At first, handtinting was used only to give colour to a photograph. This was before the invention of colour film.

In today's world handtinting is still used on black and white prints but it is mainly for the use of posters - to attract attention.

3.2 The Kit

First of all the handtinting kit can be used for colouring prints, transparencies and diagrams. It is not only used for photographs but also transparencies.

Based in specially selected dyes, they are completely transparent and may be mixed together or diluted with water to produce and require tint or strength of colour. The rules for colour mixing are the same as for prints.

The dyes are not suitable for application for non-absorbent surfaces such as glass, plastic or metal.

The kit contains the following eleven colours:

1. Crimson
2. Red
3. Scarlet
4. Magenta
5. Blue
6. Cyan
7. Green
8. Leaf Green
9. Yellow
10. Flesh
11. Warm Brown
12. Black

Also, a bottle of wetting agent 326 to facilitate even application.

It is not, of course, possible to get a transparent white dye but when opaque

pigmented colours are required the dyes may be mixed with white water-colour or poster-colour.

Since the dyes are specifically chosen to stain the gelatine layer, they are not easily removable and it is usually better, particularly when dealing with large areas, to build up the colour gradually with several applications of diluted dye rather than to attempt to match the colour and density in one shot.

Brushes or using small pieces of cotton wool or sponge or by means of an air - spray, depending on the area concerned, can be used to apply the dyes.

3.3 Digital Manipulation

To work on a computer is simple. Meant in a way that when you make a mistake you simply erase it on the computer, but working directly on a photograph you just have to reprint the whole thing.

Photoshop

First you have to know your standard painting and editing tools. These tools are very simple. The eraser erases, the pencil draws hard-edged lines, the airbrush sprays a fine mist of colour, and so on.

But one should remember that these tools do not work much like traditional counterparts. In other words it will help if one is good with hand - eye coordination too achieve good results.

painting is just what it sounds like: You take a brush loaded with colour and

smear it all over your screen image. One paints directly on top of a photograph. You simply trace over the existing details in the image, without permanently damaging the image. Because the original is saved on a disk.

Photoshop offers just three tools namely:

1. Pencil
2. Paintbrush
3. Airbrush

The paintbrush tool draws hard - edge lines of any thickness.

The paintbrush draws soft lines with slightly blurry edges to create more natural transitions.

The airbrush paints soft lines like the paintbrush. The only difference is that this tool pumps out colour continuously even when held in place - as long as the mouse button is down. By contrast, the pencil and paintbrush tools only paint as you drag.

Of course we are working on a computer so it must be able to do things that are not possible in reality. One can change the size and shape of the tip of the tool. It allows you to draw thick strokes one moment and turn around and draw thin strokes the next, all with the same tool.

After that the image is printed.

CHAPTER FOUR
JAN SAUDEK

On the 13th day of May 1935 Jan Saudek was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia. He was one of a twin, but he was born second.

In 1950 he got his first camera, a KODAK BROWNIE. One year later he composed his first photo and later coloured it in. At that time the house doctor said it was very bad. But years later when he saw it again he thought it was very beautiful.

His wife gave him his first real camera, a FLEXARET in 1959. In 1970, after the divorce he ended up in a cellar. Water was dripping down the walls and in the nights bits of soaked plaster was falling off the wall. He stayed seven years in the cellar.

His work was never recognised as art in his homeland. His work consisted of women's bodies with big buttocks and breasts as well as young girls and bodies of children. He portrayed the men as the child-barer. For a self portrait he posed nude, very muscular hardness - opposite of women and children.

In his cellar he was in his element. He used the same cloudy sky negative over and over, and many of his images were taken in front of a window in his cellar. (EVANS, 1995: 381)

For money he worked in a factory. His mother hanged herself and in 1986 he attempted suicide but that failed. In 1987 his family seized all his negatives and blackmailed him. Because of them he thinks he is worthless as an artist.

He hand-coloured his images with traditional technique used before the

invention of colour film. Power, darkness and tenderness was captured in his images.

