

Careful composition produced this subtle, artistic photograph of a pond near Juneau, Alaska by Monte Nagler. Notice the striking graphic quality he was able to obtain.

Think of yourself as a photo artist

Even though photography has been around for more than 150 years, only within the past 15 has it been widely accepted as a true art form with collections to be found in major museums throughout the world.

Obviously, not all photographs are great works of art. Most are worth little except to the people who shot them and those in the picture.

But the important thing I want to convey to you today is to believe that your photography can be an art and that as a person deeply interested in photography, you are an artist.

You paint with light, and your subject is life itself. Look at your photography as a wonderful opportunity to create.

HOW CAN you begin to think of yourself as an artist? First, by likening yourself to a sculptor. A sculptor begins with a block of stone, his whole. Then by chipping away with his chisel, he ends up with his finished work. Thus, by process of elimination, a sculptor derives his completed art.

Similarly, a photographer derives his finished product by a kind of process of elimination, a zeroing in on his subject. An initial look at the subject is the photographer's "whole."

Then by proper lens selection, camera angle, selective focusing, light direction and quality, time of day, the photographer "chips away" like the sculptor and ends up with his finished art.

Remember that it's not the chisel carving the stone — it's the sculptor. Similarly, keep in mind that it's not the camera making the photograph — it's really you.

Learning to visualize in advance is very important in your photography and will help you to think in terms of an artist.

Glass artist shows work

Artist Janet Kelman will have a show of perfume bottles, windows and mirrors 1-5 p.m. Sunday, 1205 E. Lincoln, Royal Oak.

Kelman, a versatile artist, presently working with glass in a variety of forms, does commercial and private architectural installations as well as blown pieces.



photography
Monte Nagler

When you are composing a picture in the viewfinder, try to visualize the image as a finished print.

This is especially true for those who work in black and white where an interpretation of tones and contrasts is necessary.

EVEN when you don't have your camera with you, practice looking at things as if you were seeing through a viewfinder. You'll be amazed at what you will see.

Yet another way to bring out the artist in you is to say in your photographs how you feel about your subjects, remembering that you and your subject are the two most important ingredients in making a picture.

If you love flowers, for example, communicate this love through your photographs. Try to make a meaningful statement about flowers in your pictures of them.

The idea of a photograph, as in any art medium, is to create a visual interpretation of what you saw and felt and to share your vision with others.

© 1985, Monte Nagler

Short shots

• An exhibition of new photographs by Monte Nagler is at I Browse Bookstore, 35086 Northwestern, West Bloomfield.

• An exhibit featuring color photographs of Oakland County parks and facilities will be on display in six communities this fall and winter.

Dates for the exhibit, sponsored by Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, are: Farmington Branch Library, Liberty Street, Farmington, Dec. 9-27; Ferndale Public Library, Nine Mile, Ferndale, Dec. 27 to Jan. 21; Universal Mall, Warren, Jan. 21 to Feb. 3; Pontiac General Hospital, Pontiac, Feb. 3-18; and Huntington Woods Public Library, Scottia, Huntington Woods, Feb. 18 to March 3.

By David Meesing
special writer

To continue my talk on sculpture, I must say my very favorite form of sculpture is with permanently pliable clay. This type of clay never hardens and when you hear the ingredients you'll know why.

We used to make it ourselves down at good ol' Wayne State University. If I remember correctly the basic ingredients are: a couple wads of automotive grease, a quart or two of motor oil, about 13 lbs. of wax, and a couple of "who knows what's" of Jordan clay. Oh, yes the hardest part about making your own clay is talkin' your mom out of her turkey roaster. So once you have mucked this unlovely conglomeration into the turkey roaster, you... well... you roast it. Yes folks, within minutes the inside of mom's turkey roaster looked like the labra tarpits. And you the cook, have it smeared from your knees to your eyebrows.

You, then take a stick and with all your might try to stir this lumpy brown goo. When all the lumps are gone you let it cool and begin praying that mom will never again need her turkey roaster. So when it's all over you stand there looking like a mud wrestler in a room that smells like a dead horse, looking down at a pitch black turkey roaster.

I TURNED to my fellow cooks and asked, "if this was a musical movie

artifacts

would be singing, 'I did it my way' or 'What kind of fool am I?' Well there is nothing wiser than hindsight. Looking back at the experience and the fact that I made the effort to save money, I must say, I would never do it again. By the way Mom, now you know why I left your turkey roaster on the bus back in 1967. Well, counting my materials, one pair of jeans, one shirt, two bottles of shampoo and, oh yes, a turkey roaster the clay cost me about double what it retailed for in the art stores. Live n' learn, huh?

