

Why Choose LensWork?

"I get several photography magazines and **LensWork is the one I notice I most eagerly open.** You're doing good work." -- *Pat Breslin*

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"Thanks!!! **LOVE LensWork;** wish it was weekly..." -- *Scott*

"I truly love your magazine, and **find it an inspiration to my own work** in photography, although I am just a wanna be "artist" turned amateur. Your magazine is a great comfort to me while I sit on board ships in the Arabian Gulf stinking of sweat and dreaming of cooler climes." -- *Timothy Gordish*

"I also wanted to compliment you and a wonderful publication. It is **clearly better than any other similar publication** - especially *Aperture* (the "new" version)." -- *Jack B. Combs*

"**I LOVE your publication** - a friend of mine just gave me the most recent issue." -- *Lorraine Shaw*

"I just picked up a copy of your magazine and I want to know, where have you been all my life? This says No. 36 on the front, does this mean I've missed 35 of these? **I enjoyed every bit of this issue, from cover to cover.** Just wanted to say hi and I'm sorry I didn't know about you before." -- *Katharine Thayer*

"The concept of what you are doing is fantastic; and, of course, it is more than a concept." -- *Bill* "P.S. **Appreciate most of all the "brains" so evident in the operation.**"

"I just wanted to write and say "Thank You" for producing a magazine of **such high quality.** The May-June issue was the second issue of Lenswork that I had purchased and once again **no word has gone unread.** I am new to the world of Photographic Art and Photography but the insight that I get from the pages of *LensWork*, both written and visual far exceed the price of purchase. Thank you once again!" -- *Jason Gray*



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"I have been a subscriber for a while now and have to tell you **how starved the photography community would be without your publication.** I am so very happy you are no longer quarterly. I have only one wish for you, and I mean this in a good way. May you never enjoy broad commercial appeal." -- *Marc Climie*

"This 'preview' is a delightfully tantalizing treat, one which certainly brightened up my morning. On the other hand, it's cruel torture - now I've got to **race frantically out to the mailbox, day after day, eagerly hoping that the next issue of your excellent magazine will be waiting there ready to be devoured,** only to be disappointed by 'regular' mail. If you were trying to show just enough of the magazine to drive viewers into a frenzy to see the whole issue, well, you've succeeded. Thanks for putting out such a fine magazine." -- *Paul Butzi*

"I REALLY LIKE YOUR MAGAZINE! I **love to read the in-depth interviews,** and to hear what others are doing and thinking. It brings so much more to the field of photography when you can understand where someone is coming from. I also **enjoy the connection back to other arts.** After all, we do all speak a similar language and have common concerns when it comes to being creative." -- *Jim Graham.*

"Thanks. We are enjoying both the photography and commentary in *LensWork* - **thought-provoking and like having another congenial colleague** offering new thoughts and insights." -- *Ed and Dorothy Monnelly*

"Just finished looking through / reading *LensWork* No. 32. I wanted to say what a great publication you have here. **Thought-provoking editorials, thorough interviews, and splendid portfolios.**" -- *Miles Budimir*

LensWork Now Printed in State-of-the-Art Duotone Stochastic!



