

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

BY

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In this century
powerful image
and Tim
shooting
West

Let's
and

INTRODUCTION

In this century landscape photography calls to mind the powerful images of the American West captured by Ansel Adams and Timothy O'Sullivan who exploited new territories by shooting abstract images and overwhelming panoramas of the West.

Landscape photographs inspire a deeper appreciation of nature and make people aware of the urgent need for additional environmental protection measures.

"Landscape photography makes natural vistas accessible to the masses and helps them realize their responsibility to the land". (The expressionist landscape, a master photographer's approach, Yuan Li, 1989, p.9)

The natural landscape is one of the first subjects most photographers shoot - but the majority of the resulting images are not successful. They appear to lack a connection between the subject and their viewers.

The answer to the problem is that a lasting impression has to be created. Most of the pictures are too far removed from the daily lives of most people to be able to produce either an emotional or intellectual response.

Landscape photography, however, can and should reveal the bond viewers have with their natural surroundings.

The power of a photographic impression lies in the realistic portrayal of what takes place in a split of a second and the inclusion of a deliberate element of design.

Landscape photographers have to be sensitive enough to perceive an image based on what lies before their eyes and at the same time the photograph must give the impression that the photographer was in full command of the situation while making the image.

All photographers - and most viewers - are aware of the difference between reality and an image.

In Landscape photography there are specific factors that explain the difference : in a picture there are carefully composed but artificial boundaries which contrast directly with human vision which is limited only by the obstacles present on the land.

A photograph's boundaries occasionally create tension in the image that is not present in reality. The boundaries limit what can be included in a photograph and force the viewers to focus on elements in the picture.

One of the secrets of taking a good photograph lies in the statement of Helen Manzer: " Before releasing the shutter, ask yourself what excites you in the viewfinder."

(Yuan Li, 1989 , p.12)

CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Before the invention of the camera obscura landscapes have always been of great concern to the artists. Unfortunately artists have not always treated the landscape as primary subject matter, it was used as backgrounds for the portrayal of historic, political or religious events.

After the invention of the camera obscura , during the 1600's and 1700's , visual space was redefined, and the modern concept of a landscape was created.

With increasing industrialization and technology people's thoughts changed. They became more aware of their surroundings and they even started to be interested in other countries , travelling etc.

There was a great demand for "foreign" scenics and normally wealthy individuals financed photographers' trips to countries like Egypt, Australia, Africa, America and so on.

Francis Frith was one commercial photographer who travelled the world, photographing what was termed "topographical" images.

Between 1856 and 1860 he made three journeys. He went further into Africa than any other photographer before him.

He explored Egypt, Ethiopia, Nubia and the Sixth Cataract of the Nile by camera.

He used Archer's wet-plate collodian process whose quality was better than the calotype process but which was very complicated

and bound up with a lot of work and materials that had to be carried around. (History of Photography, Peter Turner)

Frith produced very good quality pictures and was the premier photographer of his kind.

He was given medals and "The Times" announced him as the producer of the best photographs ever taken.

Frith's fellow countryman Samuel Bourne was also beginning to gain attention in photographic circles. After taking a lot of landscapes in Scotland, Wales and his native England, he went to India to experience a whole new country.

Bourne had high expectations of how the perfect landscape in his eyes was supposed to look and sometimes he travelled more than 1000 miles before he found a visual match to his expectations.

Many landscape photographers like Frith and Bourne went through difficult times.

They had to cope with extreme climates, either it was very cold or very hot and to work under those conditions was a torture.

Especially Bourne endured months of discomfort and physical danger just for the sake of making photographs.

Samuel Bourne was very famous and successful, he made some of the finest, most memorable topographical photographs of the nineteenth century, that today seem little short of lunatic.

Many photographers worked in the American West recording nature's majesty. Four of them are standing out - William H. Jackson, Eadward Muybridge, Carlton E. Watkin's and Timothy H O' Sullivan.

Although all of them were attracted to photographing the American West, a part of the country that has not been discovered by camera before, there was one very big difference in the resulting imagery.

O'Sullivan and Jackson were primarily concerned with recording fact and documenting the region.

Watkins and Muybridge were more aesthetically orientated.

They were interested in capturing the beauty of the area and its natural monuments.

They saw the landscape as a "transcendent ideal of God's work."

O'Sullivan started his career as a photographer in Matthew Brady's daguerreotype studio doing commercial work.

He then decided to stop doing studio work and started off as a war photographer working for Alexander Gardner.

Gardner published a book of the war and half of the 100 images were taken by O'Sullivan.



Fig. 1 A 'bit' on the road near Rogi, 1866, Samuel Bourne

After the war stopped O'Sullivan returned shortly to doing commercial studio work but eventually decided to join the geologist Clarence King where his career as a landscaper photographer really started.

O'Sullivan was equipped with two cameras - (a 9 x 12 inch box type and a stereoscope outfit), 125 glass plates, darkroom equipment and chemicals. The group toured through the Rocky Mountains but the trails were in a terrible condition.

Many accidents occurred and they lost parts of their equipment. O'Sullivan endured everything with patience for the sake of the incredible photos he was going to take.

During his expedition he photographed both upper and lower topographics. On later expeditions he ventured to Panama and the Colorado River.

O'Sullivan was not a romantic photographer who tried to capture the beauty of the country, he was just a gatherer over evidence and cold facts. Taking picturesque photographs was not his style. (The History of photography, an overview, Alma Davenport)

William H. Jackson, another landscape documentarian of the American West, started his career as a "colourist" in a Vermont portrait studio. But soon Jackson was tired of the romance that the West was said to provide and he decided to travel extensively and became a cowboy (here he got his nick-name "Mustang Jack"). In 1867 Jackson opened a photographic studio with his brother.



