

Child Photography

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I hereby declare that the work contained in this mini thesis is my own independent work and that all sources consulted or sited have been indicated in full.

Signature

Date

The History of Child Photography

By Louise Nel

**Submitted for the subject
Visual Communication III**

**Faculty of Engineering
School of Design Technology and Visual Art
Photography Program**

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1. Introduction

After minimum consideration, I have decided to specialize in Child Photography. I have come to this conclusion through the fact that I have always loved children, and I can spend hours watching their every move. I recently became a mother myself, and there is few things that is more satisfying than capturing a special moment on film and knowing that I can treasure it forever. I also find it very rewarding capturing an image of a child that represents their character. This can only be achieved through natural child photography, which is the way I prefer it. I also believe I have the patience to work with children, which will probably come in handy. I have done research on the History of Photography as a whole, as well as on the History of Child Photographers. I will start with photography as a whole and later elaborate on the photographers.

2. The History of Photography

The term “photography” was first used in 1839 by Sir John Herschell. It is derived from the Greek words for light and writing.

Photography was already introduced in ancient times when camera obscuras formed images on walls in darkened rooms. The image formation was via a pinhole. By the 16th century the brightness and clarity of camera obscuras was improved by enlarging the hole and inserting a telescope lens.

In the 17th century camera obscuras was is frequent use by artists and made portable in the form of sedan chairs. In 1727 Professor J. Schulze accidentally created the first photo-sensitive compound when he mixed chalk, nitric acid and silver in a flask and noticed the darkened area on the side of the flask when it was exposed to sunlight. Thomas Wedgwood was responsible for “sun prints” in 1800 when he placed opaque objects on leather that has been treated with silver nitrate.

By 1816 Nicephore Niepce combined the camera obscura with prosensitive paper and by 1826, he created a permanent image.

In 1834 Henry Fox Talbot created permanent negative images. He used paper that was soaked in silver chloride and fixed with a salt solution. He contact printed onto another sheet of paper and so created positive images. In 1837 Louise Daguerre created images on silver plated copper that was coated with silver iodide and developed with warm mercury. The French government awarded Daguerre a state pension in exchange for the publication of methods and the rights that the Daguerreotype Process may be used by other French citizens. Talbot patented his process in 1841 and called it “Calotype”(Rosenblum, 1981:255).

From the beginning of the 1850’s, in Europe as in the United States, photography developed rapidly; there was a considerable increase in the number of portrait

studios, right up to the mid 1860's. The 50 or so studios active at the end of the 1840's in Paris had increased to eight times that number by the end of 1860. In 1858 New York had 200 studios, producing an average of 50 images a day and with an annual turnover of two million dollars. *"The American Daguerreotypists neglect nothing to attract and maintain public favor. They spend enormous sums on their studios, which are enchanted castles"* – Earnest Lacon. (Rosenblum, N, 1981: 350).

The carte-de-visite was patented in 1854 by French photographer Andre Adolphe Eugene Desdri. It was a small portrait photograph originally intended to be pasted to the back of a regular visiting card. Like the stereographic camera, the carte-de-visite had more than one lens; the difference was that the carte-de-visite camera was constructed so that up to eight different images could be exposed on one photographic plate. Most carte-de-visite were full-length portraits or bust length shots rather than close-up studies of the face. 1855 was the beginning of the stereoscopic era, and direct positive images on glass and metal was very popular in the US (Thames & Hudson, 2001: 63).

In 1861 a color photography system involving three black and white photographs, each taken through a red, green or blue filter was demonstrated by Scottish physicist James Clerk-Maxwell. The photo's were turned into lantern slides and projected in registration with the same color filters. This is the color separation method.

Between 1861 and 1865, Mathew Brady and a few other photographers covered the American Civil War and altogether they exposed 7000 negatives.

From 1868 to 1880 numerous developments took place. Ducas de Haeron published a book that proposed a variety of methods for color photography. Right after that an English doctor, Richard Leach Maddox, proposed the use of an emulsion of gelatin and silver bromide on a glass plate, and thus the Dry Plate Process developed. Eadward Muybridge invented time-sequenced photography by photographing a running horse and proved that all four of the horse do leave the ground at once, and George Eastman set up the Eastman Dry Plate company in Rochester, New York at the age of 24. A very memorable day in 1880 was when the New York Graphic daily newspaper displayed the first half-tone photograph (Bajac, Q. 2001: 48).

From 1889 to 1909 things only improved. There was the introduction of the Kodak Brownie box roll-film camera; the first commercial color film; the Autochrome plates was manufactured by the Lumiere brothers in France and Lewis Hine was hired by the US National Child Labor Committee to photograph children working in mills.

Over the years several cameras developed, e.g. between 1914 and 1924, both the Leica camera as well as the Nippon Kogaku K.K, now known as Nikon, was

introduced. By 1928 Rollei introduced the Rolleiflex twin-lens reflex, that produced a 6x6 cm image on rollfilm, and in 1931, strobed photography developed with the help of Harold Edgerton.

Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham, Willard van Dyke and Edward Weston formed Group F/64 in 1932, which was dedicated to “straight photographic thought and production”. Also significant of 1932, was that Henri Cartier-Bresson bought a Leica and began a 60 year career photographing people and on March 14, George Eastman left a suicide note that read “*my work is done. Why wait?*” and then shot himself at the age of 77.

