

PREFACE

Photography has become pervasive in our society. Each of us sees hundreds, if not thousands, of images every day. The vast majority of images are those taken for personal enjoyment. These images either capture the moment or provide a form of self-expression. Many other images are used to lubricate the wheels of commerce. They appear in ads and on magazine covers and packages. Other images in magazines and newspapers are used to convey news or to make an editorial point. No matter what purpose images are put to, it is the images themselves that are transcendent. The way they have been captured is secondary. However, changes in technology can open new opportunities and approaches that change the way images look. For example, the introduction of the 35mm Leica back in the 1930s made it easier to capture fast moving action and images became more spontaneous and fluid, a far cry from the more formally posed images required by much larger and more awkward cameras.



This book is dedicated to Ansel Adams who had the kindness to introduce a young editor to the exciting world of photography.

The vast majority of the images you see are still captured with traditional cameras and film. However, this is changing rapidly as digital cameras are accepted in more and more areas of photography. Already they have made major inroads into catalog photography and photojournalism. They are now well on their way to becoming a major factor in photography for self-expression. In time, they are destined to dominate photography.

Although photographic technology has changed dramatically since its invention in 1840, the principles of good images have remained fairly constant. The images taken in 1840 by Henry Fox Talbot and Daguarre are as well composed and interesting as any images taken with the most modern equipment. However, although technology doesn't make good images any easier

to capture, it has made profound changes in others areas of photography. Digital photography in particular has made it possible to capture an image and then instantly distribute it around the world. Digital photography has also closed the darkroom and opened up an entirely new way to edit and present images. A digital camera, a notebook computer, and a high-speed Internet connection makes each of us a node on an ever-expanding network of photographers and viewers.

In this on-line book we explore photography in a very traditional way, but the emphasis is on modern technology from digital cameras, to digital darkrooms, to on-line publishing and sharing of images.

This text provides an introduction to all aspects of the emerging world of digital photography. Starting with the camera and image capture, it then goes on to discuss image storage, transfer, editing, printing, and distribution. As you follow the path through the book you'll learn much about hardware, software, and procedures.

In many ways teaching digital photography is much like teaching traditional photography. But this is true only up to a point. In traditional courses the end result is usually a print and the darkroom experience of creating it. In digital photography courses, a print is only one of many possible applications of a captured image. In many ways it's the least exciting aspect to students who are more oriented to the Internet and the possibilities it opens up to displaying and sharing images world-wide. It's this community aspect of digital photography that draws many students into courses they might not otherwise have taken.

As a teacher, the digital approach also makes it easier to demonstrate techniques and procedures on a one-to-one basis. A student who can preview results immediately can grasp ideas such as exposure compensation much easier and faster than a student who works in traditional media. It's this immediate feedback that shows students how the principles they are learning apply in situations of all kinds.