

a b s t r a c t i o n s

the idea of a quality considered apart from any particular instance

B&W images were my first photographic love. That is probably borne of the magic of experiencing a print develop before my eyes in a tray of developer. The infinite manipulation of that print through burning, dodging and cropping enhances the magic. Thirty years later creating B&W photographs still draws me, although I now sit at a computer rather than work in a darkroom. Although I now work in color frequently, B&W images continue to excite and inform me in ways that color cannot.

Color can carry an image, in fact, become the reason for the photograph, surpassing subject and composition in importance. A black and white photograph cannot fall back on color to define it. It must sing on its own. Many photographic masterpieces of landscape and human experience are B&W photographs. In them we are face to face with exactly what the artist wanted us to react to without the embellishment of color to distract us.

The style of my B&W work also serves to direct the viewer to precisely what I wish them to see. I choose to elevate the elements of composition to subject in this body of work. This was not my conscious intent from the outset; I began by just working instinctively. This is what I have come to know looking back at years of my work with an increased ability to understand it intellectually.

I have always been drawn to abstractions, isolating a detail of my subject. The detail would then take on new meaning, its qualities becoming the subject of the photograph. I find these qualities, the classic elements of composition - light and shadow, texture, form, balance, symmetry, repetition, space/negative space - compelling and gratifying to work with because I experience them intuitively. They are visual conventions that may be hard-wired in our brains. That is why a photographic composition suddenly feels right as I work. These visual elements are powerful and capable of evoking an emotional response in the viewer. I embrace these elements as the subject itself.