



What is fine print photography?

How to get a fine print using systematic working methods and how to create works with aesthetic and artistic attributes. A personal way of life for this art and some ideas about it.

The name is well known – **fine print photography**, or better known by the concept of fine art printing is the art of the perfect photo, perfect in any way. Both, as a skilled craft, meaning the ability of reaching by a structural working method, from the picture idea to the finished print with a highest gray-scale quality, as well as in creating a convincing artwork in an aesthetic and artistic way. The eye, the heart and the mind are demanded in a similar art.

Activities

I have devoted myself to the **pure** fine print photography. I don't work due my own philosophy of life, in a serial way. Series often looked upon in the past, on which one can quickly see that the creators apparently suffered from lack of ideas or constraints of creativity convinced me that **a single photo** as well can tell **a complete and in itself coherent story** – I regard every single photo as a finished work in itself and **dedicate each picture the same, undivided attention**. For me there cannot be artworks from the production belt. Those to whom the philosophy of ZEN is familiar would better understand to let himself in to every single motive and dive in its same in order to grasp its inner core – by deep meditative sinking and concentration on a single (intellectual) point without any assessment (since the perception would influence these), **the total identification and therefore under-standing of that looked object is reached**, just because this non-assessment makes unbiased openness possible. I am indeed less interested in definite motives or topics but instead at **the best possible translation of every single motive**. For this reason you wont find also no special thematic order in the gallery part. Please, let yourself in to every single photo as a detached work ...

This of course doesn't exclude the fact that some artworks can complete each other thematically or esthetically – in such cases I also like to combine variations of a motive in my exhibitions to stimulate the observer and to lead him into the part of the co-designer. The often following discussions are, beside looking at the works of art of other contemporary and historic (picture) artists, very inspiring and stimulating as well. These discussions should also be seen as an invitation for **communication**.

Promoted by the medium of Internet but at first carried and brought out by the common love for the **art of graytones** an active exchange exists in the circle of the fine art photographers, in irregular intervals, eye to eye or lens beside lens. Emphasis on the efforts of GRUPPE V and their friends of fine art photography should be done who try to give photography its status again which once was created by the legendary GROUP F/64 with their well-known members ANSEL ADAMS, EDWARD WESTON, IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM etc.

After great manufacturers within the last decades “cleaned” their stocks up the future of fine art photography looked rather gloomy. By the great involment of many small stores (GIGABITFILM, HEILAND ELECTRONIC, KONTRASTE, LOTUS, MOERSCH PHOTOCHEMIE, MONOCHROM, WISNER, etc.), which calculate the success not only in sales volume but who were concerned about photography, the total decline was prevented. Under partly adverse circumstances they even succeed in getting and offering some very sophisticated, classic materials or even further developing these. It is left to hope that this promising development continues. The internet also fundamentally contributes to this development. In order to transfer photos into this new medium of picture presentation in the best possible way and **with the furthest-reaching feeling of the originals**



into the digital world, I was soon confronted with the task and challenge to take the things into the own hands. Awakening interest and increase of practical experience resulted in several, one by one, different versions of my homepage. Just like in photography I am more concerned about the **best possible presentation of my works and the person standing behind them** rather than the (technical) programming pastime. **The proper and analogous preparation of technical and visual informations is authoritative** – photography still represents the center of my work. But the work with modern digital tools pleases me also very much so that I am strongly interested in the extension of this job.

Contacs

1998, I met in Braunfels at Wetzlar during the **3rd fine art forum**, for me an extremely impressive experience, the GRUPPE V. The job as the webmaster arose from the following contacts as of spring 1999. This job and naturally the friendly exchange of information and (creative) ideas are always stimulating and motivating also for my own (artistically) work.

Ways

Beside the further development of this classic form of art for us its all about a new, pure and more intensive form which nevertheless permits flexibility and is primarily free from superficiality and today's motto "news for all it takes". The wrong reputation of being static is found on the fine art photography. By the introduction of the flexible 35 mm film in the past it has come to a kind of **task-sharing in the photography**. New photographic languages got possible then. Why don't we even turn the tables? Which (artistic) consequences would it have, if today's technical quality of the large format was already possible on the 35 mm format? You find further information about this current topic at www.gigabitfilm.de.

