



LENSWORK

Photography and the Creative Process • Articles • Interviews • Portfolios

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Article

Bill Jay

Interview

Terry Vine

Portfolios

Roger Freeman

Terry Vine

Huntington Witherill



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Photography and the Creative Process
Articles • Interviews • Portfolios

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In this issue

Article by
Bill Jay

Interview with
Terry Vine

Portfolios by
Roger Freeman
Terry Vine
Huntington Witherill

EndNotes by **Bill Jay**

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— ■ TABLE OF CONTENTS ■ —

7

Editor's Comments
The Democratic Art

Our editor announces an exciting innovation from *LensWork*, which will redefine the photographic book-publishing paradigm, and serve to bring the stunning images found in books into the open air for a better appreciation of this democratic art form.

13

Portfolio : Huntington Witherill
Orchestrating Icons

31

Bill Jay
Motivations, Values & Trivialities

An excerpt from the long out-of-print *Negative/Positive, A Philosophy of Photography*, Jay amazes with observations made in 1979 that hold true (somewhat sadly) in photography today. A 'headier' look at the serious side of Jay .

41

Portfolio : Roger Freeman
The Cruise Series

57

LensWork Interview with Terry Vine

A commercial photographer by trade, Terry Vine has developed a balance between his personal artwork and his commercial work, bridging the gap that often separates the two. In this *LensWork* interview, Vine discusses this balance using as an example the portfolio that follows the interview.

67

Portfolio : Terry Vine
La Vida Traditional

86

Bill Jay's EndNotes

To counterbalance the oh-so-serious stuff of art-making, this new column allows one of photography's wittiest and most insightful writers to just dish is up – potluck style ...



Orchestrating Icons
by Huntington Witherill

Published by LensWork Publishing, August 2000

*108 pgs, 84 tri-tone images
Foreword by Paul Caponigro
ISBN 1-88803-10-X
\$49.95 until 1/1/2001, thereafter \$59.95*

*Also available
Twenty-five images from the book
as LensWork Special Editions
11x14" image size
Initialed by the photographer
Limited to 500 each
Gelatin silver, selenium toned
\$99*

*All LensWork Special Editions images can be seen online at
www.lenswork.com*



EDITOR'S COMMENTS



The Democratic Art

In writing, certain words tend to become overused as they become fashionable – like the word *paradigm*. It's difficult to read an article these days without finding this troublesome word, and this article is no exception. However, when there appears on the horizon such a substantial thing as a complete paradigm *shift* there is no other way to explain it than to use the word to imply that *the rules of the game have changed* – perhaps completely.

Photography has long been reputed to be *the* democratic art form. Of all the arts, it is the one that is supposed to be the most accessible to everyone in society – both as producers and consumers. It is the only one with supposedly unlimited reproducibility, thanks to the common perception of “mechanical” reproduction. The fly in this theoretical ointment has always been, however, that it is *not* a mechanical reproduction. The creation of a fine photograph takes *years* of study, masterful execution, and an artist's trained eye in combination with skillful craft – often employing days of patience and hours of

handwork. (Brett Weston's Amidol-stained fingernails come to mind!) Fine photographs are a rare commodity and will continue to be so.

For many decades now, books have been the predominant form used in the distribution of fine art photography. I'll bet you are intimately familiar with *Pepper #30*, *Monolith Face of Halfdome*, *Migrant Mother*, or other famous, classic images from the masters of photography. Have you ever *seen* these images? In the flesh, that is – an original, gelatin silver print with the rich subtleties of a master photograph? If you have, I'll bet it was in a gallery or museum where your total visual relationship with the original print lasted, what, perhaps a few minutes? Or, do you know these images mostly from their reproductions (I should say *compromised* reproductions) as ink on paper? Book printing has come a long way in the last 30 years, and we should all be grateful that we live in an age that allows us such high quality and affordable ink-on-paper access to so many great photographs. Nonetheless, ink on

press paper is *not* the same as black silver on photographic white paper.

Photographers have known for a long time that book publishing, in spite of its limitations in reproducing images, is one of the best ways to create an audience for their fine art photography originals. For those of us who are not investment-quality collectors of fine art originals, books have also been a wonderful gateway to collect images affordably. Of course, the images in books are relatively small, by necessity viewed hand-held, and spend 99.99% of their life all but invisible on the bookshelf. Compared to other visual arts – painting and sculpture, for example – photography, locked up in books, spends most of its life *invisible*. What a shame for the art form that is supposed to be the most democratic of all!

With this issue of *LensWork*, we are announcing what may be the most substantial paradigm shift in the history of museum quality photography books. I can best illustrate this with a question: **What if, say, during the last 25 years each photography book you had purchased also offered the images as affordable fine art photography?** Think about the books you have in your private library right now. These books of photography represent your favorite photography, the photography that has inspired you the most, illuminated your life, opened new ways of

understanding and feeling, and connected you with the tradition of photography in ways that gallery exhibitions can not. In these books in your library, I suspect, are several dozen images that are personal favorites you can bring to mind right now. I have my own favorites that I can see in my mind's eye any time I want – a private, if somewhat fuzzy, personal gallery in my head. Surely this is a poor substitute for seeing a fine image on the wall!