Between 1934 and 1936, Fuji Photo Film was founded.(By 1938 Fuji was making cameras and lenses in addition to film). During this time period, the first color multi-layered film was developed as well as the Exakta, a 35mm single-lens reflex camera. During World War II, the development of multi-layered color negative film took place. In 1948, the first medium-format SLR was introduced by Hasselblad in Sweden and Pentax introduced the automatic diaphragm in Japan.

Technology just kept evolving and between 1949 and 1973, the following cameras as well as films developed: the Contax S, the first SLR with an unreversed image in a pentaprism viewfinder by Zeiss; the Nikon F was introduced; the first color instant film was developed by Polaroid; the Instamatic was released by Kodak; the first purpose built underwater camera, the Nikonos, was introduced.

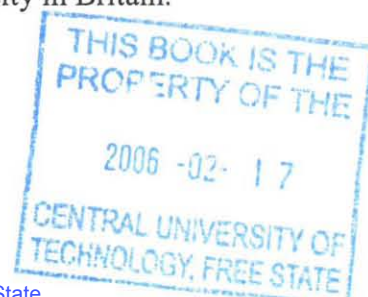
In 1985 the first auto focus SLR system was introduced by Minolta and from there on onwards cameras became a household term. Today there are very few people that does not own a camera. It has already advanced to digital photography, which makes it much easier to get the perfect shot.

3. The History of Child Photographers

I have chosen five photographers that is renowned for child photography. Lewis Carroll, mostly known as the author of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, Sally Mann, famous for her nude studies of children Julia Margaret Cameron, Lewis Hine, who documented child labor in the US, and more recently, Anne Geddes, who is world famous for her fantasy images of children, that grace the covers of many a calendar and books.

During the 1980's and 1990's in the United States, some family photographs provoked a debate about the right of both amateur and professional photographers to show children in poses that revealed genitalia, or to suggest that children possess adult sexual knowledge (Marien, 2002: 460).

Lewis Carroll's real name is Charles L. Dodgson and he lectured in mathematics and was an ordained clergyman at Oxford University in Britain.



During 25 years of Photography, he created almost 3000 negatives, including pictures of landscapes, architecture and adult portraiture, but the photographs he made of the female children of his friends and colleagues have been the subject of much debate. Carroll photographed Alice Liddell, the Alice of his stories, alone and with her sisters. His contrived image of her as a beggar child in artfully ripped clothing and bare feet is perplexing, because it is difficult to reconstruct the Victorian attitude toward children of the upper-middle class, and because Carroll may have been more than a little enthralled with Alice (Marien, 2002: 163).

Lewis Carroll has been accused of installing private erotic innuendo into his photographs of young girls. The nude and semi-dressed photographs, most of which he destroyed himself were made with the knowledge of the girl's parents.

In the Victorian period, the child became a potent symbol of purity and simplicity. The era insisted on childhood as a time of innocence, and Carroll's pictures pivot on the girl's ignorance of the teasing sexuality of their poses.

Sally Mann, an American Art Photographer's work was the center of angry criticism from both religious and conservative critics; while only 20% of the photographs in her book "*Immediate Family*" showed her children topless or nude.

The critics said that children were now becoming acquainted with the demeanor of adult sexual behavior. Those who defended Mann's pictures maintained that these were truthful portrayals of children's expressions of sexuality (Marien, 2002: 460)

Personally, I will not take a nude picture of a child older than +/- 18 months, because then the line between art and child pornography becomes too thin.

Julia Margaret Cameron is amongst the pre-eminent artistic photographers of the nineteenth century. Her photographic portraits and tableaux vivants, produced in the 1860's and 1870's within the most important artistic circles in Victorian England, have enjoyed almost continuous popularity for over a century. Cameron's prints have prompted reflection upon photography's capacities for narrative and fantasy, and woman artists and critics have revisited the sensuality of her images of children. Cameron's brilliant and imaginative transformation of conventional photographic lighting and focus stand as a major accomplishment in artistic photography, while her exploration of the communicative power of the human face in both portraiture and narrative images provides a touchstone for the examination of the broad impact of photography in modern culture (Lukitsch, 2001: 3).

Julia visited Cape Town, South Africa in 1836, where she met her future husband, Charles Hay Cameron. They were married in Calcutta in December 1838. The

family settled themselves in London, where Julia met painter George Watts, who became her artistic adviser. She was, according to William Holman Hunt, (Lukitsh, J, 2001: 7) “*most perseveringly demonstrative in the disposition to cultivate the society of men of letters and of art*”.

In the late 1850’s, a few years before she began taking photographs, Cameron herself posed for an unusual portrait by an unknown photographer. Her two youngest sons, Charles and Henry, stand and sit respectively at their mother’s side. Neither boy looks at the camera, not at Cameron, but she is in physical contact with both. She holds her oldest son Charles’s hand on her lap, where Henry’s hair falls as he leans against her. At the other side she leans on a small table, with pen, paper and ink at hand. These are the traditional attributes for a portrait of a writer – Cameron was a minor translator and poet, author of an unpublished novel, now lost, and a prolific correspondent with poet and essayist Henry Taylor and others. Her expression in the portrait is thoughtful, her head slightly jutting forward, as if to emphasize intellect. The portrait is a performance – Cameron as mother and writer – revealing her understanding even then of the possibilities of invention in front of the camera (Lukitsh, 2001: 5).

