Welcome to the free preview of LensWork 78. This PDF file offers an overview and selected sample pages of the content of LensWork (in print) and LensWork EXTENDED (on computer DVD).
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Jay Dusard
Mehmet Ozgur
Michael Penn
Janet Woodcock

Interviews
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Artistic
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Brooks Jensen takes a hard look at the photographic enthusiast and the “Power Player.”

Interview with Jay Dusard
One of photography’s Masters, Jay has successfully combined his cowboying with his photography. Meanwhile, he’s been quietly making abstracts, and shares how he’s been working in this genre all along.

Advice for Aspiring Photographers by David Fokos
Sage counsel from a mid-career artist.

EndNotes by Bill Jay

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Mehmet Ozgur
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Extended portfolios, more images - Short audio interviews with photographers • Audio comments on individual images • Videos on photography and the creative process • Direct links to web sites, email addresses • Video interviews with photographers • And more all on a single DVD using the Acrobat 7 Reader.

Photography and media are discovering that they are cousins — at least in the creative hands of some still photographers. Here is an example of the creative use of still photography in a short video that tells one photographer’s story of his uncovering the creative muse within him.

### The North American Cowboy
by Jay Dusard

### In the Rail Yard
by Christopher Mark Perez

### Bonus Gallery

#### Filigree
by Gunter Chemnitz

#### The Field Of View
by Marek Gorecki

### Alumni Gallery

#### Sermons in Sandstone
by Alan McGee

Alan McGee is a California photographer whose work Sand first came to our attention back in 1998. In this work, he presents the sculptural rock forms that, in his words, “present images with multiple levels of meaning.”

#### The North American Cowboy
by Bill Jay

#### The Field Of View
by Marek Gorecki

#### The North American Cowboy
by Gunter Chemnitz

#### The North American Cowboy
by Christopher Mark Perez

#### Jay Dusard Bonus Portfolio The North American Cowboy
by Alan McGee

#### LensWork Podcasts

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Jensen takes a hard look at the photographic enthusiast and the "Power Player."

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With viewpoints vanishing and access being restricted, this photographer works to make lasting images of a Philadelphia landmark he's loved since he was a kid.

Portfolio: Janet Woodcock
Barnyard Portraits
Janet's first experience on a farm lead to this project. "Just like humans, they can be serious and funny, powerful and gentle, curious and shy, and never predictable."

Advice for Aspiring Photographers
Sage counsel from a mid-career artist.

Portfolio: Mehmet Ozgur
Visionscapes
Mehmet continues to work from inside his own imagination, following his portfolio of smoke in issue #67 with these semi-surreal landscape constructions.

Interview with Jay Dusard
One of photography's Masters, Jay has successfully combined his cowboying with his photography. Meanwhile, he's been quietly making abstracts, and shares how he's been working in this genre all along.

Portfolio: Jay Dusard
Abstractions
Renowned for photographs of working cowboys, Jay (who plays jazz music) reveals his "jazz" photography by showing this completely different style of work.

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Editor’s Comments

Welcome to Bifurcation City

I have watched with some curiosity over the years, the battles between opposing photographic camps — the most recent and tiresome of which is, of course, the analog/digital all-out, no-prisoners war. However, a much more interesting bifurcation has been building in photography over the last generation of photographers that I find truly interesting and ripe with implications for those of us who are serious about our artwork. I might characterize the two poles as “photography as passion” and “photography as profession” were it not that this would lend confusion. The term professional might tempt you to infer “commercial photography” — and my comments are not at all tempt you to infer “commercial photography” were it not that this would lend confusion. The term professional might tempt you to infer “commercial photographers” — and my comments are not at all intended to impugn photography’s work — were it not that this would lend confusion. The term professional might tempt you to infer “commercial photographers” — and my comments are not at all intended to impugn photography’s working professionals. The primary bifurcation I see is between the photography enthusiast and today’s fully-engaged, hyper-visible, high-energy photography power player.

This bifurcation defines two mutually exclusive tiers in the world of fine art photography. Of course, the existence of two tiers is not new — as a quick scan of photo history will show. What makes this of particular interest in our times is that the two tiers have fundamentally changed.

The Old Tiers
There was a time not long ago (say, 1970) when the difference between the enthusiast and the power player was easily defined by the respective qualities of their photography. Enthusiasts — these used to be called “amateurs” — were often not very good photographers, were second-rate printers, often employed trite aesthetics, imitated the popular artistic trends with zeal, and usually made photographs of little enduring value. Photography’s power players of yesteryear — many of the great names of photography, e.g., Adams, Weston, Strand, et al — were easily identified and differentiated from the rest by the outstanding and superior quality of their work, particularly their stunning print quality. (They could also see, feel, and formulate art with sensitivity and blessed aplomb, but let’s sidestep this for the sake of discussion.)