LENSWORK

Photography and the Creative Process • Articles • Interviews • Portfolios

No. 41 Jun - Jul 2002

Articles

Brooks Jensen
Frank Van Riper

Interview

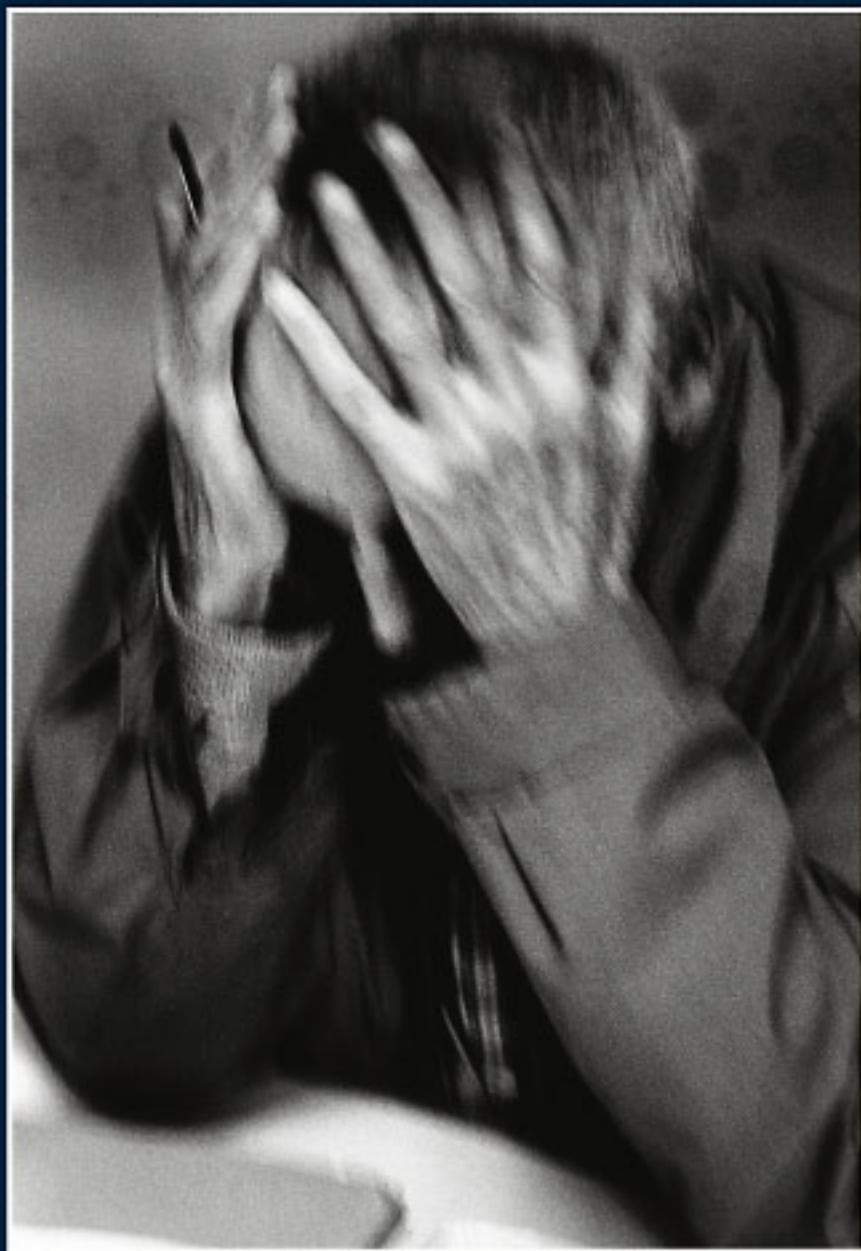
Morrie Camhi

Portfolios

Enzo Cei
J. Mark Griffith
Kevin O'Connell

EndNotes

by Bill Jay



LENSWORK

41
JUN — JUL
2 0 0 2

Photography and the Creative Process
Articles • Interviews • Portfolios

Editors

Brooks Jensen
Maureen Gallagher

In this issue

Articles by

Brooks Jensen
Frank Van Riper

Portfolios by

Enzo Cei
J. Mark Griffith
Kevin O'Connell

A Few of the Legends by **Peter Adams**

EndNotes by **Bill Jay**

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ISSN #1075-5624

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Printed in Canada

LENSWORK Publishing

909 Third Street
Anacortes, WA 98221-1502

USA Voice Toll Free
1-800-659-2130

USA FAX Toll Free
1-800-866-7459

Voice (360) 588-1343
FAX (503) 905-6111

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Web site at www.lenswork.com

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JUN - JUL 2002

LENSWORK #41

LensWork (ISSN 1075-5624) is published bimonthly (in even-numbered months) by LensWork Publishing, 909 Third St, Anacortes, WA 98221-1502. Subscriptions are available within the United States for \$29 for 4-issues, \$42 for 6-issues, or \$79 for 12-issues. Canada and Mexico subscription rates are \$39 for 4-issues, \$56 for 6-issues, or \$109 for 12-issues. Overseas subscription rates are \$49 for 4-issues, \$72 for 6-issues, or \$139 for 12-issues. Periodicals Postage Paid at Anacortes, Washington and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to LensWork Publishing, 909 Third St, Anacortes, WA 98221-1502.