Fig. 2 Shoshone Falls, Snake River, Idaho 1868
Albumen print by Timothy O'Sullivan

But soon he realized that studio work did not satisfy him , and for the next eight years he worked with the geologist Francis Hayden . He travelled through the Rocky Mountains, the Grand Canyon and the Yellowstone area.

He took the most fantastic photos , especially of the geysers and the hot springs.

The public was impressed by his work and Jackson was able to sell his photographs in speciality shops. People's existing interest in the natural beauty of the West was intensified and people who viewed these photographs were entranced by the sheer grandeur of the land.

"It was beauty they wished to see preserved for themselves and their children ." (History of photography, an overview, Alma Davenport, 1991, p.64)

On his expeditions Jackson took a variety of cameras , one of them was a 20 x 24 inch camera. The quality of the negative was so good that no enlargement was necessary. Jackson used that camera because he wanted to show the Western Wilderness as precisely as possible with every existing detail. In most of his photos he included a human form to provide the viewer a better comprehension of the real sizes of the Western natural formations.

CHAPTER TWO

**DISCUSSION OF SOUTH AFRICAN PHOTOGRAPHER
HERMAN POTGIETER AND HIS BOOK : SOUTH
AFRICA, LANDSHAPES, LANDSCAPES, MANSCAPES**

Herman Potgieter is a South African photographer who shows another face of South Africa by braking away from the usual approach of other photographers.

There is an originality to his work because he did not just photograph the old Cape Dutch houses, long golden beaches and South Africa's wildlife.

Instead of close-up portraits of people and animals he photographed the face of South Africa itself.

His book is divided into three parts :

- 1) Landshapes
- 2) Landscapes
- 3) Manscapes

The majority of the photographs in the "Landshapes" section are taken from the air.

Potgieter appeals to the viewer to look at the landscapes not from ground level "but in imagination as the hawk sees, or the helmeted airman." (Herman Potgieter, 1990, p.9).

Some of the photographs are of natural formations, but most show the influence of man on nature, shaping it by ploughing, planting and harvesting. Emphasis is placed on the creation of textures and patterns on the earth.

Because most of the photos are taken from the air, they do not aim at creating the illusion of depth or distance ; they are flat and twodimensional.



Fig. 3 Flowerfarm near Hekpoort, Transvaal,
Herman Potgieter



Fig. 4 Logging near Piet Retief, Eastern Transvaal,
Herman Potgieter

In the second section, Landscapes, the illusion of space, distance and atmosphere is created. These type of photographs with their large and intimate perspectives remind the viewer of traditional landscape paintings. Potgieter did not place emphasis on abstract shapes and designs but he aimed on evoking various emotions.

"The vital forms of nature and the moods of wheather are brought close to us " (Herman Potgieter, 1990, p.69).

The viewer gets the impression of being invited into the picture, of being part of it.

In the third section, Manscapes, Potgieter's pictures "show man's power to dominate nature and subdue the earth to his purposes" (Herman Potgieter, 1990, p.123).

Some of the pictures are urban and impressive industrial landscapes where no evidence of man, plant or animal can be found. Other photos put emphasis on the strong contrast between man - made and natural forms.

In the last one and a half century agricultural invasion has changed the face of Southern Africa ; and many of Potgieter's pictures taken from the air are glimpses of an enormous ecological revolution.



Fig. 5 Sunrise, Hole in the Wall Transkei,
Herman Potgieter



Fig. 6 Sheep farm near Riebeek West, South-Western
Cape Province, Herman Potgieter



Fig. 7 Sunset, Olifant River mouth, Western Cape,
Herman Potgieter

Every year man repaints the face of the country with his ploughs, plantings, harvesting and the heavy grazing of his animals. Potgieter shows in his book many examples of the pleasing conjunction of nature and nurture.

Some of the resultant patterns of planting are extremely gratifying to the eye and delightful tensions, contrasts and echoes are set up by the combination of natural and artificial elements of landscape.

Herman Potgieter takes all his pictures in the early morning, late afternoon or evening. Those times of the day are the most suitable because the shadows are more expansive, there is a great interplay of shadow and light, the colours are richer and light and shade are highly contrasted.

Composition and the importance of the frame are key-elements for Potgieter who refers to Matisse who said "that the relationship of the image to its format is the key to composition" (Herman Potgieter, 1990, p.12).

The aerial photographer, like Herman Potgieter, can be compared with an experienced hunter who always has to be ready waiting for the decisive moment.

Much depends upon his aim, on the split-second finding of the right view and the exact time exposure and focus.

At first sight aerial photography does not seem to be very involved but actually the photographer has to have certain abilities to be a good photographer. There is an immense mass of visual material below him from which he has to select.

Constable, a famous British painter, in his third lecture on landscape, quotes:

"It is the soul that sees; the outward eyes Present the object, but the Mind descries" (Herman Potgieter, 1990, p.13).

"In its ability to present an object to the outward eye, the camera is a marvellous instrument, but it is the soul of the cameraman that selects what the camera's eye records, in what light, at what angle, within what frame; and it is for our outward eyes to look and our minds to descry or perceive. " (Herman Potgieter, 1990, p.13).

Potgieter doesn't only take photos from the air. Sometimes he settles down at a carefully chosen spot, and waits a long time for the precise moment when the light falling on the surface is in harmony with his chosen scene.