Looking at his work one gets a strange feeling, or should I say strange mixture of tenderness and obscenity and violence, lyricism and irony, romanticism and obscenity. And it is this that made Jan Saudek undoubtedly the most provocative figure in the history of Czechoslovak photography. Daniela Mrazkova said it the best when she wrote "*On the one hand is surrounded by admiration almost to the point of worship, on other by dislike to the point of damnation.*" (Swans ; 1995 : 381)

Jan Saudek was a very ordinary man. He had a everyday work just like every other man. But what the world came to know was the man who took photographs for his own pleasure in whatever time was left after his everyday job as a worker.

Nothing is left to change in his photographs. He created a world in his photographs of the promised land. His childhood was stolen there for he invented a land where he lived out the dreams that he missed. Saudek's photographs in the 60's displayed the poetry of childhood and youth and glorify parenthood.

One thing always stands out in his photographs, and that is contrasts, Children with the pose of adults and grown ups with the signs of their childhood. To get the 'right feeling' he used costumes and scenery, puppets, bouquets of flowers, masks, ballet shoes..... essential props that serve to simplify and elaborate.

But with time there came changes, especially in Saudek's romanticism. In that aggressiveness appears. The man is no longer just a protector, a source of inspiration in the exploration of womanhood, but a strength, an element to be admired.

Edward Steichen's "The Family of Man" exhibition was a great influence on Saudek's work. When looking at his work, in total, what else does it portray then the story of the family of man? (Evans, 1995: 382)

Women willingly posed for Saudek, they even posed as clowns. For Saudek the naked body was more than just a pose. For him nakedness was a promise of freedom.

"Nakedness makes a woman a woman and a man a man, no matter whether today or a hundred years ago. I undress a woman to make her eternal." -
Jan Saudek

CHAPTER FIVE
THE AUTHOR'S WORK



Every photographer has his/her own approach to photography. Each one develops their own style, thus expressing themselves uniquely.

Fourteen images of mine will be discussed.

Photograph 1: The Sun Flower

The Sun Flower was my first attempt at handtinting. I took the picture in the studio with a 35mm camera. The colours around the picture was a very sudden thing that came over me. I can't really explain it. Lets just call it a hidden feeling.

Film: Agfa 100 ASA

Photograph 2: The Boot

This was also taken in the studio with a 35mm camera. I used a metal backboard and straw under the boot. The flowers in the boot and the rose under the boot give me a feeling of contrast. (

Film: Agfa 100 ASA

Photograph 3: Lovers

This photograph was taken outside in a very old, fallen down building. Late afternoon, with a 35mm camera. In this picture I used the colours blue, green and yellow.

Film: Agfa 100 ASA







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Photograph 4: Banana

Again I used the metal plate, this time under the banana. It gives a interesting shape to the shadow of the fork. The image was taken early in the morning.

Film: Agfa 100 ASA

Photograph 5: Jean

Once again the picture was taken early in the morning outside. The shadow across the jean gave a nice feeling to the whole picture. I tinted the jean blue with a brown leaf here and there.

