

LENSWORK

74

PREVIEW

Overview of
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Overview of
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EXTENDED

Welcome to the free preview of *LensWork 74*. This PDF file offers an overview of the look at the content of *LensWork* in print and *LensWork EXTENDED* on DVD as well as sample pages.

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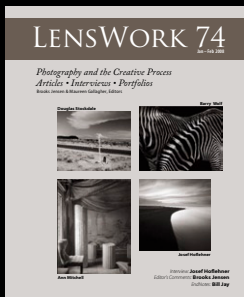
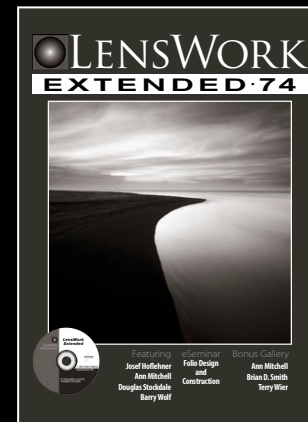
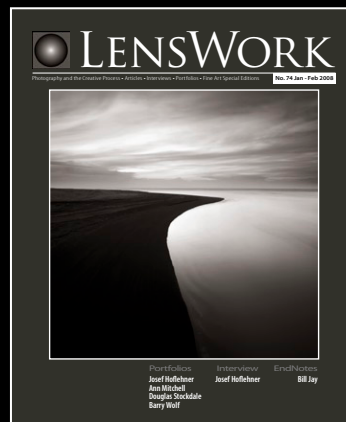


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Articles by Bill Jay	Interviews by Bill Jay
Special Features by Bill Jay	EndNotes by Bill Jay



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Articles

Editor's Comments *It's Not What You See*

The old canard proposed that the core creative process in photography is seeing. However, people who see but can't paint aren't painters. Similarly, photography may not be about seeing but is definitely about what we make, what we create.

Interview with Josef Hoflehner

A native of Austria with eight books to his credit, Hoflehner has become one of Europe's most interesting and successful landscape photographers.

EndNotes by Bill Jay

Portfolios



Josef Hoflehner
Iceland



Ann Mitchell
*Time, Place and Memory:
The Austin Val Verde Estate*



Douglas Stockdale
In Passing



Barry Wolf
Just Like Me

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featuring...

American Triptychs
by Ann Mitchell

Bonus Gallery



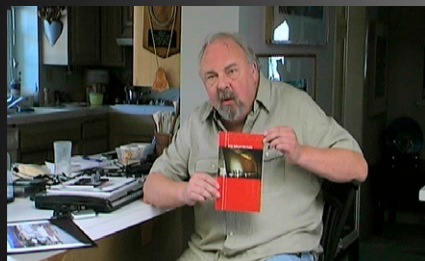
Sands
by Terry Wier



Flint Hills
by Brian D. Smith

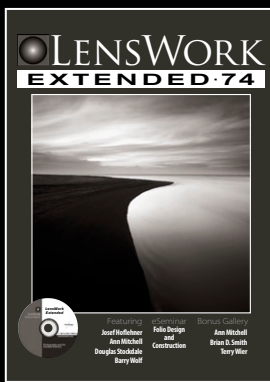
Rob Johnson on The Great Picture
Video by Anthony Mournian

Video



Anthony Mournian contributes another in his ongoing video interview series. In this issue of *LensWork Extended*, Mournian interviews Rob Johnson who shares the making of the world's largest photograph.

LensWork #74	<i>LensWork #74</i> In Print	<i>LensWork Extended #74</i> on Disc
Josef Hoflehner	20 images	32 images Plus written interview
Ann Mitchell	12 images	31 images Plus audio interview
Douglas Stockdale	21 images	50 images Plus audio interview
Barry Wolf	14 images	23 images Plus audio interview
Bill Jay's <i>EndNotes</i>	2-pages	3-pages
Audio interviews with photographers		✓
<i>American Triptych</i> by Ann Mitchell		Bonus Gallery ✓
<i>Flint Hills, Kansas</i> by Brian D. Smith		Bonus Gallery ✓
<i>Sands</i> by Terry Wier		Bonus Gallery ✓
<i>Midnight Carnival</i> by Chris Raecker		Alumni Gallery ✓
Anthony Mournian Video Interview with Rob Johnson		✓
LensWork Podcasts		✓
Photographers on Photography Audio		✓
The first of the LensWork eSeminars <i>Folio Design and Construction</i>		✓



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.