Fig. 8 **Railway Marshalling Yards, Johannesburg,
Transvaal, Herman Potgieter**

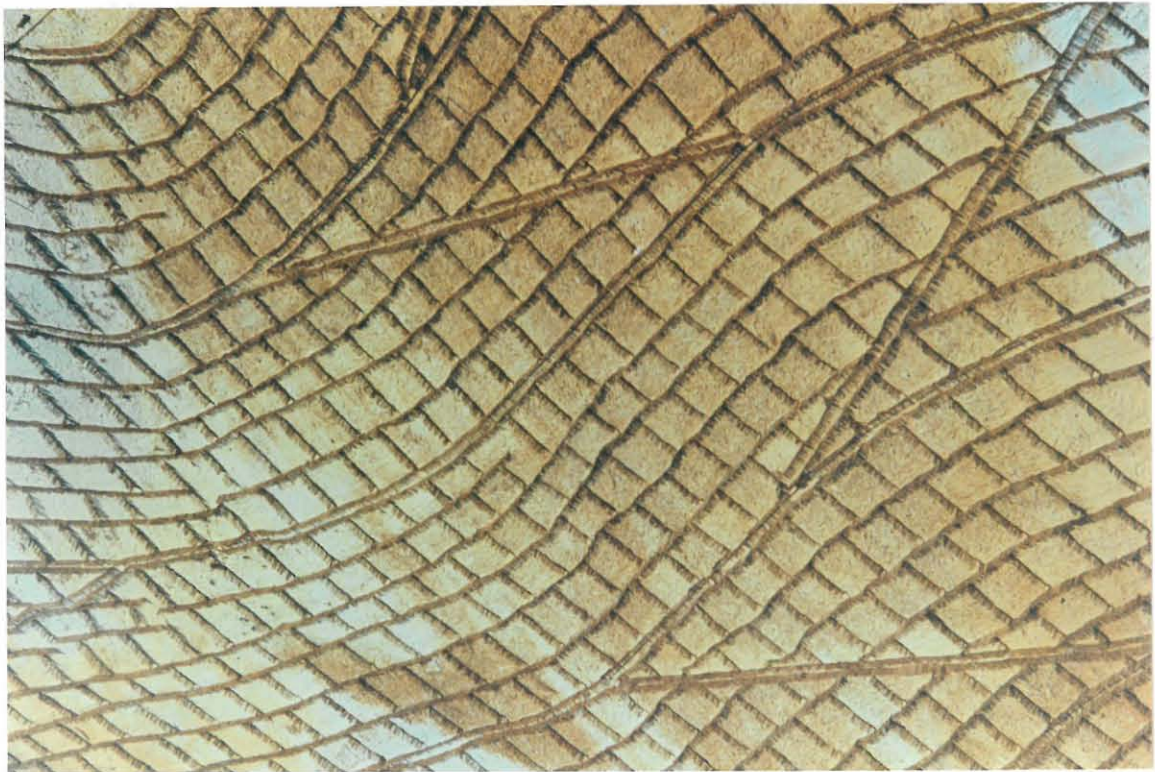


Fig. 9 Reed binding on gold mine dump, Eastern Witwatersrand, Transvaal, Herman Potgieter

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPOSITION

A chinese proverb says that to compose a landscape photograph does not mean to " fit the shoe by trimming the foot"
(Yuan Li, 1989 , p. 62)

Photographers can compose a picture to effectively convey their feelings about a particular scene , rather than let a formal design dictate an image.

There are a few reasons why composition is quite important in landscape photography. Unlike natural surroundings , pictures have only a limited area in which subject can be placed.

Different effects can be produced by the position of subjects with respect to the border and to each other.

For example, by placing the horizon in the centre of the image the picture can look very static and tension can be generated if the tonal differences are very strong.

On the other hand centering the horizon might create tranquility and serenity when tonal values above and below the horizon are compatible.

A feeling of a wide open space can be created by placing the horizon in the lower part of a picture , and moving it to the upper region creates remoteness. A landscape can appear very abstract by completely eliminating the horizon from a picture.

"The essence of landscape photography is to perceive and capture the natural world. Landscape photographers are observers , not designers of their surroundings".

(Yuan Li , 1989 , p. 62)

Landscape photographers give meaning to their work by carefully composing their images and not by manipulating subjects. The best compositions are achieved when the photographer moves around a lot.

THE ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

There are six basic elements of composition : balance, proportion, emphasis , contrast , rhythm and visual transition.

Each one of them is important in terms of composition and helps photographers to make their images visually effective.

BALANCE

Usually balance within an image is achieved by filling both sides of the frame with something visible , and by establishing a relationship among patterns around the center or simply by avoiding unused - but not necessarily empty - space on one side. The art of achieving balance is very subtle. If there is a massive structure on the one side of the picture , there does not have to be a similar structure on the other side as well to balance the picture. A flying bird in the empty sky or a long tree at the edge of a frame are often more effective to balance a picture than a symmetric arrangement.

Symmetry can produce a beautiful design , creating an abstract pattern but it also tends to make realistic renditions of landscapes appear visually static.

There are many ways through which balance can be achieved in a picture and they are far from rigid.

For example , widely separated lines on one side of a picture can converge on the other side of a picture, and can be balanced by a motif at their intersection.

Balance can also be achieved through the use of colour or tone. Images can appear balanced when light and dark tones share relatively the same amount of space or when they are similar in tone throughout.

PROPORTION

The way the limited space of a picture is divided makes quite an impression on viewers.

Subjects and colours cut the space into different shapes and forms. If similar shapes and sizes are arranged in a picture it seems orderly but at the same time monotonous.

Dividing the picture space into areas of unequal sizes produces a dynamic and interesting arrangement while cutting the picture area into halves or placing a subject at the center of the image lets the picture look dull.

Proportion is very important when considering negative space in an image. Any area in a picture that is not occupied by a physical object is negative space , for example, open sky. Negative space can complement the shapes of the subjects and become equally important to the images and can sometimes even dominate the photograph.