So why aren't images from books made available for us to enjoy outside the context of the printed pages in books? Well, they are – as posters, note cards and fine art originals (not to mention day-planners or *screen savers!*). Unfortunately, only a very few images are ever released as posters or note cards (the limited market demand prevents more from appearing) and fine art originals are often price out of reach for most of us. For those of you who have been following the development of the *LensWork Special Editions Collection* over the last year and a half, the solution to this old problem is probably obvious. Why not publish a book and simultaneously make available images using the *LensWork Special Editions Collection* technology? What makes this paradigm shift in publishing so fascinating is that for the first time in history we can make reproductions of those images with incredible photographic fidelity. It is this application of high-fidelity

technology, working in close concert with the photographer and their original master prints, that makes, for the first time in history, such photography *truly* democratic.

This is precisely the paradigm shift that begins today. Working closely with Huntington Witherill, we've just published a new book of his landscape work entitled *Orchestrating Icons*. This book has been printed to the highest standards using 300 line-screen tri-tone with varnish, the finest paper, and exquisite binding. As books go, it is as rich as ink on paper can get. The book is a joy to see and hold, and Hunter's photographs are simply stunning – a spectacular example of a creative mind working in the landscape for over 30 years. Witherill's work, firmly rooted in the tradition of West Coast landscape photography, extends that vision into new palettes, new interpretations, and lyrical compositions that clearly illustrate he is one of the true masters of this genre of photography. (*This*, and he is still just in his fifties!) A preview of Witherill's work is included as a portfolio in this issue.

This brings me back to the paradigm shift in publishing that makes this book the first of its kind. Simultaneous with the publication of *Orchestrating Icons*, we have also worked closely with Hunter to create 25 new *LensWork Special Editions* images

selected from the photographs in this book. Each of these images are gelatin silver, selenium toned, archival processed, 11 x 14 images– our new larger size in the *Collection*. Each of these 25 images are being produced in a limited edition of 500; all are hand-numbered and initialed by Huntington Witherill. These images are being produced in the spirit of all images in the *Collection*, that is, as "*Fine Art Photography at Real People Prices*."

It's difficult to write about this new book and print marriage without a bit of a "commercial" flair being introduced into my normal Editor's Comments. But, my hope, as a lover of photography, is that this publishing paradigm will catch on with other publishers, photographers, and makers of books. I, for one, look forward to the time when I can surround my life with the fine art photography that inspires me and enriches my everyday existence; to appreciate the work on my walls and display shelves, without being limited to posters and other compromised reproductions.

And, of course, it is a thrill for us at *LensWork* to unlock, open, and step through this door in photographic history, where the marriage of the book and the photographic print will allow this "democratic art form" to be appreciated on a much broader level.

**Welcoming Bill Jay to the *LensWork*
Editorial Staff with *EndNotes*...**

There is a thing called Ultimate Final Truth, and the closest we mortal, finite beings will ever come to it is probably *popular opinion*. Therefore, I'll state with the force of popular opinion behind me, that the best writer on photography — perhaps in photographic history — is Bill Jay. The author of more than a dozen books on the history and criticism of photographic art, Bill Jay emerges as the single most published writer in the seven year history of *LensWork*.

Now retired from his position as Professor of the History and Criticism of Photography at Arizona State University, Jay will

channel his wit, wisdom and keen observations on an open-ended variety of subjects into a new, regular column — called *EndNotes* — that will populate the final text pages of *LensWork*.

We're delighted to add Bill's clarity of thinking, broad historical perspective, and ever-present deflation of pretext and political correctness to *LensWork*.

To welcome Bill, or send along any comments about *EndNotes*, please feel welcome to email him at:
billjay@lenswork.com



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LWS096
Caballero
Initialed by
Terry Vine

Shown framed

8½"x12" image
Framed to 19¼"x23¼"

\$99 image only *
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Only \$29 - \$99™

LensWork Special Editions are an entirely new distribution paradigm for fine art imagery pioneered by LensWork. Each image is produced in a traditional black & white wet darkroom using state-of-the-art graphic techniques in concert with the finest materials and archival hand-processing. These images have all the deep blacks, smooth mid-tones and sparkling whites that are only possible with real silver photographic paper. And, because they are created in editions of a few dozen to several hundred, they are affordable as never before in the history of photography. These reproductions are *virtually indistinguishable* from the artist's original, even in side-by-side comparisons.

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For a complete and current listing of available prints, see our on-line, real-time catalog at www.lenswork.com

** Plus handling and shipping, see order form for specifics

New Special Editions In This Issue!