Not long ago, the number of photographers at the highest tier of quality were few, rare, and their work was truly special. But, with the advance of technology and the widespread dissemination of knowledge and techniques via magazines, books, and workshops during the last forty or so years, the differentiation between the print quality of the two tiers has essentially evaporated. Today there is an army of late-20th-century photographers (think of the graduates of all those Adams’ workshops over the decades) who have pursued their craft with passion and are now making stunning photographs by the, well, I don’t think millions is an exaggeration. This fact alone would make for a fascinating discussion, but for this article I want to focus on a different issue.

I am proposing that today’s differentiating tiers have both morphed, and now represent different characteristics that are not readily distinguished by a difference in quality. Be careful here: It would be easy (but errant) to assume that the difference between the enthusiast and the power player could be discovered in the differences of their aesthetic and artistic merit. That would be an insult to the enthusiast and often an overstatement of the power player’s talent — at least in my opinion. No, it is not the quality of their work that differentiates the power player from the enthusiast, but rather the zeal with which they pursue fame and fortune. In short, what separates the enthusiast from the power player can be encapsulated in one word: money.

Every serious photographer will, at some point in their fine art career, come to a fork in the road. Once their craft is under control, once their vision starts to mature, once their voice clarifies and their prints begin to sing, they will inevitably face the choice of jumping into the money game or staying on the sidelines. Should I sell my work or not? Should I pursue gallery representation or not? Should I covet the title of elite fine art photographer or not? The seduction to leap is powerful, the human ego being what it is. I’ve both felt this pull and repeatedly witnessed it in others in my years in photography. I’ve concluded, however, that for the vast majority of photographers (me included) that big world of elite fine art photography in galleries and museums, the high-stakes game of publishing and publicity, the lure of fame and fortune and superstar status in photography requires a price that is not worth the candle. Worse, I have become more and more convinced that fame in photography is one of the surest ways to squelch creativity — maybe not for everyone, but for most. (Quick: Name all the photographers you can think of whose...
work became dramatically more creative after they became famous.)

With the limited space available to me in these pages, here are a few — albeit preliminary — observations. Warning: I'm going to stereotype and exaggerate to draw these distinctions — both of which actions are frowned upon as dialectic techniques, but I don't care. Whatever best makes my point.

**Livelihood**

Photo enthusiasts are most typically “weekend warriors.” They don’t make money with their photography — at least not much. They certainly can’t rely on their photography as their primary source of income. They are motivated to be photographers by passion, by commitment, by compulsion. They photograph because they cannot not photograph. However, they recognize this compulsion as some form of productive and even healthy addiction. They photograph as a means of exploring the world, exploring themselves, and expressing themselves. Whatever expenses are required for this pursuit are tolerated — or at least try to. They are just as passionate and committed as the enthusiasts, but the influence of money on their passion often takes them in the opposite direction of the enthusiast. For example …

**Galleries**

The power player often embraces and employs the gallery world as a means of selling their photographs. Because of all that is involved in the gallery paradigm, their prices are relatively high. Promotion and public relations consume a great deal of their time. Marketing themselves is as serious a pursuit as marketing their artwork. In fact, their success is as much derived from their name recognition and artistic persona as it is from the caliber of their work. Don’t misconstrue this as an insult; their work may very well be outstanding, but I’m not convinced the power player’s photographs are on the whole any better than the photo enthusiasts. They are simply better at self-promotion.

**Print size**

Power players’ prints are often bigger — bigger prices demand higher prices — but the scale of their prints is often a reflection of their pricing strategy, not the other way around. Of primary importance to the power player is their relationship to the market — i.e., collectors. Power players are all about big bucks, big collectors, big prints, big exhibitions, big publication, and big-time public relations. Notice that the word “artwork” did not appear in that last sentence.

Photo enthusiasts, by comparison, often toil in obscurity — not because their work is inferior, but more likely because they simply don’t care about the publicity game. They are much more interested in making art than in promoting it. Given a choice between attending a gallery event or going out photographing, they will likely don the photo vest rather than the cocktail jacket.

**Equipment**

Because money is tight, most enthusiasts select modest equipment, work on limited budgets, adapt old equipment for new uses, buy borrow and steal from the household budget for every new piece of gear they acquire, and limit themselves to what works.

Power players use the best, the latest, and the very most expensive — on purpose. Money is often no object. Impressing someone (a client, a collector, a gallery owner, a workshop participant) is more important than limiting the budget.

Where the enthusiast will cringe at the expense of a $1,500 camera, the power player won’t wince at $45,000. (Think Canon Rebel or a used view camera versus a Phase 1 Digital back.)

