

LANDSCAPES THROUGH MY
VIEWFINDER

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BY

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Summary

The script covers a brief discussion of the history of landscape photography as well as composition , lighting , technique and equipment for landscape photography .

Landscape photography masters of the past and present is also discussed . The script ends with some aspects and examples of the Authors own work .

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Chapter One Introduction

The first workable photographic process was the Daguerreotype and some of the first successful pictures were views of the streets and buildings of Paris .

Two disappointing features of early photography were that their process was too slow to capture movement and it could not reproduce the colours of nature . However, it was well suited to subjects that did not move . From that day to the present , landscape photography has been a fascinating subject to photographers .

In the most literal sense , a landscape is a portrait of the land . More accurately, a landscape can be defined as a photograph that describes a certain place at a particular instant as seen through the eyes of an individual photographer.

With landscape photography one can discover patterns and textures that will give a fresh, original expression to landscape themes.

To achieve this however you have to acquire skills and get ahead of classic compositional rules. These rules would not limit your imagination or alter your creativity. Not in the least, it will help you achieve those photographs you have always lived for. These rules can help you create a winning picture - a breathtaking view that shall always be remembered.

In this script, the author would like to shed fresh light on creativity and compositional rules, but also give background information about the old masters and present masters in landscape photography.



Chapter Two

A Brief History of Landscape Photography

The art of photography has come a long way from what it was to what we have come to know it as we do today. Photography was thought of as a poetic idea, that it might be possible to snatch from the very air a picture formed by the forces of nature.

It began during the early Sixteenth Century. The Great Johannes Kepler had designed a portable camera constructed as a tent and gave the device a name; Camera Obscura.

The interior of the tent was dark except for the light admitted by a lens, which focused the image on the scene outside onto a piece of paper.

By the late Seventeenth Century and the Eighteenth Century the camera was being used by painters, it was a common tool to painters.

It would seem that most painters used it as a crutch rather than a method of exploration.

In 1837 Louis Daguerre developed a practical process for fixing the image but in 1848 the first photographic process on glass was introduced. Glass was a cheaper base for the sensitive coating than a silvered copper plate and its transparency made it the perfect base for the multiplication of copies. Disadvantages were its weight and fragility but the main problem was to find a vehicle for the silver salts that would not dissolve or float off during development, fixing and rinsing.

Nicephore Niepce had used this process in 1822 and so did Daguerre who made "sketches upon glass".

Undeterred by other failures to create a valuable process, a nephew of N. Niepce, Abel de Saint Victor continued to experiment with glass. Eventually he found, after having tried starch and gelatine that the white of egg (albumen) acted as a satisfactory coating .

In the Albumen Process the glass plate was coated with a thin layer of egg white containing a few drops of a solution of iodine of potassium. When dry, the plate was washed with an acid solution of nitrate of silver and after exposure the latent image was developed with gallic acid and fixed in the usual way. (Gernsheim: 1987 : 7 -17)

The Albumen Process was a great step forward but had certain drawbacks. Its slowness, 5 - 15 minutes - according to circumstances and its application to portraiture, which precluded were examples of these drawbacks. It was, however, excellent for landscapes.

Later on, in the fifties, albumen paper was a convenient medium for the coating of glass negatives but was also employed for coating positive paper. Blanquart - Evrard was the originator of Albumen paper in May 1850.

In March 1851, a new period in photography began with F. S. Archer's invention of The Collodion Process. It took over all the existing methods (Daguerreotype, Calotype and Albumen). This was the fastest photographic process so far devised and immediately won immense popularity.

This is how the process worked: collodion containing potassium iodide was poured on to a glass plate, forming an even coating by tilting the plate. Immediately followed by sensitising the plate by dipping it into a bath of nitrate of silver solution. It then had to be exposed while still moist because the sensitivity deteriorated greatly as the collodion dried. Development followed directly after exposure with either pyrogalllic acid or ferrous sulphate. The picture was fixed with sodium hyposulphite or potassium cyanide. (Gernsheim: 1987 : 7 - 17)

The Collodion Process was often called “ the wet - plate process “, as it was essential that all manipulations be carried out while the coating on the plate was still moist. Exposures of the collodion process varied from ten seconds to one - and - a - half minutes for landscapes and architecture.

It was therefore a matter of course that collodion won immediate favour. (Gernsheim: 1987 : 11)

For the travelling photographer it involved taking about a dark-tent and a large quantity Of chemical solutions, dishes, etc., in fact an entire darkroom outfit which almost outweighed the advantages of the process. Except for the professional portraiture plhographer who was considerably eased by having at his command a much faster sensitive material.

Most photographers still worked with folding wooden-box-type cameras. The much lighter bellows, which would have seemed the ideal tourist camera, established itself only very gradually. Presumably the big bellows extension proved insufficiently rigid for relatively long exposures (15 - 50 seconds). Demanded by the large plate sizes which landscapes and architecture photographers worked with.

As enlarging was not yet practicable, large pictures meant large plates from which contact to make contact copies. 25.5 cm x 30.5 cm and 30.5 cm x 40.6 cm (10 in x 12 in x 16 in) were nothing out of the ordinary. Large pictures were in demand for sales and exhibition purposes. Some of Francis Frith `s Egyptian and Palestine views were taken on 40.6 cm x 50.8 cm (16 in x 20 in) plates and so do many of Roger Fenton`s landscapes and architectural studies of English Cathedrals.

Equipment of the Photographic Tourist

In addition to a camera and a sturdy tripod the photographic tourist was supplied with several lenses, chemicals or made-up solutions for the glass negatives. He also needed dishes, glass plates, scales and weights, glass measures and funnels and a pail to fetch water for rinsing.

But above all he needed a portable dark-tent in which all the chemical manipulations took place. The photographic tourist had to be content with a large calico bag, which he drew over his head and fastened tightly around his waist with an elastic band. The chemical process was performed while standing at a folding table. Although these one-man tents packed conveniently into a box they were suffocating in use and the equipment was bulky and strenuous.

The pursuit for a solution not to use a portable dark-tent continued.

This could be effected either by chemical means - advanced preparation of the plate - delayed development, (which meant decreased sensitivity) or by constructing cameras fitted with a dark chamber in which all the chemical manipulation could be carried out.

Such a camera designed by F.S. Archer for the Talbot type process in 1849, was adapted by him for the collodion process and throughout the evolution of photography it was modified numberless times to suit new processes.

The messy business was manipulating the chemicals inside the camera. Even when going about it in the greatest care it was still frustrating.

Newton's camera, introduced in 1852 overcame the most objectionable features, with a chamber underneath. This was divided into four compartments for sensitising bath, developing solution, fixing bath and rinsing water. The collodionized plate, attached to a rod could be moved and lowered into each compartment in turn.

But both Archers and Newton's cameras were makeshift devices and failed to gain popularity. The serious amateur could not do without a tent.

Gernsheim (1987: 119 - 120) says that the process was slow and a man who could bring back as many as six pictures from days outing was lucky. It was never safe to convey the sensitised plate a greater distance than about three minutes walk. Photographers familiar only with the miniature camera can hardly imagine the herculean labours of a travelling photographer during the collodion period.