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Brooks Jensen
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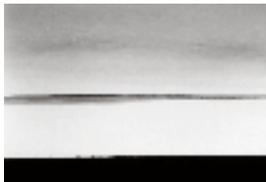
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Improved Printing and Reduced Subscription Rates!

LensWork now printed in duo-tone

Just like the finest hardbound fine art books, *LensWork* is now printed in duo-tone which has deeper blacks, richer tonality, and can reproduce warm hues that more closely match warm-toned original prints.

25-micron dot stochastic screen

Finer dots mean more detail, more subtle gradations, and reproductions that more closely mimic the random grain pattern in silver photographic film and paper. (See www.lenswork.com for details.)

Equivalent to 380-line screen

The very best books have traditionally been limited to 300-line screen. Using new technologies just now available in the printing industry, these finer screens surpass even the best books of previous generations. Finer screens combined with deeper blacks make today's printing approach true photographic fidelity.

Brighter, whiter paper

Clean, pure highlights mean better fidelity and wider dynamic range. This results in more depth and realism in fine art photography.

Computer-to-plate printing

Computer-to-plate printing eliminates the use of litho film in preparing printing plates. By skipping this "second generation" the plate is cleaner, sharper, and can use increased ink density without image degradation or loss of shadow detail seen in traditional web-press magazines. (Virtually all other photography magazines are web-press printed.)

Subscription rates reduced!

Surprisingly, in addition to these major strides in increasing quality, we are simultaneously **reducing** our subscription rates! Effective immediately, we are reducing our subscription rates to benefit all of our subscribers – both US and foreign!

Newsstand cover price to increase

With the next issue in August 2002 (*LensWork* #42), we will, however, increase the newsstand price from \$8.95 to \$9.95 (US). This price increase will only affect newsstand purchasers. This is our first price increase since we started publishing *LensWork* 10 years ago! If you have been purchasing *LensWork* off the newsstand, now is an ideal time to subscribe – and save money!

What is duo-tone printing?

Duo-tone printing uses two inks that complement and supplement each other. Two inks mean more ink density which help achieve deeper, smoother blacks while still preserving shadow detail. If the second ink is a different color, this further allows subtle color shifts. We've used duo-tone printing on the cover of *LensWork* since issue #16. Beginning with this issue, we are using duo-tone throughout the entire issue!



Single ink, half-tone printing



Two inks, duo-tone printing

What is *stochastic* printing?

*In printing on an offset press, images are constructed using a pattern of tiny dots of ink. If you look at the inside pages from any previous issue of *LensWork* with a magnifying loop, you will see that the dots of ink are distributed on a regular grid. The dots are spaced equally apart as if they were aligned on graph paper. The tonalities in the photograph are created by using different sized dots – large dots in the shadow areas and smaller dots in the highlights. The size of the grid is measured in lines-per-inch.*

Stochastic printing also uses tiny dots of ink. Unlike a traditional line-screen however, stochastic printing uses very tiny dots (in our case 0.25 micron dots) that are all the same size. The dots are randomly scattered across the printing surface, similar to the grain in photographic film. Again, just as in photographic film, shadow areas have a higher concentration of dots, highlights are sparsely populated. In fact, film and gelatin silver paper use a stochastic pattern of silver grains! Because the stochastic ink dots are so small, they reproduce exquisite detail and smooth tonalities far better than line-screen printing.

SPECIAL EDITIONS SILVER SAMPLE PRINTS



LSS001 Piano, Alkabo School, ND, 1994 by Brooks Jensen



LSS003 Books, Fairview School, OR, 1991 by Brooks Jensen



LSS002 Chairs & Pledge, Alkabo School, ND, 1994 by Brooks Jensen

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- **Gelatin silver** (we use Ilford Multigrade Fiber Base Paper) processed in a traditional wet darkroom
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EDITOR'S COMMENTS



Cheap Shots, Redux

Regular readers of *LensWork* know we do not publish a "Letters to the Editor" column. It's not that we don't receive letters; we do. But, the letters we receive run over 95% along the lines of "Great publication. Keep up the good work!

I love it!" – lovely sentiments (keep them coming!) which bolster our staff morale, but boring reading if regularly published in the magazine.

