INTRODUCTION

My fascination with photography began when I was around twelve years old. I can still remember my first camera: a hard plastic Kodak Brownie Hawkeye with a shiny dome-shaped flash attachment. The magical ability of capturing a brief moment in time on a piece of film was just one of many things that attracted me to photography as a kid. There was always a special sense of adventure in loading a fresh roll of film into my Brownie "in subdued light" then heading off into the unknown in pursuit of something new to photograph.

I have tried in hindsight to figure out exactly what it was about taking pictures that made me feel so absolutely enthralled about the photographic process back then. Besides the adventure aspect, it also seemed like such a *mature* thing for a young kid to be doing while the other kids were knocking around a wiffle ball in their backyards. I mean — this was *serious stuff!* Add this to the fact that I was a hyper kid who hated sitting around with nothing to do and it isn't too hard to rationalize why photography was such a great fit for me as a youngster.

A long time has gone by since those childhood days but I am every bit as fascinated by photography today as I was back then. I still get excited waiting to see an image I shot — whether it be on the LCD screen of my digital SLR, in a tray of paper developer, or after peeling apart a Polaroid instant print. The magic is still there, every bit as strong as it ever was.

Photography has been there for me through all of my life learning experiences: adolescence, high school, college, playing music in bands, my seven years living in New York City, my marriage, etc, etc. Had I not had my camera along with me for the ride throughout these experiences, they would not seem nearly as rich and meaningful as they seem to me now.

This book reflects my photographic experiences over the last twenty years — from when I began my career as a professional photographer in NYC in the mid-eighties to the present. I decided to publish this book because I feel that I have something worth sharing that will (hopefully) be enjoyable for the casual reader and informative for the aspiring photographer.

I decided to narrow the genres of photography I have been involved with down to three: fashion/glamour, still life/product and alternative processes. These are the ones that I have always been most passionate about. Weeding out the actual images I wanted to use was by far the most daunting task of all, no thanks at all to my haphazard system of organization. Over the years my images have been preserved in what can only be described as organized chaos, with a few slide pages stored here, some of my black and white prints stuffed into there, most of my negatives buried somewhere else, and organization nowhere!

Once I had the images picked out, I had to decide how to approach the actual manuscript—should I simply present the images and let them speak for themselves or include a section on "how I made this image, step-by-step," allowing the teacher in me to impart his knowledge?

I finally settled on a compromise of sorts: Let the images speak for themselves but add a brief dissertation for each one plus a separate "how-to" section addressing some of the more challenging techniques I used. How well this format works is at this point anyone's guess.

So here it is, *The Story Behind The Images*. I hope you enjoy this book as much as I have enjoyed producing it!

S.W. December, 2006

SX-70 MANIPULATIONS

**(More details of this process in the How-To Section.)*

I captured this scene while at an arts and crafts show in downtown Worthington, Ohio. Carrying my old folding SX-70 SLR around and keeping my eye out for shots like this was a very gratifying experience. I can still remember how much I looked forward to going home to begin manipulating this particular image as I watched it develop in my hand!

***Lemonade Stand*, 2004, Polaroid SX-70 Manipulation**

POLAROID IMAGE TRANSFERS

**(More details of this process in the How-To Section.)*

Creating Polaroid image transfers is one of my favorite alternative processes. One of my very first transfers is also one of my favorites because this structure no longer exists in this form in New York. Besides the muted colors and mottled texture, the repetition of red trimmed windows and the dilapidated dock in the foreground makes this an enduring, rustic image.

***Pier 17: Before*, 1999, Polaroid image transfer**

This scene is a good subject for a salt print. The old objects look even more rustic in this image.

***Untitled*, 2006, salt print**

CYANOTYPES

**(More details of this process in the How-To Section.)*

A tree lined creek I shot during a snowfall with a medium format Rolleiflex TLR and Tri-X film made a good subject for this cyanotype. The blue tone of the image adds to the chilly nature of this wintry scene.

