

Photographic Projects

TELL YOUR STORIES
DEVELOP YOUR STYLE
IMPROVE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY



Questions I am frequently asked:

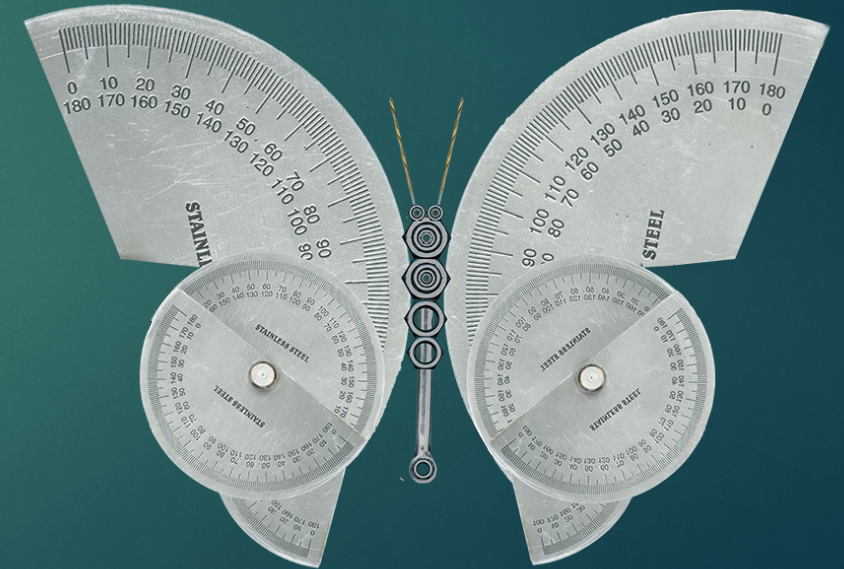
- ▶ How do I become a better photographer?



Toolbugz: Staghorn Beetle - 2024

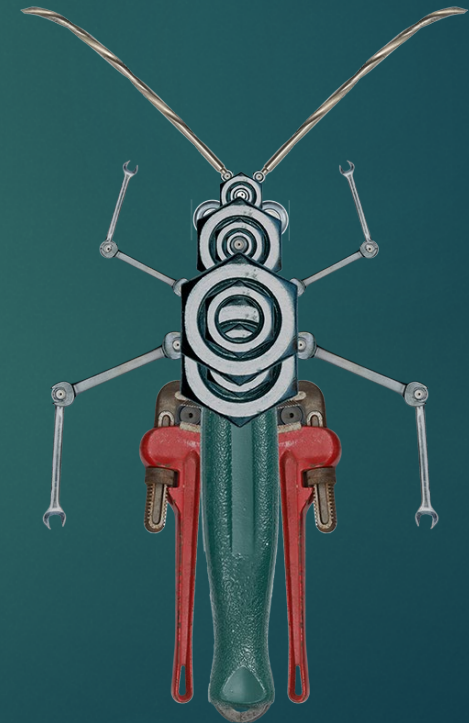
Questions I am frequently asked:

- ▶ How do I become a better photographer?
- ▶ How do I develop my personal style?
 - ▶ “Visual Language”



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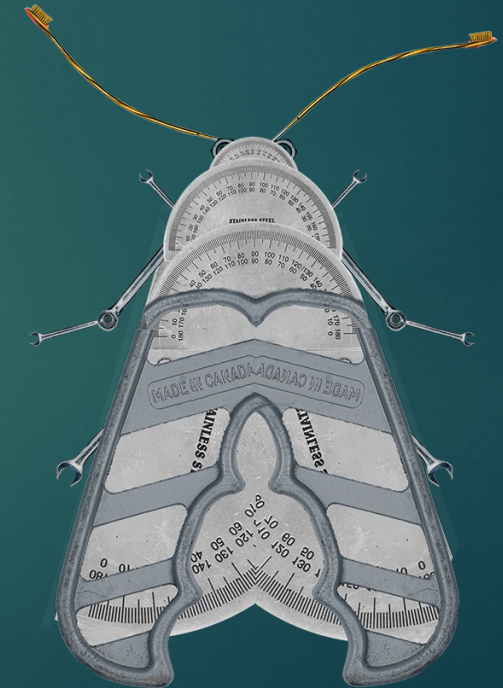
- ▶ How do I become a better photographer?
- ▶ How do I develop my personal style?
 - ▶ “Visual Language”
- ▶ How can I get people to take my work more seriously?



Toolbugz: Grasshopper - 2024

Questions I am frequently asked:

- ▶ How do I become a better photographer?
- ▶ How do I develop my personal style?
 - ▶ “Visual Language”
- ▶ How can I get people to take my work more seriously?
- ▶ How do I tell a story with my images?



Toolbugz: Moth - 2024

Create Projects

1. SERIES OF RELATED IMAGES
2. INTERNAL CONSISTENCY TO THOSE IMAGES
3. THEY “TELL YOUR STORY”



FANtasy: Crane - 2024

Photographic Projects

1. VISUAL LANGUAGE
2. PERSONAL STYLE
3. BODY OF WORK
4. STORY-TELLING



FANtasy: Heron- 2024

Single Image vs Project

- ▶ Single Image:
 - ▶ Immediate impact
 - ▶ One image carries the entire story
 - ▶ Viewed alone
 - ▶ Limited context

Single Image vs Project

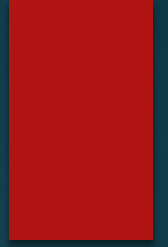
- ▶ Single Image:

- ▶ Immediate impact
- ▶ One image carries the entire story
- ▶ Viewed alone
 - ▶ Limited context

- ▶ Project:

- ▶ Cumulative meaning
 - ▶ Tells your whole story
- ▶ Images depend on neighbors
- ▶ Viewed as a coherent set of images

Why Projects?



- ▶ Skills development
 - ▶ Planning
 - ▶ Capture
 - ▶ Processing
 - ▶ Consistent “look & feel”
 - ▶ Discipline
- ▶ Stylistic development
 - ▶ Helps evolve your personal style and look
- ▶ Body of Work
 - ▶ Start developing your Body of Work
- ▶ Feedback
 - ▶ Gives your viewers more information about your work
 - ▶ **Remember: Social media “likes” are not feedback!!!**

Projects

- ▶ Blair Mill Project
 - ▶ Unpublished
- ▶ Nandgaon and Barsana, India
 - ▶ Street Photography Book (Travel)
- ▶ Nebulous Project
 - ▶ Gallery level work
- ▶ Toolbugz
 - ▶ Two books
 - ▶ Fine Art
 - ▶ Children's Book
- ▶ FANtasy
- ▶ Black & White Vases
- ▶ Turner Valley Gas Plant



Blair Mill Sheave Tower Project

MY “FIRST” PROJECT

Blair Mill Project – Cambridge Ontario

- ▶ Took almost 1 year to complete
- ▶ Five similar images
 - ▶ Shooting position
 - ▶ Orientation (landscape / horizontal)
 - ▶ Post-processing style (look & feel)
 - ▶ Different times of the year
- ▶ Constraints
 - ▶ Could only do these when visiting the area
 - ▶ No control of weather
 - ▶ Snow and vegetation were constraints



Blair Mill Sheave Tower - Winter, Cambridge, Ontario – January 2014



Blair Mill Sheave Tower - Fall, Cambridge, Ontario – October 2013



Blair Mill Sheave Tower - Winter, Cambridge, Ontario – January 2014



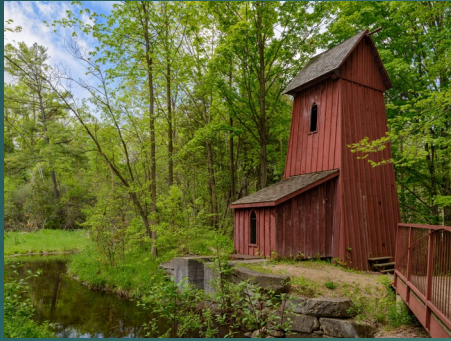
Blair Mill Sheave Tower - Early Spring, Cambridge, Ontario – April 2014



Blair Mill Sheave Tower – Late Spring, Cambridge, Ontario – May 2014



Blair Mill Sheave Tower – Summer, Cambridge, Ontario – August 2014



Blair Mill Sheave Tower Project – 2013 – 2014 by Manfred Mueller



Photographic Style

WHAT IS IT?

A photographer's **style**

- ▶ Recognizable pattern of choices that repeats across your work
- ▶ Decisions about subject, composition, light, colour, timing, processing, presentation, etc
- ▶ Consistent
 - ▶ Works look and feel inter-connected

A photographer's **style**

- ▶ Recognizable pattern of choices that repeats across your work
- ▶ Decisions about subject, composition, light, colour, timing, processing, presentation, etc
- ▶ Consistent (**enough**)
 - ▶ Works look and feel inter-connected



WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE MASTERS?





