$\mathcal{D}$istinctive Image

featuring...

Tom Hady, APSA, MPSA
Virginia

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Tom Hady, APSA, MPSA, "did it in the dark" for fifty years, after he was given a home darkroom kit for his thirteenth birthday. He grew up in the Midwest, mostly in the Milwaukee, WI and Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN areas, and for a long time, did not have the luxury of a darkroom. He remembers developing prints in trays in the bottom of the bathtub in the first apartment he and his wife, Marilyn, occupied after their marriage. He served two years in the US Air Force before coming to the Washington area to work for the Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Tom has a Ph.D. in economics, earned at the University of Minnesota, and he had a "day job" he enjoyed, doing and managing economic research for the USDA. Over his career, he worked on problems of farm taxation and rural government, and later on rural development. At retirement, he was Chief of the National Economy and History Branch, in charge of work on the relationship between the rural economy and the general economy and USDA's work on agricultural history.

When Tom and Marilyn moved to their current house in northern Virginia in the early 1970s, he got his darkroom, and soon after that, he joined his first camera club, the Northern Virginia Photographic Society. That was the point, he says, when he began to understand what a quality print was, and he started entering international exhibitions a few years later. Photography has remained a hobby

Tom joined the Photographic Society of America (PSA) in 1974 and then the Mid-Atlantic Chapter when it was organized. While he worked in the darkroom, he exhibited prints only in monochrome. He experimented with color printing, but he didn't feel that he had the time to perfect his color printing to standards he was willing to exhibit. With the advent of digital

Mt. Chapel

Mykonos Church

Photos ©
Tom Hady, APSA, MPSA

photography, he added color printing, and he recently reached PSA's Galaxy 1 in large color prints. He now has Galaxy 8 in large monochrome prints, and multiple stars in both small color and small mono prints, as well as having earned a couple of stars in color slides, back in a former century.

For most of his career, Tom used 35mm film. Later, he carried a 6 x 4.5 cm Pentax and a couple of extra prime lenses. Until he thought digital camera technology was good enough, he continued to shoot negatives with that camera, scanned them, and printed digitally. For the last ten years, though, he has used Canon SLR's and a single zoom lens. He feels that he gets adequate sharpness and enjoys the freedom of not carrying all that weight. He likes to use a tripod when he can, mostly because he enjoys the slower, more contemplative style of photography it encourages.

One of Tom's least favorite questions, when people see his work, is "Did you Photoshop that?" The short answer is "always," since he shoots only in RAW. The more complete answer is that his purpose is to communicate to the viewer the emotions he felt when he snapped the shutter, and what the camera shows unedited seldom communicates what he felt.

Tom has been PSA's Award of Merit Director (star ratings) for monochrome prints since 2003. He also judges both international and local exhibitions, teaches and does a variety of other photo-related activities. Tom and Marilyn love to travel and another of his favorite activities is showing and telling of trips they have taken. They are both active at the Osher Lifetime Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, where Tom has taught both photography and economic history, as well as serving a stint on the board. For the last several years, he has coordinated the "Trip Tales" series. Each spring and fall semester, eight OLLI members (and Tom is often one) each take an hour and twenty minute session to tell of a trip, with pictures. The series is very popular, often filling a classroom with 50 or more members. Tom believes it has helped a number of OLLI members discover the joys of photography.

With Tom's background and experience he was a natural choice to be featured as a Distinctive Image Artist. His expertise in black and white prints was a real bonus.

Mabry Mill

Techniques

My first serious camera was a Kodak 35, with manual focus and no exposure meter. It taught me to estimate exposures and distances quite accurately; a skill I find has deteriorated with the automation of today's equipment. After many years of multiple lenses and larger formats, I now carry a Canon 7D with a Sigma 18-250mm zoom lens. I like the results, and the smaller rig fits my current photographic style.

Years of enlarging 35mm negatives to 16 x 20 inch (40.6-50.8 cm) prints put me in the habit of filling the frame when I shoot. While I often crop, I seldom crop much. I am, however, a firm believer that the image should dictate the aspect ratio of the print, not any standard paper size or mat cutout.

With separate monochrome sections in projected image exhibitions, black and white

Known But to God

images are becoming more popular again. Ansel Adams was the consummate master of black and white. If you look at his pictures, you will commonly see all the tones from pure white to pure black, but most importantly, all the shades of gray in between. Adams' zone system was a way of getting the negatives he needed, but he was famous for the amount of time and effort he put into what we now call "post-processing," but used to call working in the darkroom. A few suggestions for doing black and white, whether projected or printed:

First, shoot your images in color and use RAW. Most cameras can be set for black and white, but you are ceding control over the result to the camera. Your opportunity to make the image "yours" is much less. You should shoot RAW for the same reason. A color jpeg image can be converted to black and white, but the camera has already thrown away part of what it originally recorded, and your converted image is not likely to be the best you could have.