This is fun. Let’s continue the comparisons:

**Difference around every corner**

The enthusiast is often satisfied with 8x10s as the finished product. The power player makes 20x24 proofs.

The power player has people. The enthusiast has friends.

The power player regularly publishes books. The enthusiast buys them.

The enthusiast runs to the store to pick up some developer or some ink. The power player has it trucked in on skids.

The enthusiast has a really neat photo vest. The power player has assistants to carry his gear.

The power player has staff to manage their “web presence.” The enthusiast is a regular participant in online photography forums.

The enthusiast has customers. The power player has customers. The enthusiast has other photographers with whom they trade prints.

The enthusiast has a tripod. The power...
player has an endorsement deal with their name on a tripod.

The enthusiast has a darkroom in their basement. The power player has a wine cellar.

The enthusiast owns a Vivitar 283 flash unit in a box in the closet. The power player has a separate room for storing their lighting equipment.

The enthusiast waits for the sun to be in just the right position. The power player flies himself to whichever continent has the best sun angle at this time of year.

The enthusiast sells lots of work at craft fairs, but despairs of gallery representation. The power player sells very little work in the gallery, and despairs of an elite European or New York auction house to offer his work for really big money. Both are miserable with their current state of affairs.

The enthusiast can’t wait for CS4. The power player can’t be bothered with Photoshop — “my assistant pushes all the buttons.”

The power player goes to Antarctica for a week of wine and photography. The enthusiast packs the camper for a weekend of Duett and photography.

Okay, enough fun exaggerating the class differences. Why poke fun at these two sides of photography? There was a time in so many of our lives and dreams when we enthusiasts longed for the success of the Masters. We wanted to be a great photographer like Ansel Adams, or W. Eugene Smith, or Brett Weston, or Henri Cartier-Bresson. We thought it would be so much fun to live their lives and have their kind of relationship with photography. In short, we wanted to photograph like them.

But then something happened to photography. It grew up. Money crept into photography, and alongside it crept fame and fortune, PR agents and brie. Instead of photographers pursuing the “great photograph,” they started paying more attention to pursuing the “buzz.” How much ink you got in the press became more important to your gallery prices than the quality of the work of the enthusiasts that accompanies a complete absence of responsibilities or restrictions.

Please do not infer that I am throwing stones at the other guys. I’m not intending this to be a criticism of either philosophy or approach, but rather an acknowledgment that the two camps do, indeed, exist. Besides, bifurcation is not necessarily a bad thing. There are professional baseball players and weekend sandlot athletes. For every Eric Clapton there are a million guys in a garage band having a ball. The world needs both ends of the spectrum, indeed can’t survive without yin and yang.

It’s not the existence of bifurcation that is bothersome, but rather the all-too-common assumption by some that the guys in the garage band can’t play. Maybe that used to be the case, but not any longer. In photography today there are tens of thousands of photographers producing outstanding work, who simply choose not to participate in the power-play circles. These are precisely the photographers we so enjoy publishing in LensWork and whose work we would gladly compare to the “famous photographers” who are so often lionized as the heart and soul of photography. For me, the heart and soul of photography is the tens of thousands of enthusiasts, many of whom are readers of LensWork, who carry the torch that has been passed to us by yesterday’s enthusiasts (a.k.a. “Masters”) — a torch, I might add, that was lit long before big money came into photography and began to influence the photographic art world.

I do have questions — for example: What will the influence be on the gallery world of so many talented photographers selling their work on the Internet? What is the future of the fine art photography book in this age of Blurb and the PDF? How will those on limited budgets keep pace with the changes in technology? How long will it be before 64” wide printers and 60 megapixel cameras will seem puny? As the quality of the work of the enthusiasts gets better and better, what will the power players do to differentiate themselves from the crowd? What consequences are on the horizon for all fine art photographers as a result of these changes? As these changes unfold, will art rise in importance, or will marketing skills reign supreme? If content is no longer king, do the spoils go to the person with the most effective PR team?

We’ll have to wait to see. Damn, we do indeed live in interesting times.
Barnyard Portraits

by

Janet Woodcock

An additional 50 images are included in LensWork Extended #78, as well as an audio interview with the photographer.
Sample Pages from LensWork 78

Ears, 2001

Venerable, 2001
Abstractions

Wall, Canyon del Muerto, Arizona, 1992

by

Jay Dusard

An additional 10 images are included in LensWork Extended #78, as well as an audio interview with the photographer.