Ernest Hemingway – **Yousuf Karsh** - 1957

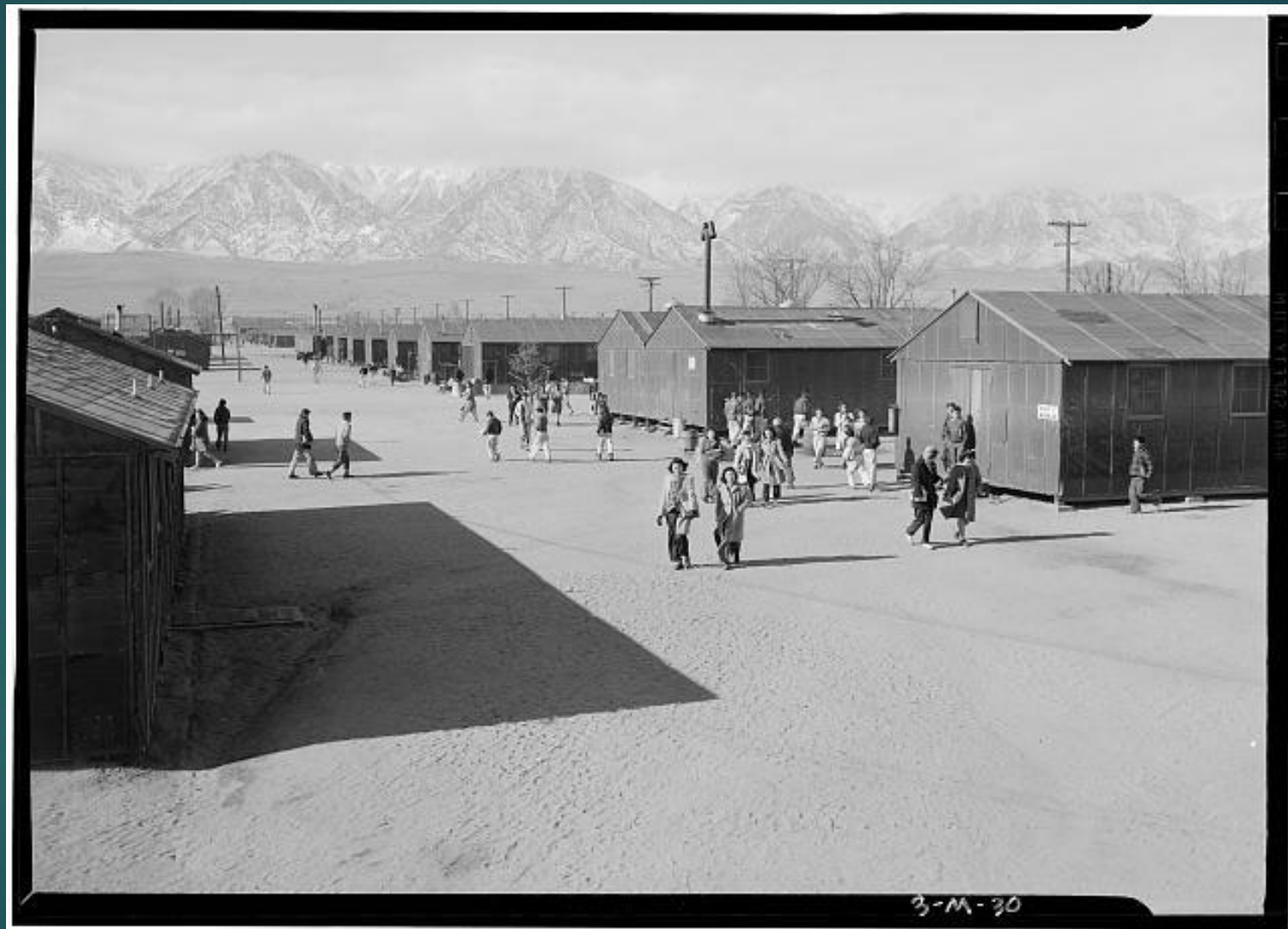


Ford Motor Company, Canada – **Yousuf Karsh** - 1951





Tetons and the Snake River – Ansel Adams - 1942



High school recess period, Manzanar Relocation Center, California - **Ansel Adams** - 1943





Railcuts #1 C.N. Track, Skihist Provincial Park, British Columbia – Edward Burtynsky - 1985



