

HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL

ADVANCED PHOTOGRAPHY III

Course Number: 0365-0A1 Time/Date: Mon 5/6, Wed/Fri 6
Room Number: Feldman-Horn 106
Instructor: Kevin O'Malley

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No art is truly teachable in its essence. All the knowledge in the world of its techniques can provide in itself no more than imitations or replicas of previous art. What is irreplaceable in any object of art is never, in the final analysis, its technique or craft, but the personality of the artist, the expression of his or her unique and individual feeling.

John Fowles
The Tree

As an artist progresses beyond the novice stage, he or she will become impatient with merely adding new technical skills or acquiring new technology. For example, dancers stop worrying about selecting just the right leotard or ballet shoe and begin to concentrate on the strengths -- and limitations -- of their bodies. Actors discover a range of character. Writers stop writing about what they do not know. Singers begin to hear their own "voice" and will invariably want to push it to new levels.

And photographers begin to see the light, too. Or to be more precise, they begin to see light. As they become more sensitive to this elusive vehicle of their expression, the successful young photographer will become more selective of what that light is falling on. Questions of "what am I photographing?" and "why am I doing it?" will begin to take precedence over the simpler "how can I do that?"

The Advanced Photo III student should have enough technical skills at this point to be able to create a clear and perceivable image. What they will wrestle with this year is making images which will communicate their own feelings about the world around them (sometimes those feelings are less than clear and perceivable -- even in the older artist). And the student will try to communicate in such a way that their audiences will feel and understand what is being expressed in a similar manner to how it was first perceived by the photographer. This is no small feat. But through challenging assignments, lectures, field trips and much hard work in the studio, it will be our goal for this year.

Assignments

The year will be broken up into 7 sections: September, October, November, December/January, February, March, and April/May. Students should expect an assigned project from the instructor at the beginning of each section. These assignments will emphasize work that can be done within the confines of class time (for example, the large format cameras, studio lighting, digital imaging, images from field trips, etc.). Students should use the first week of an assignment for research and shooting, the second week for processing and printing, and subsequent weeks for final printing, mounting, exhibition and critique.

The most important aspect of this class will come in the assignments that each student designs for themselves. In those same seven sections, students will be able to find their own “individual and unique feeling” with their own cameras by generating their own projects. Some students might elect to design seven projects. Some might go with seventeen. Someone just might find a single topic so engrossing that a September to May relationship results – so to speak. To reiterate: these will be the most important projects.

Students can also expect a continuing series of in-class exercises dealing with the never-ending intricacies of Adobe Photoshop.

Course Calendar

September	Introduction -- Project #1 – <i>God’s Eyes</i> Studio Project – <i>(tr)IPOD -- Pictures in Silhouette</i> Studio -- Studio lighting, Polaroids, Processing/Printing Large Format Film, Scanning Negatives Lecture: “Criticizing Photographs” Exhibition: Summer Work Show
October	Studio Project – <i>Isn’t it ... (beautiful, out-moded, ironic, etc)</i> Critique – Silhouettes Prepare for Exhibition -- Mounting a Photograph Lecture: “Why Photography and Why 1839?” Field trip – Getty Museum
November	Studio Project – <i>My Favorite Teacher</i> Lecture: “Henri Cartier Bresson” Field Trip -- Low tide, Paradise Cove, Malibu
Dec/Jan	Project -- <i>Preparing a Website Portfolio</i> Studio Project – <i>Photographing the Figure</i> Lecture – “Walker Evans – The Greatest Photographer ...Ever” Field Trip -- Los Angeles County Museum Field Trip – Huntington Museum

February	Project – <i>Slide Show</i> Lecture: “Eugene Atget: The Desire to Know” Field Trip – Armand Hammer Museum
March	Studio Project – <i>So You Wanna Be In Pictures...?</i> Lecture: “What are they really selling?” Critique – Slide Shows Lecture: “Introduction to Construction” Field Trip – Bergamont Station Galleries
April/May	Studio Project – <i>Color Added</i> Exhibition: Senior Show Lecture: “Robert Frank/Diane Arbus/Gary Winogrand”

Course Objectives

- to continue the students’ study of the history of photography and critical aesthetics in order to enhance their own studio work
- to challenge the students to explore their own sensibilities and sensitivities through a personal dialogue with the visual world
- to offer a forum for testing their work through public exhibition
- to help students become more critical and perceptive about the visual world around them and thus more involved in it
- to help the students become more independent in their pursuit of art