When Cameron started photography, her main objective was to make “*photographs that are not only from the Life, but to the Life, and startle the eye with wonder and delight*”, (Lukitsh, J, 2001: 4). She had an artistic vision for her photography and she worked with scale, focus, lighting and posing to achieve it.

Initially, Cameron used large format for portraits and for heads of characters, usually woman, but also men and children, from history and literature. She worked with this large scale almost exclusively. Using the large format, however, did not make the process of posing for her camera easier. The large lens and negative entailed especially long exposures, in which any motion made by the model could ruin the desired result. Several of Cameron’s models, particularly those who were children when their photographs were made, described holding still for seemingly interminable sessions before her lens. Clearly, even allowing for some retrospective exaggeration, posing for Cameron was a difficult task, since her ambitions for her artistic photographs outweighed the convenience of either model or photographer. It is not surprising that Cameron’s favorite female model, Mary Hillier, was also her household maid.

Cameron attributes her first success to a photograph she took of a friend’s ten year old niece. The massing of forms in the background, cloak and unruly hair in this picture, foreshadow Cameron’s future work as a photographer with an exceptional ability to invent bold portrait compositions.

Julia Margaret Cameron died in Ceylon after a short illness in January 1879. Comparatively few images from the last four years of her life exist and her inscriptions on the images are infrequent. In these photographs, Cameron maintained her regard for the human figure.

“There is work that profits children, and there is work that brings profit only to employers. The object of employing children is not to train them, but to get high profits from their work.” – Lewis Hine, 1908 (Panzer, M, 2001: 4).

After the Civil War, the availability of natural resources, new inventions, and a receptive market combined to fuel an industrial boom. The demand for labor grew, and in the late 19th and early 20th centuries many children were drawn into the labor force. Factory wages were so low that children often had to work to help support their families. The number of children under the age of 15 who worked in industrial jobs for wages climbed from 1.5 million in 1890 to 2 million in 1910. Businesses liked to hire children because they worked in unskilled jobs for lower wages than adults, and their small hands made them more adept at handling small parts and tools.

Children were seen as part of the family economy. Immigrants and rural migrants often sent their children to work, or worked alongside them. However, child laborers barely experienced their youth. Going to school to prepare for a better future was an opportunity these underage workers rarely enjoyed. As children worked in industrial settings, they began to develop serious health problems. Many child laborers were underweight. Some suffered from stunted growth and curvature of the spine. The developed diseases related to their work environment, such as tuberculosis and bronchitis for those who worked in coal mines or cotton mills. They faced high accident rates due to physical and mental fatigue caused by hard work and long hours.

By the early 1900’s many Americans were calling child labor “*child slavery*” and were demanding an end to it. They argued that long hours of work deprived children of the opportunity of an education to prepare themselves for a better future. Instead, child labor condemned them to a future of illiteracy, poverty and continuing misery. In 1904 a group of progressive reformers founded the National Child Labor Committee, an organization whose goal was the abolition of child labor. The organization received a charter from Congress in 1907. It hired teams of investigators to gather evidence of children working in harsh conditions and then organized exhibitions with photographs and statistics to dramatize the plight of these children. These efforts resulted in the establishment in 1912 of the Children’s Bureau as a federal information clearinghouse. In 1913 the Children’s Bureau was transferred to the Department of Labor.

Lewis Hine, a New York City schoolteacher and photographer, believed that a picture could tell a powerful story. He felt so strongly about the abuse of children as workers, that he quit his teaching job and became an investigative photographer for the National Child Labor Committee. Hine traveled around the country photographing the working conditions of children in all types of industries. He photographed children in coal mines, in meatpacking houses, in textile mills and in canneries. He took pictures of children working in the streets as shoe shiners, newsboys and hawkers. In many instances he tricked his way into factories to

take the pictures that factory managers did not want the public to see. He was careful to document every photograph with precise facts and figures. To obtain captions for his pictures, he interviewed the children on some pretext and then scribbled his notes with his hand hidden inside his pocket. Because he used subterfuge to take his photographs, he believed that he had to be “double sure that my photo data was 100% pure...no retouching or fakery of any kind”. Hine defined a good photograph as “*a reproduction of impressions made upon the photographer which he desires to repeat to others*”. Because he realized his photographs were subjective, he described his work as “*photo-interpretation*” (Rosenblum, N. 1981: 446).

Hine believed that if people could see the abuses and injustice of child labor for themselves, they would demand laws to end those evils. By 1916, Congress passed the Keating-Owens Act that established the following child labor standards: a minimum age of 14 for workers in manufacturing and 16 for workers in mining; a maximum workday of 8 hours; prohibition of night work for workers under age 16; and a documentary proof of age. Unfortunately, this law was later ruled unconstitutional on the ground that congressional power to regulate interstate commerce did not extend to the conditions of labor. Effective action against child labor had to await the New Deal. Reformers, however, did succeed in forcing legislation at the state level banning child labor and setting maximum hours. By 1920 the number of child laborers was cut to nearly half of what it had been in 1910.

Lewis Hine died in poverty, neglected by all but a few. His reputation continued to grow, and he is now recognized as a master American photographer. His photographs remind us what it was like to be a child and to labor like an adult at a time when labor was harsher than it is now. Hine’s images of working children stirred America’s conscience and helped change the nation’s labor laws. Through his exercise of free speech and freedom of the press, Lewis Hine made a difference in the lives of American workers and most importantly, American children.

