

MYSTERY AND LIGHT - Assignment #1

The widespread use of photography as a documentary medium presents photos that give it all to you without requiring a response. This is one-way communication. The goal is to impart information quickly and cleanly. These pictures will not keep the viewer's attention for very long. People are happy just to identify what it is a picture of and then leave. We are interested in two-way communication. It is important, therefore, to make images that raise questions, that involve a viewer in a conversation. Meaningful images inspire their audience to compare their personal experiences with those of the photographer, using the photograph as linkage.

This end is achieved by creating images with a sense of mystery. Photographs that are filled with clues rather than facts are far more interesting. The artist must, however, be clear about these questions. If the essence behind the image is confused then the best you can hope for is a confused audience.

In general your assignment for the semester is to make photographs with **mystery, passion** and **intelligence**, using light as your paintbrush.

MYSTERY

Closeness and Fragmentation -

edit out all the unnecessary clutter from an image
cameras do not have the editing filters that your brain supplies for your vision
if you can step closer and remove unnecessary things from your image
and the image is no worse, it has been improved!
this is called "economy of means" - saying more with fewer words
This is the "**What?**" of the photograph.

Unique Angle of View -

much of our lives are spent looking at the world from 5' 6" off the ground
this is the most *uninteresting* angle to take pictures from
put a new perspective on things that may be somewhat ordinary
This is the "**Where?**" of the photograph.

Dramatic Lighting -

look for great light
if you are shooting in flat light you will get a flat picture
eventually you will get the interesting part of the world into that light
This is the "**When?**" of the photograph.

PASSION

Relationships -

show connections between objects, the spaces they inhabit,
and the people with whom they interact
indicate active situations rather than passive
force people to compare their emotions with those of the photo
This is the "**Who?**" of the photograph.

INTELLIGENCE

Ideas -

put forth concepts not to prove a point
but to indicate other possible paths of thought
if something is "not right" in the picture, the viewer will have to figure it out
if a viewer has to think about the picture
they might realize that there is someone alive behind it
This is the "**Why?**" of the photograph.

MOVEMENT AND DEPTH OF FIELD - Assignment #2

EXPOSURE

For the time being we will assume that your meter is relatively correct in its suggestions of how to set your shutter speed and *f*/stop. Follow those suggestions for this assignment.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

Shoot outside in an average lighting situation.

Use ASA 400 speed film to shoot.

Write down the subject matter, shutter speed, and *f*/stop specs for all shots.

Do not rewind the film all the way into the film cassette! This saves one step.

MOVEMENT

Find a scene or subject with consistent movement; get close enough so the moving part of the subject fills the viewfinder.

- Set shutter to the maximum (1/1000th sec.); set *f*/stop so the meter says okay; shoot one frame.
- Reset shutter speed one stop slower; reset *f*/stop to compensate for the loss of light; shoot again.
- Continue taking the same picture at every shutter speed until you run out of *f*/stops.

Find another scene with consistent movement and repeat the above procedure until you shoot all 36 exposures on your roll of film.

- For the 4th and 5th series, try starting with a slower shutter speed (maybe 1/25) to see how the really slow shutter speed appear.

DEPTH OF FIELD

Find a scene with depth, rows of things not too far apart; get close enough so the closest thing is only a foot or so in front of you; focus about one-third of the way back;

- Set your *f*/stop to maximum (*f*/1.8 usually); set shutter speed so the meter says okay; shoot one frame.
- Reset aperture one stop smaller; reset shutter speed to compensate for the loss of light; shoot again.
- Continue this process, taking the same picture at every *f*/stop on your lens.

Find another scene with depth and repeat the above procedure until you shoot all 36 exposures on the roll.

FOR NEXT CLASS

Bring the exposed film into the next class for development.

Contact sheets of these shots will be handed in to the instructor.

READ chapters 5 and 6 in the Hohenstein book, if you have it, so you will have an idea of what will be discussed in the next class.

This is Experiential Learning. It is not stuff that you can learn by reading and listening. You can only learn it by doing. If you are confused after the lectures that explain the preceding material, that is okay. Technology does that. Even if while listening to the lectures you think everything makes sense, that is technology fooling you. It is easy for something to sound like it makes sense. Then when you go out to do it, it may get confusing again. That is okay. Photography is learning how to dance with your camera. Once you have learned how your camera deals with all these technical concerns, you can forget it all and work by instinct. This is the function of discipline. So stick with it, get used to it, learn it, and then forget it. Okay?

DARKS AND LIGHTS - Assignment #3

The first seven or so frames of each of these two rolls will produce an exposure test. The resulting negatives will all be one stop different from each other in exposure. Viewing these will give you a good idea of how your film and your meter interact.

Shoot outside in bright shade. Write down all the exposure information!
You can only do this assignment using your camera in fully manual mode.

DARKS

- find a very dark or black textured cloth
 - set yourself up so that the cloth completely fills the frame
- set f /stop to $f/5.6$
- adjust the shutter speed until the meter says the light is right
 - LEAVE SHUTTER SPEED AT THIS SETTING until you finish these exposures
- take one exposure at every f /stop available, starting with the largest ($f/1.8$ or $f/2$)
 - use full f /stops, if the lens has clicks at half f /stops, move two clicks between frames
 - your meter will start yelling that you are over or under exposing
 - that is exactly what you want in this case
- finish the roll of 36 exposure ASA 400 film by taking three bracketed shots each (-1, norm, +1) of situations where 80% of the image is overly dark or black.
 - make sure to WRITE DOWN the data for every shot.

LIGHTS

- find a very light or white textured cloth
- using the same procedure as above, shoot a full range bracket of the cloth
- finish the roll of 36 exposure ASA 400 film by taking three bracketed shots each (-1, norm, +1) of situations where 80% of the image is overly light or white
 - make sure to WRITE DOWN the data for every shot.
 - Do not rewind your film all the way into the film cassette!

AFTER the film is placed into negative files, go back to your notebook and write down the f /stop and shutter speed for each shot on the plastic below each frame. Do this carefully and make sure you have the right information under the right frame. (the frame numbers may not match up because you may have started shooting on frame 0 or frame 2). This process is very important because these contact sheets will serve as reference sheets for all future shots.

PRESENT contact sheets of these two rolls plus contact sheets of the depth-of-field and movement shots from last week to the instructor. When returned, file the contact sheets in your Negative Storage Binder next to the appropriate negative file sheet. Remember to keep a log of every shot you take in a small notebook that you can keep with your camera. Write down the frame number, subject, f /stop, and shutter speed for each shot, and the type of film for each roll. It pays to be compulsive when doing photography.