The author will next discuss some of the great landscape photographers during the Collodion Process.

Great Britain

Roger Fenton was one of the most prolific as well as versatile photographers in the eleven years he practised photography. His English landscapes and Cathedrals and a series of art treasures taken as an official photographer for the trustees of the British Museum in 1854-8 are as maturely in their different ways as most of his Crimean War pictures.

Apart from his views, which were sold at print sellers and won many awards at international exhibitions, Fenton also illustrated a number of books. For some years he was Chief Photographer to the Stereoscopic Magazine - A Gallery of Landscape, Scenery, Architecture, Antiquities, and Natural History and to the Photogalvanographic Company until his retirement from photography in 1862 to resume his legal profession. (Gernsheim: 1987: 121)

Henry White, a London Solicitor was for approximately ten years a prominent amateur photographer. His quiet pastoral idylls of cornfields and haystacks as well as close-ups of ferns of bramble and ivy on walls were his specialised fields.

Similar close-up nature studies presaging the New Objectivity Style of the 1920's were produced rather surprisingly, at the Military School of the Royal Engineers at Chatham, where from 1856 onward photography was thought to the Officers and Sergeants.

At this period accrued the establishment of several big photographic publishing firms: those of Joseph Cundall in London, James Valentine in Dundee, and George Washington Wilson in Aberdeen. They all started as individual photographers and later employed a large staff travelling round Britain and the continent, eventually amassing a stock of hundreds and thousands of scenery and architecture.

France

Baldus, Negre, Marville and Le Gray did some fine landscapes and architectural photographs in the Collodion Period. Le Gray and Negre retired in the early 1860's. The Brisson Brothers, who were leading the fields of architecture and art reproductions, withdrew from photography about 1862 and sold their negatives to E. Placet. It is their extraordinary large views 15 in x 18 in in

historic buildings rather than their work in portraiture and art reproductions for which they are famous.

German-Speaking Countries

According to Gernsheim (1987: 130) Herman Krone's reputation as a landscape photographer rests on his *Album der Sächsischen Schweiz*. Which contains sixty-three photographs of a renowned part of Saxony. Published in 1853 these topographical views have been admired in Germany but are of more than average when compared with English and French photographers of the time. Krone was also commissioned to take some 145 views of Saxony towns and some general vistas along the Elbe River of Dresden and are of the finest photography.

Krone made his living as a portrait photographer in Saxony but his work in that area is not remarkable. From 1870 - 1895 he was instructor of photography at the Polytechnic of his hometown until his appointment as Professor at the Technical University. (Gernsheim: 1987: 130)

The Near East

Francis Frith was another leading landscape photographer in the Collodion Period, and his fame nowadays rests on the many publications, which ensued from his three tours to Egypt, Nubia, Palestine, and Syria. For these exemplify his finest and earliest work.

He encountered many problems on his tours and needed a lot of patience in working with collodion in the hot and dry climate. Suffocating heat in the dark-tent aggravated these difficulties. Resulting sometimes temperatures of 50° - 55° C. Neither could he seek coolness of rock tombs for coating and developing the glass plates, this proved unsatisfactory resulting in dust settling on the plates causing spots.

Frith travelled in his photographic van, a work carriage that served both as a darkroom and sleeping quarters.

He returned to England in July 1857. Negate and Zambra published one hundred stereoscopic views and enabled the public to see photographic views rather than the paintings of Roberts and Denon. Frith was commissioned on another two trips after the excellent reception of the Egyptian photographs.

He travelled through Palestine and Syria and set out again to Cairo and travelled to many other famous places. Frith printed a selection of the best 8 in x 10 in negatives with accompanying text.

The demands of views of the Near East seemed insatiable and Frith set off once more with three cameras in the summer of 1859. This trip took him farther up the Nile than any photographer has been before.

Accompanied by his dragoman, cook, two guides and a boy Frith covered the distance in eighteen days, taking as little baggage as possible, apart from the photographic outfit. (Gernsheim: 1887: 159)

Frith continued and covered much of Western Europe with his camera. Though he was artistic, most of Frith's later work is rather straight forward topography. Frith's architectural views are perhaps more striking than his landscapes. But only a photographer knows and can appreciate the difficulty of getting a view satisfactorily into the viewfinder.

India

Samuel Borne settled in Simla from 1863 - 70 and in a few years he was recognised as the leading landscape photographer in India.

It is said that the quality of Borne's work is equal to that of the best landscape photographers in the period. His silver prints shows a perfect graduation of tone in difficult subjects such as white marble temples, while his almost three-dimensional rendering of distance in mountain views could serve as an example to many present-day landscape photographers who often lose perspective by over filtering.

Hundreds of views, which opened up an unknown world to the eyes of European public, were created by several long expeditions. Borne's partner, C. Shephard published a catalogue of 1500 photographs.

The Far East

John Thomson spent ten years in the Far East and related his explorations and adventures in several volumes. He then became picture editor of Photographic Accompanying the “ Ever Victorious Army “ containing photographs illustrating incidents in General Gardens campaign against Chinese Rebel Forces.

His most important work in the Far East was his superb documentation of China. He travelled 8000 kilometres in five years and published two volumes, “ Views in the North River “ and “ Foochow and the River Min “ (Hong Kong). These volumes contained albumen and carbon prints

The work for which Thomson is best known today are four folio volumes of illustrations of China and its

People, published in London. (Gernsheim: 1987: 170)

His work reflects of curiosity for bizarre moments and unfamiliar scenery.



Chapter Three

The Importance of Composition and Lighting

Seen from an open viewpoint, the whole landscape appears to spread out in a sweeping panorama.

A good photograph of such a scene can re-create for the viewer the same feelings of freedom that inspired the photographer.

There are many ways to compose pictures and there are also classical compositional rules for visual organisation, which will be covered in this chapter.

Though rules are meant to be broken, and when you know these rules you can decide for yourself whether applying one or more of them will render the best interpretation of your subject.

3.1. Golden Mean and the Rule of the Thirds

Since the Middle Ages sculptors in Ancient Greece and European painters and architects relied in the classic formula for subject's placement called the Golden Mean.

The Golden Mean is defined as, "that to produce the most pleasing proportions, a line - or any picture area - should be divided into two parts so that the relationship between the whole line area and the large part and the small part is the same as the relationship between the whole line area and the large part.

(Caulfield : 1987 : 67)

The rule of the thirds states that the picture should be divided into thirds horizontally and vertically. The centre of the picture's interest should be placed at one of the intersections of the vertical and horizontal lines.

3.2. Where to Put the Horizon

The rule of the thirds and the Golden Mean provides easy answers about where to put the horizon, or other subject elements.

It is, however, interesting to experiment with high horizons, low horizons, and horizons close to the middle of the frame. As the horizon is such an objective aspect of any landscape, it seems strange that where it appears in the frame is often not well thought out by many photographers. Usually we try to include both the land and the sky. Because the horizon falls approximately in the middle, this is usually an awkward arrangement, which should be avoided unless an accomplished photographer applies it deliberately for effect.

