



photography

Monte
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Don't be slave to meter; use 'zone system' tricks

Two weeks ago, we considered the fundamentals of the zone system in black-and-white photography, pointing out that all light meters read for zone 5 (middle gray). Dark subjects are in low zones, light in high zones.

We also mentioned the need to place certain values in their proper zones. Skin should be placed in zone 6 and your white cat in zone 7.

But you needn't always meter one area, place it in the desired zone and let all other values fall where they will. You can control this, too.

Suppose you are photographing a subject with greater-than-normal brightness range. You want to keep shadow detail in zone 3, but that will put the highlights into zone 9 and you'll lose all detail.

Do you give in and follow the dictates of your light meter? Of course not.

THIS SITUATION can be controlled when you develop the film.

Less development time will not significantly affect values in the lower zones but will noticeably alter negative density in the high zones. This is called "minus" development.

If a subject value which falls in zone 9 is

developed to just enough density to print as zone 8, it has been shifted one zone down the scale. This is known as "normal minus one" development (N-1). Remember, "minus" development compresses the subject values into print value range.

Now let's turn to "flat" subjects, or those with a shorter-than-normal brightness range. To avoid a flat print, give the film additional development time. This is known as "normal-plus" development. N-plus development will move, for example, a zone 7 value to zone 8 print value.

Thus, "plus" development expands subject values into print value range, while "minus" development compresses the values. Other values also shift when plus and minus developments are used.

Keep in mind that high values (above zone 7) are affected most, middle values (zones 4-6) less, and low values (zone 3 and darker) hardly at all. Amounts of time added or subtracted from normal development depend on type of film, developer and so on, but are usually in 10-15 percent increments.

You don't have to use all zones in every photograph. Pictures that contain only the middle zones can capture the mood of a softly lit scene. Conversely, pictures

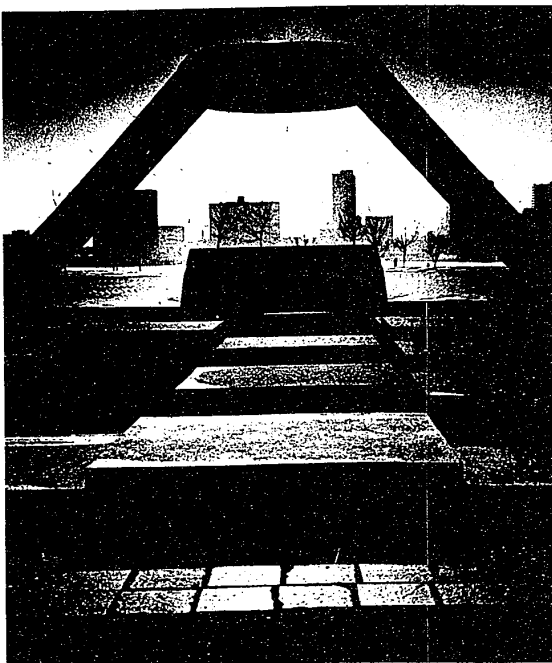
which display only the extreme zones of bright light and deep shadows will convey a feeling of stark reality.

PRE-EXPOSURE is another zone system tool for obtaining optimum negative. Pre-exposing film (you must have provisions in your camera for double exposures) is actually taking a picture of a gray card. It will add a certain amount of light units to the film. Adding extra light to the low scale values (zones 1-3) will move subject values into print value range when the final exposure is made.

But the same extra light will not significantly affect the high values — thus another way of compressing zones. In practical terms, pre-exposure will enable you to obtain detail in shadow areas without sacrificing detail in the highlights.

In summary: The zone system is a creative and stimulating tool. It brings us back to the basics of photography. It encourages us to think, to plan, to visualize and to produce the finest possible print.

© 1980 by Monte Nagler. The writer has photo exhibits opening this weekend at the Bixby Gallery in Ann Arbor and the Oak Park Public Library.



Both ends of the zone scale were used in this picture of the Dodge Fountain in Detroit. This high-contrast print gives a feeling of stark reality.

(Photo by Dr. Daniel Marks of West Bloomfield.)

We're all handicapped; accept it graciously

Somerset Maugham, an outstanding novelist of a generation ago, indicated in his autobiography that his stammering was one main reason why he started writing.

A physical defect, he pointed out, can be of utmost value to anyone, especially one who is striving in the arts. It may increase the depth and range of his insight. In his struggle to overcome the handicap, the artist becomes something he otherwise might not have been.

To prove his point, Maugham cited the testimony of other lives and made a convincing case.

The poet Byron had a club foot, novelist Dostoevsky suffered from fits of epilepsy, scientist Pasteur was crippled by a paralytic stroke.

Beethoven, the genius of music, became deaf. Milton, a supreme poet, was blind. Moses, the highest of the prophets, was slow of speech.

So runs the record of biography — much of the greatest in the world is the product of handicapped people.

HOW DID THEY do it? Each of us needs to learn their techniques because all of us are handicapped in some way.

Rare indeed is the person who does not feel a

moral
perspectivesRabbi Irwin
Groner

sense of inadequacy, failure or deficiency in some aspect of ability or function. To rebel and sink into self-pity is not the answer. It simply means failure and barrenness.

We must accept ourselves, our powers and our limits, not grudgingly, but graciously.

Since we all have difficulty in accepting the given and are reluctant to face facts, we engage in hypothetical thinking: If things were a little different... if my nose were not so big... if my parents were not so poor... if I had chosen a different profession or vocation... if I had seized the right investment opportunities... if I had not made the mistake of marrying Harry (or Gwendolyn).

How much better the whole prospect would have been if some of the "details" were different.

MATURITY involves acceptance. Each person enters into life with handicaps and imperfections.

A central task each of us faces in the formation of an identity is acceptance of those defects and limitations which are our destiny.

Self-acceptance is a prelude to responsibility and creative change.

It is impossible to delete those deformities and weaknesses which we are all tempted to despise without completely altering the person. If we do not like our lot in life, there are many others like us.

We must beware of the subtle ways in which we

cripple ourselves by rejecting the given terms in which life is granted to us.

Furthermore, there are usually some parts of any particular given world which can be changed or mastered by our will. There is almost always an area of freedom available to everyone.

Those creative personalities indicated above — the ones who have suffered from obvious handicaps but succeeded in the arts — have shown us how great and useful life can be despite apparent limitations. What counts is the spirit in which we live, our courage, determination and imagination, our mastery of ourselves and our understanding sympathy for others.

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