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Photography and the Creative Process • Articles • Interviews • Portfolios • Fine Art Special Editions

No. 74 Jan - Feb 2008



Portfolios	Interview	EndNotes
Josef Hoflehner	Josef Hoflehner	Bill Jay
Ann Mitchell		
Douglas Stockdale		
Barry Wolf		

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The old canard proposed that the core creative process in photography is <i>seeing</i> . However, people who see but can't paint aren't painters. Similarly, photography may not be about seeing but is definitely about what we make, what we create.	<i>The Austin Val Verde Estate</i>
	Tucked away on a private estate in Montecido, California is a bit of history in the Austin Val Verde Estate. With special access, Mitchell brings us this touch of Hollywood and history in this portfolio.
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Portfolio : Barry Wolf	<i>Interview with Josef Hoflehner</i>
<i>Just Like Me</i>	A native of Austria with eight books to his credit, Hoflehner has become one of Europe's most interesting and successful landscape photographers.
Who amongst us hasn't photographed the animals at the zoo – with resulting photos that look like animals at the zoo? In this portfolio, Wolf brings us their <i>personality</i> through their gestures and expressions that seem almost human.	
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Portfolio : Douglas Stockdale	Portfolio : Josef Hoflehner
<i>In Passing</i>	<i>Iceland</i>
Every memorial marker along the road is a story to be told. It is easy to drive by with just a glance. This photographer stops and makes us, through his photographs, <i>look</i> .	This frozen landscape has a beauty of its own that Hoflehner captures with a delicacy and drama. Looking at his photographs makes one <i>feel</i> the cold.
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	<i>EndNotes</i> by Bill Jay

Turn the page for additional content
in *LensWork EXTENDED #74* on computer disc!

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Photography and the Meaning of Life

[Editor's Note: I should warn you that I am in a sour and cynical mood. This often happens when I visit the photography book section of the big bookstores during the holiday shopping season. (I am writing this on Monday after the Thanksgiving holiday.) You have been warned.]

I've formulated a tentative strategy based on a shaky conclusion – now, there's a rousing way to start! – all influenced by the plethora of images and books I saw this last weekend. A startling revelation came crashing through to consciousness: *Too much of photography is about photographers.* That is to say, the creative act in photography is supposedly the photographer's skill in *seeing* what others do not, but this is simply not sufficient – and can lead to a lot of trite photography.

Here are two interrelated observations.

First, photography is not about what we see; photography is about we *make*. A person who sees, but can't paint, is not a painter; a painter is someone who *creates* a painting. A person who hears, but can't write music, is not a composer; a composer is one who *creates* music. Even so, painting is not about the manipulation

of paints; composing is not about the manipulation of notes. In all arts – including photography – what counts is what a person *makes*, and – most importantly – *expresses*. It's not *seeing*, it's *expressing* that makes photography art.

Worse, photography is so mechanical that it can seduce us into thinking that mere *production* is a creative act. Photographers too often think that the most important decisions they make are where to position the tripod and when to trip the shutter. What else is there? After all, once these decisions are made, everything else is a fairly minor adjustment – tonal shift here, a color balance there, a crop, a dodge, a bleach, a flash. These acts of adjustment in the final image are relatively minor, usually (but not always) quite subtle and fundamentally do not *radically* alter the image. (There are, of course, exceptions – Uelsmann, for example.)

By and large, this leads photographers to a habit of *accepting* or *rejecting* – be it during the capture process or the printing process. We accept this composition, or we reject it. We chose this moment to release the shutter, or we reject it. We accept this print variation, or we reject it. The radical

(and probably controversial) idea I'm proposing is that this is not *creative* act. It is an editorial one.

I can hear all of you darkroom mavens protesting already. But, look at our “creative process” from the point of view of the general public – who is not trained to see photography with the discriminating eyes that we have. I was once told by a gallery owner that one of the greatest challenges he faced when showing platinum work is that most non-photographers cannot see different between a black-and-white gelatin silver print and a brown-and-white platinum one. If “civilians” – i.e., folks not trained with a photographer's eye – can't see the difference between a platinum and gelatin silver print then why, pray tell, are we darkroom mavens sweating bullets over the subtle difference between Zone III and Zone III½? Well, we do so for those individuals who *can* see the difference – for our peers, for collectors, for mavens, you might say. I suppose there is some solace in that; at least there is *someone* who appreciates the subtleties in our work. But, what about the general public? Are we to ignore that 99.999% of the population who are not fine art photographers? At what level of elitism have we crossed a line that makes our work meaningless?