3.3. Achieving Balance

That pictures should be balanced is another general compositional rule.

Subject elements are weighted and assigned different degrees of importance depending on their size and their tone or colour. Light areas have more weight than dark ones.

This rule is not opposition to the rule of thirds. In photographs made according to the rule of thirds, the larger, emptier part of the photograph balances the weight of the main subject.

3.4. Verticals Versus Horizontals Formats

According to Patricia Caulfield (1987 : 76) if possible he always take verticals and horizontals

Of the same scene, changing her angle, vantagepoint, lens or distance when necessary.

Apart from this professional requirement she let her subject matter dictate horizontal or vertical framing. A picture shape implies the right framing.

Our eye is inclined to travel from left to right or right to left with horizontal pictures. And from top to bottom or bottom to top with verticals. Horizontal pictures however emphasise the horizon or other horizon lines or shapes while verticals are more effective than horizontals in showing depth.

3.5. Check the Background

As in pictures of people, in nature pictures you want to avoid any juxtaposition of your subject and background objects that makes the latter appear connected to the main subject. For example; a telephone pole “growing” from a models head.

It is essential to pay attention to the backgrounds relationship to the main subject. But one can also select a wider aperture to render the background more out of focus. By doing this, you may change your vantagepoint, coming closer to your subject to eliminate any background. You can even go further and change lenses to show more or less of the background or alter the relationship between the subject and the background by changing camera angle .



3.6. Foregrounds are Important

- Unnoticed foreground objects or an empty foreground ruin as many pictures as bad backgrounds do. Filling the foreground is particularly important with wide angle-lenses.

Foregrounds can be used as scrims through which you see the main subject in sharp focus, but it is vital to check the effect of your aperture choice on the depth of field.

There are many ways to compose a picture. Composition is also very personal and most successful pictures are well composed in some way.

The Importance of Lighting

The Best Light

For a couple of hours after dawn and before dusk the sun's light slants low over the land. This is the best time to photograph landscapes.

Because the light changes more rapidly early and late in the day than it does around noon. This light makes it possible to show the landscape in several different moods, all in the space of half an hour or so. (Beazley: 1984: 54)

The light in which you see and photograph it determines how every picture appears. A landscape photographer treasures light. Not just any light but decisive light. Jeff Wignall (1987: 66) describes decisive light as a light that derives not from a particular lighting but from the subject and the photographer.

Decisive light can be passive or dramatic, in the end it is that which matches the photographer's intentions and style. The three traits of light that play across the land are direction, colour, and quality. A brief discussion on these will follow.

Light Sources

In nature or landscape photography your most important light source is the sun. On cloudless days the illumination is brightly-lit areas but it is not the immediate source of all light falling on a subject. Other phenomena reflect sunlight too and contribute significantly to lighting subjects.

Secondly the sky is also a major light source outdoors. The sky is the main light source for subjects in open shade on sunny days and on overcast days, not direct sunlight. Blue sunny-day skies give shadow in a picture taken in open shade a characteristic blue tint. The light source on



overcast day is the great dome or greys sky; here the clouds act as a giant diffuse, diminishing both light intensity and contrast.

Light Direction

Light always has a direction, whether it comes from specular or diffuse light sources. It is important to be aware of light direction because it reveals form and texture and also creates contrast.

The height of the sun in the sky creates an ever-changing vertical angle that is as important to light direction as the horizontally based incidence. At noon the sun is as close to being directly overhead as it will be on that day at that location. You will always have a greater angle of incidence at sunrise and sunset when the sun is low and close to the horizon. (Caulfield: 1987: 34)

Frontlighting with the sun behind you fully lights a scene. It diminishes shadows, depth, and form and stresses colour, detail and shape. Off to the side, the sun strafes the land. Textures roughen; forms emerge and shadow stretch. Sidelighting invigorates landscapes, makes them palpable and three-dimensional. With backlighting, the sun behind the land and facing you, shadows determine the mood. They obscure the faces of mountains, trees, and buildings. Small shadows from pebbles and sticks heighten contrasts. Backlighting can be used to create a rim light effect that outlines a subject's shape.

(Wignall: 1987: 67)

Colour

Though we may not always take note of it, the colour of light changes perpetually from dawn to twilight.

The coloration of light is most obvious early and late in the day. The light reflected from your subject is in fact the same thing as your subject matter because it is what your camera records. You should be able to analyse light that falls on the subject, which is called incident light. You should also be aware of light reflected from the subject namely reflected light.

The amount of light reaching a subject is called light intensity. Light intensity is an important aspect to exposure. Light intensity and subject reflectivity determine the shutter speed and aperture combinations that will produce the correct negative. The brightness of this reflected light is what you measure with reflected - light meters, whether build into your camera or separate devices.

The reason object appears coloured is that they reflect some way of the wavelengths in incident light and absorb others.

“ Objects look white when they reflect all the wavelengths in white light equally. They look black when they absorb all wavelengths equally. They look red when they reflect the short red wavelengths absorbing blue and green. They look blue when they reflect blue wavelengths, absorbing red and green. They look green when they reflect green wavelengths absorbing red and blue.” (Wigan: 1987: 39)

The other colours come from mixtures of various wavelengths. Yellow objects reflect equal amounts of red and green light. All the colours that we see illuminated by white light result

from selective absorption of one or more of the lights wavelengths.

Naturally the colours reflected depend on what colours are present in the light source and on the absorption and reflectance characteristics of the subject.

Quality

The hardness and softness of light is called lighting quality.

The size of the light source largely determines the lighting quality, the larger the source the softer the light.

Hard lighting can be very dramatic, giving a vibrant, electric atmosphere, but can easily overwhelm some subjects. Hard lighting works best with simple landscapes where shadows define shape and texture. Because of its high contrast, hard lighting forces one to make difficult exposures, often sacrificing highlight or shadow detail. Though with black and white negative film you can hold much detail in both highlights and shadows by using the Zone System.

Soft light is quiet and romantic. Early and late in the day it yields gentler contrast and more manageable highlights, providing little frustration in figuring exposures.

Chapter Four

Discussion of Equipment and Technique

A camera can be described as a light tight box with a glass eye at one end for looking and a piece of film at the other end for remembering. (Wignall: 1987: 82)

Cameras differ in two basic ways, format, (dimension of the image area on film) and viewing system (how the camera lets you look at a scene). Each of these different formats and viewing methods has its own advantages and drawbacks. (Wignall: 1987: 82)

Cameras and other photographic equipment are merely tools or instruments which we as photographers use to produce our photographs. (Chamberlain: 1987: 21)

The Versatile 35 mm SLR

The smallest and most popular of the serious formats is 35mm. Fast, convenient, lightweight, compact and very versatile. Lenses, from macro to wide-angle to super-telephoto can be interchanged by the flick of a wrist. (Wignall: 1987: 82)

These cameras feature through-the-lens (TTL) viewing and focusing, which allows the photographer to see exactly what the film sees and are of great help when composing with the help of motordrives, underwater housings and many others. The 35mm SLR can be adapted to almost any shooting situation or environment. (Wignall: 1987: 82)

There are many variations of the SLR. They range in format from cartridge to roll film. The 35mm SLR camera gives the ability to precisely frame up the picture and focus without the slowness of a view camera.