Occasionally, we receive a letter that offers a well-thought-out alternative opinion – usually a counter-argument to my Editor's Comments. I have recently received one that is both well-written and may even be persuasive. It was sent by a reader named David Baddley who is a Professor of Photography at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Utah. While I don't agree with Professor Baddley, I do respect his opinion and particularly appreciate his effort to convey his thoughts to me in a personal letter. Furthermore, I believe his letter, although written as a personal letter rather than as a more complete and formal article,

provides an important counterpoint to the discussion I addressed about art and beauty in my Editor's Comments entitled *Cheap Shots* in *LensWork* #40. This is precisely what we hope to engender with *LensWork* – ideas that foster deeper thinking about important topics of concern to creative photographers. With Professor Baddley's permission, I am reproducing his letter here, word for word, with the hopes that another viewpoint will broaden the discussion and that *LensWork* readers will consider both sides of this issue and draw their own conclusions.

Here is his letter . . .

Dear Brooks,

I thoroughly enjoy your publication. I was especially amused by your editorial, *Cheap Shots*. I am writing to address some of the ideas that you presented and the questions that you posed.

It hasn't been only in the past twenty years that photography has been

concerned with the exploration of reality. The entire history of photography is a long procession of individuals questioning the conventions of their time with reality-based issues of life, using their own personal definition of reality. William Henry Fox Talbot invented photography from the desire to make pictures which were more real, to cause “nature to draw itself.” Peter Henry Emerson began the movement of Naturalistic Photography in the 1880’s as a direct response to what he saw as the corrupt artificiality of the “higher truth” embraced by Henry Peach Robinson. Edward Weston laid aside his soft focus lens, and with it the sticky, escapist sentimentality of Pictorial Photography.

You ask how images that you find ugly qualify as art. Art often concerns itself with the expression of beauty, but this is certainly not its only purpose. When a work of art is effective it elicits an emotional response within its viewer. It requires the viewer to creatively participate both emotionally and psychologically, with the artwork. This participation isn’t always pleasant, but it doesn’t need to be pleasant to make you think or feel.

This issue is also complicated by the fact that the nature of beauty itself refuses to be pinned down. The perception of beauty is an intimate experience. The early abstracts of both Paul Strand and Edward

Weston were called ugly, in their own time, for their mechanical style of vision and their celebration of mundane subject matter. *The Americans* by Robert Frank, now respected as one of photography’s most important and poetic anthems, couldn’t find an American publisher. They all said that it was too ugly. If *Places of Power* by John Sexton had appeared a century ago, it would have been called radical and crass. Slasher films might not have been around, but Shakespeare was producing the most controversial work of his time, relying heavily upon sexual intrigue and gratuitous violence.

The best photograph of dancers frozen in the air that I’ve seen was made by André Kertész. The most horrific picture of a corpse? Weegee. Some of Edward Weston’s strongest images are his photographs of dead pelicans. In these photographs, Weston combines his usual use of exquisite formal beauty with the shocking ugliness of death. The effect is resonant. The irony embraced in these pictures gives their beauty an uncomfortable edge. Looking at these pictures is challenging, both emotionally and psychologically, making them more complicated and intimate. Their beauty is amplified.

Joel Peter Witkin (your most likely target in reference to headless corpses) simply turns up the volume on this equation.

His pictures are simultaneously extremely beautiful and extremely ugly. I have never felt good looking at his work, but I have certainly been moved. Why such extremes of expression? Starvation and misery are not new, neither are wealth and comfort. What is new is the experience of sitting in a warm home and eating a well-prepared meal while watching suffering, starvation and violence delivered in fifteen second sound bites between smiling newscasters and infomercials. Artists may be engaged in personal expression, but their work is also an expression of the culture that produced them. Artwork has always been a manifestation of its time. As much as I sometimes wish that it could be true, producing the imagery of a simpler time will not return us to a simpler time. It will only provide a source of escapism, allowing us to avoid (and neglect) the contemporary world.

Your editorial suggests that the only work being produced and popularized now is depraved, offensive and negative. This simply isn't true. Read down the lists of artists represented by major galleries or look at the books in print and you'll find that the work that you describe as dominant is, in fact, in the minority. Our reenchantment with Olivia Parker and Michael Kenna, the emergence of Keith Carter and the evolution of the work of Richard Misrach are only a few examples

of successful contemporary work which is not only positive and uplifting, it's also actually good. Are you suggesting that only the work that you find beautiful and uplifting be shown in a fine art context?