***Untitled*, 2006, cyanotype**

*I was experimenting with textures in Photoshop and came up with this image. I added an image of dry grass to the image of the model then adjusted the layer blending and opacity until I achieved the desired effect within her face and torso. The pure black failed to render the added texture in the background. *(More details in the How-To Section.)*

***Untitled*, 2003, digital image**

*This evolved out of my obsession with photographing eggs and seeing the incredible works of Jerry Uelsmann and Don Carroll. I shot my hand holding an egg against a pure black background with my Nikon FE-2 and a macro lens. A single soft box from the left was used as the light source. Using the circle in the center of the focusing screen in my viewfinder as a reference point, I then shot the model from a distance against pure black with a 28mm lens, making her appear very small in the frame. In the foreground of the model I placed a piece of black felt up to where the top edge of the egg would meet her waistline. In the darkroom I carefully lined up both negatives and sandwiched them in the negative carrier. Even though one could put this image together in no time in Photoshop, this wasn't an option back then and I thought it came out pretty well for a composite made "the old fashioned way." *(More details in the How-To Section.)*

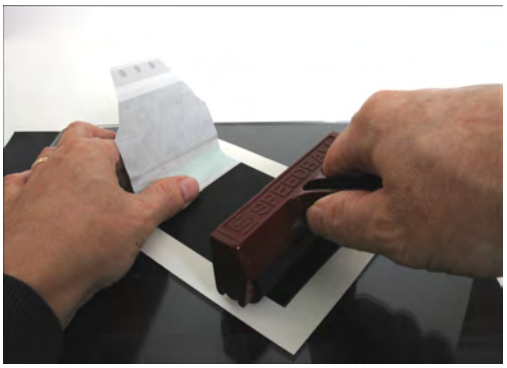
***Untitled*, 1989, gelatin silver print**

Please Note: These are general instructions. Film types, equipment, times and techniques may vary.

Fig. 8: Polaroid Slide Printer and Type 669 Film

Fig. 9: Materials Needed for Image Transfers

Step 1: Soak watercolor paper in distilled water for one minute at 100º F. Place watercolor paper on plexiglass and squeegee off excess water. Choose slide and expose Polaroid film using the slide printer. Pull film out of the printer, cut off the developing pod with scissors and peel apart paper negative from the print within 20 seconds.



Step 2: Place paper negative on watercolor paper and gently but firmly roll three to four passes across full length of negative using a brayer. Roll in one direction only.

Step 3: After two to three minutes, carefully remove the negative from the watercolor paper by starting at one corner and peeling off diagonally. Place the image transfer on paper towels and allow to dry overnight.

Emulsion Lifts

Equipment/Materials used: *Polaroid Slide Printer, 35mm. color slide, Fuji FP-100C instant film (or Polaroid Type 669 film), distilled water, 8x10 trays, print tongs, thermometer, sheet of clear acetate, tea kettle, clear acrylic medium (e.g. Modge Podge), paint brush.*

***Comments*:** Emulsion lifts differ from image transfers in that a fully developed instant print is used and the emulsion is transferred to a receptor of your choice. For this particular lift, I transferred the emulsion to a piece of wood that I had previously added texture to with a woodburning tool as well as crackle medium. Note that Fuji film has a thicker, less manipulative emulsion than Polaroid 669 and requires a thin layer of clear acrylic medium applied over it in order to keep it adhered to the surface.

Directions for creating Emulsion Lifts:

Step 1. Using a slide printer loaded with the slide of your choice, expose a sheet of Fuji or Polaroid film and allow it to develop a minute before peeling apart the print. Allow the print to dry overnight.

Step 2. Place the print in a tray of distilled water heated to 160º F. Keep the print submerged and agitate frequently while grasping a corner of it with print tongs until the emulsion begins to fall off.

Step 3. Once the emulsion is about to completely fall off, transfer the print to another tray of water at room temperature. Slide a sheet of clear acetate in under the print. Once the emulsion has completely fallen off, "flip-flop" it so that the image is backward.