The most obvious disadvantage of the 35mm SLR is the small negative (24 mm x 36mm) but with professional films high-quality enlargements up to 16 in x 20 in or larger are possible.

Medium Format Cameras

The next step up the format ladder is the medium format cameras. Medium format cameras have several different image sizes including 6 x 7 cm, 6 x 4.5 cm and 6-x 6 cm, all achievable in 120 roll film.

The principal advantage of using a medium format camera is that its larger negative size yields higher quality than those from 35-mm negatives do. (Wignall: 1987: 83) The main disadvantages are higher cost for comparable equipment and weight, an important consideration for landscape photographers.

In addition to offering a greater image area, the medium format SLR cameras also offer much of the same flexibility as 35 mm's, including lens interchangeability. Interchangeable camera backs allow a change of film types in mid-roll, allowing one to photograph the same subject in both black and white and colour. (Wignall: 1987; 83)

The camera is easy to use over a wide range of viewpoints and offers great flexibility.



The View Camera

View cameras are the classic tools for scenic photographs. In several ways they are without peer in the camera world - their adjustments, swings, tilts and rising and falling fronts allow you to rearrange nature and take pictures that would be impossible to make by any other means. (Caulfield: 1987: 17)

The most common formats are the 4 x 5 inch and 8 x10 inch view cameras. Film are bought in sheets and loaded in the dark into individual holders. Such large negatives provide an unparalleled clarity and richness of detail - but at a considerable cost in inconvenience. (Wignall: 1987: 84)

A view camera basically consists of a front standard and a rear standard that are joined together by a folding bellows on a bed. The difference between monorail or field cameras is in the type of bed or track they travel on. Monorail cameras travel on a metal tubular arrangement while those that use a rectangular wooden frame track are called flatbed cameras. (Wignall: 1987: 84)

View cameras are extremely versatile because they have interchangeable lenses, backs and different kinds of bellows to go with wide-angle or close-up lenses. But the view camera most unique feature must be its camera movements. By moving the back and front standards you are able to do a range of movements including swing, shift, tilt, rise and fall which permits the lens and film backs to move in relation to each other. These movements permit very precise control over image distortion and perspective. (Chamberlain: 1987: 37)

Important to remember is the Scheimpflug principal, which creates extra depth of field. Using a little of each of front and back swings. The back is swung just enough to start to improve depth of field, without noticeable shape distortion. Then the front is swung just enough to extend depth of field to the whole floor at your chosen aperture, without noticeable cut-off due to poor coverage. The subject plane, the film plane and the lens plane all meet at an imaginary position below the camera. (Langford: 1986: 108)

View cameras can almost be used for any photographic task. View cameras are, in effect, extremely high precision optical benches and can therefore be easily damaged and portability may become difficult. But most manufactures produce large alinent cases, which provides ideal travelling and rough handling. (Chamberlain: 1987: 39 - 40)

Tripods

The best solution against unwanted camera movement or “ shake “ that is responsible for an unsharp picture is a sturdy tripod.

Tripods are an essential part of landscape photography. By providing total stability at any shutter speed tripods allow one to take full advantage of different shutter speeds or aperture combinations. Assuring complete control over sharpness and depth of field.

The size and type of tripod chosen will depend on what format is worked in. What type of environments are visited and how much you are willing to carry into the field. Because portability is always a consideration when choosing a tripod usually involves a compromise between heft and mobility. (Wignall: 1987: 88)

Most tripods consist of these elements, three telescoping legs, a centre post, and a tilt head. Next to stability, versatility is the most important feature to look for in a tripod.

Choose a tripod that works well on uneven terrain and remember a tripod is not an accessory but a necessity for a landscape photographer.

Lenses

“ The important thing is to pick lenses that match your vision of the world “ (Wignall: 1987: 90)

This statement by Jeff Wignall basically concludes your thoughts as to what lens to choose. Many photographers use a normal lens to capture their surroundings. A normal lens approximates the human view of the world; it reproduces the sizes and shapes of objects and the spaces between them much as we expect them to be. (Wignall: 1987; 90)

But there are also different focal lengths in which you can interpret reality magically.

The most significant way that one lens differs from another is in focal length. Focal length determines the magnification and the angle of view of a lens.

“ A short focal length lens sees more but magnifies less, and a long focal length lens sees less but magnifies more “. (Wignall: 1987: 90)

The Standard Lens

Provides a very similar field of view to that of the human eye. (About 50 mm on the 35 mm format) Little or no distortion and a natural perspective make it an ideal choice for all general photography.

The 55-mm lens is probably one of the most versatile lenses. They are relatively easy to design and manufacture and are therefore usually of very high optical quality. Most are quite fast too and maximum aperture ranges from F. 1.7. - F.1.8. . Such wide apertures not only make it possible to take pictures in low light situations, they also provide a much brighter image in the viewfinder. (Chamberlain: 1987: 110)

The standard lens can be used in different types of photography, from portraiture to landscapes. It is ideal for urban landscape work due to its natural perspective and freedom from distortion.

Wide-Angle Lenses

“ Wide-angle lenses offer just what their name implies - an expanded view of the world. “
(Chamberlain: 1987: 91)

Wide-angle lenses have a shorter focal length and a wider angle of view than your standard lens. Used constructively, such lenses are extremely useful tools, which may enable you to interpret a scene somewhat differently than always. Wide-angle lenses are a little more difficult to design and manufacture. Maximum aperture of such lenses is therefore frequently smaller than those lenses of “ standard “ focal lengths. They are also often very expensive.
(Chamberlain: 1987: 113)

Wide-angle lenses provide great depth of field, due to their short focal length. Their maximum aperture ranges from F.2. - F.1.4. , And as mentioned before, cost a considerable amount of money.

From a creative standpoint, wide-angle lenses offer several choices of composition. One might want a foreground object to loom large in comparison with something in the background, or to create some distance between your objects. With ultra-wide angles, distortion can enter the realm of surrealism- tall buildings become rockets and flowers caricatures of themselves.
(Wignall: 1987: 91)

Zoom Lenses

A zoom lens is rather like having a whole range of focal lengths available, all incorporated into a single lens. This makes it possible to frame and compose a picture very precisely from any chosen viewpoint.

(Chamberlain: 1987: 124)

Manufacturing a zoom lens however is a fairly complex job. Most zoom lenses incorporate a great many separate lens elements in their design. Depending on the lens type, you alter the focal length either by turning a collar or by pushing and pulling it along the length of the lens barrel. They range from 80 - 200, 70 - 210 , 35 - 105 , and 28 - 200 mm . Zoom lenses are made for nearly all 35 mm and medium format cameras . (Wignall : 1987 : 93)

Zoom lenses do have some disadvantages also . They are usually somewhat larger and heavier and you may more often need to use a tripod to avoid camera shake . Even though zoom lenses are capable of producing very high quality results , they still cannot match fixed-focal-length lenses when used at a maximum or minimum aperture . (Chamberlain : 1987 : 125)

Telephoto Lenses

Telephoto lenses see only a sliver of the world around them . Rather than expand space , telephotos compress the apparent distance between objects . (Wignall : 1987 : 92)

Any telephoto lens requires a certain amount of care in its use if you are to obtain sharp results . It is important however to choose your lenses carefully . One does not know what you might stumble upon on a journey through the scenes of our world .