The large format has due to the larger and therefore more clear focussing screen an unquestionable advantage of **better composition possibilities** which for many is the convincing reason for its exclusive use. In addition the **far more flexible possibilities of its sharpness guidance** ("Scheimpflug") which at smaller picture formats are not satisfactory if carried out. The technical work and further financial efforts forces the photographer to work more consciously and with more concentration.

The pure technical quality requirements can already be fulfilled with smaller picture formats, though. Artistic picture quality should therefore not be dependent on the choice of the picture format. Well, my personal preference of the large format is based on purely formal aspects. I also like processing large formats in the darkroom far more pleasantly.

I recommend to every 35 mm film photographer at least temporarily to work with the large format since this trains the eye and the technical abilities in a greater measure which a 35 mm format isn't capable of.

This far common reproach of being static of the large format is likely to be based on **non flexibility and prototype way of thinking** in the heads than on definite facts. This question is also not quite right – the critic should ask himself once whether the comparison with the technically (but however still not artistically) flexible 35 mm format doesn't work out of place easily. Hardly anyone would reproach the watercolorist, or comparison, that his pictures are blurred! These critics should just wonder whether if they haven't understood the application field of the large format camera! The static lies more in the **choice of the subject field** than in the technical equipment.

The question also arises why and for which reason the large format photography and particularly the fine print art has to justify itself? This added as a remark, would fine print art be



more flexible if I would work with smaller formats? This question reminds somehow of the famous comparison between apples and pears. Well, those of you whose hearts doesn't beat for the fine print art way should simply not work with it and put its efforts rather in the service of spontaneous and "at the right moment" photography. Tolerance and flexibility finally make free spaces which enrich the complete area of photography. In addition, every branch of photography has its weaknesses and problems!

Perhaps the difference between a fine art photography and spontaneous photography is, that at the former the photographer shows an element from the reality and the latter waits what (by chance) is offered to him. Fine Print art is always realized after a picture strategy for spontaneous photography isn't – if I spontaneously make a well representing negative this for certain is a terrific thing but regularity is only possible with the conceptional method of the fine print art. Both ways are already different by the set up and can therefore only conditionally be compared with each other.

I personally go even a step further. The reproach especially against the commercial photography, that it is an **artificial reality**, this may seem for today's people plausible (The very awake people today will already have thought longer about the question, what this reality really is!). But this is exactly what is all about both in the commercial photography and in the fine print art. A particular moment, an event, an object shall from the large chaos which the is world now, **taken out and be reminded**. The **showing of the special**, the **exhibition of the individual and valuable** is the key to the understanding of advertising and the fine print art. The **actual value of this subject**, the right to make this subject stands of course on another sheet and is highly individual. Thus the creator of the work of art and also the advertising campaign is mirrored through the choice and conversion of the subject. Who is able to understand the value of this special subject now won't have any problems to find a particular form of aesthetics in it. It will be clear to him that the value of this subject is based on its unusual features and not on the fact that it is "new". A well-known but nevertheless convincing and **for the subject suitable conversion** always has to be preferred to a still so new but not to the impractical. New ways of seeing make only sense, if they **lead to a higher understanding of the subject in itself!**

Frequently an understanding of the subject arises only **during the course of time** e.g. by cultural or other intellectual events – not seldom were artists or scientists of their times ahead! It is also plausible that not everyone can have the access to every subject since every individual is a child of its inheritance and their influences and therefore most individual. It will always have its **own scales** for the assessment of a work of art.

It seems to me also important to mention that a static picture can get its spontaneity from the **sense and meaning of its content!**

The large format photography personally still represents the crown of creative technical-working for me. It forces me to the **concentration on the essential** both in the working technique and artistically – I like to obey this support, thus it provides the base for my artistic ambitions in order to transfer my "inner world" onto the paper. In other words – I am hoping that I hereby have spoken from the souls of other fine art freaks and expressed that this so called non flexible large format photography is the foundation stone for my artistic actions.

Translated by Christine Cavanna (www.cavanna.de)