EMPHASIS

This element of composition often suggests the center of interest in an image although photographers can also make a point without a center of interest.

Landscape photographers must first decide which part of a scene best conveys their feelings about it and which should then be emphasized. The emphasis on any landscape can be changed completely by a slight shift of the camera.

For example, when you shift an object to the edge of a picture frame a sense of movement is created.

If photographers wish to emphasize a center of interest like a shack or a tree in a vast landscape, they can either zoom in on it or use natural light to single it out.

While a shack or a tree often adds to a landscape , it should be noted that including a person as the center of interest in a landscape photograph usually detracts from the scene. Photographers must have a clear understanding and vision of what they wish to emphasize.

CONTRAST

Light plays an important part in determining an image's contrast because it helps to produce the tonal range. Both colour images and black and white photographs that include a full range of tones can have quite a visual impact.

One of the advantages of working with colour is the subtle but pleasing contrast generated by colours of the same value. Even under subdued lighting sufficient colour contrast can be produced. When using black and white material, colours of a similar or the same value are often difficult to distinguish.

When taking photographs under misty conditions the chances of creating effective contrast are reduced ; but this problem can be overcome by placing for example a silhouetted subject in the foreground of an image. Even by including a very bright and colourful object the impact can be increased.

RHYTHM

Like in music the word "rhythm" is often associated with movement, repetition and design patterns. The viewers' eyes follow these patterns which usually consist of repeated lines, forms or motifs.

The rhythm of patterns can either enliven or diminish an image, when combined with the element of proportion. Lines , forms and motifs at precise intervals might seem rigid and monotonous.

A slight variation in pattern or an expansion or decrease in proportion can break this monotonous recurrence and let the landscape look more interesting and dynamic.

VISUAL TRANSITION

Visual transition must be provided throughout the picture space otherwise a sense of chaos and disorder is conveyed.

Photographers are able to lead the viewers' eyes through a photograph, through the arrangement of lines and forms which create a transition from one region to another.

Some photographs that lack transition are prevented from being unified and are said to be too busy.

There are rules that tell photographers to avoid including an even number of subjects of equal size or importance in a single image and that not too much should be included in a photograph to keep it simple - but if the transition is effective harmony or tension is created which then disproves these rules.

CHAPTER FOUR

LASER LANDSCAPES

Carol Strickman : Impressionistic pictorialism meets the 21st century.

Before Carol Strickman decided to devote herself full time to photography in 1988, she had been a manager with I B M for eight years.

One day she realized that she had not seen major sections of her country and she decided to do something about it. By travelling through the South Western United States , India and Provence she discovered her passion for landscape photography.

Carol Strickman began her photography career by studying at the International Center of Photography in New York and afterwards she took workshops with photographers whose work she admired, such as Dennis Stock , Bruce Bornbaum , Bill Neill and Craig Stevens.

She also has a B.S. degree from City University of New York and an M.B.A. degree from New York University.

Through her photographs C. Strickman wanted to convey to others her exhilaration and excitement that she experienced when viewing beautiful sceneries with their overwhelming and spectacular colours. She wanted people to feel that what they are seeing borders on the unbelievable , "that there is still incredible beauty in a world that seems filled with crack , AIDS and recession."

(Carol Strickman , 1992 , p.32)

Carol Strickman has found that as you spend time in an area, you begin to become part of it. The landscape begins to speak to you through its light, sounds and smells.

Each locale has a special feeling . She wanted to capture her emotional response to it in her images. Carol Strickman describes her emotions at a certain moment through her pictures.

Photography lets her escape from the real world of fear and disaster into another world.

"I can go off by myself , without feeling lonely and become absorbed in the landscape. I slow down , look and let the natural forces take over. I begin to see planes of colours and forms created by light. Only then do I start to make photographs". (C. Strickman, 1992 , p 34.)

She wants to cause an immediate reaction with her photographs and she wants the viewer to stop , slow down and view the landscape from another perspective. She sees some of her images as tapestries of fields of colour and movement.

Most of the times Strickman used a 35 mm camera loaded with Fuji Velvia film.

The photos are printed on a Canon Laser Copier. Although she prints most of her photographs with the Ilfochrome process , the laser copy process is an interesting alternative and creates different effects on some images.

With the laser copy process it is very easy to make the prints exactly the way you want them.

The combination of the laser paper and inks create visually exciting images . Controls on the laser copier permit you to adjust the colour tone and saturation , sharpness and contrast and it is possible to change the shape of the image. Because a colour-seperation process is used , you can change the image being copied on the glass during any one of the four colour passes.

Magenta , yellow, cyan and black are seperately recorded on the paper. For example, if you remove the picture on the copy glass and replace it with a paper with printed words on it during the black pass, a pictorial image with print will be created.

A totally different effect can be created by transferring the laser print onto other materials such as water colour or brown paper. Colour can be added with pencils , water colour paints or pastels.