This type of clay has many popular brand names. The best known would be Artone, Plastacene and Plastalene. The closest to homemade, which by the way is excellent, is Artone and it sells for \$5 per two pounds. So whether you make it, buy it or find it, here's what you do next: build an armature, an armature can be as simple as chunks of styrofoam, wood or just any rigid support. The armature that is required of course varies with the sculpture you intend to do.

Another good benefit of an armature is that it provides the bulk of the sculpture which in turn saves on the amount of clay required. My favorite clay tools are a couple 80 cent wooden

tools and one or two wire loops. So the total of six pounds of clay and a few tools are under \$18. That is enough clay to create a life size head study. This is of course a good investment because you will continually reuse the same clay. Some of my clay that I use today came out of that first batch back in 1967.

Your sculpture looks great, but, my friend, the battle's only half over. Making the mold and casting your piece is still ahead of you. My favorite method for making the mold is with latex rubber. Your first step is to paint a thin coat of rubber onto your clay piece. Carefully, blowing out any air bubbles. The first coat will dry in about 20 minutes, then apply the second coat a little thicker. Allow an hour or two drying time. The wet rubber is bright pink and as it dries it turns deep red. Apply at least four or five coats, letting each dry thoroughly.

NOW BEFORE you pull the mold from off the original, mix up some molding plaster and mix a one, two or three piece mold around the rubber mold. Without this support mold, the rubber mold may balloon out when you pour casting plaster into it. The support mold takes about 45 minutes to make and is well worth the effort.

On a simple shape, however, you can merely stick the empty rubber mold to sand for support if the support mold seems too involved. Now with your support mold finished, separate the halves and peel the rubber from off of the original. Then place the support mold back around the mold and turn it upside down so that the base of the mold is facing up. Now mix your hydrate to a heavy cream consistency and slowly pour the mixture into the negative space of the rubber mold.

Hilt, shake or vibrate the mold to loosen and bubbles that might form against the rubber mold surface. Hydro stone will dry rock hard in about 20 minutes. Peel your mold off and there you are a perfect casting of your original and best of all you can cast many pieces as you like.

This is another in a series of lessons on art and drawing by special columnist David Meesing. He has taught for 10 years and operates two art stores, Art Store and More, Middlebelt, Livonia, and 265 N. Main, Plymouth. Messing encourages questions and comments from readers. You may call him at 322-4311, write to him at his store or in care of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 33203 Grand River, Farmington, Mich. 48024.



Kirk hosts yule concert

A special Yuletide performance of Benjamin Britten's magnificent "St. Nicholas" will be given at 7:35 p.m. Sunday in Kirk in the Hills, 1340 W. Long Lake, Bloomfield Hills.

The combined adult choirs of Christ Church Gross Pointe Episcopal and the Kirk Chancel Choir along with the Grosse Pointe Children's Chorus and a 22-piece orchestra will with Dr. John Douras and Frederick DeHaven, Christ Church music director conducting.

The grandiose work which tell the

story of the patron saint of children, seamen and travelers, is written for three boy sopranos, a tenor, two choruses, audience, orchestra and two conductors.

St. Nicholas was born at Patara in Asia Minor and died during the first half of the fourth century having served as Bishop of Myra, the capital of his native country, Lycia. He is the hero of many popular legends and is universally known to children in his disguise of "Santa Claus."

There is no admission charge and the public is invited.

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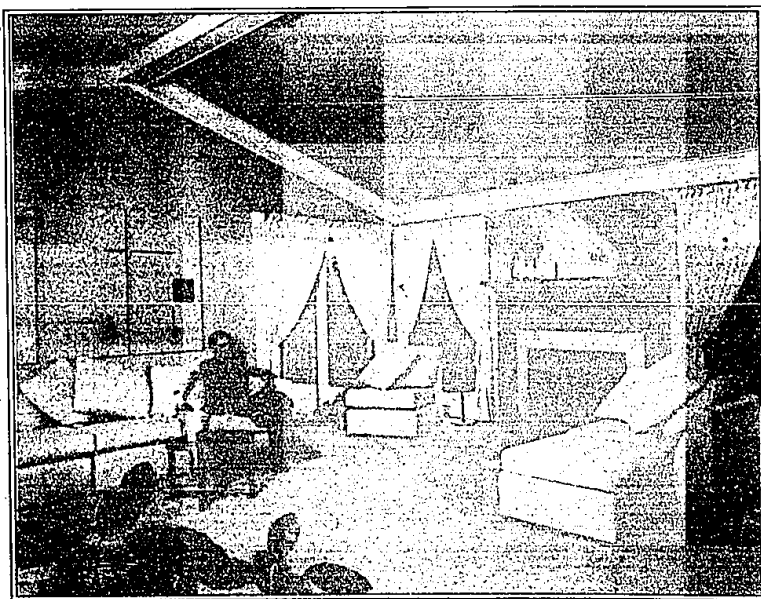
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