

PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES & EFFECTS

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EDUCATION



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PREFACE

The word photography means literally 'light writing' or 'drawing'. It is derived from the Greek photos (light) and graphos (to write, draw, record or note).

When photography started in the 19th century, it involved glass plates and huge tripods, where subjects had to remain dead still (sometimes for minutes) so the light could be captured to produce an acceptable photograph.

As time passed, photographic processes and equipment became increasingly sophisticated and available to more people. The process of capturing an image involved the use of photo sensitive chemicals, for most of this time. More recently, this has been widely, but by no means completely, superseded by capturing images digitally.

Digital photography has many advantages over film, but there are still many things that may be done better with film, than with digital. A good photographer recognises the strengths and weaknesses of both film and digital image capture, and may choose to use one or both.

In today's world, most people take photographs; but only some people create good photographic images.

It takes a certain amount of skill, together with imagination, attitude and perhaps even luck, to create a truly outstanding photographic image.

This book is intended to help you understand and develop a unique and successful approach to photography; in effect to help create a "style of your own".

CHAPTER 1 STYLE AND CREATIVITY

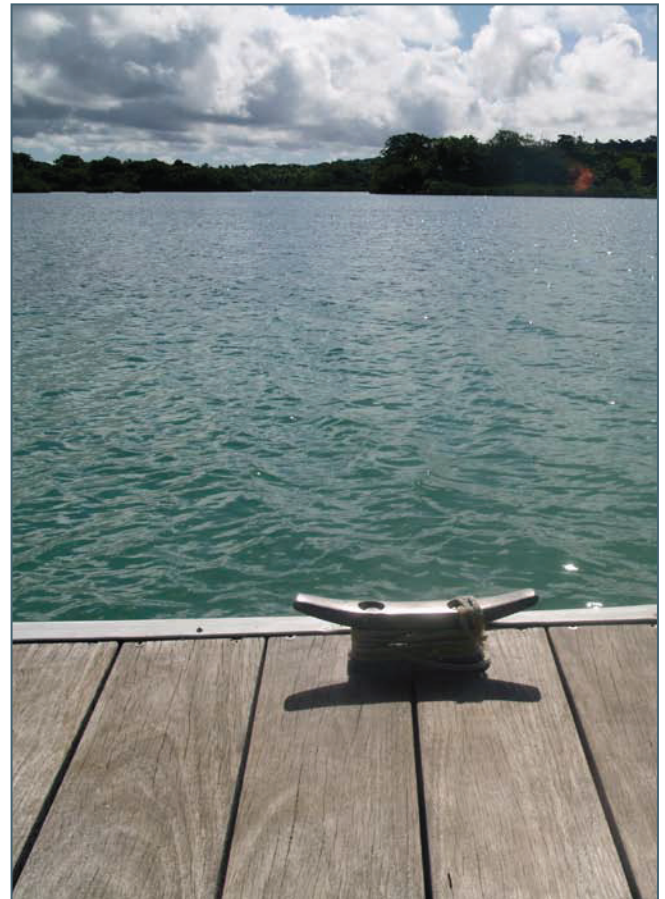
Photography is a creative activity – by many it is considered an art. To produce great photographs, a photographer needs an artistic eye; an ability to see things differently to others, to see artistic potential in common things. All great photos, irrelevant of the subject, will have artistic merit. A good photographer however will also understand when it is appropriate to use artistic license, and to what extent to use it, and when it is not needed or appropriate.

Good photography is not accidental. Good photographs are created by a person with the ability to identify the photographic potential of a situation, and use that potential (plus the tools at their disposal), to create an outstanding image. It could be likened to the way a sculptor sees the possibility of a sculpture in a piece of stone, and uses the tools available (hammer and chisel), to create a final piece of artwork.

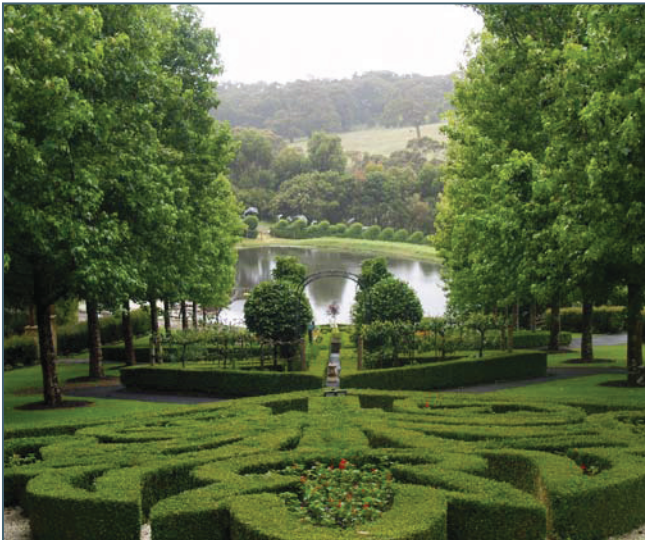
Great photographers don't develop their art or craft overnight though; it takes time to develop a personal style. Initially photographers must follow a path that begins with learning the technical skills required to use a camera. As they become more experienced with the technicalities, they develop an awareness of how an image capture system (all the equipment that can be used in the photographic process) responds in different ways to light. Their ability (with time), sharpens even further and they begin to identify things and situations that will make great photographs - and to imagine the finished result.

Photographic 'style' can vary greatly from one photographer to another. Style is how something is interpreted by the photographer i.e. in the way they create an image, whether through the use of

the camera, lenses, filters, lighting, composition etc., or through techniques for processing the image after it has been taken.