Born and raised in Queensland, Australia, Anne Geddes has always been interested in the strength that a photographic image could hold. In her mid-twenties, she began experimenting with the family camera, developing her signature style of simple structure and immediate visual impact.

One of the world’s most respectful and successful professional photographers, Anne has captured the imagination and hearts of people around the globe. Her distinctive, award-winning images of children have become classic icons celebrating life and birth. The grace greeting cards, calendars, books, stationary, photo albums, and an array of other fine products, and are currently published in over 50 countries, spanning North America, Europe, the British Isles, Australia, New Zealand, South America, and Asia. More than 13 million books plus many more millions of other non-book products have been sold worldwide.

Until now, Anne Geddes' stunning retrospective of classic images personally selected from her body of work, took Europe by storm. Printed in seven languages, it became an immediate popular and critical success, appearing on The Sunday Times Bestseller List in the UK, becoming the number 1 Best selling Illustrated Book on the Livre Hebdo List in France, and a bestseller in the Netherlands. In Germany, it was reprinted four times in four months, and was selected from a field of 445 worldwide entries to receive the "Kodak Fotobuchpreis 1998". Famous German publisher, Heyne called this "the most prestigious award an illustrated book can receive in Germany".

"Until Now" was released in the United States and Canada in late 1999 to immediate praise. "The book is wonderful...really marvelous", said "Good Morning America". "Artfully composed, exquisitely produced...these always clever, often touching, sometimes hilarious images...are the work of a vivid imagination – but never doubt they are the work of real work, as well", noted Newsday. The New York Daily News called Anne "the most popular and successful baby photographer in the world. Her photos of infants are the shots seen around the world". "Until Now" has more than 700 000 copies in print worldwide.

Anne and Kel live in New Zealand with their two daughters.

4. Conclusion

These are only a few Child Photographers that I have mentioned. I will use their work as guidelines in my future as child photographer.

I only hope, that if these brilliant photographers were alive today, except Anne Geddes, who is still alive and well, my child portraits would deem worthy in their eyes.

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The working Environment of Child Photography

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1. Introduction

In my field of study, there is no limit to the environment in which to work. I can either do portraits in a studio or outside in the open. It all depends on what kind of photograph the parents want.

Outdoors, successful pictures can be taken in just about any conditions, however, if you're shooting in bright sunlight, make sure your subject isn't looking towards the sun, otherwise they'll squint and will quickly feel uncomfortable (Roth, 1988: 38).

Most photographers prefer the comfortable environment of a studio. I will therefore elaborate on the studio as the environment for the photographing of child portraits and studies.

2. Discussion

Across the Atlantic, the great studios maintained an ostentatious luxury, in keeping with the taste of the fashionable press: the visit to the studio of the great photographer became commonplace in the magazines of the period between 1850 and 1870 (Bajac, 2002: 58). Intended for the affluent middle-classes, the most opulent studios were to be found on the new thoroughfares of the great capitals: in Paris, around the Opera; in London, on Regent Street, where forty studios were situated in the mid-1860's; in New York, on Broadway (Marien, 2002: 66). Branches were set up in the places frequented by fashionable society and the "*demi-monde*": The Bois de Boulogne in Paris, where, in the 1860's, Disderi and then Nadar opened studios specializing in "*equestrian photography*"; or in fashionable resorts like Baden, where during the high season Carjat had a studio (Rosenblum, 1981: 189).

Instead of interminable stairs to climb, studios were now situated on the grander lower floors, where marble was mixed with crystal. Sitters were accommodated in a room resembling a salon rather than a dentist's waiting room (Bajac, 2002: 59). While they waited, they could page through albums containing the studio's latest creations and select a pose. They could admire a gallery of paintings, enjoy the facilities of a library, or even have a cigar in the billiard room. From the 1850's, the great studio photographer became a celebrity (Marien, 2002: 66).

Studio photography is easy because you can get exactly what you want. Soft light, hard light, hair light, background, everything is under your control. If you are a creative person who knows how to use studio equipment, you'll get wonderful results. If anything is wrong with the lighting, balance or exposure, you'll have nobody to blame but yourself (Roth, 1988: 10).

Having your own studio (which in my case, is a necessity), is great for spontaneous work and also because you can take some of your equipment on location. There are two types of home studios you can arrange. One is the permanent studio that is always set up for work. A large home or even an apartment might allow for this. You can take a spare room or garage and have your lights, backdrops, and other materials always ready for work (Hedgecoe, 2001: 89).

When planning a home studio there are several factors that you will need. The first is a minimum space for working, which usually means an area of at least 12 by 18 feet. A foot or two greater width is a definite help, and the longer your working area, the more versatile you can be when working with full-figures. The camera-to-subject distance can be 5 feet or less when taking head-and-shoulders portraits, but full-figure photography requires you to have some distance from your subject (Roth, 1988: 46).

Seamless paper, the least expensive backdrop, will be placed against the wall. It comes in various sizes. There are a few ways to suspend a roll of seamless background paper. The easiest for the established studio, is the wall or ceiling-mounted holder on which

several rolls of different colours can be suspended. You pull down the amount needed for your session, then, roll it back up when you are done. The paper is always out of the way, yet always ready for use (Hedgecoe, 2001: 142).