So, if the public doesn't appreciate the visual subtleties and the fine finesse we

work so hard to produce in our creative process, what is photography to them? Consider the unsuspecting public walking up to the photography book section. What do they find? What is *creative* in photography? Or, more accurately, what are they led to believe is creative photography based on the books they see representing the medium? Is it bilaterally symmetric gravityless trees floating in the sky? Psychedelic colors? Clever camera positions? Cross processing, fuzzy images, photographed constructions, angst on parade, nakedness, kinky nakedness, nakedness where one is not typically naked, or bilaterally symmetric floating nakedness? This would be the logical conclusion if looking at photography books was the evidence you examined. No wonder I was the only one in the photography section and the rest of the store was jammed with holiday shoppers.

Thinking of the reactions of the public to fine art photography can depress me like no other mental exercise. But, what the heck, as long as I'm piling on, here is another example: Years ago, we published a book of pressed and dried flower still lifes by Huntington Witherill called *Botanical Dances*. It is wonderful work that visually explores the tenuousness of beauty and life. The photographs are lovely, exquisite, and unique. I've never seen anything quite like them and we were delighted to publish this work.

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We exhibited the work in our gallery, and received many compliments. But, a few comments from the public included:

"It's too bad these aren't in color."
"I don't like flower pictures."
"Why are they all dead?"
"Do you have any pictures of cats?"

It's enough to make one sell the cameras and take up golf.

So, what is going on here? Why is there such a disconnect between photographers and the public? What can we do about it?

Scouring the bookstores this weekend I was led to this conclusion: The way photography is mostly practiced today, with few exceptions, results in images that occupy one of two camps.

Here is a significant event and I happened to be available to witness it (documentary, photojournalism) and here is the best shot of it (editorial process).

All of you insensitive plebes might think this subject is not significant, but as a sensitive artiste I can attest that it is, and therefore I'm going to show you its significance via my photography and if you are anything but a dolt you'll recognize my genius in observing it. (I told you I was in a cynical mood.)

This second category is dominant in today's fine art photography. Worse, if examined closely, the true subject is – well, *the photographer*. We've succumbed to the cult of celebrity. Make weird, obtuse, bizarre artwork and become famous – for being weird, obtuse, or bizarre. I suspect that far too many non-artists wonder what the fuss is all about and think we artists are the weird ones – fine art photographers included. The emperor's new clothes may, in fact, look a lot like a photo vest.

As I stood in front of the shelves and shelves of photography books this weekend, I found myself wondering *Why?* – a lot. *Why was this work photographed? Why were these images selected above all others in the editing process? Why should I care about this work? Why was this book published? Why does anybody think anybody else is going to buy this? Why do they think this work/book is worth \$75?*

Which led to even more questions: Why is there a section in the bookstore called "Art" and a separate section called "Photography"? Are retailers acknowledging that *photographers* are one group of buyers and *the public* a different group? Why are most photography books purchased by other photographers? Why is it that photography as an art form has failed so dismally to capture the excitement of the general public – compared, say, to music, painting, theater, or the novel? *Whew.*

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Fortunately, I could recover my calm at the latte counter.

As to that last question, I think art – the *best* art – tends to be about lofty things. Perhaps I should use the term *meaningful things*. I fear that too much photography is about mundane things. The best art is about life and death, spirit and matter, suffering and pain, the natural world and the cosmic prisons in it, love or love denied, the eternal quest for the meaning of life, our relationship to the the world and beyond. It is about connections of people with people, or people with God. Too much of art photography tends to be about stuff. And, if it's not about stuff, it's about the photographer and their angst about stuff. Or sex. Or sex stuff. Or angst about sex and stuff. If you don't believe me, do a search on eBay for "photography books" and see what titles come up. (A moment ago as I checked, at the top of the list of photography books was *The History of Pantyhose*. I am not kidding.)

Mundane stuff and angst about sex do not compete well against *the meaning of life*.

So, what to do? Well, what do you want to say? Is it important to you? What feelings and emotions are significant? If you had five minutes on global television, what would you say to the world *for their benefit*? If you knew you had only one day left to live, what would you want to leave

behind? What would you tell someone 200 years from now about life or these times in which we live? What have you learned in your four score and seven years that is worth sharing with humanity? Granted an audience of five minutes with God, what questions would you ask? Beyond what you see, what do you *think, feel, wonder, question, ponder, seek*? Seems to me, these are the types of fine art pursuits that might just help us break out of the ruts of trite fine art photography and give it life that would be much more on par with the other media of art – and offer meaning to the wider audience beyond our photographic peers.

Fine, in theory, but what about in practice? There are plenty of photographers who use their craft to explore beyond the camera, beyond the photographic. As examples of this, consider the work in this issue of *LensWork*: explorations of place (Hoflechner) and culture (Mitchell); the fragility of life (Stockdale); universal emotions beyond even the human (Wolf). For years, I've said that photography is not "about light," as is so often proposed, but rather *about life*. These four portfolios are shining examples of what I mean by this.