*National Holocaust Monument, Ottawa, Canada - **Edward Burtynsky** ~ 2017*



Development of Personal Photographic Style

TAKES TIME AND PRACTICE

EVOLVES - CANNOT BE RUSHED



Still Life in Motion: Red & White – April 2021



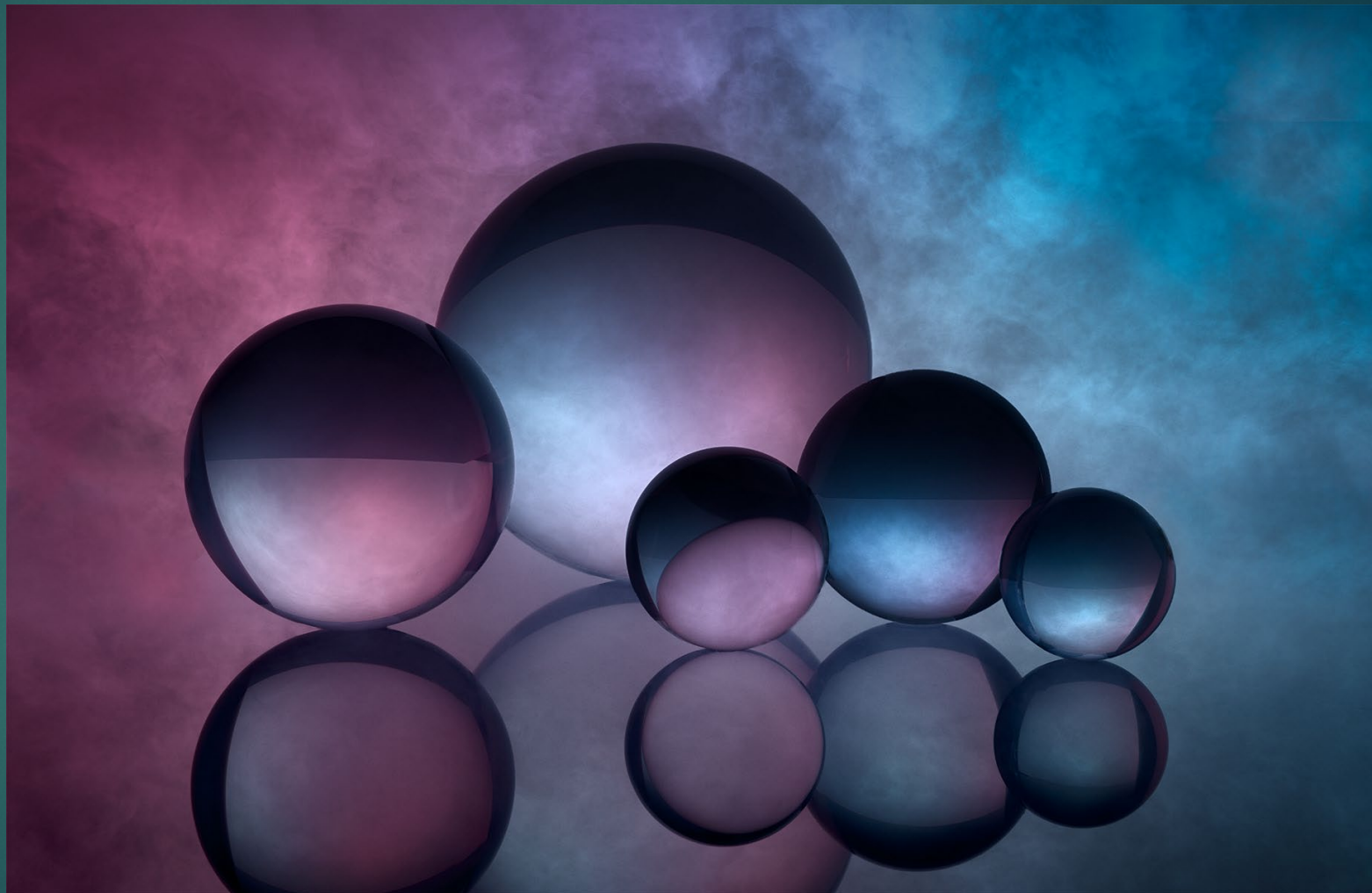
Blue Swirl – June 2022



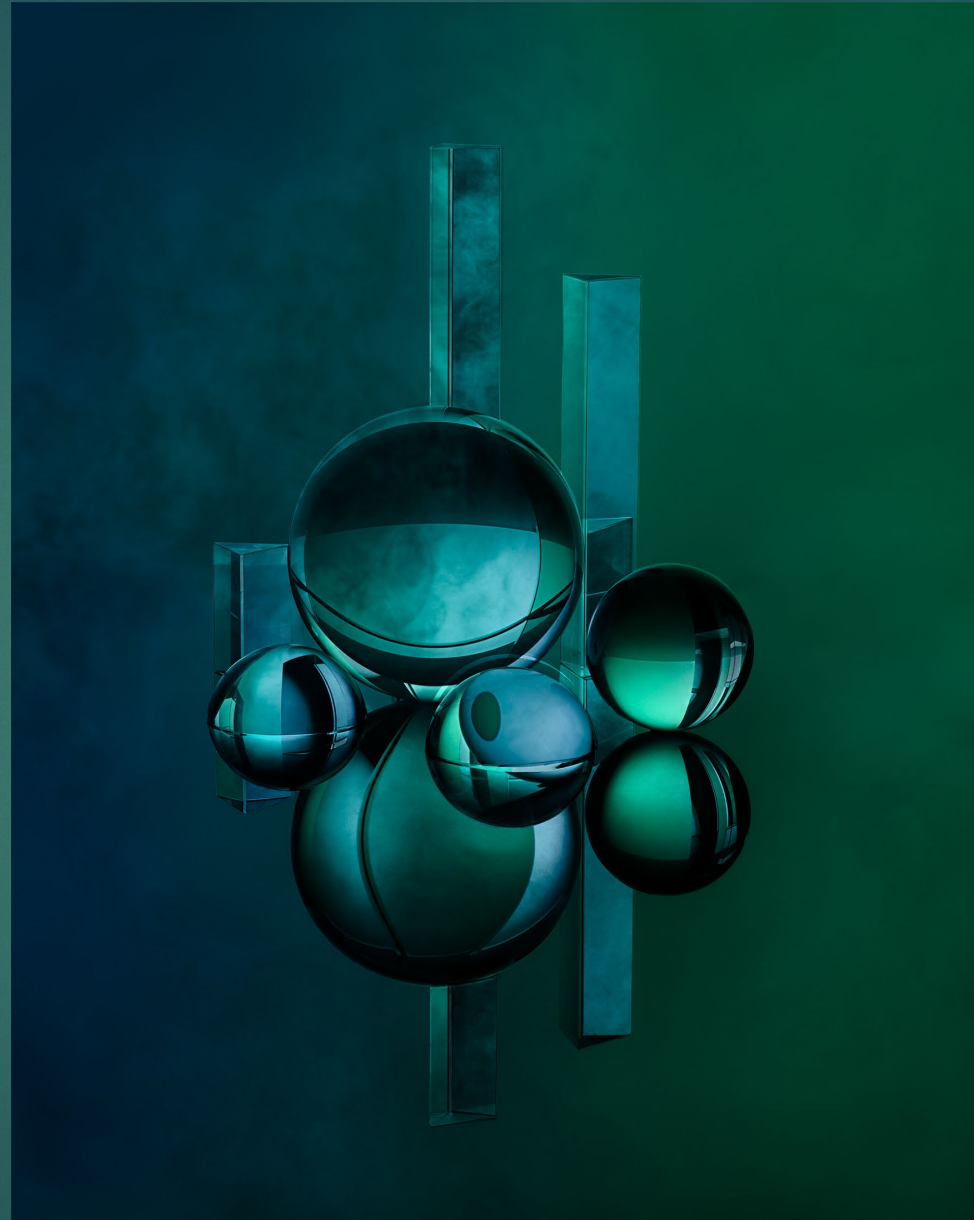
Hiding in Plain Sight – October 2023



Smoked & Stemless – July 2023



Spheres & Smoke – July 2023



Nebulous: Restaurant at the End of the Universe – November 2023



The Ascent – April 2026



LET'S LOOK MORE CAREFULLY...



Japanese Cast Iron Tea Pot on Wok Ring – Top View - 2022



Braun KM-32 – Right Hand Side View - 2023



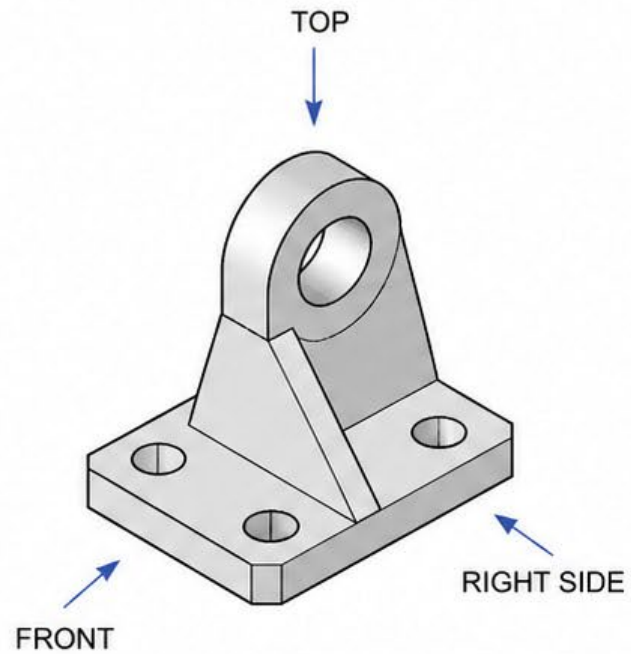
Chateau Albert Hotel, Bertrand NB – Front View - 2022



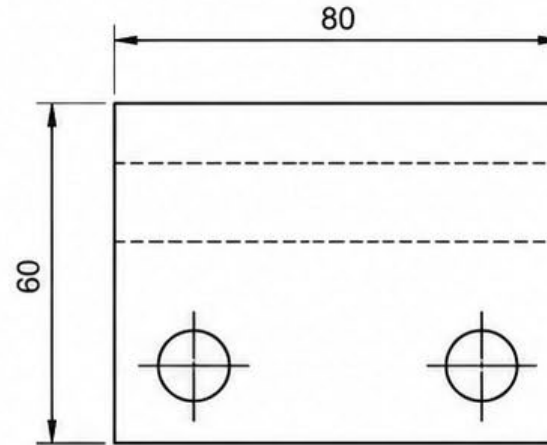
Extreme Makeup – Front View - 2010

ORTHOGRAPHIC PROJECTION

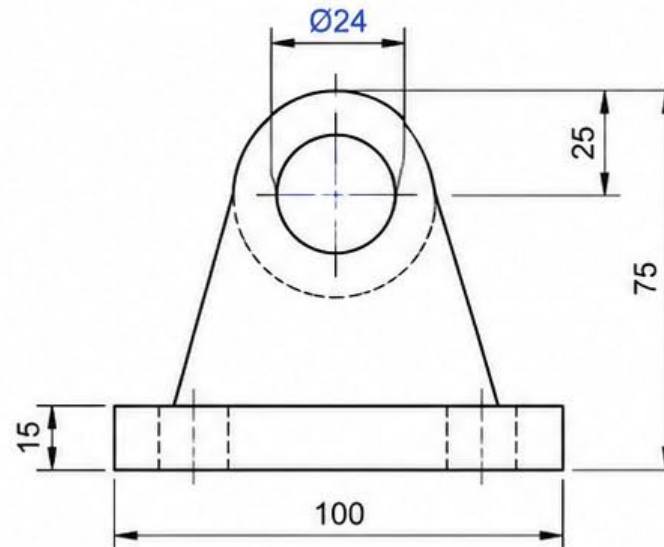
Orthographic projection represents three-dimensional objects using parallel projectors that are perpendicular to the projection plane.