The second type of hanger is a spring-loaded pole that attaches floor to ceiling by the pressure of the spring. Various extensions enable you to adjust the pole for different room heights. A crossbar is used to hold the paper in place. It is a highly portable system within the limits of the height of the room (Schwarz, 1984:51).

The third type of support is the free-standing pole support. The base is like a tripod with a long, expandable support pole and a crossbar for the paper. You must have at least a foot on either side of the paper ends to handle the tripod's legs. The free-standing pole support is the most versatile when you have to set up and take down your paper or take it on location (Schwarz, 1984: 56).

Once you have the paper in place, you have to examine the surface of your floor. A linoleum, tile or thin tightly woven carpet can easily support your model on the paper.

Once the paper is hung, you will need your lights. The larger the stands, the more space are required. However, it is possible to work in a 12-foot wide space with floods and umbrella reflectors. The movements may be a little cramped, but it can be done. You will need at least two lights with umbrella reflectors or three to four flood lights (or electronic flash) for most portraits and studies involving people. You will need long, heavy-duty extension cords for the lights since you may overload your circuits. By plugging the lights into outlets in different rooms, you will avoid this problem. Electronic flash units may also need extensive wiring, though you can eventually use wireless slave triggers. Should you decide to go from the use of photofloods or tungsten bulbs to electronic flash, you can continue to use the same holders for AC slave flash units. Many of these screw into the same socket used to hold more 500-watt flood bulbs. This is a standard household socket, so you can continue to use your original equipment even while changing your approach (Roth, 1988: 91).

According to the work I am doing, additional space will be required. Models (children) and clients for portraits needs a dressing are where clothing can be changed and make-up applied (in case it is needed). This may be a bedroom or some other location. I will also need a sitting area where clients or family members can wait away from where I am taking the picture. When photographing children, it is best to have a room where siblings and parents can wait. This should be out of sight of the portrait subjects. Children are more likely to respond effectively to your desires when they are not either trying to impress or rebel against a parent. The taunts of other children in the family can also raise havoc with your efforts. Physical separation will enable you to work more effectively.

3. Conclusion

I have just briefly mentioned the surroundings that I will be working in, but in the next chapter I will be discussing the equipment for the studio in greater detail, as well as what techniques to use when shooting a specific subject in specific surroundings.

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Techniques for Child Photography

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today's modern cameras, some of which even attend to focusing automatically, have removed from photography much of the technical guesswork that still remained. What they cannot do, however, is the heart of photography. They cannot choose your subject or scene, or decide how to capture it in the most convincing way. They cannot make decisions about what lens or viewpoint to use, how to compose your picture, or how to crop a print. The camera is still only a highly efficient tool and it needs a craftsman to make proper use of it.

Technical excellence does not necessarily imply a full tonal scale, needle-sharp focus, and a grain less image. Good technique is whatever is appropriate to the content. Almost without exception, the photographers we respect achieve a pleasing balance between art and craft.

There are lots of different techniques to help you create the perfect picture. I will briefly discuss a few, which I found most helpful.

2. TECHNIQUES FOR CHILD PHOTOGRAPHY

People (children, in my case) are among a photographer's most important subjects. The first thing to learn is how to get your subject to relax.

A method to eliminate fixed grins is to ask the sitters to breathe in deeply, puff out their cheeks and exhale through pursed lips. This always provokes spontaneous, natural laughter. Cure glazed looks by getting subjects to look down and close their eyes. On the command "NOW!" they look up at the camera, with a fresh and open expression, and you press the shutter release (Hedgecoe, 2001: 89)

When it comes to photographing children, it is very important to give them something to do, since they get bored easily. Most children will adopt a more relaxed pose if they have something to lean against, or a prop to hold.

Another important thing to consider is what kind of lens to use. Personally, I have found the telephoto lens most appropriate. You can stand a little way off from your subject, and long lenses are more flattering as well.

What I have mentioned above is obvious and easy, however, there are a lot more to consider before starting a shoot. Most important is the exposure. Without the right exposure, your photograph will be useless.

2.1 Exposure

The process of determining the amount of light that is needed by the film or sensor for the required results is called *exposure control* (Frost, 1995: 12). Many digital cameras can change sensitivities to maintain practical camera settings. It is important to control exposure accurately and carefully, as it not only ensures you obtain the best from whatever system you are using, but it also saves you the time and effort of manipulating the image unnecessarily at a later stage.

To determine exposure, the camera measures the light reflecting from a scene. Most SLR cameras have *center-weighted* meters that are influenced more by tonal areas in the middle of the picture than at the edges. A far more elaborate exposure system divides the entire image area into a patchwork of zones, each of which is separately evaluated. This system is extremely successful at delivering consistently accurate exposures over a wide range of unusual lighting conditions (Davis, 1993: 23).

It is very important to meter the most important area. If the main subject is off-center in the picture, turn the camera and center the subject in the frame. Look at the exposure reading, then recompose the picture and set the measured exposure manually.

