

SO WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY

Posted on 2018-04-03 2019-12-17 by spd_wp_admin

Dear Reader,

Since last I wrote here, I have had an extended weekend in the Yukon photographing the Northern Lights and the creamy daze of northern light. I also made a brief trip to England. This last weekend I finally responded to a friend's request to comment on his photographs. This last event re-emphasized my responsibility to be clear about some of the ideas I am exploring with my photography. Here are some thoughts on that subject.

- There are images technology records, but we do not perceive until we see the resulting image. For instance, photo 1 shows the results of a hand-held attempt at HDR. The light wasn't great, but I enjoy the ghosting of figures that occur over the 3 photos taken in quick succession.
- Space and form. There is space on its own, especially when ground and sky blur. These rare photos are both inviting and disquieting. Again there is an interest in perception. The viewer (ok me) tries to add a horizon that is not there. This past winter I had a couple of number 5s in this vein.
The idea of form is manifest in two ways. There is the form of land and line that define space. There is also the way human constructs interrupt space with shapes both smooth and jagged. I am slowly going through the process of organizing a slide collection that goes back decades in preparation for having them scanned. Initially I was a little disturbed to see that form and space have been a long running interest. Now, I am taking comfort in that same observation.
- Just so I don't get too high on an intellectual horse, there are also images I try to capture because I get a particular kick out of colour, light, and form converging in a way that is pleasing to my eye.
- As I have mentioned before, 3 or 4 years ago I started making individual books for friends and family. In recent months I have started thinking about collections in a much narrower light and engaging the viewer (admittedly a small number) by presenting a set of images which have small variation or have a very narrow focus.
- Time, Perception, Light, and Colour.

- Related to the above, I recently presented an “Exploration in White” on Instagram at ArtSpud80.

I of course reserve the right to contradict myself tomorrow.

Here are photos from a ramble around Oxford from early March. The first 5 photos are vertical and display correctly when you click on them.



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Cheers, Sean

2 Replies to “So What Are You Trying to Say”

1. **Keith** says:

2018-04-05 at 07:58 Edit

I saw this a few hours after you published (poor night's sleep) and was interested. However I didn't have a clue what to make of it. Then again, it was late at night in an odd frame of mind. I've come back several times, in between attempts to domesticate my wife's new cell phone. (Don't get me started about instructions, and videos!)

The recent photography book I've been reading was talking about form and content. I need to go back and re-read that part, and some other parts as well. A horizon is fundamental to our view of the world. We have land or sea, and the sky above. An intentionally tilted horizon in an image is one thing; the viewer is clear that it's intentional, and they can get the intended effect or not as they please. A subtly tilted horizon generally implies the photographer goofed.

Then we come to the lack of horizon, or one where the other visual clues overwhelm the horizon. I suspect part of the disquiet people have with such images is they don't know where to start. Their eye wanders over the image, looking for a starting point, a foundation. Without it, their choice is to abandon ship and move on to the next image, or dive in and try to get a grip on it which means confronting their own assumptions about the world and images of it.

Your point 3, exactly. I've been getting more interested in seeing and understanding the differences between what our eyes see, and what the camera sees. One purpose is to tweak the photo to better represent reality, or the opposite, to tweak the photo to represent a reality I saw in my head but isn't there in fact.

I've scrolled through your instagram images, both one at a time and in the grid. I find the concept of 'liking' a photo in such a grid to be problematic. Do I go through and like all the individual photos? Do I like the first one and hope the photographer (mainly you but some others are doing the same thing) understands I mean the overall image? Not having any formal artistic training I struggle with groups of images, trying to understand the images themselves, and the relationships between them.