Film

Today there are many films available to the landscape photographer .

These films vary in brand name and ISO numbers (International Standards Organisations) , films come from all over the world , for example , Kodak (American) , Ilford (England) , Agfa (Germany) and Fuji (Japan) . (Rau : 1994 : 13)

Although there are many films available from different manufactures , all film types resemble one another in basic construction and share many attributes .

Slow films are usually sharper than fast films . Fast films usually have more grain . Then there is also a higher contrast between slow black and white films and fast black and white films . Both colour and black and white films can be “ pushed “ in processing for higher film speeds than their ISO ratings . This creates an increase in grain and contrast . (Caulfield : 1987 : 152)

It is wise to experiment with different films until decided which films match a certain style and favour . It is maybe better to first decide whether one wants to record the world in black and white or colour . Both black and white and colour can create quite different moods . Seeing pictures in black and white is somewhat different from seeing them in colour . (Caulfield : 1987 : 152)

How to choose from all the different films available on the market can get tricky . But it is important , when one choose film to keep in mind the nature of the subject matter you will most often be shooting .

For example ; NPS 160 FUJI Colour for portrait , wedding , industrial and architectural photography .

NPL 160 FUJI Colour for studio portraits and copy work .

FUJI CRHOME PROVIA 100 for outdoor scenery , fashion and sports or product shots .

FUJI CHROME VELVIA for landscape photography and advertising photography .

Filters

“ Filters are the fine-tune adjusters of photography “ (Wignall : 1987 : 98)

Filters can be used to perfect the colour balance of a scene , correct contrast or brightness , or just to have fun by changing colour tones .

Most importantly , in both black and white and colour photography , filters allow you to match realities of a scene to the limitations of your film . (Wignall : 1987 : 98) Most photographers use skylight or ultra violet (UV) filters on their camera lenses all the time . They also protect the front element of the lens from dirt and scratches .

Filters for Colour Film

Filters can be used for two basic reasons in landscape photography . The first is to make pictures resemble the scene being photographed as nearly as possible . The second is to use filters for creative purposes - to make the scene look unusual or change its natural appearance . (Caulfield : 1987 : 156)

Filters for Black and White Film

Filters for black and white film function the same way they do with colour . They absorb the wavelength of colour that are different from their own hues . (Caulfield : 1987 : 157)

The reason for using filters in black and white is to translate colour contrast into tonal contrast .

Another reason can be to darken skies . Black and white films are more sensitive to blue and ultraviolet wavelengths than others , so a yellow filter that absorbs blue makes skies look more natural and closer to what we see than photographing the same sky without a filter . (Caulfield : 1987 : 157)

Polarising Filters

Polarising filters can be used for both black and white and colour film . Polarizers darken skies and remove light reflections from foliage . Polarizers can also be used to eliminate reflections on water surfaces . A polarizer cuts out reflections and shows colour with increased saturation when the subject is illuminated with front light .

To use a polarizer one views through the filter and rotates it until the desired effect is achieved . (Caulfield : 1987 : 156) Grasses grow in their greenness and red roses redden . Remember that the amount of colour saturation you achieve depends on how many polarised light you eliminate . (Wignall : 1987 : 2)

Chapter Five

Masters Past and Present

There are many photographers , past and present , and each had their own unique style . Not one of them even had the same angle of view .

Therefore it is necessary to get a broad perspective of these landscape photographers . Each one can teach something else . For example ; Ansel Adams shows how to concentrate on vast areas of the landscape , by using the large format camera . Freeman Patterson , on the other hand , tends to concentrate on smaller pieces of the landscape in colour . (Rau : 1992 : 27)

In the following chapter a discussion of four great photographers is provided .



Ansel Adams

Alfred Stieglitz once wrote to Ansel Adams saying , “ It is good for me to know that there is Ansel Adams loose somewhere in this world of ours . “ (Stillman : 1990 : 5)

Alfred Stieglitz saw Adams genius early on and inspired him greatly .

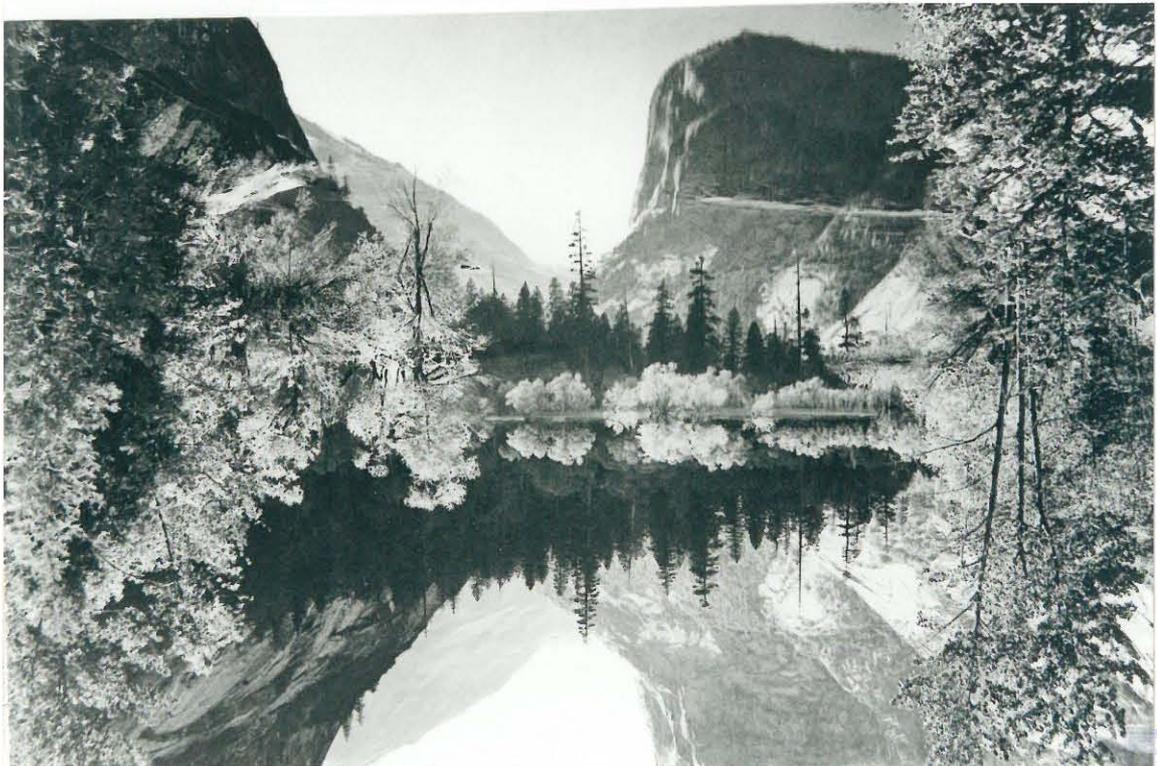
For Ansel Adams photography is a way of telling what you feel about what you see . Ansel Adams was a passionate human being . It is known widely how he cares about people , wilderness , conservation , music , and teaching .