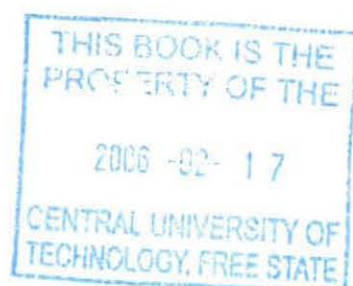
As good as they are, the exposure systems found in modern cameras are not perfect. Always be on the lookout for false readings. All meters assume that the subject is an average gray tone and will give incorrect results with light and dark subjects. With a light subject you should open one or two stops more than the meter recommends, and vice versa (Hedgecoe, 1985: 17). On gray days careless metering does not matter, but sunny weather creates greater contrast. I will recommend taking one picture at the indicated exposure, then over- and underexpose by one stop. This ensures that one of the three pictures will be perfectly exposed.

2.2 Focusing and depth of field

Depth of field is the space in front of and behind the plane of best focus, within which objects appear acceptably sharp. You can use it to imply space, to suggest being inside the action, or to emphasize the separation between elements within the picture area (Erickson, Sincebaugh, 1983: 43).

Your chief control over depth of field is the lens aperture: as you set smaller apertures, depth of field increases. Depth of field also increases as the subject being focused on moves further away from the camera. The result of this is that at close focusing distances, depth of field is very limited (Erickson, Sincebaugh, 1983: 44).

Shallow depth of field (resulting from a wide lens aperture, a long focal length lens, focusing close-up, or a combination of these) renders only a small portion of the image sharp, and can be usefully applied to:



- ❖ Portraiture, to help concentrate viewer attention.
- ❖ Reducing the distraction from elements that cannot be removed from the lens's field of view.
- ❖ Isolating a subject from the distracting visual clutter of its surroundings.

Effects of lens aperture

The main reason for changing lens aperture is to adjust camera exposure: a smaller aperture restricts the beam of light passing through the lens. However, the aperture also alters depth of field. As you set smaller apertures, the cone of light passing through the lens becomes slimmer and more needle-like. As a result, even when it is not perfectly focused, light from the subject is not as spread out as it would be if a larger aperture were used. Thus, more of the scene within the field of view appears sharp (Frost, 1985: 32)

Effects of focus distance

Two effects contribute to the great reduction in depth of field as you focus more and more closely to the camera, even when there is no change in lens focal length or aperture. You must turn a lens more when it is focused on close-up subjects than when it is focused on distant ones (Ericksenn, Sincebaugh, 1983: 22). Another reason for the change in depth of field is that effective focal length increases slightly when the lens is set further from the focal plane.

Auto focusing

Two main methods of auto focus can be used. In compact cameras, a beam of infrared (IR) light scans the scene when the shutter button is first pressed. The nearest and strongest IR reflections are read by a sensor, which calculates the subject distance and sets it on the camera a fraction of a second before the picture is taken (Hedgecoe, 2001: 89).

The other main method is passive. Part of the light from the subject is sampled and split up, but only when the lens is in focus do the parts of the image coincide. The crucial property of this system is that the phase differences vary, depending on whether the lens is focused in front of or behind the plane of best focus. Auto focus sensors analyze the pattern and can tell the lens in which direction to move in order to achieve the best focus (Hedgecoe, 2001: 89).

Though sophisticated, auto focus systems can be fooled. Beware of the following circumstances:

- ❖ The key auto focus sensor is in the center of the viewfinder image, so any off-center subjects may not be correctly focused. Aim the focusing area at your

subject, hold the focus with a light pressure on the shutter-release button, and then return the viewfinder to the original view.

- ❖ When photographing through glass, reflections from the glass may confuse IR sensors.
- ❖ Extremely bright objects in the focusing region could overload the sensor and influence accuracy.
- ❖ Photographing beyond objects that are close to the lens e.g. through a bush or between the gaps of a fence can confuse the auto focus system.
- ❖ Moving close-up subjects may be best kept in focus by setting a distance manually and then adjusting your position backward and forward in order to maintain focus.
- ❖ With very fast moving subjects, it may be better to focus on a set distance and then wait for the subject to reach that point before shooting.

Acceptable sharpness varies according to how much blur a viewer is prepared to accept. This depends on how much detail a viewer can discern in the image. As a small print, an image may display great depth of field, however, as the image is progressively enlarged, it then becomes easier and easier to see where the unsharpness begins, and so depth of field appears increasingly more limited (Frost, 1995: 46).

2.3 Image proportions

As you take pictures you may start to notice that the proportions of the image have a subtle effect on the picture's ability to communicate. A square image, for example, evokes a sense of stability and balance. However, an image that is just slightly rectangular can communicate a sense of indecision or make subject matter look uncomfortable within its frame. This type of framing is therefore best avoided unless you have clear reasons for it.

Panoramas

The panoramic picture has been popularized most recently by its availability on APS cameras. In reality, this system simply crops the top and bottom off an ordinary image, changing it into a narrow one, and so it is not a true panoramic image.

Digital cameras, however, can produce true panoramas, so that the field of view of the image is greater than the field of view of the lens. This is achieved by taking a number of pictures that overlap and placing them together. To achieve best results, pivot the camera around a fixed point, such as a tripod, so that as you rotate the camera the image does not appear to move. To aid you, some digital cameras have a panoramic function which indicates where the next pictures should be taken by showing you on the LCD screen the previous image as a guide.

Cropping

One of the simplest and often one of the most effective changes you can make to image proportions is to crop them, in other words, slicing portions from the sides, top or bottom of the picture area. This can change the whole emphasis of a shot by e.g. removing unnecessary or unwanted subject matter or by changing the relationship between various subject elements and the borders of the frame. This can turn an ordinary picture into a truly arresting image.