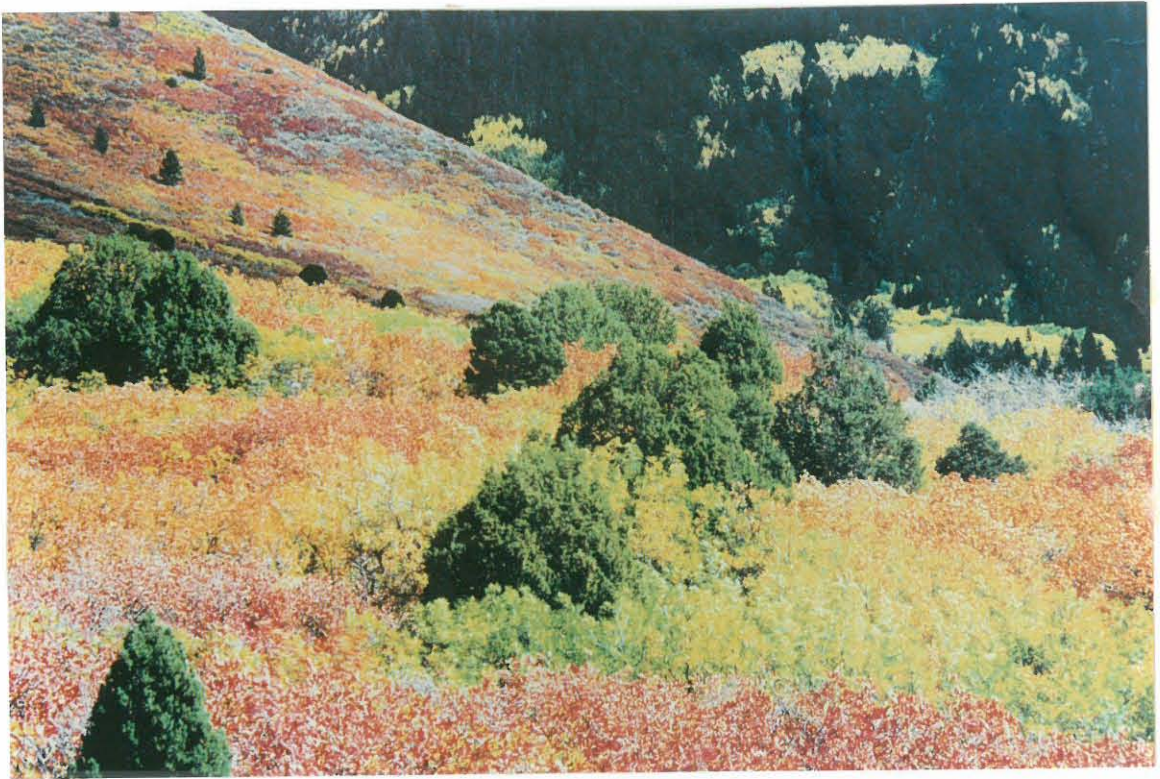


Fig. 10

Laser Landscape, Carol Strickman

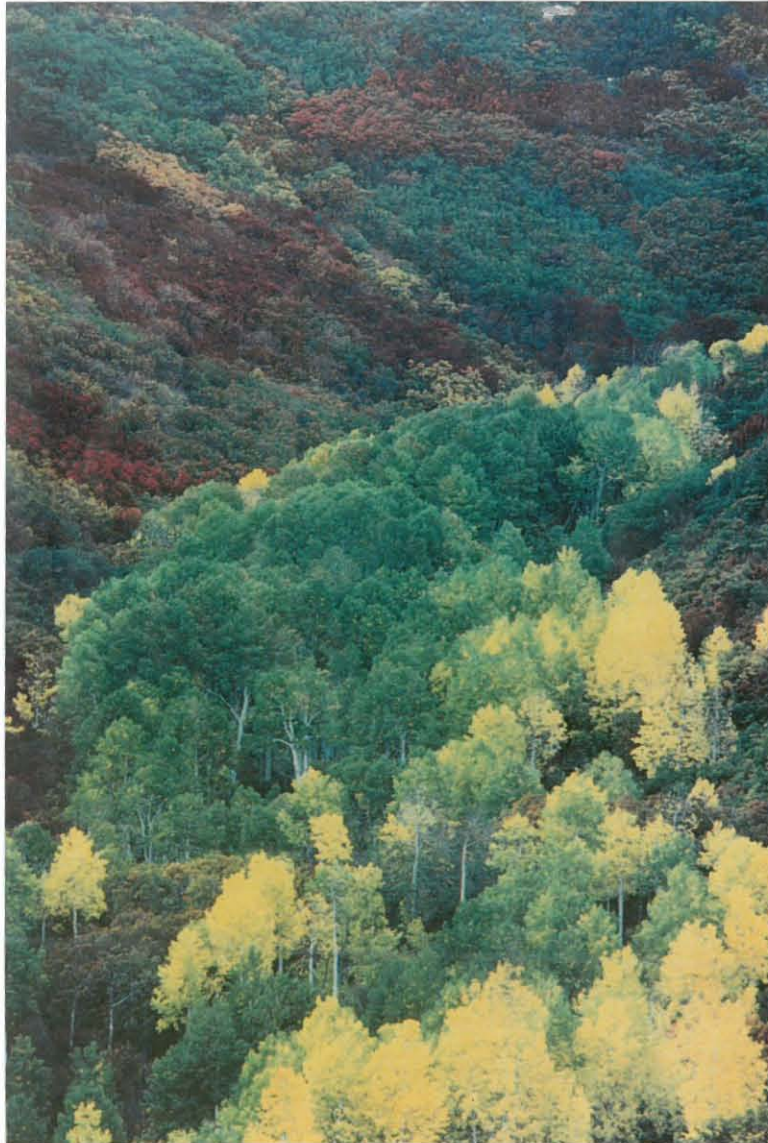


Fig. 11

Laser Landscape, Carol Strickman



Fig. 12

Laser Landscape, Carol Strickman

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW TO SHOOT SUPERB LANDSCAPES ? DISCUSSION OF EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES

There is no point in having the best equipment and spending a lot of money getting to the right location if your technique isn't up to standard.

If you want to be a successful landscape photographer you have to familiarize yourself with the techniques of pictorial photography. Landscape photography involves more than pointing with a camera at a pretty view.

The important fact that everyone should know is that landscape photography is all about light. It picks out shape and line, it reveals pattern and texture, it creates contrast through highlights and shadows and it creates an illusion of depth. It can be said that light is the real subject of landscape photography.