Ansel’s systematic approach to photography and his practice of testing the materials he worked with made him without peer . (Schaefer : 1992 : 1X) Also , he shared what he learned through formal teaching , workshops and books . Adams felt that the true task of the photographer was first to conceptualise , then to capture and finally to reproduce as nearly as possible the emotional as well as the objective realities . (Botha : 1995 : 57) He found it impossible to separate the art of photography from its science . Developing and printing were as important as choice of subject and exposure .

“ A great photograph is one that fully expresses what one feels , in the deepest sense , about what is being photographed , and is , thereby , a true manifestation of what one feels about life in its entirety . “ Ansel Adams . (Schaefer : 1992 : 3)

Figure 5.1.

Ansel Adams



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Figure 5.2.

Ansel Adams



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Figure 5.3.

Ansel Adams



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Figure 5.4.

Ansel Adams



Freeman Patterson

Freeman Paterson was born at Long Reach , New Brunswick . His interest in photography began in childhood and has since grown steadily .

His photographs have been published in numerous books , magazines , journals and advertisements , and have been exhibited around the world . Many of his photographs were selected for the National Film Board's three award winning books , " Canada , A Year of the Land " and " Between Friends / Entre Amis " . (Patterson : 1989 : 168) He is the author of other acclaimed books , for example ; " Photography for the Joy of It " and " Portrait of Earth " , these are only a few mentioned .

Patterson also travels and lecture frequently in Canada , United States and aboard . He has a deep love for nature which is shown through his writing and photographs .

Patterson believes that we should sometimes forget a strictly realistic approach , and use our cameras to portray intangible qualities - the freedom of a bird in flight or the gentleness of an early morning mist . He feels strongly about the landscape photographers opportunity , to heighten public awareness and concern for the crisis the environment exist in .

" Through our images of natural things , our slide shows , print exhibitions , and talks about nature and environmental photography , we can contribute to the understanding , appreciation , and caring for natural habitats and stimulate positive action to preserve them . " (Patterson : 1989 : 7 - 8)

Figure 5.5.

Freeman Patterson



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Figure 5.6.

Freeman Patterson



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Figure 5.7.

Freeman Patterson



Figure 5.8.

Freeman Patterson



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Sonja Bullaty

The varying effects of climate , weather , and season plays a mayor part in establishing the mood in Sonja Bullaty 's photographs .

Bullaty is a self-taught experienced photographer who said that photography can be more than a profession , that it is a way of life . (Amphoto : 1984 : 50) She uses a 35 mm single lens reflex camera and uses any lens from an extra wide angle to a zoom , depending on the requirements of the picture . She usually , (though not always) goes without a tripod , works primarily in colour and thinks of colour and black and white as different complementary means of expression . She does not always use filters but occasionally she will use a polarising filter or an ultra violet filter when working in the mountains .

The Seasons - are a subject of which she never tires . Summer is the most difficult for her to photograph , while winter is her favourite . She tries to approach each subject with an open mind . Like Yuan Li she prefers photographing the landscape early morning and just before and after sunset .

Figure 5.9.

Sonja Bullaty



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Figure 5.10.

Sonja Bullaty



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Figure 5.11.

Sonja Bullaty



Figure 5.12.

Sonja Bullaty



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Yuan Li

Yuan Li 's photographs are starkly simple ones and often convey a sense of mankind's smallness and insignificance in the face of nature . He likes to use manmade structures in his photographs but use them in contrast with rolling hills and fields seen under a raking light .

Most of his work is done with his 35 mm camera , usually with a zoom lens . He favours Kodachrome 64 for its warmth . He does not use filters but often uses a tripod to compose his pictures more carefully . He prefers late afternoons or early morning light because it provides better contrast and warmer tones . On occasion an overcast sky or storm will help him create a more dramatic image .

Often he emphasises the abstract element of the landscape . He eliminates the horizon lines and concentrate on the landscape below it . However , he does not insist that this approach is always the right one - even for himself .

“ Any creative process would cease to be creative if it became a routine repetition of fixed steps . “ Yuan Li .

Figure 5.13.

Yuan Li



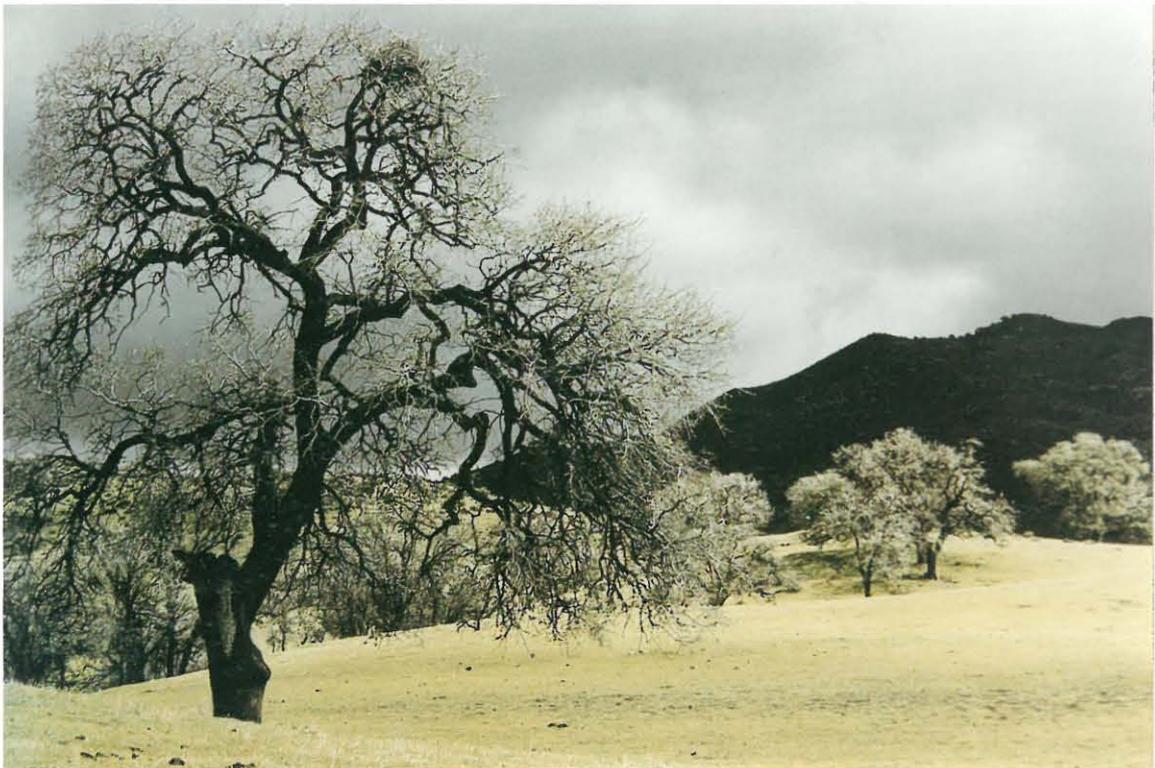
Figure 5.14.