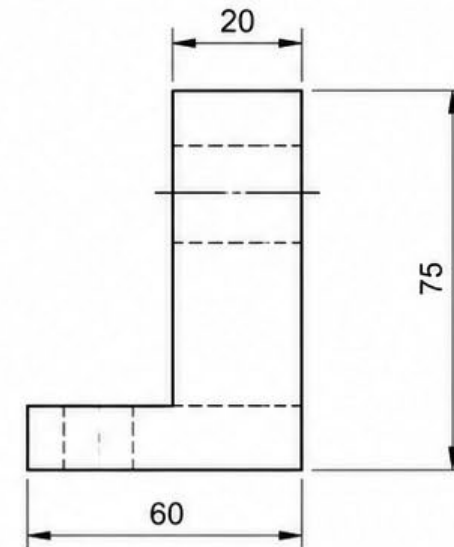
TOP VIEW



FRONT VIEW



RIGHT SIDE VIEW



Orthographic Projection

- ▶ Represents a 3-D object as a 2-D representation
- ▶ Commonly used in architectural and engineering drawings
- ▶ Photographs are 2D
 - ▶ Most photographers use techniques to add “depth”
 - ▶ I accept and celebrate this 2D look

My Style

- ▶ Intense colours
 - ▶ I virtually never increase saturation or vibrance
 - ▶ Use intense colours and lighting
- ▶ Monochromatic direction
 - ▶ Tend to have subtle additional colours
- ▶ Straight-on view, eye level
 - ▶ Orthographic projection influence
- ▶ Considered use of lighting in my compositions
- ▶ Considered backgrounds are an important visual element
 - ▶ I prefer simple ones



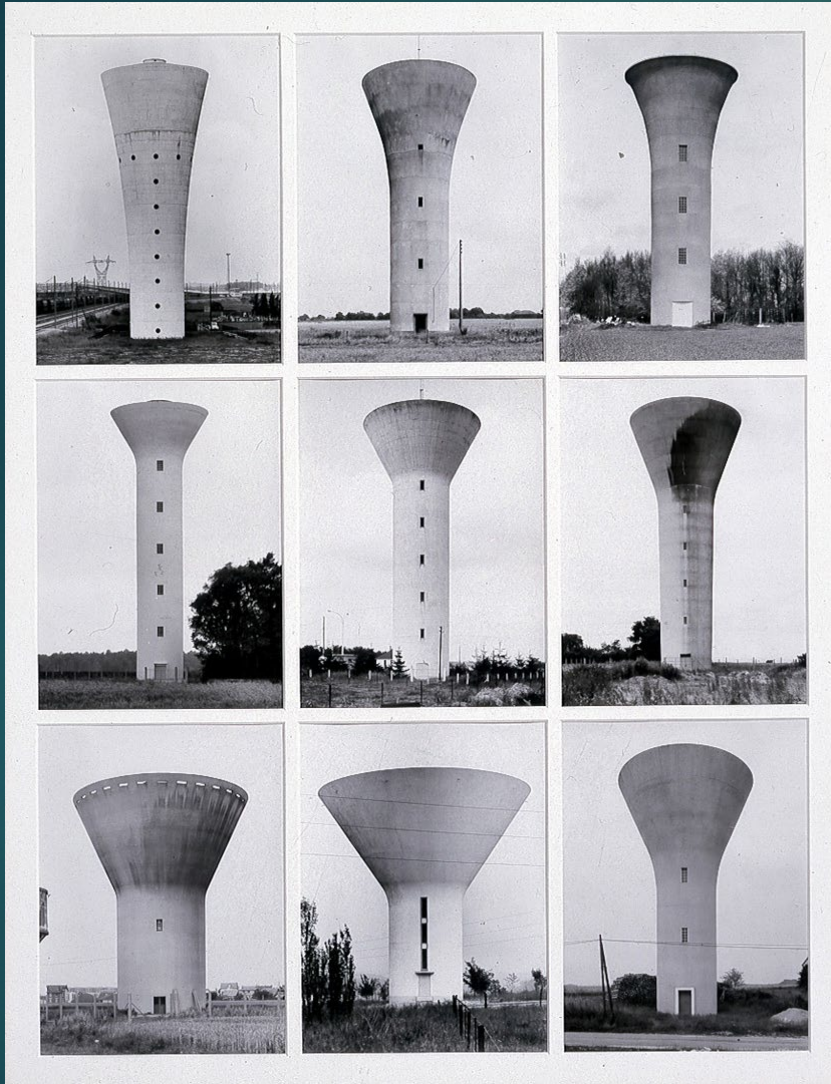
Visual Language

THE CHOICES A PHOTOGRAPHER MAKES WHEN CREATING AN IMAGE TO COMMUNICATE:

- INTENT
- MEANING
- MOOD
- EMPHASIS

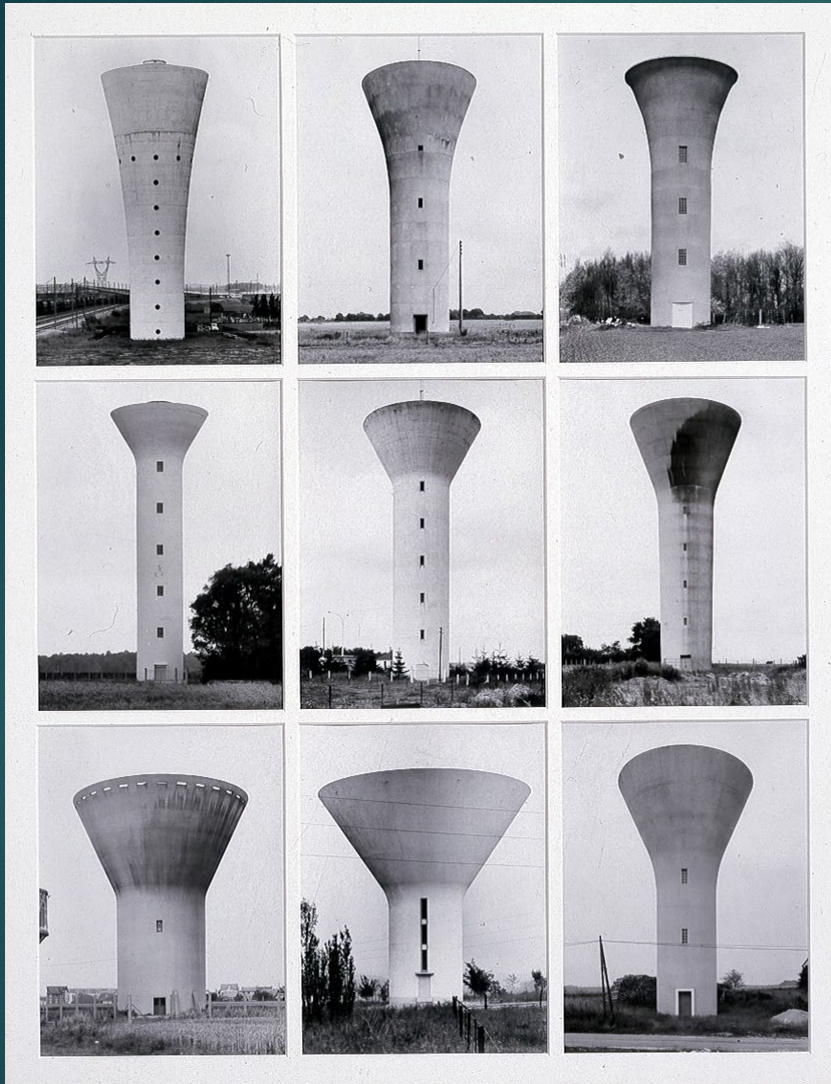
Water Towers

Visual Language



Bernd and Hilla Becher - *Water Towers*, 1972

Visual Language



Bernd and Hilla Becher - *Water Towers*, 1972

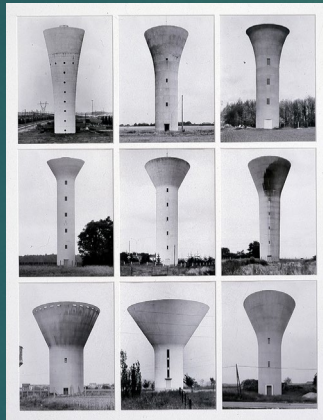


William Eggleston - *Plains, Georgia*, 1976

Visual Language

► Bernd and Hilla Becher

“What kinds of water towers exist, and how do their forms differ?”



► William Eggleston

“What does this particular ordinary place look and feel like?”



The subject is what was photographed; visual language tells us how the photographer chose to present it

Visual Language

- ▶ Commentary on the Bechers?
- ▶ Tower partly obscured by trees
 - ▶ Shot from below
- ▶ Layered composition
- ▶ Emphasis on a particular place
 - ▶ Rather than classification



George A Tice — Watertower, Rahway, New Jersey, 1994

Visual Language

- ▶ Character of industrial site
- ▶ Geometry
 - ▶ Lines & shapes
- ▶ Economic and physical
- ▶ Hints of dystopian setting



Walker Evans - *Factories*, 1932

Visual Language

- ▶ Transformed room into pinhole camera
 - ▶ Experimental photography
- ▶ Uses inversion, projection, layering and spatial ambiguity
 - ▶ Interior and exterior elements
- ▶ Architectural elements
 - ▶ Study of perception



Camera Obscura Image of the Water Tower in Park Hyatt Room, Chicago, IL, Abelardo Morell - 2005



“THERE ARE ALWAYS TWO PEOPLE IN EVERY PICTURE: THE PHOTOGRAPHER
AND THE VIEWER”

Ansel Adams



What is your visual language?