As the light changes different moods are created. You do not actually need a camera to appreciate the ways in which light effects a landscape. The more sensitive you become to different moods and nuances that are created, the better your photography will become.

The best time to shoot landscape photographs are early in the morning and late in the afternoon.

During these times the sun is lower in the sky, and the lower, warm light brings out whatever texture is to be found in the scene. Most of the time the light will be clearer than during the day which is very important when photographing distant views.

LIGHT AND FILM

When we view a scene our subconscious make continuous and unconscious adjustments to visually improve the scene.

But film isn't as accommodating as the naked eye , it reacts to the light that falls on it.

That is the reason why pictures taken in the middle of the day are often disappointing unless a warm-up filter is used . Midday light has a harsh and contrasty feel that is far from photogenic.

SEASONAL VARIATIONS

Many photographers take photos in the middle of the day and in summertime when the light is at its worst .

Most landscapes are shot in summer , although the clearest air and the most dramatic lighting are generally to be found during the other seasons.

The air is the clearest in winter : perfect conditions for shots of distant scenes and wide panoramas. If you want to photograph in the mountains, winter is the perfect time.

Autumn is also a nice season for taking photos. It offers muted colours, not least the warm colours of fallen leaves.

In spring the greens are of a great intensity that cannot be found in midsummer anymore.

EQUIPMENT

Professional landscapers know that successful pictures come from planning, hard work and making the right creative decision.

The choices of lens, film, the optimum combination of shutter speed and aperture play a very big role in landscape photography.

A wide-angle lens is regarded as your "standard" lens in landscape photography. It is worthwhile investing in a quality optic with a focal length between 24mm and 35 mm.

The field of view of a wide-angle lens offers a number of benefits. When choosing a small aperture you obtain extensive depth-of-field-from a few feet to infinity.

You can also get good separation between fore, middle and back ground which gives the pictures a convincing sense of space and distance.

Furthermore you should have at least one lens that is longer than 50 mm, for example a 90 mm or a 135 mm. A zoom lens, like a 70-210 mm, is also useful but the quality of a fixed focal length lens is usually better than the quality of a zoom lens.

A long lens is useful for isolating individual features in the landscape - such as a tree, part of a field or a figure.

Long lenses flatten planes. When photographing mountain peaks the distance between the peaks seems to be minimized. The longer the lens, the more pronounced the flattening effect will be.

In landscape photography you will normally make use of a small aperture to obtain maximum depth of field.

That means that your shutter speeds can vary from for example 1/250 of a second up to a few minutes exposure time or even longer.

If your shutter speed is 1/30 of a second or longer it is impossible to hold the camera steady, so you will have to make use of a tripod. A tripod is a very useful piece of equipment in landscape photo-

graphy, it frees you from the need to compromise: it lets you use small apertures, long shutter speeds and slow, fine-grained film - no matter what lighting conditions you encounter.

FILTERS

There are very few filters that you need for landscape photography. There are a lot of gimmicks on the market but they are not applicable to shooting landscape photographs.

One of the filters that you do need is a grey gradation filter. In most situations the lightest part of a landscape is the sky. If you take a reading from the sky and then from the foreground you will probably find at least three or more stops difference between the two metered areas.

To get the right exposure you use the grey gradation filter which reduces the contrast between sky and land.

The grey area of the filter serves to hold back the sky.

It accentuates the colour - and unclouded sky will go deeper blue, your sunsets will be more dramatic.

Another useful filter is the warm-up filter. Pictures shot in the middle of the day typically show an overall blueness because the light is cooler than at the beginning and end of the day.

The warm-up filter can be used whenever the pictures are likely to come out with a blue colour cast, or whenever you want to give a scene an extra degree of warmth.

The third essential filter is the polarizer. It is something of a maverick among filters because its effect depends on the direction

it is pointing. When the effect is most extreme, the filter offers deeply saturated colours. It also lessens reflections from most surfaces including water.

When shooting black & white photographs you should equip yourself with three filters - yellow, orange and red.

A problem with black & white landscapes is the lack of sky detail - clear blue skies can become washed out on film, needing excessive burning in during printing.

A yellow filter increases contrast slightly, giving a more natural rendition of sky. The orange filter accentuates the effect, while the deep red filter goes further. Clouds glow spectacularly out of dark skies and the results can be impressively dramatic.

"Filters are useful gadgets. They can make good pictures better. But there is no filter on the market that can transform a dull scene into a great shot ". (The complete guide to shooting superb landscapes , practical photography , October 1992, p.14).

FILMS

There is no film that is best for landscape photography. Many amateurs use medium - speed films (ISO 100-200) because such films can cope with most of the subjects. However, most of the professional landscape photographers use very slow films (ISO 25, ISO 50 or ISO 64), which are the finest-grained films. They deliver maximum detail and clarity. There is a startling difference in

sharpness and colour saturation between a film rated at ISO 400 and one rated ISO 50. Slow films can be considered for landscape photography because it is one subject where speed is not of the essence.

If you want to create a grainy , moody feel you should use a very fast film (ISO 1000). You can even rate those films at ISO 4000 to exaggerate the effect.

Depending on what the photographer intends to do with the resulting images, there is the choice between print and transparency film. Most professionals use colour slide film because it still gives the best results in terms of depth , colour fidelity and sharpness.

FORMAT

The most 'appropriate' camera for landscape photography is a 35 mm SLR (single lens reflex) camera that is not totally automatic in operation. It allows the photographer to take a few creative decisions of his or her own.

Because 35 mm films are very good these days , many successful landscape photographers use this format exclusively for their work.

Other cameras that can be used for landscape photography are medium - format cameras (6 x 4,5 cm, 6 x 6 cm and 6 x 7 cm) and large format cameras like 4 x 5 inch and 8 x 10 inch cameras.