Yuan Li



Figure 5.15.

Yuan Li



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Figure 5.16.

Yuan Li



Chapter Six

The Authors Portfolio of Photographs

At this stage the portfolio of photographs consists of a variety of different styles and viewpoints . I am still in the process of creating my own sense and style of landscape photography .

The following photographs all came through my viewfinder . It was , as with each one , a new experience . Seeing them , composing them , and finally printing them .

Figure 6.1.

This black and white scene was taken near Port Edward at the South Coast . The sun was slowly setting when clouds drifted in front of the sun , making it quite dramatic . The sea was pulling water back and created a strange mystical moving effect .

Sitting on my knees I got the big belly rock in the foreground and the dark sky to complement it further .

It was taken on the authors Pentax Z 1 with Ilford XP 2

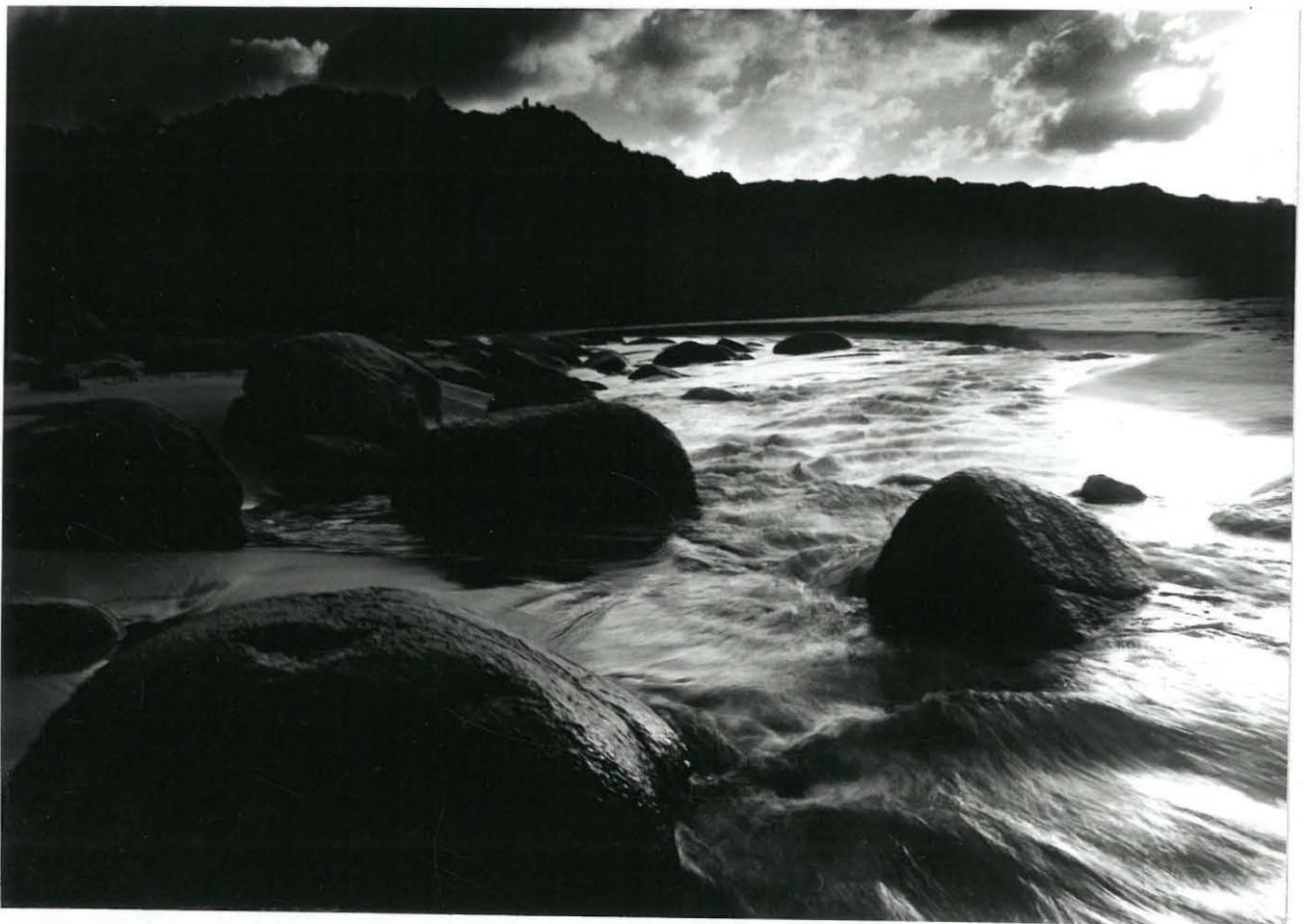


Figure 6.2.

This photograph was taken with the Mamiya 6 x 7 on an overcast day on the outskirts of Bloemfontein .

Sawing this dam and the blue sky, all the colours created a layer effect . It seems like the colours are just in the right place .

Film used ; Fuji Colour NPS 160 .



Figure 6.3.

On our farm there are many of prikley pears near the railroad . Just as the sun was setting , the lines of the railroad and the prikley pears made a unusual graphic scene .

Also taken on the authors Pentax Z 1 , Fuji colour 100 ISO .



Figure 6.4.

This long deserted cemetery with handmade gravestones longed to be photographed . Taken on our farm in the Freestate .

Used Fuji Colour film , 100 ISO with my Pentax Z 1 and tripod .



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Figure 6.5.

This landscape was taken at the Vaalriver in the Freestate . The sun was setting behind the trees . The tracks in the shallow water made a intresting foreground to lead one into the rest of the scene .

The author used Agfa 200 ISO with her Pentax Z 1 .