THE CONSISTENT USE OF VISUAL ELEMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHIC DECISIONS TO SHAPE AN IMAGE AND INFLUENCE THE VIEWER

Body of Work – Bernd & Hilla Becher



"Bernd and Hilla Becher: Landscape / Typology" – MoMA - 2008

Body of Work – Yousuf Karsh



"American Portraits" at The Rockwell Museum – Corning, NY - Yousuf Karsh - - 2019

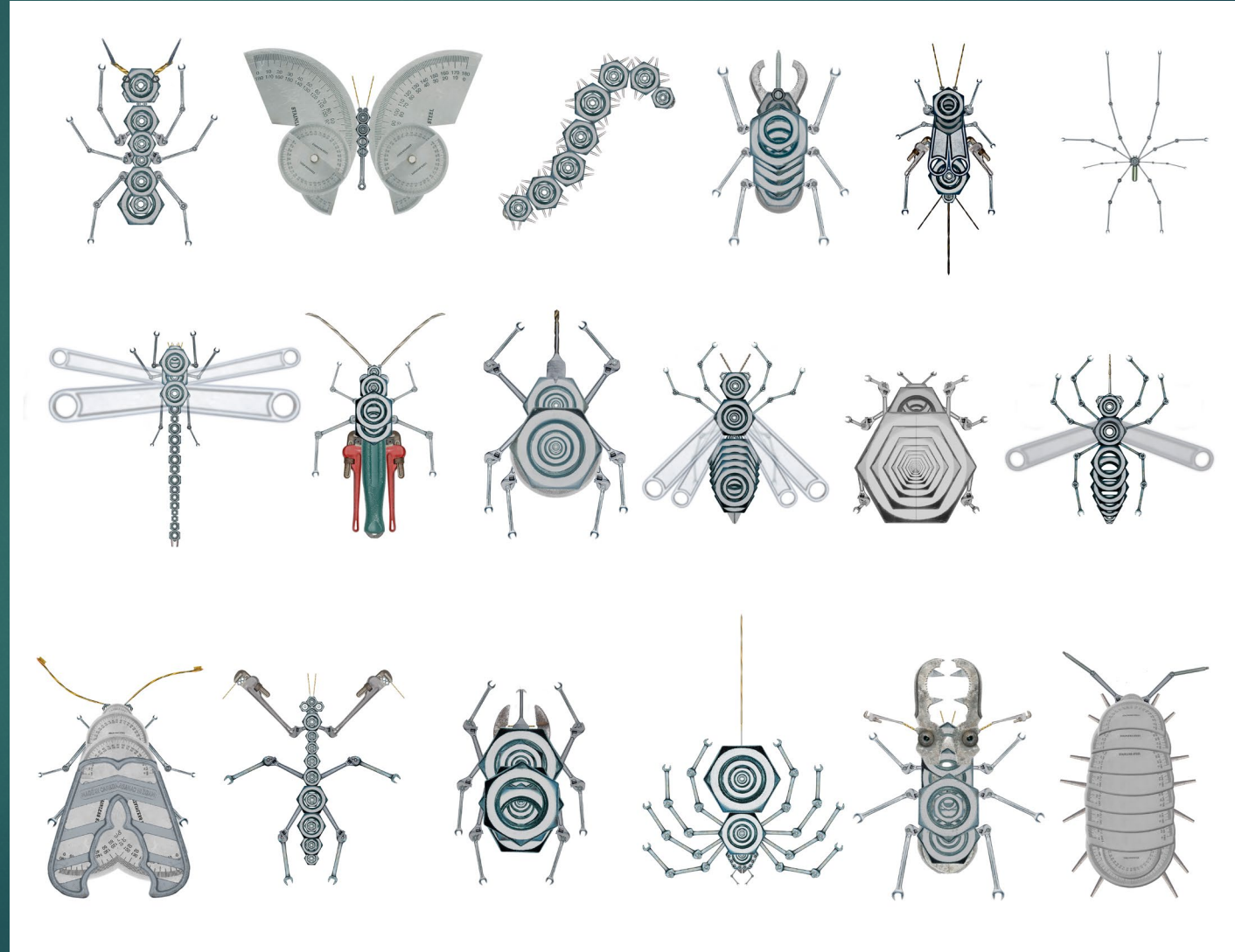
Body of Work - Burtynsky



Edward Burtynsky – Arsenal Contemporary Art – Montreal - 2023

Body of Work – Toolbugz

- It's a start



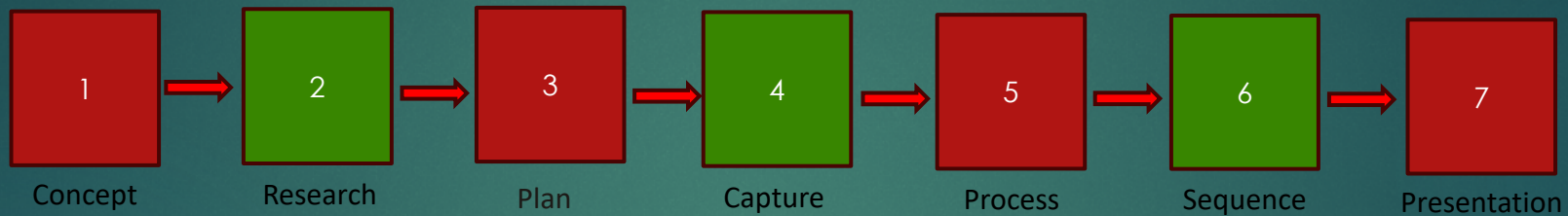
PRACTICAL SIDE OF PROJECTS

Planning & Executing a Project



Young Gunners, Nandgaon, Uttar Pradesh – India - 2017

Project Phases



- Phases not necessarily linear
 - Some looping back
- Photographers cycle between research, planning, capture, processing, and sequencing

Project Duration

- ▶ Fixed content
- ▶ Open ended



Through the Window, Nandgaon, Uttar Pradesh – India - 2017

Concept

- ▶ Topic + Medium + Visual Language + Visualization
- ▶ Drives many costs and creative decisions



Nebulous Series – 9 image typology, 2024

Concept - Medium

- ▶ Display
 - ▶ Gallery
 - ▶ Wall at home
- ▶ Book
- ▶ Online Portfolio
 - ▶ Website
- ▶ AV presentation



Towers – Juliaca, Bolivia - 2019

Home Display



Concept - Topic

- ▶ Choose a topic / assignment
 - ▶ Genre
- ▶ New shoot or use images you have already taken?
 - ▶ Need to supplement existing images with new ones



Morning Chai, Nandgaon, Uttar Pradesh, India - 2017

Concept

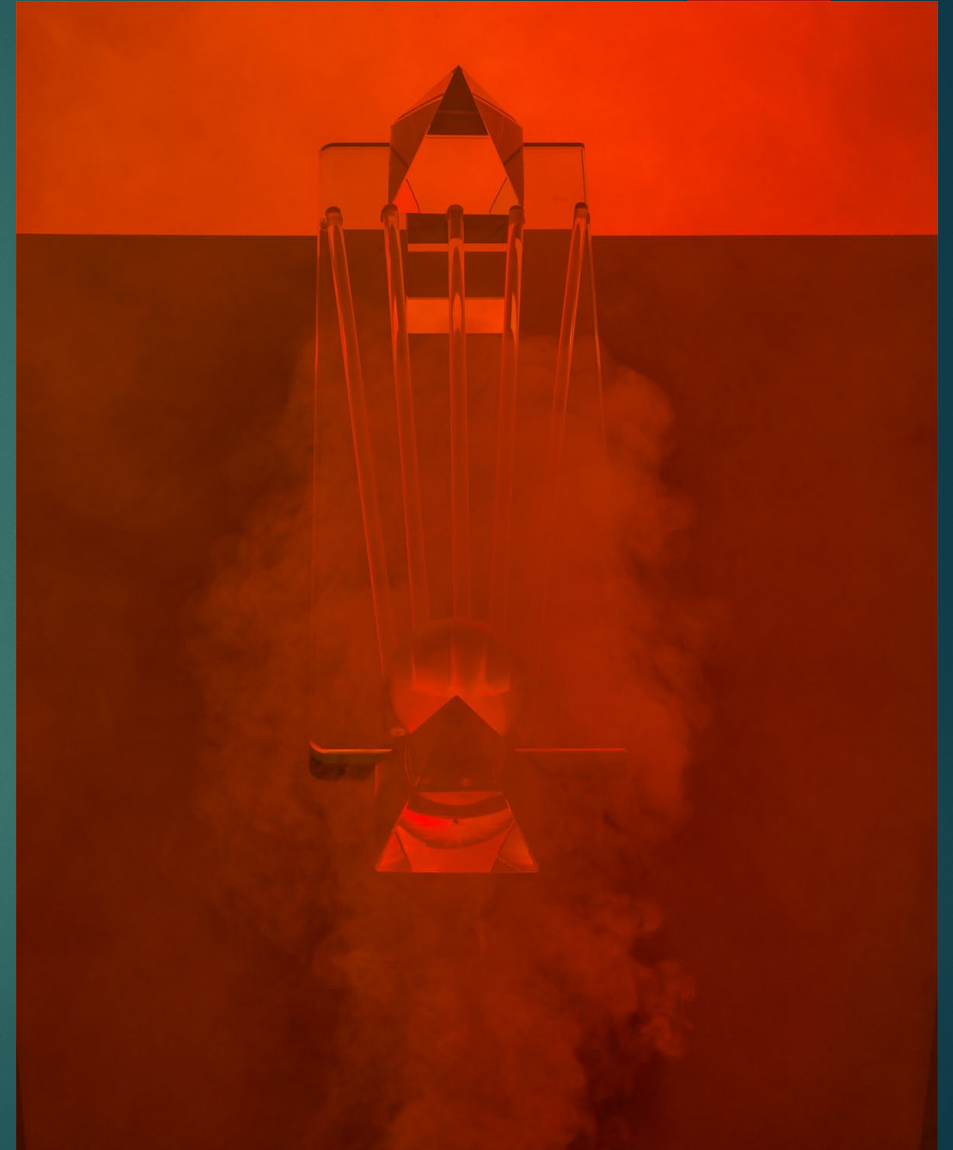
- ▶ Visualization
 - ▶ Need idea as to what final work will look like
- ▶ Presentation
 - ▶ Colour, Monochrome (ish) or B&W
 - ▶ Landscape / Horizontal orientation or Portrait / Vertical orientation or Square