You lament the passing of photographic styles which embrace happiness, joy, beauty, finer meaning, higher purpose, photogenic landscapes, nice people, etc. I can assure you that tons of this stuff is still in production. Why, then, isn't it receiving much critical attention? Because it is dealing with issues that were thoroughly explored by photography during the last part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. Most of these issues were addressed, resolved and worn out before most of your readers were old enough to set up a tripod. Every photographer will benefit and grow as an artist on a personal level by working through these important issues in their work, but you can't expect to be a part of the cultural dialogue if you don't have anything new to offer. Galleries sell to collectors and collectors want to buy a piece of history. Why would a collector buy a photograph that looks like a Weston instead of buying a Weston? It should be no surprise that today's attention is focused on the work that deals with today's issues.

I disagree with your conclusion that the

photography that you don't like is somehow easier to make. Sally Mann's pre-pubescent nudes are sensitively composed and exquisitely crafted. Do you really think that it was easy for Larry Clark to photographically reveal his private life of petty crime, drug addiction and sexual depravity, risking social rejection and even incarceration? Joel Peter Witkin's images are as painstakingly constructed as any picture ever made. He travels to foreign countries to gain access to his subjects. His photographs contain clever and sophisticated references to artists from history, including Sandro Botticelli, Pablo Picasso, and Julia Margaret Cameron. His elaborate sets and intensive preparation represent a serious commitment to his images long before the shutter of his view camera lens is opened. One of the most difficult photographs that I've made is a portrait of my dog in her grave. It's hard for me to even imagine what it would feel like to work with a dead model. Do you really think that it would be easier to photograph a dead person than a living person? Death is motionless, but it's also troubling, and it gives off a seriously bad stench. By comparison, the usual process of finding a pleasing scene, setting up the camera, working out the details (composition, plane of focus, depth of field, etc.) and making an exposure seems relaxing.

I also disagree with the assumption that

a photograph that is easy to make is somehow inferior to a photograph that has been labored over. I agree that the work of a photographer will improve with experience and commitment, but I have seen some photographers work hard, day after day for years and never produce anything of significance. I have also seen photographers who, even with little experience, have strong work simply and almost effortlessly flow out of them. I would rather look at an exciting, clever Polaroid snapshot planned and made in less than a second than look at a carefully crafted, archivally processed, selenium toned silver gelatin print that, in spite of the investment of more than twenty hours, is still a boring picture. Robert Frank's picture of the elevator girl (*Elevator, Miami Beach*) is one of the most compelling photographs ever made, and it appears that he didn't even break his stride to make it.

I agree with you that the use of shock value has become so common that it has been reduced to a novelty. The extreme sharpness of a print made from an eight by ten negative is also a novelty. As someone who loves to look at photographs, I try to look through the more superficial levels (Ooh, that's sharp. I'm shocked! Nice toning. What is this abstract a picture of?) to gain an appreciation for the substance of the image. In most cases, there is something to be found. If you don't

like certain kinds of pictures, don't look at them. But don't dismiss them as being devoid of the substance that you weren't willing to look for as a viewer. I believe that all of these artists care deeply about what they are making, and that their expressions are deeply personal. There is certainly work being produced today that I don't like. I am not excited about cute babies in mounds of flowers, nor am I moved by orange fish floating through blue rooms. But I am glad that the work is out there, and I am glad that so many artists are working in so many directions to provide me with more choice when seeking to enrich my visual experience.

I'm glad that they have chosen to participate in our cultural dialogue.

Sincerely,
David Baddley
Professor of Photography
Westminster College
Salt Lake City, Utah
dbaddley@westminstercollege.edu

I'd like to express my gratitude to Professor Baddley for allowing us to reproduce his letter here and for your indulgence in this break from our regular publication format.



