

Nothing beats on-location art

HEVY, I'M an artist and a pretty observant guy. I look for color, shape, value and texture almost everywhere I go. But for an artist, I sure get into embarrassing situations. Let me tell you about a recent one.

I decided to eat a pastry and sip on some coffee while writing this article. So I took my new Dodge Caravan to the bakery and parked right in front of the door. After a minute or so in line at the counter, I realized that I had left my keys in the ignition so I went out and retrieved them. After purchasing my high-calorie goodie, I went out and sat in the van. I was horrified when I went to put my change in the ash tray. Someone had seen it was full of change and stolen all the coins right out of my van.

"Man!" I exclaimed out loud. "Am I glad I took the time to come out and get my keys?" I sat there for about a minute asking myself those questions that we all ask when something is stolen. You know like, "What's this world coming to?" "Of all the nerve!" etc.

Noticing crumbs on the carpet and

seat, I began brushing the passenger's seat with my hand. "The guy who stole my ashtray full of money," I thought to myself, "must have been smoking. In fact, the whole van smells like cigarettes!"

Finally in disgust, I lifted the steering wheel and jammed the key into the ignition. But — you guessed it — the key didn't work! Why? Because I was in the wrong van! This van was just like mine. A little dirtier and missing an ashtray but just like mine.

I NOW HOLD THE Guinness Book record, in the heavyweight division, for the fastest exit from a parked vehicle while clutching pastries.

So much for embarrassing moments.

I have, for years, defined the attempt of art as a personal statement colored with the artist's style and ability or a physical representation of an emotion or inspiration.

I have also defined the piece of art as an individual production restating the often stated or re-presenting the very present that is often an uncommon look at the common place.



artifacts
David Messing

I, for one, am always inspired by the exotic animal or far-away oddity. But when the paint hits the canvas I am, once again, painting from a photograph in a magazine. And my painting when done is ineligible for most art shows and certainly ineligible for art competition. The definition, "uncommon look at the common place," seems to be the answer when originality is the priority.

Artists of past centuries have understandably drawn and painted what was around them. With the wonder of photography, artists are, however, tempted to borrow a little here and there. And, in fact, an artist's stack of ripped-out magazine pages is affectionately called a "swipe file." I, myself, have an extensive swipe file. But for originality, nothing beats on-

location art. Now that summer is here, we should all be outside painting and drawing.

IF THERE IS A particular lighting effect that you admire, I recommend you take a photo to freeze the highlights and shadows. For me, the best way to do location art is to execute a quick color rendering, take some photos for details or lighting and then redraw or clean up the painting when I get home.

I am usually not that comfortable out on location. My back is usually sore, I always need the brush I left at home and a host of other reasons. But the uncommon look at the common place or thing is fascinating. Imagine a post with a couple of rusty nails sticking out. Who would paint that? But look closer, there is a bent-up rusty wire fence nailed to the post, casting beautiful shadow patterns across the ground. The cold wire and nails make a wonderful contrast against the warm and weathered wood grain of the post.

Maccabees sponsors Quest for Excellence

Maccabees Mutual Life will hold its fifth annual Quest for Excellence scholarship competition.

The nationwide, \$10,000 competition is open to all non-professional instrumental musicians, 15-22, living in the United States and Canada — string, woodwind, brass, percussion, harp, guitar and keyboard.

Musicians interested in entering the competition must send an audition tape with selections from an official qualifying repertoire, along with a contest application to Maccabees Mutual Life Insurance Company. Deadline for applications and tapes is Aug. 1.

Quest for Excellence is co-sponsored by radio station CKLW-AM 800. The semifinal and grand finals

are broadcast by the station.


The preliminary judging will be done from the audition tapes. The judges will select 78 contestants to advance to the semifinal competition.

Semifinal rounds will be held at Varner Recital Hall on the Oakland University campus in Rochester beginning Tuesday, Sept. 8. The 15-week semifinals will feature six competitors each week and will be broadcast live over CKLW. The performances will be from 8-9 p.m. and will be open to the public without charge.

The winner of each semifinal round will receive a \$110 honorarium from Maccabees Mutual.

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photography
Monte Nagler



A light reading off the bright sky in this Monte Nagler photograph underexposed the cypress trees sufficiently so they appear in the print as dark, dramatic silhouettes.

Silhouettes can heighten drama

You all know how backlighting can add impact to your shots. Today, I'll take backlighting one step further to where it can produce truly dramatic photographs.

This extra step is making silhouettes. Instead of using backlighting as rim lighting or as lighting to accentuate textures, use it to obtain striking silhouettes of your subjects.

How do you make silhouette pictures? Effectively using an early morning or late afternoon sun will do the trick. Compose carefully. Place a strong subject in the foreground with the sun behind. The sun can be just outside the viewfinder or directly behind the subject.

Take your meter reading off the sky. Because it is so bright, the sky will "call for" a minimum exposure, that is, a small aperture and/or a fast shutter speed. The foreground subject will then be underexposed to the point where it will appear in the finished print as a silhouette.

What subjects are good to use? Some of my favorites are stark trees, flying birds, interesting architectural forms, even people (you can

produce interesting profiles).

Try including the sun directly in your picture. Use slow speed film, an aperture of f-16 and a shutter speed of 1/500 second, paying no attention at all to your camera's meter. The result is that your foreground subject will reproduce as a black silhouette and the sun will appear as a shining star. Be careful not to look directly at the sun through the viewfinder because eye damage can occur.

For slide shooters, here's an idea that will result in truly exciting results. On an overcast day, shoot pictures of trees, birds, airplanes and lighthouses, with the bald sky in the background. Then remount these slides with transparencies of sunsets, clouds, or any other subjects your imagination can produce. The densities of both layers of film will darken the "sandwich" sufficiently so that the subject will appear as a silhouette.

Producing silhouettes is fun and exciting. It's an area in photography where your imagination and creativity can truly excel.

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