

Visit museums, galleries for inspiration



photography
Monte Nagler

So you've developed an interest in photography and just spent a few hundred dollars on a new camera with all the latest features.

You've even purchased a good "how to" book, maybe even taken a class and gotten a good understanding of the fundamental mechanics of photography.

If so, you're off to a fast start and you should feel good about your photographic growth thus far. But there is another important aspect of the art that is often neglected by aspiring photographers.

(I refer to this as the area of looking at pictures.)

How many of you have been to the photography gallery at the Detroit Institute of Arts or visited the many libraries which host photo exhibits? How many of you have seen the photographs at Birmingham's Pierce Street Gallery or Gracie Pointe Park's Gallerie 454, or visited Hales-Gallery of Birmingham when special openings for the public are held? There is a tremendous amount of knowledge to be gained by looking closely at photographs. Museum and gallery personnel are usually eager to help you and answer your questions.

Study photographs carefully. Look for things such as composition, how the photographer uses light, and how he performs in the darkroom. Look "into" the picture — see what the photographer was feeling and what he's trying to say.

Did you know you can learn a lot about a photographer by closely studying his work? Look at the magnificent landscapes and vibrant print quality of an Ansel Adams photograph or the simple subtleties of an Imogen Cunningham still life. You'll learn a great deal if you do. Also, your appreciation of photography will be enhanced and your own photographic growth stimulated.

Begin collecting books. Not just how to books, but photography picture books. Study the works of the masters. Learn technique and style. Photography books are an inexpensive way to have and enjoy many photographs.

Consider investing in photographic prints. There are many outstanding, young photographers whose work can be purchased at very reasonable prices.

Even the works of many well known photographers can be obtained at prices less than you might

think. Photography can be a handsome investment. And remember, purchase should be based primarily on your enjoyment and love of the print.

Being a complete photographer means much more than learning proper operation of your camera. It includes developing the skill and art and appreciation of looking at pictures.

When you find yourself truly enjoying pictures, learning from pictures and getting inspired from pictures, you'll know your photographic growth is becoming well rounded, and you'll find yourself heading in new, exciting directions.

©1987, Monte Nagler

As you look at this picture see if you can tell what Monte Nagler was feeling and what mood he was trying to create by isolating this solitary tree in the barren cornfield behind the stark fence.



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