Detail, Semi-Trailer, 1990

So, while cowboying has certainly been a significant part of my life and my photography, I feel at last that I’m giving my creative interest in abstraction some real attention. It may feel to some like a country singer becoming a jazz artist, but with my love of jazz music I guess it shouldn’t come as too great a shock that my love of photography and music might have more than a little in common.
Overview of LensWork

EXTENDED

Sample Pages from LensWork

Icon, 1972 (double print)

Procession, Jerome, Arizona, 1975

Eom, 1972 (double print)

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**Visionscapes**

An additional 8 images are included in LensWork Extended #78, as well as an audio interview with the photographer.

Dante’s Reflection

by

Mehmet Ozgur

Midway

Mehmet Ozgur’s portfolio Smoke Abstractions appeared in LensWork #67 (Nov–Dec 2006)
The Ben Franklin Bridge

by
Michael Penn

An additional 30 images are included in LensWork Extended #78, as well as an audio interview with the photographer.
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Cable Support, Night

Ben Franklin Bridge Study
Note:
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Sermons in Sandstone
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Additional Bill Jay
plus audio interview

Jay Dusard
Abstractions 28 images
plus audio interview
Michael Penn
Ben Franklin Bridge 22 images
plus audio interview
Mehmet Ozgur
Visionscapes 20 images
plus audio interview
Janet Woodcock
Barnyard Portraits 66 images
plus audio interview

Jay Dusard – The North American Cowboy
Jay Dusard may be best known for his photo-
graphs of the North American cowboy — from
his 1983 book by the same name. In this bonus
portfolio, we present some of his best images
from that book, as well as a few audio excerpts
from a talk Jay gave at the Coupeville Arts Center
workshop in April 1990 entitled The North Ameri-
can Cowboy: The Breed That Won’t Vanish.

LensWork Extended is a true multimedia publication that dramatically
expands the contents of our 96-page magazine, LensWork — then
loads-in lots of audio, video, and “extended extras.” In the spirit of the
paper publication, the focus continues on the creative process, with each
issue offering an engaging mix that only multimedia makes possible.

Penn
Visionscapes
Ben Franklin Bridge
Barnyard Portraits
Gunter Chemnitz
The Field of View
Ibarionex Perello
Barnyard Portraits
In the Railyard

EXTENDED Extras
• Ibarionex Perello Video
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• Additional Bill Jay EndNotes

Alan McGee
Sermans in Sandstone
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Close
Abstractions

by

Jay Dusard

Jay Dusard
I don’t consider these abstractions a “project” in any sense of the word. These images represent precisely what I hoped to accomplish as a photographer. They have emerged, little by little, during the four decades that I have worked in the landscape and in environmental portraiture. Of all my work, the abstractions are the most personally compelling and satisfying, and yet the least known.

Much of this work was done with an 8x10 view camera, which results in great rendering power. In more recent years, I have been stalking abstract subjects with 4x5 and 5x7 cameras. Some of the prints were made with component exposures from two negatives. This approach required extensive double-proofing — with a low degree of success, I’m afraid. In some cases, diverse elements of subject matter were assembled for the camera.

For example, Wall, 1972 [pg. 78] involved photographing the same wall from two different distances; once without adornments, and again with all manner of “stuff” nailed up essentially at random. Then, both negatives were contact printed — one at a time — on the same sheet of paper with balanced partial exposures.

Another double print is seen in Boneyard, 1972, [pg. 79]. One component negative was made in rural Chino Valley, Arizona, where I lived while teaching at Prescott College in 1970. While out riding one day, I came upon a place where a dead horse and two dead sheep had been deposited. I recognized the horse as a friend’s Palomino that had been killed on the highway about a year earlier. I was able to drive my pickup truck alongside this tableau and secure my big Ries tripod like an outrigger over the subject. With a fairly wide-angle lens on the 8x10, I made the negative, which turned out to be technically good, but not a stand-alone image. Another “also-ran” negative of a piece of old roofing that I had found on the ground near Jerome, Arizona (the “Largest Ghost Town in America”) in 1969 was just what I needed to complete the picture. What appears to be curling hide is actually curling roofing cement. The “postholes” in the ground are just nail holes in the roofing.

So, while cowboying has certainly been a significant part of my life and my photography, I feel at last that I’m giving my creative interest in abstraction some real attention. It may feel to some like a country singer becoming a jazz artist, but with my love of jazz music I guess it shouldn’t come as too great a shock that my love of photography and music might have more than a little in common.
Streambed Detail, Antelope Canyon, Arizona, 1987
Boneyard, 1972 (double print)
Publishers & Editors
   Brooks Jensen
   Maureen Gallagher

Design & Layout
   Brooks Jensen
   Thea LaCross

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Anacortes, WA 98221-1502 U.S.A.

USA TOLL FREE  1-800-659-2130
Voice  360-588-1343  FAX  503-905-6111
Email  [editor@lenswork.com](mailto:editor@lenswork.com)

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