HUNTINGTON WITHERILL

Pg	Number	Title	Image Size	Price
14	LWS102	<i>Approaching Storm</i>	14" x 9.5"	\$99*
15	LWS101	<i>Toroweap Overlook</i>	14" x 9.5"	\$99*
16	LWS103	<i>Monument Valley</i>	14" x 11.2"	\$99*
17	LWS104	<i>Cliff Face, The White Rim</i>	14" x 10.4"	\$99*
18	LWS107	<i>Reflections, Badwater</i>	14" x 11"	\$99*
19	LWS109	<i>Morning Mists</i>	10.5" x 14"	\$99*
20	LWS106	<i>Waterfall, PA</i>	14" x 10.5"	\$99*
21	LWS118	<i>Ice Form #3</i>	14" x 10.5"	\$99*
22	LWS121	<i>Dune Form, 1977</i>	14" x 5.7"	\$99*
23	LWS122	<i>Dune Form, 1987</i>	14" x 5.5"	\$99*
24	LWS112	<i>Sand Dunes, 1980</i>	14" x 10.3"	\$99*
25	LWS114	<i>Dune Form, 1974</i>	14" x 9.8"	\$99*
26	LWS115	<i>Dune Form #3, 1983</i>	9.4" x 14"	\$99*
27	LWS111	<i>Dune Form, 1982</i>	14" x 10.1"	\$99*
28	LWS105	<i>Juniper and the Grand Canyon</i>	14" x 11.1"	\$99*
29	LWS113	<i>Great Sand Dunes, CO</i>	14" x 10.3"	\$99*

TERRY VINE

Pg	Number	Title	Image Size	Price
67	LWS096	<i>Caballero</i>	12" x 8.6"	\$99*
71	LWS097	<i>The Sword</i>	12" x 8.4"	\$99*
76	LWS098	<i>Braided Hair</i>	12" x 8.6"	\$99*
77	LWS099	<i>Adela's Hands</i>	12" x 8.6"	\$99*
82	LWS100	<i>Three Women</i>	12" x 8.6"	\$99*

* Image only

Add \$18 for matting on gallery white; Or add \$49 for matting and framing



ORCHESTRATING ICONS



by

Huntington Witherill

*Hear an audio interview with Huntington Witherill and see more of his images
in the LensWork MultiMedia Library. Online preview at www.lenswork.com.*





Toroweap Overlook, The Grand Canyon, AZ, 1982



MOTIVATIONS, VALUES & TRIVIALITIES

by

Bill Jay

Let me begin with a quote from the book *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* by Abraham Maslow:

Today a very large proportion of our artists, novelists, dramatists, critics, literary and historical scholars are disheartened or pessimistic or despairing, and a fair proportion are nihilistic or cynical (in the sense of believing that no "good life" is possible and that the so-called higher values are all a fake and a swindle). This volume springs from the belief, first that the ultimate disease of our time is valuelessness; second, that this state is more crucially dangerous than ever before in history; and finally that something can be done about it by man's own rational efforts.¹

My starting point springs from the belief that much of *contemporary photography* is rooted in valuelessness and that this state of the medium has never before been so pronounced as it is today. My personal conviction is that the answer to the problem is inherent within each individual photographer. This prevalent systemized approach to art is merely a reflection of the wider problem of valuelessness that is endemic in society at large.

It is my conviction that the artist has an obligation to *lead* rather than *follow*. If *any* type of person should be in front ranks, breaking trails into the future, it should be the creative individual, who has already found a purpose and

This article was originally published in the book Negative / Positive: A Philosophy of Photography by Bill Jay under the title The Failure of Photography, published by Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1979.



THE CRUISE SERIES



by

Roger Freeman

Roger Freeman





INTERVIEW WITH TERRY VINE

Brooks Jensen: Let me begin by asking about the challenge of integrating your professional – that is your *commercial* photography – with your *art* life. It seems that a lot of commercial photographers struggle with this. I often hear the same story from photographers who start their career in photography doing artwork, but need an income so they pick up wedding or advertising work to pay the bills. Down the road they find they've lost track of their personal work and wish some day they could find some time to do it. You've been successful avoiding this dilemma. What are the keys that you've discovered that help you keep your personal work alive?

Terry Vine: You're so right. I've know so many photographers and friends who, when they were younger, started out photographing things that they found beautiful or were somehow attracted to. Through the process of school, and making a living, they end up getting geared more towards photographing what *other* people want. Years go by and looking back they think 'Wow, this isn't as *fun* as it used to be.' For me, it is still fun, because I feel incredibly fortunate making a living doing what I love to do. I feel fortunate about that now, but when I first started my commercial business I spent almost no time doing personal work. For quite some time, while I was getting a business started, I was just trying to get any job I could. I started my commercial business in 1985. The next thing I knew I had employees and was traveling — on top of opening a new studio. There was not a lot of down-time.



LA VIDA TRADITIONAL

San Miguel de Allende, Mexico



by

Terry Vine

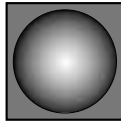
*Hear an audio interview with Terry Vine and see more of his images
in the LensWork MultiMedia Library. Online preview at www.lenswork.com.*





Adela's Hands

LENSWORK



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