Step 4: Holding the emulsion against the sheet of acetate, carefully flatten it out as completely as possible. Remove the emulsion/acetate from the water.

Step 5. Place a corner of the emulsion against the receptor and slowly peel away the acetate away from the emulsion, allowing the emulsion to remain on the receptor. If further manipulation is needed, trickle tap water over the emulsion while gently positioning it into place.

Step 6. Allow to dry completely. Note: If using Fuji film, brush a thin coat of clear acrylic medium over the emulsion before allowing to dry. If using Polaroid film, spray on a thin coat of clear lacquer after the lift is completely dry.

Salt Prints

Equipment/Materials used: *Digital Negative, Contact Printer, 500 watt Quartz Halogen lamp (or the sun), *Formulary™ Printing Out Paper/Salt Process Kit, watercolor paper, 2 hake brushes, developing trays, rubber gloves.*

Materials used for digital negative: *Adobe Photoshop, Epson Stylus Photo 1280 inkjet printer and 8 ½ X 11 inch inkjet transparency film.*

***Comments*:** Creating salt prints is a very "hands-on" process that can be quite addicting! My favorite aspect of the process, besides the rich brown tones rendered, is the fact that I use digital negatives (a modern process) to produce a final image that involves a process that is as old as photography itself! Exposure of salt prints requires ultraviolet light — therefore the prints are contact printed since enlargers can't be used as a light source. Digital negatives are the best medium to use for this process since the prints should be contact printed with large format negatives in order to yield a decent size print. (Since most folks don't own 8x10 view cameras.) Directions on how to make an 8x10 digital negative are given here.

Composite Imaging in Adobe Photoshop

Equipment/Materials used: *Nikon FE2 w/85mm Nikkor lens, DynaLite Studio Flash, Film: Kodak Plus-X ISO 125 Black and White and Fujicolor 100. Lighting Setup: Single head with softbox and natural daylight. Approx. exposure: 1/60 second at f8 /f5.6. Post production: Adobe Photoshop CS.*

Comments: This composite began as two separate images: (1) A black and white print of the model shot in the studio and (2) A color print of a bunch of tall grass. I scanned both prints into Photoshop and made sure that both layers were in RGB mode so that the grayscale image would support the blending of the color layer. With the grass layer above the model layer, I lowered its opacity in order to show the underlying image. Then I experimented with the blending mode and liked the way the "multiply" option made the model look as though she were made of the grass — the black background making it all the more convincing since the grass layer didn't show up in the negative space. I raised the opacity back up to 100 percent and moved the grass layer around until I was pleased with the placement. Finally, I flattened the image and "cleaned up" the areas that were distracting due to the water droplets present in the original model shot by using the clone stamp tool. I thought the final result was quite convincing.

Figure 4: Model Layer

Figure 5: Grass Layer

The composite was created in Photoshop by layering these two images and using the blending mode to render the texture.

Selective Coloring in Adobe Photoshop

Equipment/Materials used: *Nikon FM2 w/85mm Nikkor lens, Comet 48 Studio Flash, Film: Ektrachrome ISO 64, Lighting Setup: Single head w/bounced umbrella for model, Approx. exposure: 1/60 second at f5.6. Post production: Adobe Photoshop CS.*

***Comments*:** I had shot the original image in full color using 35 mm slide film. I wasn't pleased with the image so I decided to see what it would look like in grayscale with the lips, lipstick and fingernails in color. This was a fairly simple procedure to perform.

After scanning the slide into Photoshop at high resolution, I carefully selected the lips using the lasso tool. Then I copied and pasted them into a new document. I did the same with the lipstick and fingernails. Then I converted the original image to grayscale and back to RGB so it would support added color.

I opened up the file of the lips in color and reselected them using the wand on the white background then inverted the selection. I then copied the selected lips and pasted them into the grayscale image. Using the move tool, I carefully positioned the new red lips over the existing grayscale lips. I then repeated this process with the remaining components. The result was what I feel is a much improved image over the original.