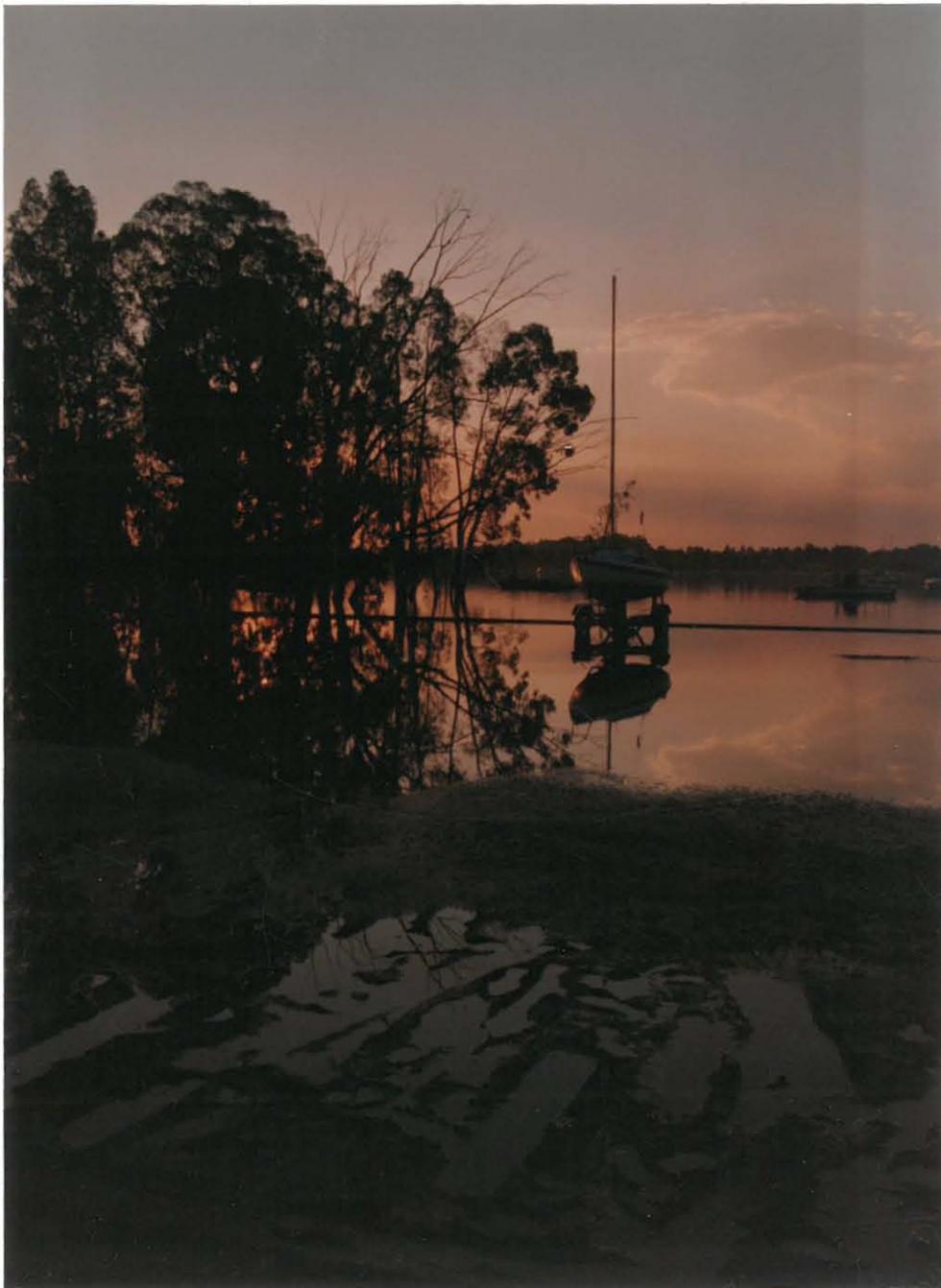


Figure 6.6. and 6.7.

The Vaalriver was really full , over flooding its normal banks . The sun was still behind the clouds after a little drizzle that afternoon . The clouds were unbelievable .

The giant tree in the water with the swing still attached to it made an unforgettable scene through my viewfinder .

The other one looked more dramatic with the dark , thin trees and the looming sky .

On both occasions I used Ilford XP 2 with a polarizer to create a more dramatic sky .

I used my Pentax Z 1 .



Figure 6.7.

I used Ilford FP 4 Plus with my Pentax Z 1.



Figure 6.8.

In a old , long forgotten hotel in the Freestate in a small town called Deneysville I took this photograph . The landscape through the broken out windows was excellent . Each window shows a different part of the landscape making it really successful .

Ilford XP 2 , Pentax Z 1 .



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Figure 6.9.

This picture was taken near Glen outside Bloemfontein . The thorn bush made an unusual introduction for the scene, leading one into the rest of the photograph .

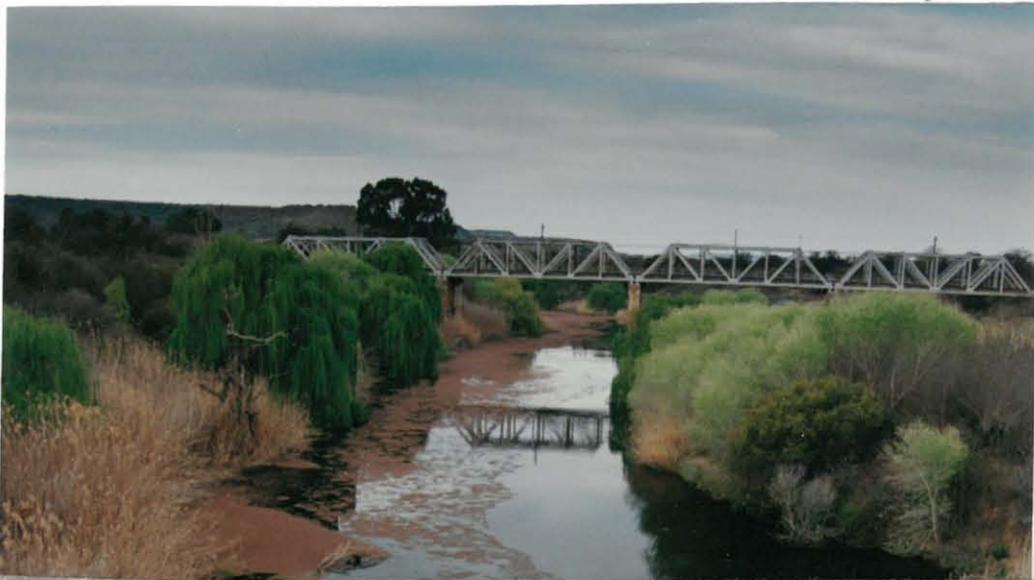
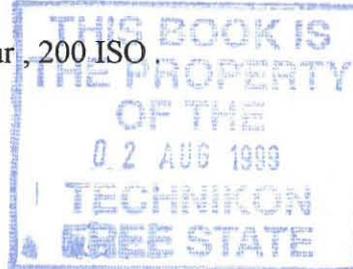
I used my Pentax Z 1 with Fuji Colour , 200 ISO .



Figure 6.10.

This photograph was taken at the beginning of Spring outside Bloemfontein . The trees were getting green again and the scene really looked pleasing through the viewfinder . The reflection in the water rounds the whole picture of quite well .

I used my Pentax Z 1 with Fuji Colour , 200 ISO .



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Figure 6.11.

The sun was setting with these long stretched out clouds . The tree and telephone wire added some graphic lines to the image . Without it , the photograph would have been unsuccessful .

Used Ilford XP 2 with the Pentax Z 1 .



Figure 6.12.

This deserted building just had the right surroundings to make it a perfect image . With the sun casting its rays on it , the building took on a sad , deserted feeling .

I used my pentax Z 1 with Fuji Colour Film ; 400 ISO .



Conclusion

To photograph landscapes one needs to apply certain rules . By doing this composition improves and every aspect of a scene just seems to fall into place . The light seems to fit the composition perfectly and your once unsure eye, drinks in the spectacular image formed by these basic rules .

Learning from others is also important . These experienced landscape photographers teach us different aspects and lead the way for greater photographers and photographs .

Look through your viewfinder .
See a new world unfolding ...

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