Film: Agfa 100 ASA

Photograph 6: Sarah

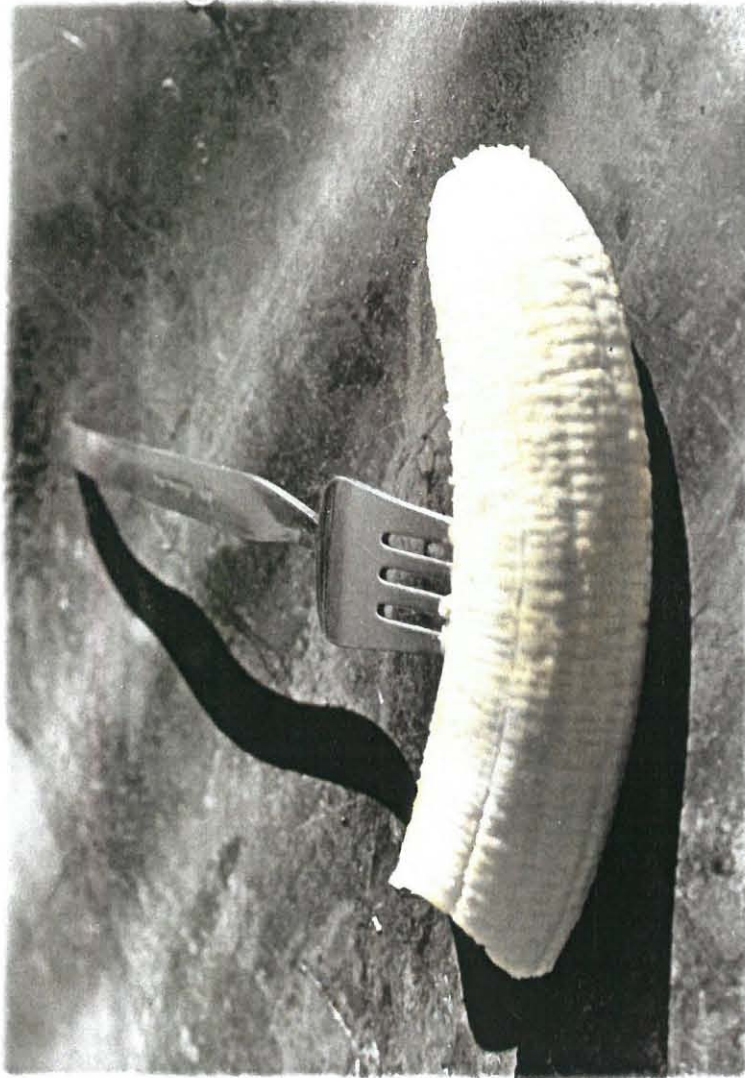
I photographed Sarah on the road sitting on a suitcase looking as thou she was tired of the world and tired of waiting. But then I tried to brighten the picture by tinting her dress a light green.

Film: Agfa 100 ASA

Photograph 7: Fruits

The Photograph was taken late afternoon outside. I had to mix my colours to get the right one. I also tried to make my colours darker in the front, that way the focus is more in the front and takes you gradually further in the picture.

