

## PASSIVE / ACTIVE SHOOTING

Photographs of things are not really that interesting. Photos that just show the appearance of things are **PASSIVE**. They ask you to look at the subject and say, "That looks cool." But they say nothing of how the photographer thinks or feels about the subject. Therefore they are passive and objective.

What is interesting are photos of the photographer looking at something. This means photos that show an interaction with the subject- photos that could only have been made because the photographer looked at something in a certain, specific way. These photos are **ACTIVE**. They reveal something about the photographer, not just the subject in the photographic frame. i.e. they are subjective, not just a mere descriptions of appearance.

This is sometimes known as 'point of view'. There are several **visual tools** available to achieve this. These celebrate the visual geometry in a scene as established by the viewpoint of the photographer. This is a unique vision that is the product of the photo-artist's sensibility, aka subjectivity.

[**PROXIMITY**] It can be approached in a visual way by getting close to your subject, to shoot in a way that fragments the subject, making a painting of its form.  
extrapolation > **FRAGMENTATION**

[**ANGLE OF VIEW**] A similar method is to shoot from an unorthodox angle of view, again presenting your subject with a unique viewpoint.  
extrapolation > **BIRD'S EYE/ WORM'S EYE VIEW**

[**LUMINANCE**] Dramatic lighting is a prerequisite to heighten the impact of any photo.  
extrapolation > **PITCH BLACKNESS/ STARK WHITENESS**  
(without losing shadow or highlight detail!)

These terms can also be considered in an emotional or intellectual framework, extending beyond the visual/ physical aspects of the photos. **PROXIMITY** can be how closely related the photographer is to their subject. **ANGLE OF VIEW** can be the sociological or political attitude of the photographer. **LUMINANCE** refers to having achieved a higher level of awareness.

Other ways of achieving this are to use strategies that are unique to your personal vision, such as shooting through obstacles [**OBFUSCATION**] (ref: Ray Metzler, *Pictus Interruptus* series), or waiting for people to pass through a scene that you have structured to have a compelling geometrical sense [**INTERACTION**] (ref: Cartier-Bresson). Photo-artists often construct their photographs either before hand with pre-planning, or by imagining how the final shot will appear before they hit the shutter [**PREVISUALIZATION**] (much easier now with digital cameras). (ref: Minor White, Ansel Adams, Joel Peter Witkin)

That is the bottom line of looking at photographs anyway. It is not to appreciate the things in the pictures. It is about finding some person (photographer or photo-artist) who sees the world in a way that is similar to how you see things. Then, when you find this person through some of their photographic inquiries, you become intrigued enough to go out and find out even more about **what** they do, and **how** they do it, and maybe most importantly, **why** they do it. At this point you realize that you share some portion of their life. This relationship is called **resonance** and is the result of **communication** as a dialog photographer and artist. This sharing is the ultimate goal.