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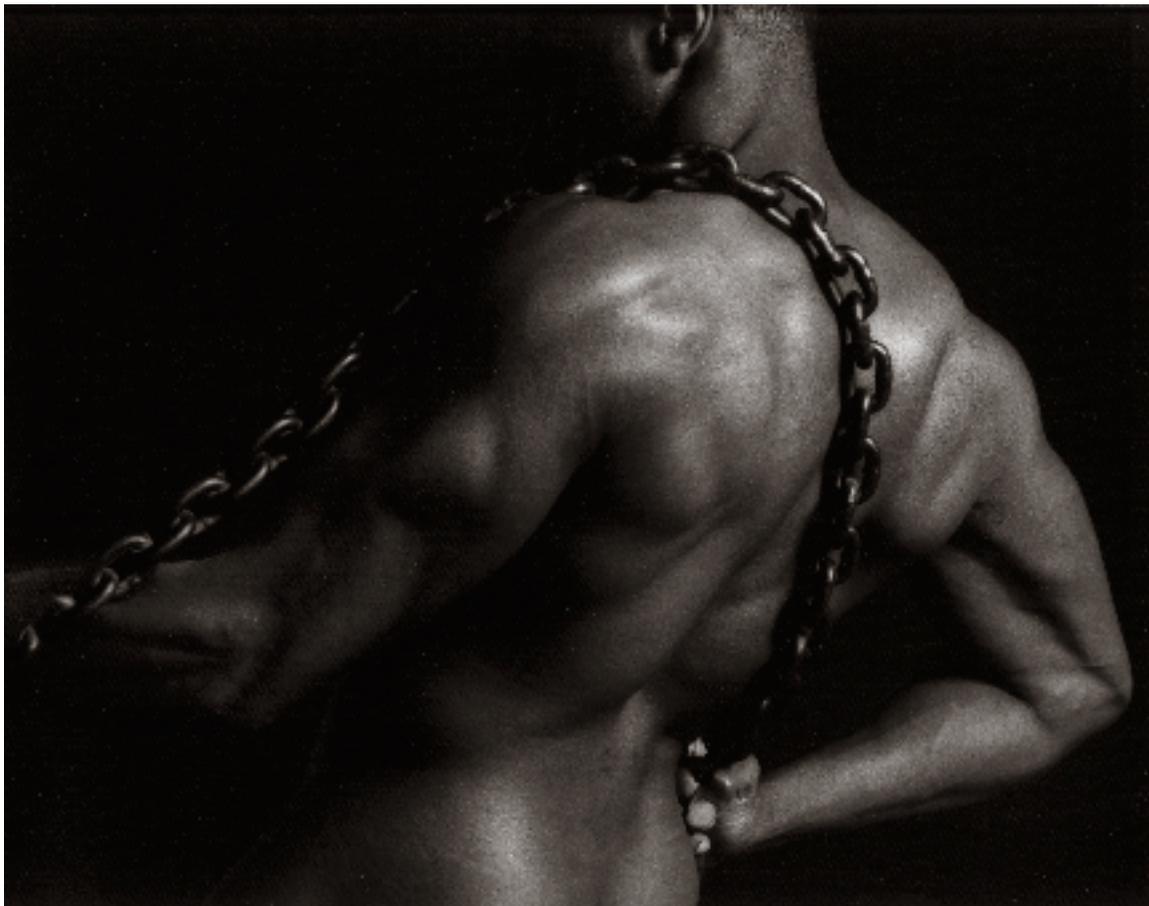
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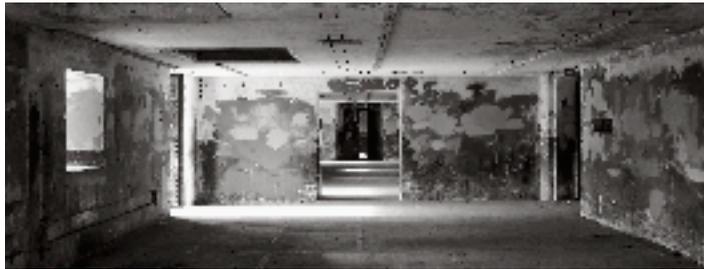
Bluegrass, Jackson Road, WA
by Don Kirby © 1989