I work in camera RAW in Photoshop, and I'll describe that process, but similar adjustments are available in other software. I open the RAW image in Adobe Bridge (camera RAW). Do the basic adjustments of exposure and (usually) obtain a histogram spread from black to white. Click on the "HSL/Grayscale" icon, and check "convert to grayscale." (In Lightroom, find BW in the Develop module.) Now the creative part begins. In the old days, black and white photographers carried colored filters to adjust tones as they took the picture. A red, "Wratten A" filter, for example, darkened the

sky. You have a very complete filter set at your fingertips on the computer. To darken the sky, slide the blue slider to the left. This will, of course, also darken any other blue parts of the image. Want to lighten the foliage? Move the green slider. Try the yellow one, too; often adjusting green and yellow in tandem will give the best foliage color. Work with the different sliders until you get the image you want. For example, you may find that two adjacent colors are rendering in nearly the same shade of gray. Often, you can separate them by using the color sliders. There were a number of instances in the accompanying picture, "St. Basils," where I had to work the sliders to differentiate the colors. You may also want to try the graduated filter selection to darken the sky. Then go ahead and use all the other tools in Photoshop as needed. In particular, the layer masking techniques described by Vincent Lawrence in the May 2015, *PSA Journal* are often useful.

Then take another look at the histogram. You want to see a full range of shades, from dark black to whites with just a hint of detail, and a good range of shades in between on the histogram. I find, for my work, that a bit of a "tail" on the black end of the histogram often helps the picture. I usually want no "tail"—washed-out highlights—on the light end. Make the necessary adjustments. In my experience when judging, lack of good blacks is one of the most common problems. It is useful to have a well-calibrated monitor, but I find test prints essential.

When my wife and I were younger, we travelled independently, often renting a car and doing all the research ourselves to find places to visit. As we got older, the advantages of organized tours became more attractive. I sometimes look out of the bus and wish I could yell "Stop! I want to take a picture," but tour leaders have taken me to a variety of places where good pictures abounded, places that I would never have found on my own.

We travel primarily to see the world, and only secondarily for photography, so we use regular tours: Road Scholar and Smithsonian Associates are favorites. No, the tour leader will not get you to the best tripod holes during the "golden hour," but you can often find ways to get the pictures anyhow. Sometimes, it's as easy as getting out of bed. Some of the best pictures I took on our recent trip to Norway with Road Scholar were taken from the window of our dorm room at Lofotens Högskole. Often, you can leave the tour when they are going to the sixth cathedral of the trip, and wander on your own. Just be sure the tour leader knows not to include you in "the count," you know where and when to meet the bus, and you are there on time! I seldom use a tripod on tours, though I often do when shooting alone. With image stabilization and the ability to use higher ISOs in modern equipment, the tripod

Bruges Belfrey

is usually not necessary, and it's hard to use one in a tour group.

Apart from making prints, telling others about your travels can be a lot of fun. One of my favorite outlets is the "Trip Tales" series at our lifetime learning institute. Here, telling of the trip is the main objective, but the pictures carry the tale. I find PowerPoint to be the best framework for these presentations, but any presentation software that allows you to click manually through the slide show should work. I always use a plain, dark gray background for my slides, not white. The viewers' eyes will go to the lightest color, and I want them to look at my picture, not the background. Trip Tales have given my travel photography a new dimension. As I travel, I need to take pictures to tell the story of the trip, rather than just those that might make winners at exhibitions. That adds another set of challenges and a new dimension of interest for me when travelling. See if your local lifetime learning institute has something similar. If not, offer to start it!

Most of all, remember that photography is about having fun! The most important question about any final image you produce: Does it make YOU glow a little when you view it?

Moraine Canoes

Artist's Statement

I do photography for fun. The fun, though, lies in trying to produce an image that will convey to the viewer not only the scene but some of the emotions that I felt as I viewed it. Photography has meant that I had an activity that fit into my life from my working years through retirement and from mixing chemicals to changing pixels. n my working years, the darkroom was a way to relax from the problems of work. Whatever problems I had at the office, I could go down into the darkroom and start wrestling with a negative. Within five minutes, I had forgotten about the rest of the world. In retirement, the computer has replaced the enlarger, but I still can spend many happy hours doing photography. Trying to sell my work would have interfered with that, and I have never been interested in going commercial.

I'm primarily a print photographer. I enjoy taking pictures and processing them to create an image that reflects what I "saw" when I viewed the original scene. What you "see" is a complex product of the image formed on your retina and the processing of that image in your brain. A "straight" image often will not produce that result, at least for me. Some people call the darkroom or computer work "post-processing," but for me it is integral to the process of creating that image. Decades of doing it in the darkroom, enlarging 35mm negatives to 16 x 20 inch (40.6 x 50.8 cm) prints, taught me to fill the frame when I took the picture and try to nail the exposure, but it also taught me that some cropping, dodging and burning was usually necessary. Ansel Adams is often quoted that "The negative is the score, the print is the performance," and I like that philosophy.

I made the transition to digital in the early 2000s. I found that all the adjustments--dodging and burning, adjusting contrast, etc—that are part of printing were not only easier, but more precise, on the computer. At first, though, I did not think the technology of the early cameras gave me adequate detail, so I continued to use my Pentax 6x5 to take the images and then printed them digitally. When the technology improved, I completed the switch. I also started doing color prints for competition. Some photographers (I'm one) think a good black and white image is more difficult to make than a color one. You don't have color to carry the message; it all has to be done with shades of gray.

I'll take pictures of anything, but I do most of my work outdoors with natural light (and a little fill flash now and then). I especially enjoy taking pictures of scenery, trying to bring home for myself, and to show others, the interesting and beautiful sights my wife and I see on our travels. ■