Nebulous: Infinite Improbability Drive - 2024

Research

- ▶ How do I want to present my topic?
 - ▶ What have others done?
- ▶ What will prevent me from succeeding
 - ▶ Is this a “fatal flaw”
- ▶ Prototype
 - ▶ Test
- ▶ Timing
 - ▶ How long will it take me to capture the images
- ▶ What skills do I need to develop / refine
- ▶ Do I have the equipment I need?



Research

- ▶ Subject
 - ▶ Location
- ▶ Technique
- ▶ Equipment
- ▶ Post-Processing
- ▶ Display



Ox Cart, Nandgaon, Uttar Pradesh, India - 2017

Plan

- ▶ Shot list
 - ▶ How many images
 - ▶ Specific images
- ▶ Schedule
 - ▶ When is this work being done
 - ▶ Is there a shooting “window”
 - ▶ How long should this take
 - ▶ Schedule
 - ▶ Shoot to final product
- ▶ What equipment is required



Cooking Chapatis, Nandgaon, Uttar Pradesh -
India - 2017

Shoot

- ▶ Execute the shot list
 - ▶ Previsualize
 - ▶ Shoot more than needed
 - ▶ 15% - 25%
- ▶ Monitor for quality
 - ▶ Reshoot as required
- ▶ “Hero shot”
- ▶ Stay on schedule!



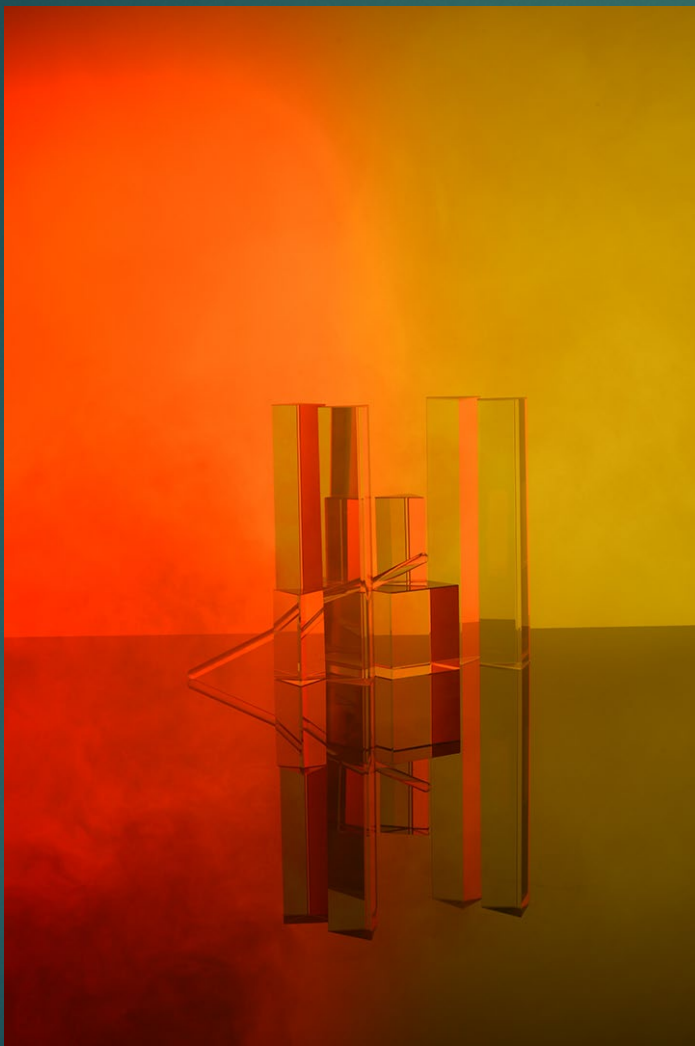
Manfred shooting at Lathmar Holi – Georgette Mueller - 2017

Previsualization



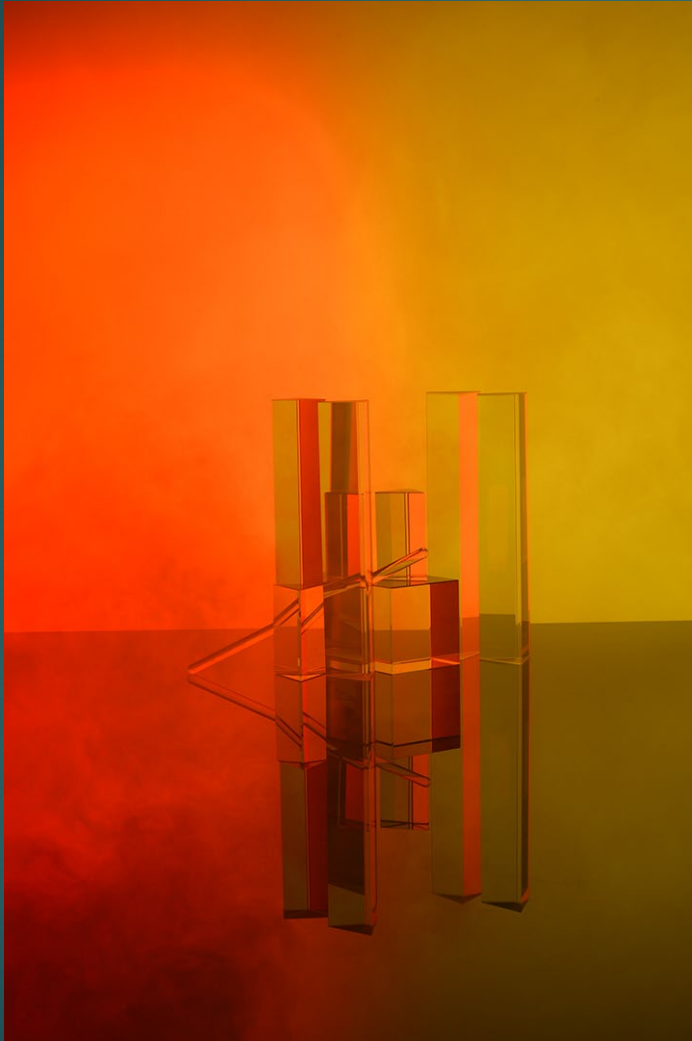
Nebulous – Shoot – 2023 - 2024

Previsualization



SOOC Shot - 2023

Previsualization



SOOC Shot - 2023

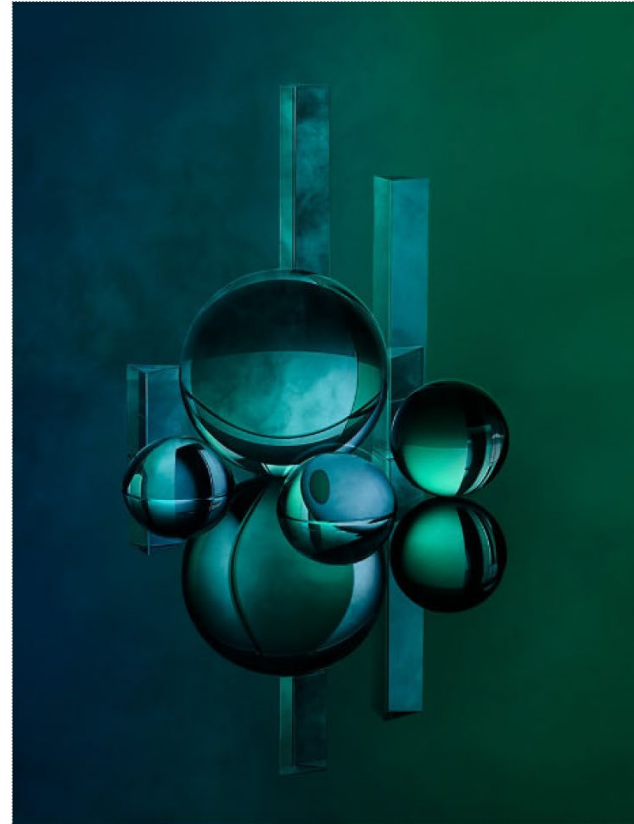


Final Image - 2024



Hero shot(s)