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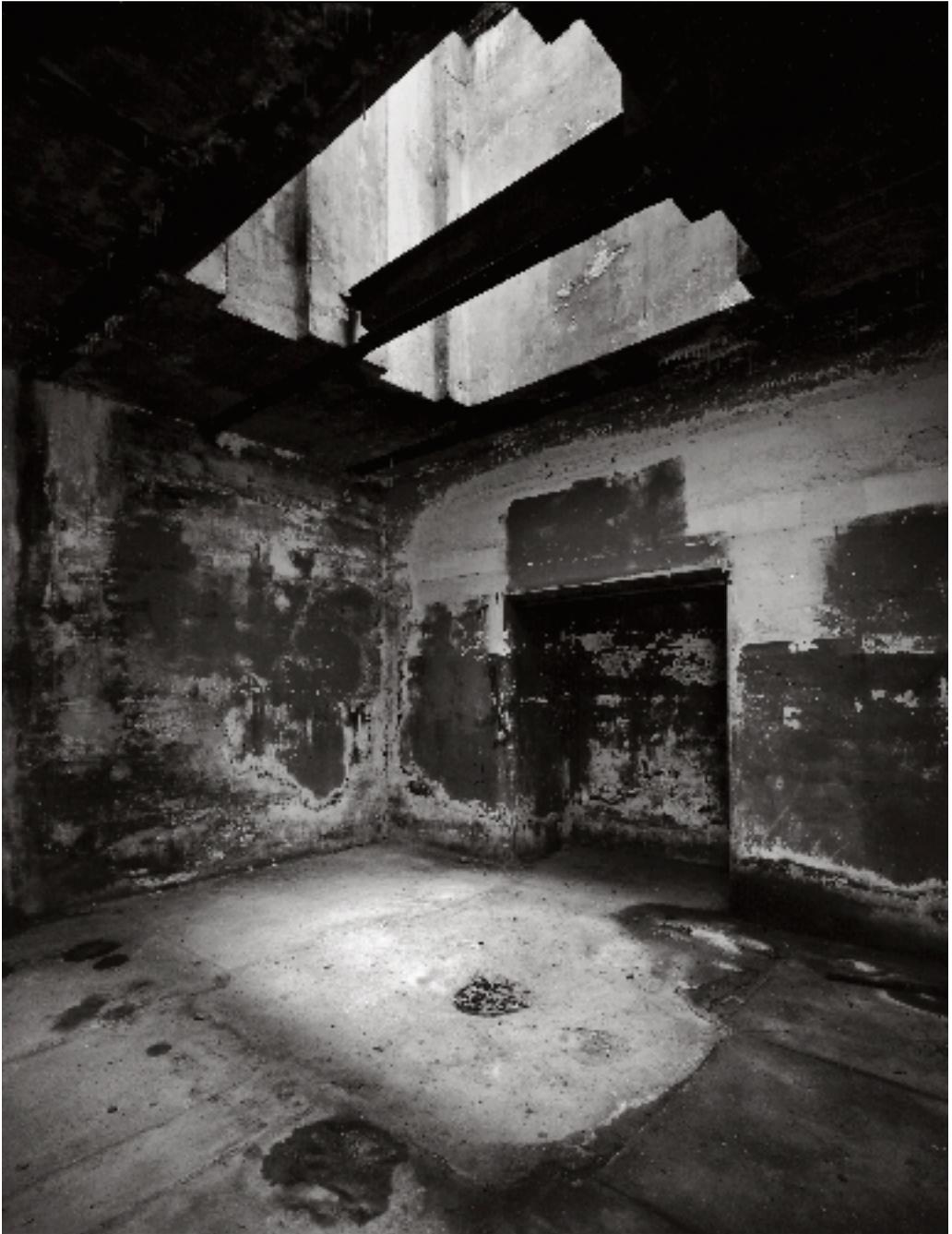
COASTAL DEFENSE



by

J. Mark Griffith

J. Mark Griffith





STEPHEN KING, PHOTOGRAPHY TEACHER

by

Frank Van Riper

Though he probably didn't set out to do it, author Stephen King has written an insightful, plainspoken, and thoroughly enjoyable book on photography.

Of course, King's latest book, *On Writing*, is about the craft of setting words to paper, as well as a deftly written autobiography describing his Maine boyhood, his enduring marriage to fellow novelist, the former Tabitha Spruce, his successful battle with alcohol and drugs, and of course, his recovery from the 1999 car accident that nearly killed him.

But as someone who has met King and photographed him, and who has spoken with him a number of times about his craft, I finished his book thinking that a lot of what King said about being a good writer can apply to being a good photographer. I respect King greatly for his devotion to what he does best – telling stories that can grip you by the throat, move you, scare you, make you laugh out loud, and then rob you of a night's sleep. And that devotion, I think, can be translated to other art forms.