2.4 Studio flash

If you are working with studio flash, it is best to keep the following points in mind:

- ❖ As a general rule, always use as few units as possible to achieve the desired lighting effects. Start with one light only and use reflectors to control the quality of the illumination reaching your subject. Only if this is insufficient should you consider adding extra lighting units to the scheme.
- ❖ Remember that it is easier to remove light than to add light. Using accessories, such as barn doors or snoots, you can easily control the fall of light and any shadows that are created as a result. However, an additional light immediately casts a set of new shadows.
- ❖ A reflector placed facing the main light, angled so that it bounces light into subject shadows, is usually a more effective solution than using another light source to reduce shadows.
- ❖ A large light source, such as an umbrella or soft box, produces softer light and more diffused shadows than a small light source.
- ❖ A small light source, such as a spotlight with a small bowl, produces harder light and sharper shadows than a large, diffused light source.

Young children can be demanding subjects if you have too fixed an end result in mind. They are curious about all the equipment in a studio, they are very mobile, their concentration span is short, and they are difficult to direct. One approach is to position them against a plain background and set a broad lighting scheme – two soft boxes, one either side of the set. The wide spread of soft light allows your subjects to move around without you worrying where shadows will fall.

2.5 Electronic flash

Modern electronic flash units are versatile and convenient light sources, ideal for use when light levels are low (and the subject is relatively nearby), or when image contrast is high and you want to add a little fill-in illumination to the shadow areas (Hedgecoe, 1985: 16). However, due to the intensity of their output as well as their limited range and covering power, obtaining natural lighting effects and correct exposure can be a problem.

Common types of problems that are encountered when using electronic flash includes overexposed results – particularly of the foreground parts of the image – and underexposed results – particularly of the image background. In addition, general underexposure of long-distance subject matter is very common, as is uneven lighting, in which the corners or foreground are less bright than the center of the image.

Rather than firing the flash direct at your subject, bounce the light off a wall, ceiling or large reflector, so it's softened and shadows are weakened. You can also fit a bounce attachment to the flashgun itself, or take the gun off the camera and hold it to one side so you have more control over the direction of the light in relation to your subject (Hedgecoe, 2001: 67).

The best way to obtain reliable results with flash is to experiment in different picture-taking situations. With a digital camera you can make exposures at different settings in a variety of situations to learn the effects of flash without wasting any film. Some flash units feature a modeling light, which flashes briefly to show you the effect of the light. This is a useful preview, but it cannot consume a good deal of power and is likely to disturb your subject.

Given all the above information, child photography is no easy game. Listed below are a few summarized tips that should always be kept in mind:

- With very small children, work at a fixed distance: focus your lens manually to let's say, 0.5 m and keep your subjects in focus by leaning backwards or forwards as they move. Small children move very quickly but usually over short distances. This method requires little effort and can be superior to relying on auto focus.
- When you first photograph a group of children, fire off a few shots in the first minute – they need to get used to the sound of the camera or light from the electronic flash, while you need to exploit their short attention span. Once they have heard the camera working, they will soon lose interest and ignore you. If, however, you wait for them to settle before taking your first picture, they will be distracted by the noise.
- For professional photography of children, the best cameras to use are SLR-type digital models or manual film-based cameras. These give you more flexibility than ordinary digital cameras or auto focus compact ones. You need the shortest possible shutter lag (the time interval between pressing the shutter and actually recording the picture) if you do not want to miss out on the really spontaneous images.
- In low light, try using faster film or increasing the photo sensor's sensitivity rather than setting the lens's maximum aperture. With non-professional lenses, you lose more image quality through using large apertures than from the grain given by higher-speed recording.
- Never lose your temper when things aren't going according to plan. If your subject isn't interested, call the shoot off and try again tomorrow rather than forcing the issue. It's impossible to take good pictures if you're frustrated, and any bad vibes will be instantly picked up by your subject.

- Always get down to your subject's eye-level. If you tower above them like a giant the results will look odd because the child is forced to look up. It can also make them feel uneasy and intimidated.
- Kids aren't stupid, so don't treat them as if they are. When giving instructions be firm but polite, just like you would with an adult, and take an active interest in what they have to say or any ideas they have to offer.
- Don't put your camera down too soon. It's Murphy's law that the kids will start performing the minute you stop shooting, so stay put and rather take too many than not enough pictures.

3. CONCLUSION

I have found that the key to successful child photography is keeping things as simple as possible at every stage so you have less to worry about – that includes the lighting. Window light is an ideal source as it produces soft, flattering illumination and can be used at a moment's notice. With babies and toddlers all you have to do is place their cot or high chair close to a window, position a large reflector opposite to bounce light into the shadows, and fire away. Older children can be asked to stand or sit by a suitable window.

Bright but slightly overcast weather creates very soft light but keeps the light level high enough for you to shoot at decent shutter speeds. If you need to soften the light further just hang net curtains over the window or tape a sheet of tracing paper to the glass. Warm, late afternoon sunlight flooding through a window also works well.

As I have discussed earlier, electronic flash is also an option, but it must be used carefully to give attractive results.

Outdoors, successful pictures can be taken in just about any conditions. Keep in mind that if you're shooting in bright sunlight, make sure your subject isn't looking towards the sun; otherwise they'll squint and quickly feel uncomfortable. Instead, keep the sun behind them, and use a reflector or a burst of fill-in flash to bounce light onto their face.