Come to think of it, I guess I'm not as cynical as I thought. In fact, I may just be a bit motivated.



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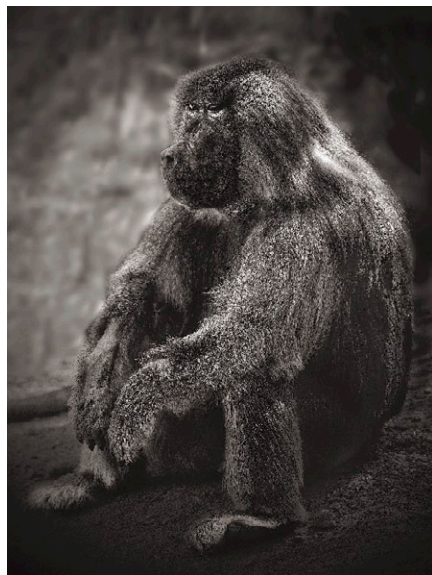
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JUST LIKE ME



by
B. Wolf
Barry Wolf

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IN PASSING



by

Stockdale

Douglas Stockdale

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Randy's Memorial, Nevada

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Iron Crosses and New Guardrail, California

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Cross with Morning Shadow, California

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TIME, PLACE, AND MEMORY

The Austin Val Verde Estate



by

Ann Mitchell

Ann Mitchell

*This portfolio excerpted from the book
Austin Val Verde: Impressions of a Montecito Masterpiece
Ann Mitchell, Jay Belloli
ISBN 978-1-890449-31-5 Balcony Press
Also see www.balconypress.com/html/austinverde.html*

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MASTER BATH

*The master bathroom, with surrealist mural painted in 1939
by Oliver Messel (a Tony Award-winning designer).*

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LIVING ROOM

Living room without drapes. This room changed the most throughout my visits.

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ROSARY

The bedroom in which the Lindberghs stayed to escape the press after the kidnapping of their baby. The room was redesigned in the 1940's.

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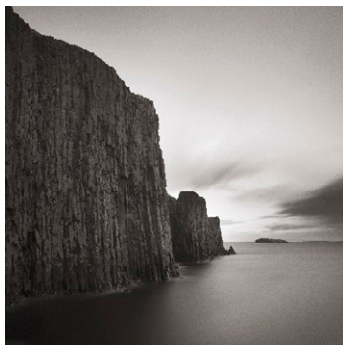
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ICELAND



by

Josef Hoflehner

This portfolio excerpted from the book:

Iceland

First printing limited to 1,000 hardbound copies (ISBN 3-9501510-7-9)

Limited Edition: 30 copies with original gelatin silver prints in cloth slipcase (SOLD OUT)

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Aurora Borealis II

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Featuring
Josef Hoflehner
Ann Mitchell
Douglas Stockdale
Barry Wolf

eSeminar
Folio Design
and
Construction

Bonus Gallery
Ann Mitchell
Brian D. Smith
Terry Wier

EXTENDED *Portfolios*



Josef Hoflehner
Iceland
32 images
plus written interview



Ann Mitchell
The Val Verde Estates
31 images
plus audio interview

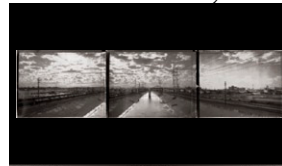


Douglas Stockdale
In Passing
50 images
plus audio interview



Barry Wolf
Just Like Me
23 images
plus audio interview

Bonus Gallery



Ann Mitchell
American Triptychs (wide-screen)



Brian D. Smith
Flint Hills, Kansas



Terry Wier
Sands

EXTENDED *Extras*

- LensWork Podcasts
- Alumni Gallery: Chris Raecker
- An Anthony Mournian video interview with Rob Johnson
- Additional Bill Jay EndNotes

eSEMINARS FROM LENSWORK

New for 2008, we are launching an exciting new series of tutorials called *LensWork eSeminars*. Over the years,

we've had thousands of requests to offer workshops or seminars. One of the most frequently requested topics is how to design and create a folio cover like we used in the *LensWork Folios* series, and is currently used in the Brooks Jensen Arts folios. In this issue of *LensWork Extended* you'll find sample videos from this new *LensWork eSeminar* and ideas how you can create your own folio covers.



System Requirements: This DVD-ROM can be played on your PC or Mac computer using the free **Adobe Acrobat Reader™ Version 7** or newer available via download from www.adobe.com.

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.

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Photography • Art Criticism

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ICELAND

by

Josef Hoflehner

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Thumbnails ◀ ▶

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Deadlock

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