This photo is composed to create a sense of distance. The camera was held low, close to the jetty to exaggerate it's closeness. The sky and strip of land in the distance, is given less space in the image than the water, making it seem further away.



Using trees or buildings as leading lines helps draw the viewer eye into the scene.

ASPECTS OF STYLE

Style is affected by the way in which the photographer:

- Chooses what components to include, and what not to include in the image
- Organises the components in the image (which can be affected by the angle from which they are photographed: the distance, what parts are in sharp focus and what are not, what components are lit more brightly than others, etc)
- Uses colour
- Uses light
- Captures or hints at movement (or lack of movement)
- Implies or invokes emotions
- Relates to the subject
- Presents the work.

The following tips are just some ways you can become more creative, develop your imagination and broaden your thinking:

- Study the work of others in books, newspapers, magazines, social media, web sites, galleries, museums, advertising materials etc.
- Don't try to be too analytical (feeling inspired by a photo is more important than being able to classify it into a category)
- Be sensitive and open to having an emotional reaction to a photo (do not suppress your emotions), and recognise the positive or negative emotions when they emerge
- Try imitating (reproducing) your own versions of images created by other photographers. Many artists are famously known to be influenced by other artists who came before them - but over time, their own unique styles evolved beyond those who influenced them
- Consider the way your eye moves through the image and why some images keep your attention longer than others
- Consider blur, light intensity (dark or shade), etc.
- Take risks by thinking outside the box
- Ask yourself what you normally do, and then try to find a way to do it differently.

What are the Different Styles?

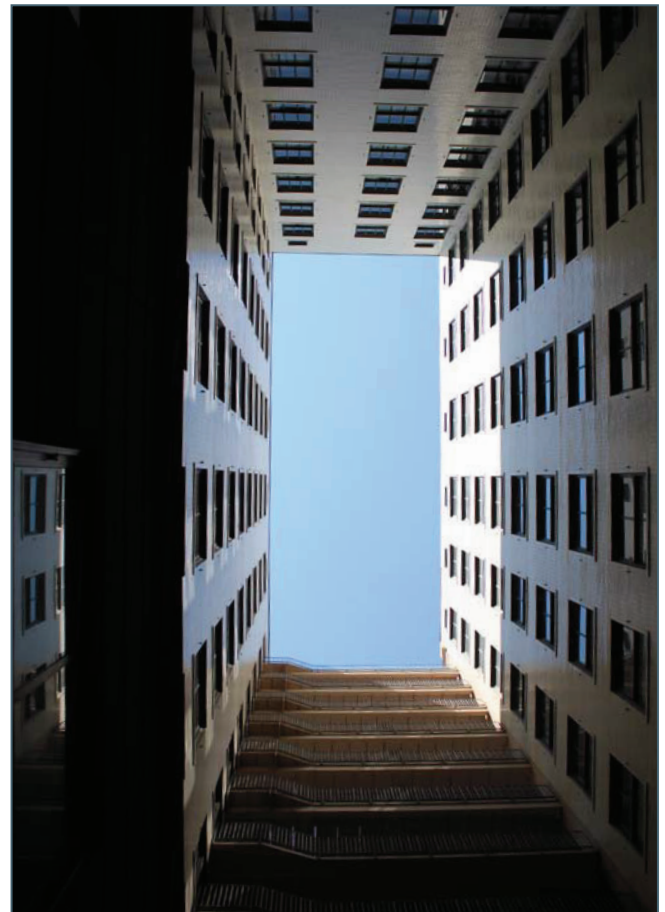
- Some styles are easier to describe in words than others (abstract, photojournalistic, 70's retro).

Categories of Photos according to Jacobs:

- Pictorial/Postcard/Scenic
- Artistic Scenic
- Casual Snapshot
- Journalistic
 - ◆ story telling
 - ◆ news
 - ◆ photo essay
 - ◆ in depth documentary
- Portrait
 - ◆ informal or candid
 - ◆ formal or studio
 - ◆ high key lighting
 - ◆ reflected lighting
 - ◆ environmental
- Abstract Designs/Geometric Forms
- Romantic/Soft Focus/Painterly
- Advertising
- Symbolic/Moody/Story Based

- Bizarre/Intentional/Accidental
- Multi Image
 - ◆ in camera
 - ◆ sandwiching
 - ◆ during printing
- Experimental/Individual Approaches.

(Reference: Developing Your Own Photographic Style, by Jacobs, publisher: Amphoto, 1986)



Look for different angles to take photos from. Often shooting something from an unexpected angle, as has been done here, can create an image that is interesting simply because it isn't what people normally look at.

What is an Appropriate Style?

Appropriate style chosen to meet the subject and situation is important.

- Some photography is more realistic, depicting what you would expect to see in real life.
- Other photography can be less realistic (perhaps more artistic), sometimes to the point that one needs to look and think more closely before they can properly interpret what they are looking at.
- Photography can be traditional or avant-garde, illustrative, abstract or perhaps something else.

Some photographers tend to develop a certain style, in the same way that a painter or other artist develops a style. A career (or business) may be built upon a reputation for creating a certain style of photograph.



Monotone or Black and white can suggest an old world style to a photograph.



Illustrative photography is all about capturing an image that clearly illustrates something. Here the parts of a passionfruit flower are what are being illustrated.

Throughout a long career, the style of a photographer may well evolve and change though. Consider wedding photography, as an example, to see how styles can vary. The wedding photography market is very busy and competitive - in order to be different a number of photographers push the limits of traditional wedding photography. They may take a small but portable strobe setup into the church or venue at which the ceremony is being held, and use that where they can. They may plan to take the couple to a pre-planned location after the ceremony for 2 hours or so, and take the shots like a commercial shoot, with all the series of shots planned ahead of time.