

Film for high contrasts

This week I'm directing my comments mainly to those of you who have darkrooms and do your own processing and developing.

And to the rest of you, please read on. You'll discover an interesting aspect of photography you may not have known about and at a later time may want to pursue.

Look closely at any black and white photograph and what do you see? Usually some blacks, some whites, and numerous shades of gray, all of which make up an image which you can easily recognize.

Now, imagine how a photograph might look if there were no grays at all — if the picture contained only blacks and whites similar to a pen and ink drawing.

Well, imagine no more. There is a film possessing such extremely high contrast that absolutely no gray values appear in the negative.

THIS FILM, made by Kodak, is called Kodalith. It is available in 4 by 5 sheet form. With Kodalith, you can produce truly dramatic results, many of which may not even look like photographs at all.

Begin by placing one of your favorite negatives in your enlarger. Negatives with a moderate amount of contrast work best. Choose a negative that is not too dark or too light.

Be sure to use a dark green safelight or no safelight at all. Make an exposure onto a piece of Kodalith cut to the largest size your enlarger can accommodate.

This is to facilitate handling of the negative. However, if you wish, you can make a contact exposure onto Kodalith under a piece of glass, using your enlarger as the light source.

Once the exposure is made, develop, stop, and fix in the normal way. While Kodak recommends a special Kodalith developer, your basic D-76 will do just fine.

You may have to experiment to get the correct exposure and development times. When your film has dried, take a close look and you'll see that you have a Kodalith "positive," a recognizable image made up of either clear or opaque areas on the film.



photos

Monte Nagler

TO GET a Kodalith "negative," repeat the process, this time contact printing the positive onto another piece of Kodalith. Now, after development, you have a Kodalith negative.

You may get some small pinholes in your film. If so, use Kodak Opaque and a brush to eliminate them. You can also use opaque to paint out areas on the negative you wish to appear white on the finished print.

Once your Kodalith negative is completed, simply make your print in the normal manner. Or, if you want a different look, use the positive Kodalith to produce a print. It's as simple as that. Want to experiment even further?

Produce a Kodalith using a color transparency instead of a black and white negative.

Then, after developing, sandwich the Kodalith with the transparency just off-register (slightly out of line) and place in a glass slide mount. You'll have a truly exciting slide to either project or from which a print can be made.

Using Kodalith requires very little darkroom skill other than that needed for normal printing. You'll be excited at how easy it is to work with and delighted at the dramatic results.

Monte Nagler

Saving art for posterity

This is another in a series of lessons on art and drawing by special columnist David Messing. He has taught for eight years and operates an art store, Art Store and More, 18774 Middlebelt, Livonia. Messing encourages questions and comments from readers. You may write him at his store or c/o Observer Newspapers, 23352 Farmington Road, Farmington MI 48024.

By David Messing special writer

I am 36 and aging fast. Just look at my photo. Really this photo in the paper doesn't do my eye bags justice. They are much bigger and darker. I am already into the corrective combing stage and hate to go out on windy days. Even my beard is turning white. I know it is just a few white hairs here and there, but it is getting a little painful plucking them out every day. One friend said a white beard is very distinguished. But I'm only 36, I

Artifacts

want to be cute, not distinguished. I have always been relatively unconcerned about my age until I became "28ish" and "29ish," then I began to worry about the "big three-0." As a matter of fact I had a traumatic experience at that time in my life. I always got confused about my age. Since I needed a pencil and scratch pad to figure it out, I never took the time to calculate my correct age. So when I thought I was 25 getting close to 30, I was shocked to discover I was already 29 turning 30.

At my own birthday party, I couldn't believe it when my wife put 30 candles on the cake. I still feel that I lost a year somewhere back then.

SINCE we can do nothing to halt the passing of time, it is a particular blessing to be an artist. Certainly any work of art outlasts its creator. How inspiring to think that an expression in the form of art whether it be in drawing, painting, sculpture or writing can clearly speak long after the voice of

the artist is silenced. This thought adds a little weight to those many quick sketches most artists have laying around. Indeed a significant percentage of art works we frame at the art store are cherished pieces, perhaps only casually observed during the artist's lifetime. For this reason I feel it is of particular importance that your choice of paper and media be of good quality so that your works of art will hold up to the passage of time.

This week we framed a pencil drawing done in 1977. It is hard to believe that in just seven years this paper had drastically yellowed and even cracked in some areas. When you consider the time spent doing any work of art it would be a shame if it turned out beautifully and was on an inferior grade of paper. If this happens, you can always transfer your drawing to better paper. The best way to approach this, however, is to do a rough sketch on bond, lay-out or poster paper. When you have established all the critical areas transfer (by rubbing graphite on the back of your drawing) the main shapes to a good quality paper. High rag or 100 percent rag paper has a good chance of staying white over the passing of time. I had better get to a question to change the subject before this sounds like a life insurance commercial.

DIA has slide show for kids

The Detroit Institute of Arts is offering eight free slide presentations this year to fourth, fifth and sixth graders in the metropolitan area.

Co-ordinated by The Art to the Schools Committee of the DIA, trained volunteers bring slides of DIA art objects into the classroom and lead a discussion of them with the students.

Interested teachers can call the DIA to arrange a presentation. The volunteers undergo a year-long training program given by Michael Farrell, art history professor, and various curators from the DIA education department.

"Portraits and People" the museum, arts of Asia, has been added to the Native Americans and African, and the 20th Century.

The "Home Team" Advantage

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