If you keep all of the above in mind, you should not have any problems when photographing children.

I am ending my discussion with these two thoughts:

The less equipment you use, the more you can concentrate on your subject, and last, but not least, KIDS WILL ALWAYS BE KIDS!

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DISCUSSION OF AUTHORS OWN WORK

By Louise Nel

Submitted for the subject
Visual Communication III

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1. INTRODUCTION

For me, child photography is one of the most rewarding fields in photography. There is great satisfaction in capturing a child's true spirit on camera. It is also very challenging because it can be difficult to get a child to do what you want him to do. Every child portrait is unique in its own way, because no two children are alike, which ensures unique photographs every time.



Plate 1: Mila
By Louise Nel

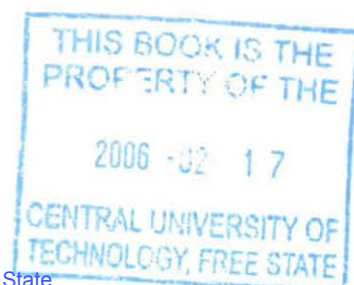


Plate 1: Mila

The subject was laid on her stomach and was given a toy in order to distract her. The choice of black & white gives the photo a feeling of professionalism. I chose a do a close-up, to emphasize the subject's features.

It was taken in studio b at the Central University of Technology in the Free State on the 14th of February 2005. I used a CANON EOS 20D camera, with a standard 50mm lens with a close-up filter attached.



Plate 2: Calista
By Louise Nel

Plate 2: Calista

This picture was originally taken in color, but I found that black & white lifts out the mood more. It also gives the feeling that this photograph was taken at the spur of the moment. What I like most about this photograph is the subject's half-open mouth. It is a natural facial expression of a child caught on camera.

It was taken on the 26th of July 2005 outside on a farm near Bloemfontein. I used a CANON EOS 20D with a standard 50mm lens.



Plate 3: Miance with flower
By Louise Nel

Plate 3: Miance with flower

This photo was taken in color and changed into black & white. The color was brought back into the flower. The black eyes of the girl, and the colorful flower is in extreme contrast with each other. The eyes give a feeling of mysteriousness, whilst the flower gives a feeling of warmth and happiness.

It was taken on the 13th of March 2005. I used a CANON EOS 20D with a standard 50mm lens. It was taken outside in the open air.



Plate 4: Crying Mila
By Louise Nel

Plate 4: Crying Mila

There is so much emotion in this picture it almost makes me sad when I look at it. Displaying this picture in black & white definitely contributes to the mood of the photograph. It is a little underexposed in order to get an even better effect.

It was taken at my house in Bloemfontein on the 20th of June 2005. I used a CANON EOS 20D with a standard 50mm lens. I placed the subject next to a window and used natural light only.



Plate 5: Lelanie
By Louise Nel

Plate 5: Lelanie

In order to take this picture, I had to follow the subject around the yard and wait for her to do something interesting without knowing that my lens is on her. When she reached down to smell the flower, I took this shot. I made it a little more interesting by bringing out the color of the flower.

I used a CANON EOS 20D with a standard 50mm lens. It was taken outside, so only natural light was used. It was taken on the 9th of April 2005.



Plate 6: Cyle
By Louise Nel

Plate 6: Cyle

In this picture, I put the subject on its stomach and bent in front of him. I made faces until I got the desired effect. Black & white gives the feeling of a moment being captured. The reflection in his eyes comes through beautifully and was achieved by sunlight streaming through the window.

I used natural light in this photograph and took it with a CANON EOS 20D with a standard 50mm lens with a close-up filter attached. It was taken in the home of the subject's parents on the 16th of May 2005.



Plate 7: Jaden
By Louise Nel

Plate 7: Jaden

Because of the fact that this picture is black & white, I had to use something other than color to bring out this subject's beautiful eyes, so I took an extreme close-up of his face. The manner in which it is cropped also contributes to the features of the subject's face.

The photo was taken on the 11th of July 2005 in the home of the subject's parents. I used a CANON EOS 20D with a standard 50mm lens with a close-up filter attached. I used natural light and an on-camera CANON flash.



Plate 8: Calista on the grass
By Louise Nel

Plate 8: Calista on the grass

The angle of this photograph is what makes it so special to me. The subject's facial expression also contributes to the effect that the photograph has on me.

It was taken outside, on the 28th of June 2005. I made use of natural light only. It was taken with a CANON EOS 20D with a standard 50mm lens.



Plate 9: Calista and R.J.
By Louise Nel



Plate 10: Danielle
By Louise Nel

PLATE 10: Danielle

I love this photograph for several reasons. The first, being the feeling of softness it gives. You can almost feel the softness of the skin. I also love the fact that her hair matches the colour of the prop that was used. I also appreciate the look on the girls face. It is very difficult for a child to achieve that pose. She looks like a real model.

The photo was taken on the 22nd of September 2005 at the subject's parent's house with a CANON EOS 20D with a standard 50mm lens and I also used a CANON Flash combined with tungsten light.

3. CONCLUSION

In my work as a child photographer, I have come to learn that children really are unique little beings. It is so fulfilling to work with this naïve, gullible little breed. It has made me appreciate life everyday. If people can stay as innocent as they were when they were children, the world will be a much better place.