The advantage of the medium and large format cameras is that the resulting images are of an outstanding quality and sharpness.

Therefore some professional photographers use them for calenders and posters. The disadvantages are that these cameras are very expensive and extremely bulky.

A 35 mm SLR camera , on the other hand , is mobile and less expensive. So most landscape photographs sacrifice image quality and sharpness for versatility.

CHAPTER SIX

AUTHOR'S WORK

Most of the landscapes photographs that I have taken were not planned in advance.

A lot of times when I travel I take my camera along because I know there might be something that interests me.

All of the photographs included in this portfolio were not taken for a specific project. I took my best photographs under pressure when time was running out , but when I take landscape photographs I must be totally relaxed . I must be in the right mood to picture a nice photograph. Sometimes when I travel with somebody in the car I watch the scenery and then I see : this is it ! Then I have to stop and take the photograph otherwise I keep on thinking and asking myself why I did not take it.

I remember one day when I stayed in a caravan park in Noordhoek near Cape Town . I came back to the tent one evening when I saw this nice scene. A man was sitting in his big orange tent that was illuminated from inside and he was watching TV. I could only see the black silhouette of the man and the TV.

Behind the tent was a huge mountain and white clouds were creeping with a very high speed over it. It looked as if the clouds were pouring onto the tent. What made the shot even better , was the huge full moon shining that night. I remember this scene in detail and I regret it so much that I did not take the photograph.

It is impossible to arrange or pose a scene like this again because it would not have the same mood and I would not feel the same when I see the picture.

Many of my photos include the subject of water. I find water extremely interesting , whether it be the sea , a river or a pond. Water creates a certain mood, it is an element that gives a picture the extra punch. In water you can find interesting reflections which themselves can make a good picture.

Most of my photos I took very early in the morning or late in the afternoon when the light is at its best and the subjects seem to glow when illuminated by the endless sunrays.

I used two camera bodies , a Canon A 1 and a Canon AE 1 program. Most of the times I used my 28 mm lens with a polarizer.

FIGURE 13

This photograph of the Amsterdamhoek in Port Elizabeth was taken in the late afternoon.

The atmosphere seems very relaxed due to the sun that was setting low in the sky and which left interesting reflections in the water.

The whole photograph has got a very moody feel because of the warm colours of the houses.

The blue sky and water are in contrast to the "yellow" middle part of the picture.

I used my Canon A1 with a 28 mm lens and a polarizer. The film I used is Agfa Optima 125.



Fig. 13 Amsterdamhoek, Port Elizabeth,
D. van Bömmel

FIGURE 14

Colour is a very strong element of this photograph , taken in the Eastern Cape.

The red berries on the right definitely add the punch to this image. Without this colour the photo would have just been another "boring" landscape.

The colours are very strong and saturated.

The thin branch in the sky lets the clear blue sky look a bit more interesting.

The photograph was taken at about ten o'clock in the morning, about half an hour after the sun reached the valley.

I used Agfa X RG100 film in my Canon A1 with a 28 mm lens and a polarizer.





Fig. 14 Untitled,
D. van Bömmel

FIGURE 15

When I took this photo of the fishhead I experimented with a fish-eye lens for the first time and I think in this case the effect of the fish-eye works very well. I was walking along the dam when I discovered the fish head lying in the sand. Because it was wintertime and freezing cold the fish head was well - preserved and not rotten at all.

I thought that it would make an interesting and different photograph and put the head on an old tree trunk.

I went very close to the fish head and shot from all different angles.

This photo where the fish's mouth is pointing to the sky works the best for me. Because the photo was taken very late in the afternoon, the colours are very soft and warm.

The fish head in front and the curved "water-horizon" in the back work very well together and give the image a surrealistic feel.

I used my Canon A1 and the film used is Kodak Gold 400.



Fig. 15 Fishhead,
D. van Bömmel

FIGURE 16

The moon in this very simplistic landscape wasn't originally there. I felt that without the moon the image looked too empty, a third element was missing.

The grass, the moon and the mountain in the background that looks like a pyramid form a triangle that holds the picture together. They are three very simple elements but when looking at the photo your eye moves from one to the other.

This photograph shows that you don't always need a lot of picture elements to let an image look interesting. A very graphic or simple photograph often looks better than one that is too busy.

I took this photo very early in the morning, about one hour after sunrise at Golden Gate.

It was a very windy day and I used a slow shutter speed to achieve the blurry effect of the grass.

I used my Canon AE 1 program with a 28 mm lens and a polarizer and the camera was loaded with Agfa Ultra 50 film.



Fig. 16 Untitled,
D. van Bömmel

FIGURE 17

For this photograph I again used my Canon A1 camera with a 28 mm lens and a polarizer and used Agfa APX 100 black and white film.

Unfortunately the negative came out a bit too thin and because the photo was taken around midday the print didn't look very good , it was too flat. But I liked the image, especially the reflections in the water let the photo look very interesting so I tried to give the photo more impact by solarizing it.

I still found that something was missing so I sepia toned it and I am quite satisfied with the final result.

So if you get a nice image but the negative is bad, you don't have to give up immediately. There are a lot of techniques to be used that can make the image more interesting.



Fig. 17 Reflection ,
D. van Bömmel

FIGURE 18

Without using a polarizing filter this photo wouldn't have been so effective.

The deep blue sky and the white clouds look very dramatic. The tree on the left leads the eye into the picture and the clouds seem like an extension of the tree.

If I had used a fill-in-flash for the tree, I could have given the image the extra punch. Now the tree looks a little bit dead.

The photo is taken in the Free State at about three o'clock in the afternoon with my Canon AE 1 program and a 28 mm lens. I used Agfa Optima 125 film.