"This is a short book because most books about writing are filled with bullshit," King says in one of his three forewords. (Don't ask.) "Fiction writers, present company included, don't understand very much about what they do – not why it works when it's good, not why it doesn't when it's bad. I figured the shorter the book, the less the bullshit..."

But in fact King does understand much more than he initially lets on. He understands – and beats the reader over the head with the notion – that devotion to process is what informs craft. And that craft becomes art only after long, hard work.



DRIVING THE GREAT PLAINS



by

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Kevin O'Connell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kevin O'Connell





WHEN THE RULES CHANGE

by

Brooks Jensen

I finally figured out what camera I want. I want a camera the size of a deck of cards with a 20x optical zoom, razor sharp from edge to edge, that makes images indistinguishable from 8x10 negatives, with a built in 5,000 watt light source that runs off one AAA battery for ten years. I'd like it to have shutter speeds that range from 1/50,000th of a second to 10 hours including reciprocity failure. And finally, I would like it to be disposable and incredibly cheap.

You laugh. Why is my fantasy camera any different than the wishes of a daguerreotypist who, if he saw the cameras we have available today, would undoubtedly be incredulous. It's odd, but in our times we take it as an element of faith that technological improvements and sophistication will evolve with geometric proportions. At the same time, we continue to be amazed when they do! Each new advance of technology both amazes us, astounds us, frightens us, forces us to completely reevaluate our previously cherished ideas, and threatens us. Each advance in technology is also a doorway that leads us out and beyond what we *know* is possible, inviting us away from the comfortable surroundings of the rooms we now inhabit.



A Few of the Legends • A Series by Peter Adams

MORRIE CAMHI



“We do not see things as they are. We see things as we are.”

Morrie Camhi (1928-1999)



EMPTY ASYLUMS

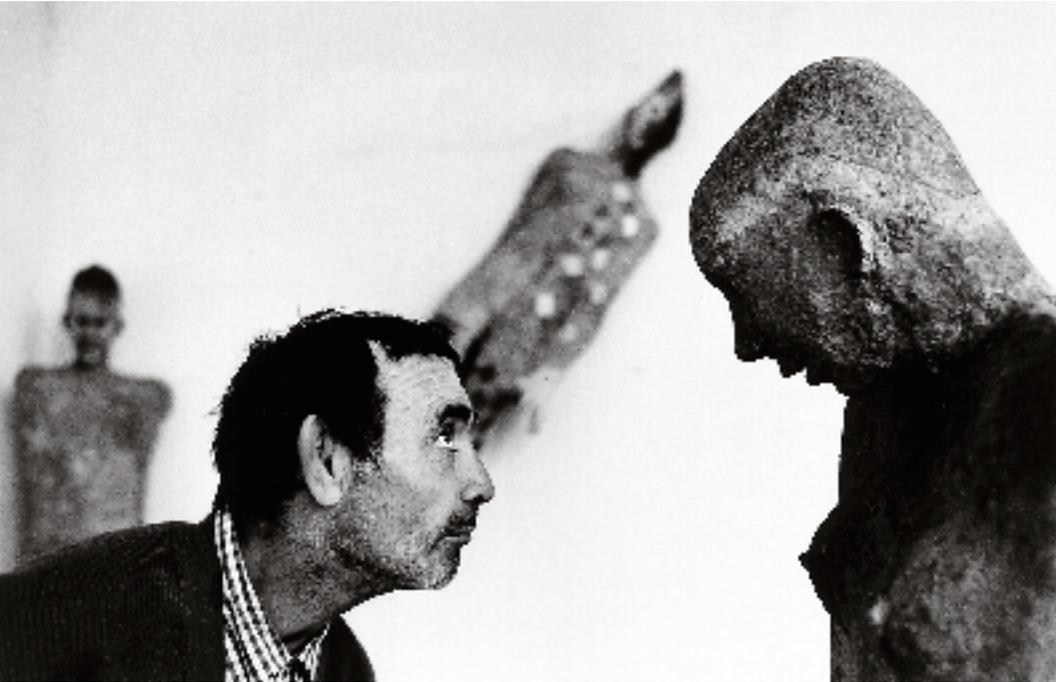
Portraits from an Italian Mental Hospital



by

Enzo Cei

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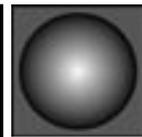
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