- ▶ Anchor shot
 - ▶ Draws attention to project
 - ▶ Not all projects use a "hero shot"
- ▶ Shot you would submit to:
 - ▶ Competitions
 - ▶ Publications
 - ▶ Commercial use
- ▶ Rely on expert opinions
 - ▶ Friends on social media are not experts!



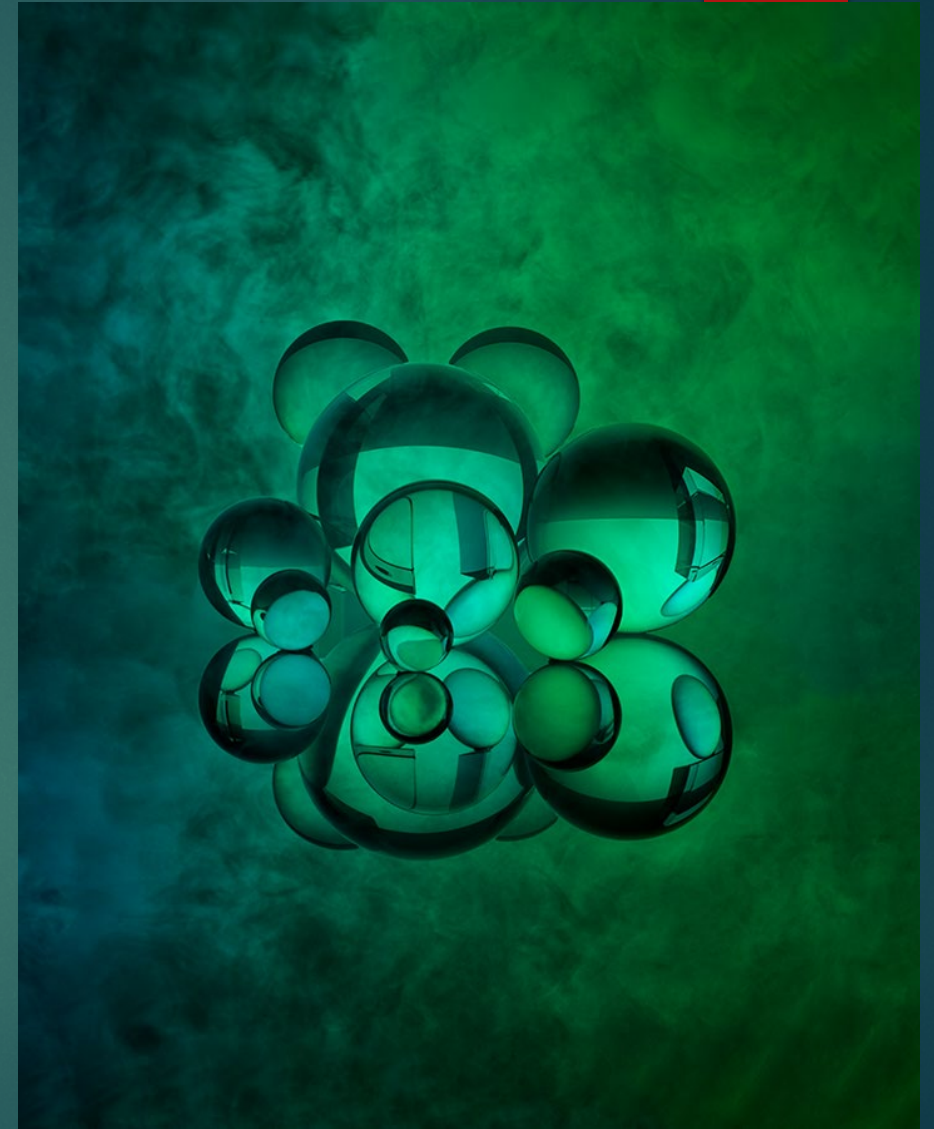
MANFRED MUELLER
Kanata, ON
Nebulous

"Inspired by the images produced by the Hubble and James Webb space Telescopes of nebulae, with a hint of inspiration from Richard Adams's work "The Restaurant at the End of the Universe," glass shapes are arranged to create new visions."

manfredm.ca

Edit

- ▶ Cull shots that:
 - ▶ Will not fit the project
 - ▶ Are not good enough
- ▶ Process the “keepers” being considered for inclusion
 - ▶ Look and feel required for project
 - ▶ Includes format and orientation
- ▶ Not every finished image will make it to the final product



Nebulous Reject – 2023

Sequence

- ▶ Determine the order and placement of the final images
 - ▶ Tell your story
 - ▶ If you have one
- ▶ Get others to comment on your choices
 - ▶ Helps validate your decisions

Sequence Display

- Finalize images for exhibition space



Sequence Book - Images

- ▶ Arrange as page pairs

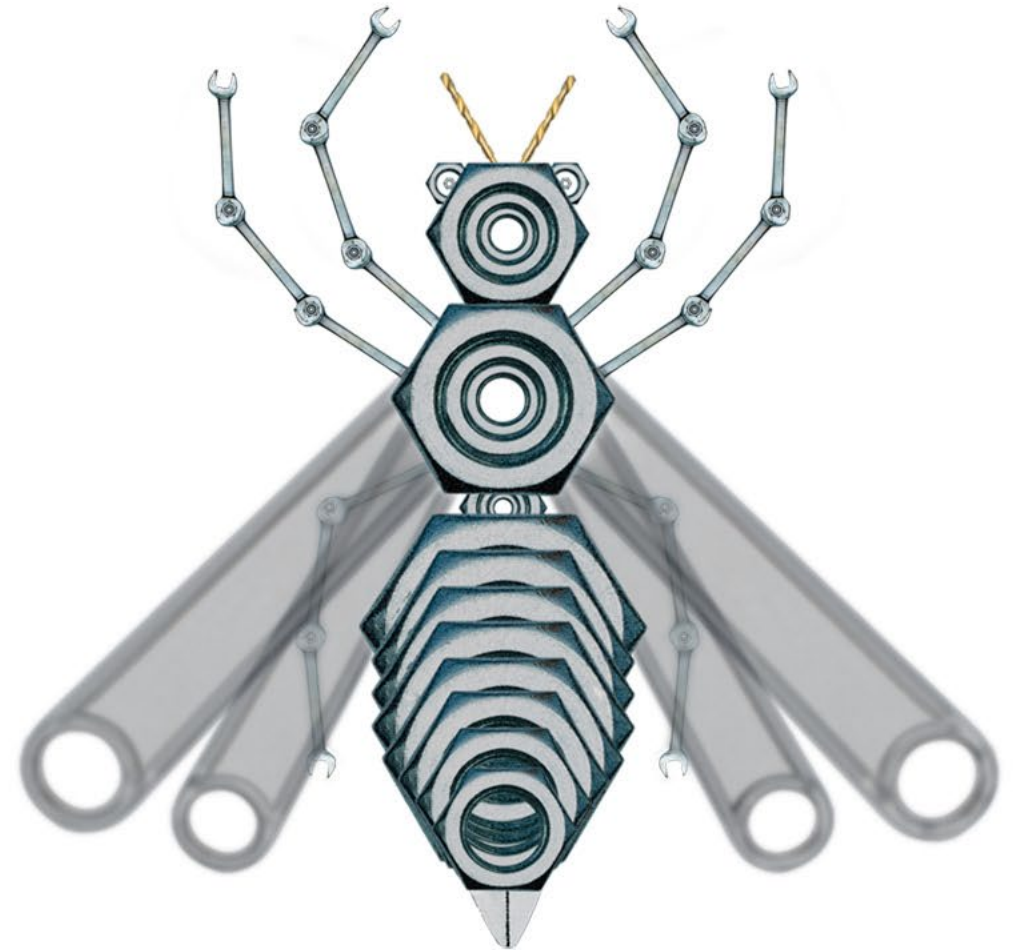


Sequence Book - Text



Housefly はえ

This is a housefly. They have big eyes with lots of small eyes inside. They are annoying because they always fly around and stick on you and your food. They can be small or big. Their babies are called maggots.