Fig. 18 Untitled,
D. van Bömmel

FIGURE 19

In my three years of studying I always wanted to photograph a sunrise and this is the only photograph that I like. I was on my way to the coast when I watched the sun rise. I was looking for the appropriate spot to take the photograph , but everything looked the same and quite boring until I drove past this thornbush. I had to act fast because the sun was rising very fast. I exposed for the sun and used flash to illuminate the thornbush in front.

I used Agfa XR G 100 film loaded in my Canon A1 with a 50 mm lens.

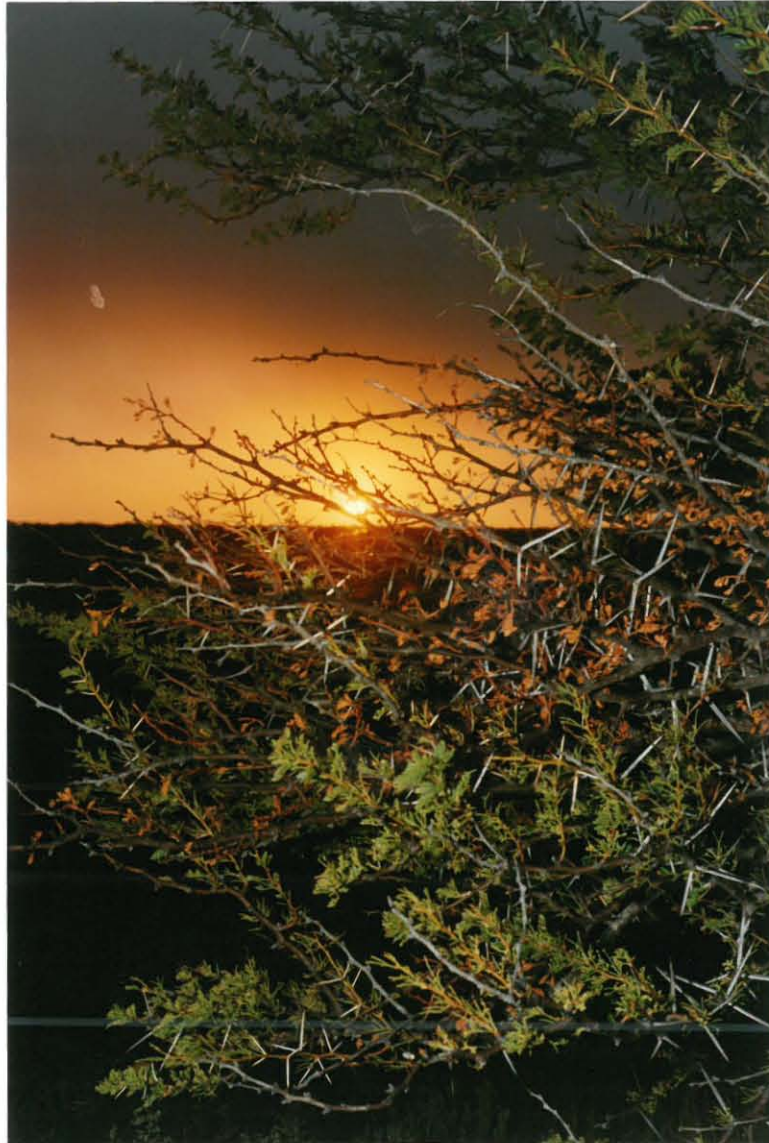


Fig. 19 Thornbush as Sunrise,
D. van Bömmel

FIGURE 20

This photograph was taken on Elba , an Island in front of the Italian coast.

I wanted the image to look very abstract so I cropped the sun shade on the left in a way that it cannot be identified.

The sun-shade in front , and the mountain in the back balance the photo well. I took this photo a few minutes before the sun disappeared behind the mountains.

The warm colour of the sand is in sharp contrast to the cold blueness of the sun-shade , water and sky.

The highlights on the sun-shade add extra sparkle to the image. I again used my 28 mm lens with a polarizer and I shot on Agfa Ultra 50 , a very contrasty and fine -grained film.



Fig. 20 Untitled,
D. van Bömmel

FIGURE 21

Because this photo was taken at about midday it has a very cold feel. With this kind of image the coldness works very well. I was driving past the field when I saw the cow standing under the tree at the perfect spot. I rushed there in the hope that the cow won't move , luckily it did not.

I cropped the photo to get a long and thin horizontal image to avoid empty and unused picture space.

The polarizer on my 28 mm lens gives the sky a very saturated colour.



Fig. 21 Untitled,
D. van Bömmel



Fig. 22 Untitled,
D. van Bömmel



Fig. 23 Untitled,
D. van Böttmel



Fig. 24 Untitled,
 D. van Bömmel

CONCLUSION

Landscape photography is more difficult than many people can imagine.

There is more to it than just a beautiful scene and a camera, which I tried to bring across in this book.

Before taking a landscape , you have to do a lot of planning and you must have the time and patience to take landscape photographs.

I must admit that I didn't plan my shoots enough and that the time was often limited. I still have a lot of ideas which I wasn't able to bring on film during my last year.

But my career is still ahead of me and hopefully I will still produce some good photographs.

The role of landscape photography has changed over the last few decades.

Everything started with travel photography . Photographers were taking photos to show the people in their country what the rest of the world looked like.

By publishing those landscape photographs they educated the people.

Nowadays landscape photography has two purposes. Many people take landscape photos for their family album and to keep memories of places they have visited.

The other purpose is commercial photography. Professionals take photos for calenders or magazines. But one thing must be stressed and that is that amateurs and professionals take landscape photographs because they love nature and not just because of the money involved.

Landscape photography is more difficult than many people can imagine.

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