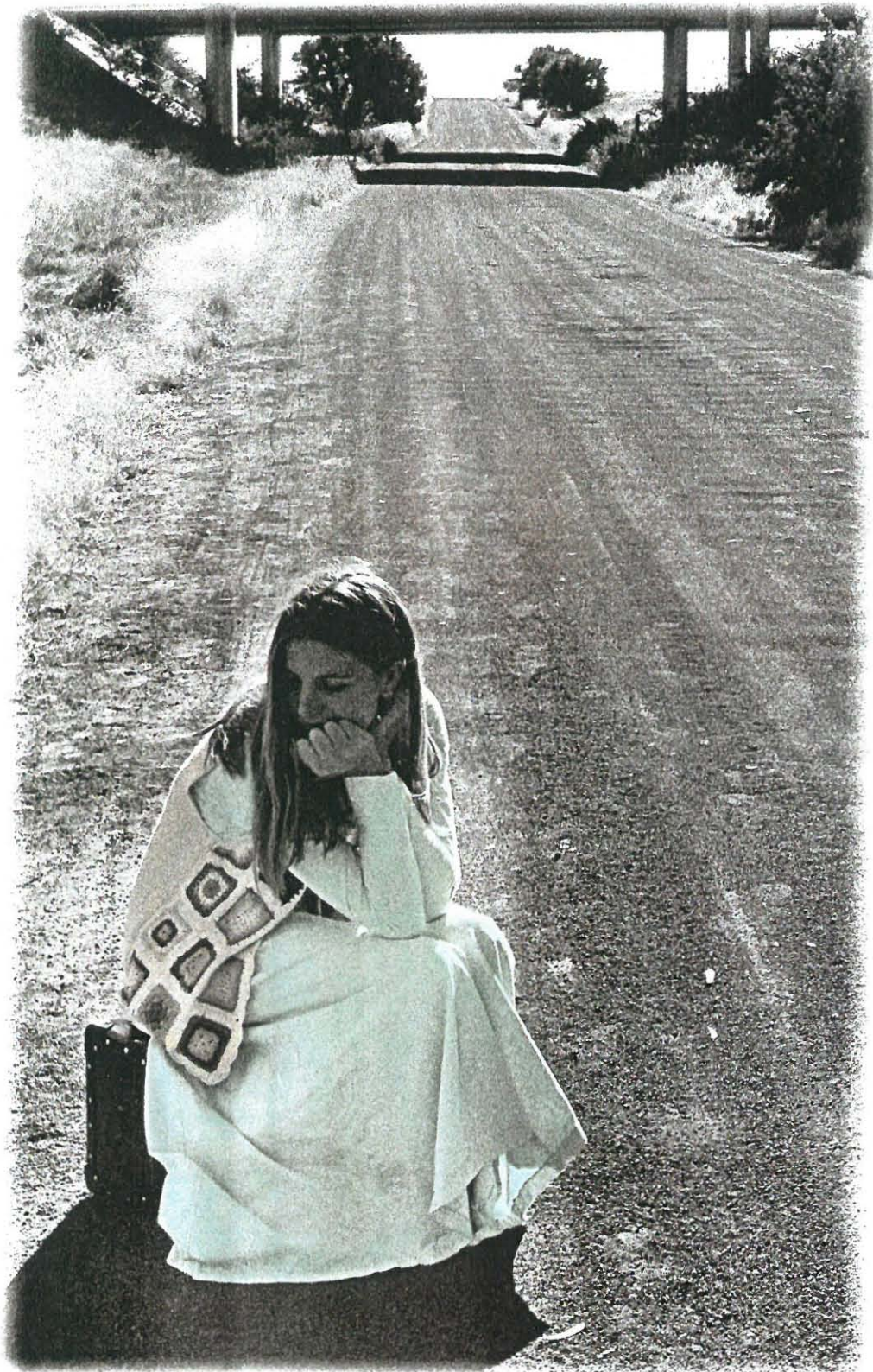
Film: Agfa 100 ASA

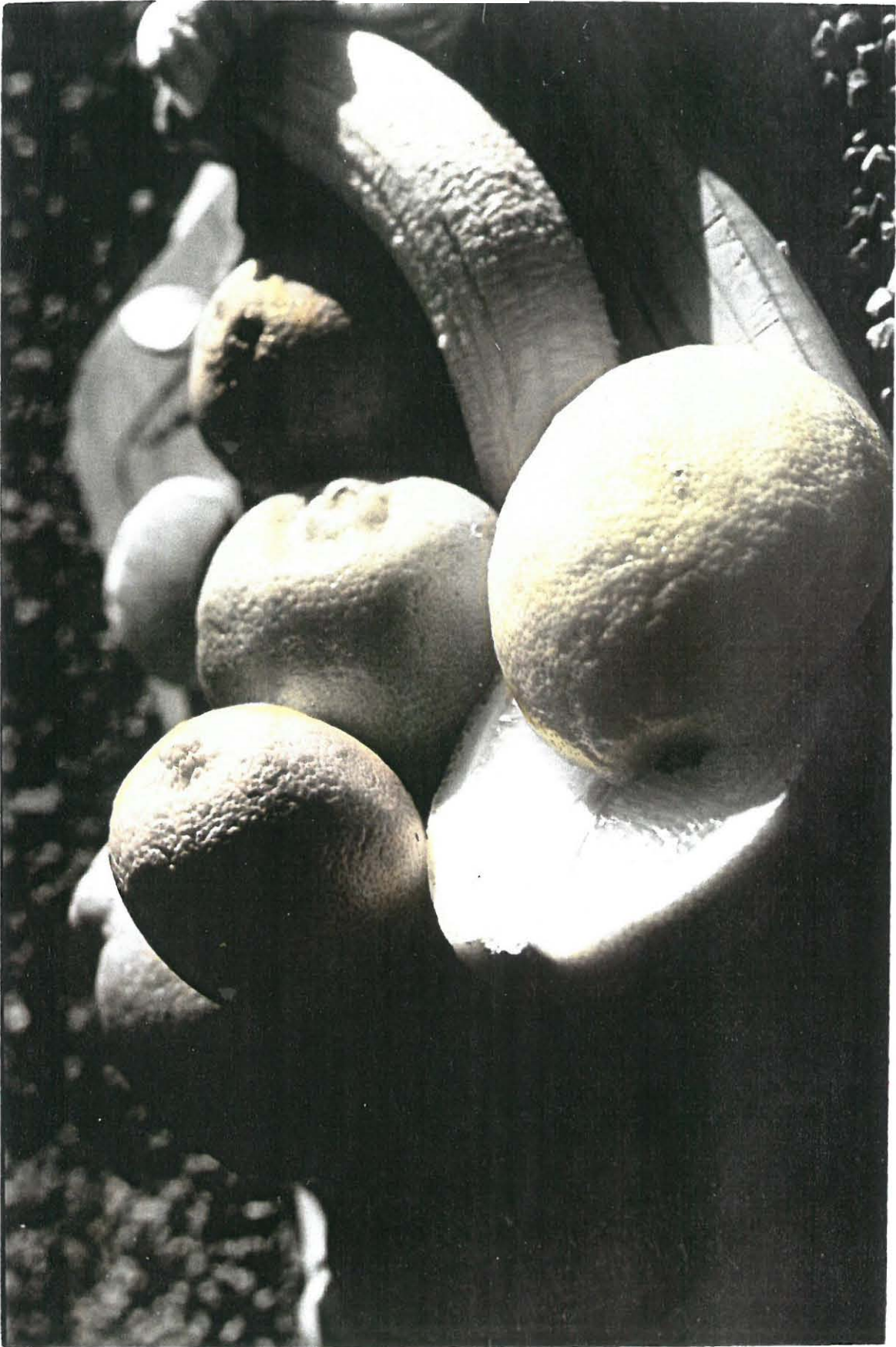


Photograph 4: Banana

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Photograph 8: Shadow

The shadow of the chair and that give a nice clean feeling to the image. I handtinted the background a soft blue, the hat a soft brown and the flowers a little bit more brighter colours.

Film: Ilford Fp4 125 ASA

Photograph 9: Landscape No 1

The river is handtinted blue, the grass green and the flowers pink. To give a little more colour the sand was coloured brown. The image was taken early in the morning.

Film: Agfa 400 ASA

Photograph 10: Landscape No 2

The photograph was taken in the late afternoon. I handtinted the dam blue with the brown leaves and green hill in the background. The sky I left white.

