

## DIGITAL PRINTING

Printing is the most critical aspect of making photographs, digital or darkroom. This is the craft of photography.

There are some digital specific preconceptions that arise in the digital world because of people's experience with making snapshots. A digital printer is not a copy machine. This is not like Shutterfly where you get a picture to look nice on the screen send it in and you get a print back. Those prints might look good enough to the average person, but you are now working on developing a professional-level critical eye. And you will soon find that such prints do not cut it.

You cannot wait until the day before your critique to gather all of the photographs you have processed and then print them out. This again goes back to snap-shot brain. And you certainly cannot wait until the day before your critique to start processing.

The creative process works like this: Every time you get a photograph processed to your satisfaction you have to go and print it right away. This way you get a feel for how the printer interprets your screen image. The two will never be the same. With this feedback of information, the dialogue between screen and printer, you begin to learn how the screen image translates to paper. At the beginning you will have to go back and re-tweak the screen image so the print looks more like how you wanted it. This back and forth is a critical part of the creative process.

Through time you will learn to do a better job of processing the next print so that it will look more like the way you want it to look when it hits the paper. As you do this repeatedly for two weeks, the usual time between critiques, you'll build up a collection of photographs that will all look the way you want them. And you will have a solid collection of prints that have subtle variations between them. And you will not struggle with that pre-crit anxiety of, "Oh my God, I have to print all my photos for the crit tomorrow." And of course you know that if you try to get them all printed at one time something will go wrong with the technology and you'll end up with nothing. And you cannot show up to the critique empty-handed.

So the action of printing has to go hand-in-hand with the processing of the photograph so there is a symbiotic relationship between the two. This is the full creative dance: shoot, process, print. You cannot shoot all your photos for the critique at one time in one place; you cannot sit down and knock out all your processing at one time without printing at the same time; and you cannot collect all your processed photographs and think you're going to get them printed at one time. None of these tactics work. And none of these tactics will allow you to grow as a creative photographer, which is the point of this class.