Film: Agfa 100 ASA

Photograph 11: Landscape No 3: Golf Club A

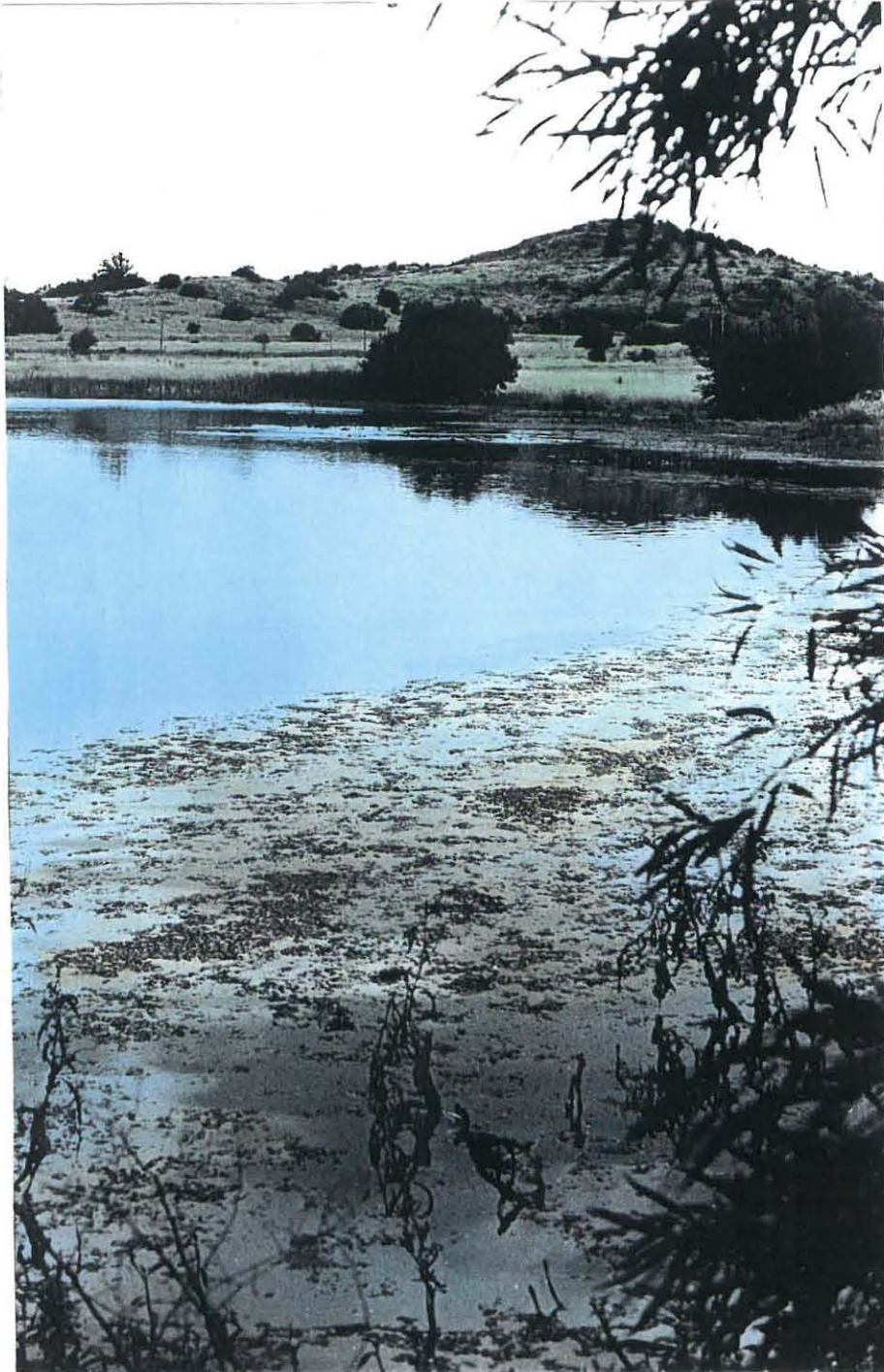
I handtinted the hay brown and grass in the background green. The water is a mixture of blue and green.

Film: Ilford Fp4 125 ASA



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Photograph 10: Landscape No. 2

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Photograph 11: Landscape No. 3 - Golf Club A

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Photograph 12: Landscape No 4: Golf Club B

The plant in front I tinted a bright green and the grass a more general green. Again I handtinted the hay a light brown and the water blue.

Film: Ilford Fp4 125 ASA

Photograph 13: Cartier

I took the photograph in the studio. The desk I tinted brown with the sign of the cigarettes green.

Film: Ilford Fp4 125 ASA

Photograph 14: The Car

The image is very simple. But the brown of the car makes the whole image different.

Film: Ilford Fp4 125 ASA



Photograph 12: Landscape No. 4 - Golf Club: B

Zelda Potgieter



Photograph 13: Cartier

Zelda Potgieter



Photograph 14: The Car

Zelda Potgieter

CONCLUSION

To become a successful handtinting photographer one must love colour and using one's hands.

Personally I feel more part of the photograph when I finished a tint on a picture. All the effort and time seems to play off.

Because of image editing software such as Adobe Photoshop, I believe there will never be an end to this kind o photography. In fact, I think in the future it will remain a part of everybody's lives in one way or the other.

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