Enjoying the Morning Paper, Nandgaon, Uttar Pradesh, India - 2017



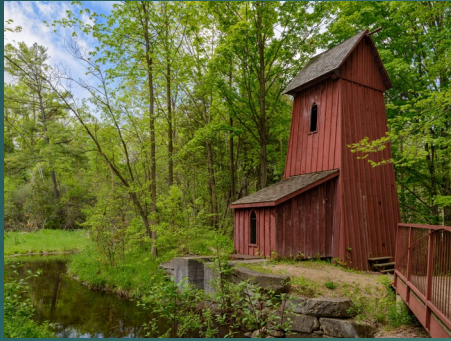
Out on the Street, Nandgaon, Uttar Pradesh, India - 2017

Sequence – Books or AV Presentations

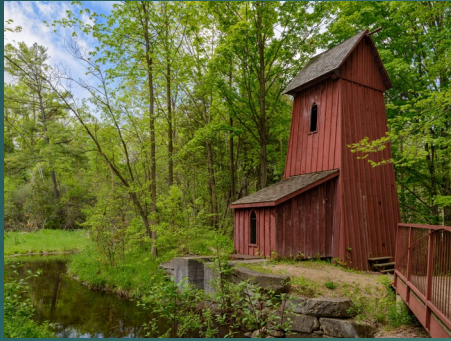
- ▶ Chronological
 - ▶ Often least effective
- ▶ By subject / sub-topic
 - ▶ Food, people, architecture, location, etc.
- ▶ Random
- ▶ With interspersed text
 - ▶ Books

Presentation

- ▶ When you first start:
 - ▶ Use same format and colours
 - ▶ Colour or B&W, not both
 - ▶ Horizontal / Landscape or Vertical / Portrait or Square
 - ▶ Do not mix
 - ▶ Provides consistency
 - ▶ Mix only when you are experienced enough to know what works
 - ▶ And what does not



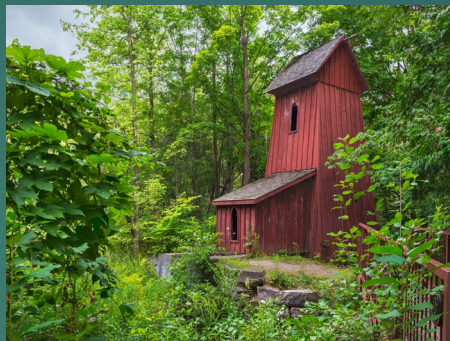
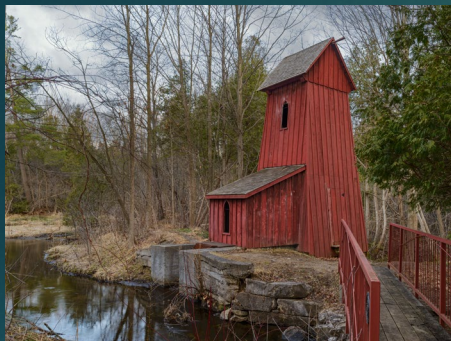
Blair Mill Sheave Tower Project – 2013 – 2014 by Manfred Mueller



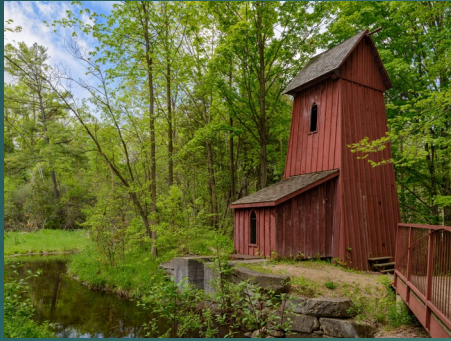
Blair Mill Sheave Tower Project – 2013 – 2014 by Manfred Mueller



Blair Mill Sheave Tower Project – 2013 – 2014 by Manfred Mueller



Blair Mill Sheave Tower Project – 2013 – 2014 by Manfred Mueller



Blair Mill Sheave Tower Project – 2013 – 2014 by Manfred Mueller



Media Specific

PRINTS

Display - Prints

- ▶ Expensive - \$ - \$\$\$
- ▶ Medium
 - ▶ Photo ink jet (archival)
 - ▶ Pigment ink
 - ▶ Archival paper
 - ▶ Chromogenic (non-archival)
 - ▶ Traditional silver halide
- ▶ Mount
 - ▶ Frame
 - ▶ Dry mount on Masonite
 - ▶ Canvas
 - ▶ Metal or acrylic
 - ▶ Vinyl



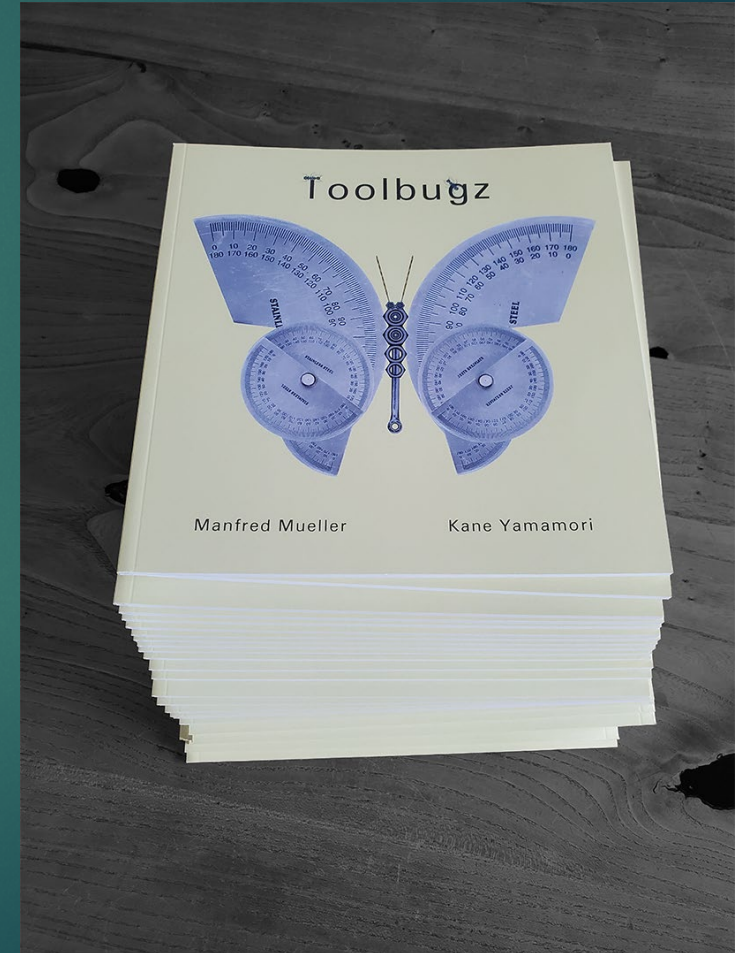


Media Specific

BOOKS

Books

- ▶ Expensive - \$\$
- ▶ Type
 - ▶ Soft cover
 - ▶ Hard cover
 - ▶ Coffee Table
- ▶ Cover design
 - ▶ Front, back & spine
- ▶ No of pages
- ▶ Paper selection



TOOLBUGZ

MANFRED MUELLER

ツール
バグズ

KANE YAMAMORI



これはバッタ。バッタはよく飛べる。足は強い。筋肉いっぱい。いろんなバッタの種類がある。バ

ッタはが羽が四つある。たくさんの人がバッタを好きじゃない。人が食べる植物も食べるから。でも

ケインはバッタが好き。しいべトになるし、ジャンプするときはずいぶん日本まで。バッタ「う

て本がある。ケインがめちゃ好きな本だよ。」

バッ
タ

Parts of a Book*

- ▶ Jacket
- ▶ Hardcover
- ▶ End Pages
- ▶ Half Title
- ▶ Full Title
- ▶ Frontispiece
- ▶ Table of Contents
- ▶ Foreword / Introduction
- ▶ Epigraph
- ▶ Dedication
- ▶ Artwork
- ▶ Epigraph
- ▶ Dedication
- ▶ Artwork
- ▶ List of Titles
- ▶ Glossary
- ▶ Acknowledgements
- ▶ Artist Bio
- ▶ Artist Photograph
- ▶ Artist Statement
- ▶ Colophon
- ▶ Postscript

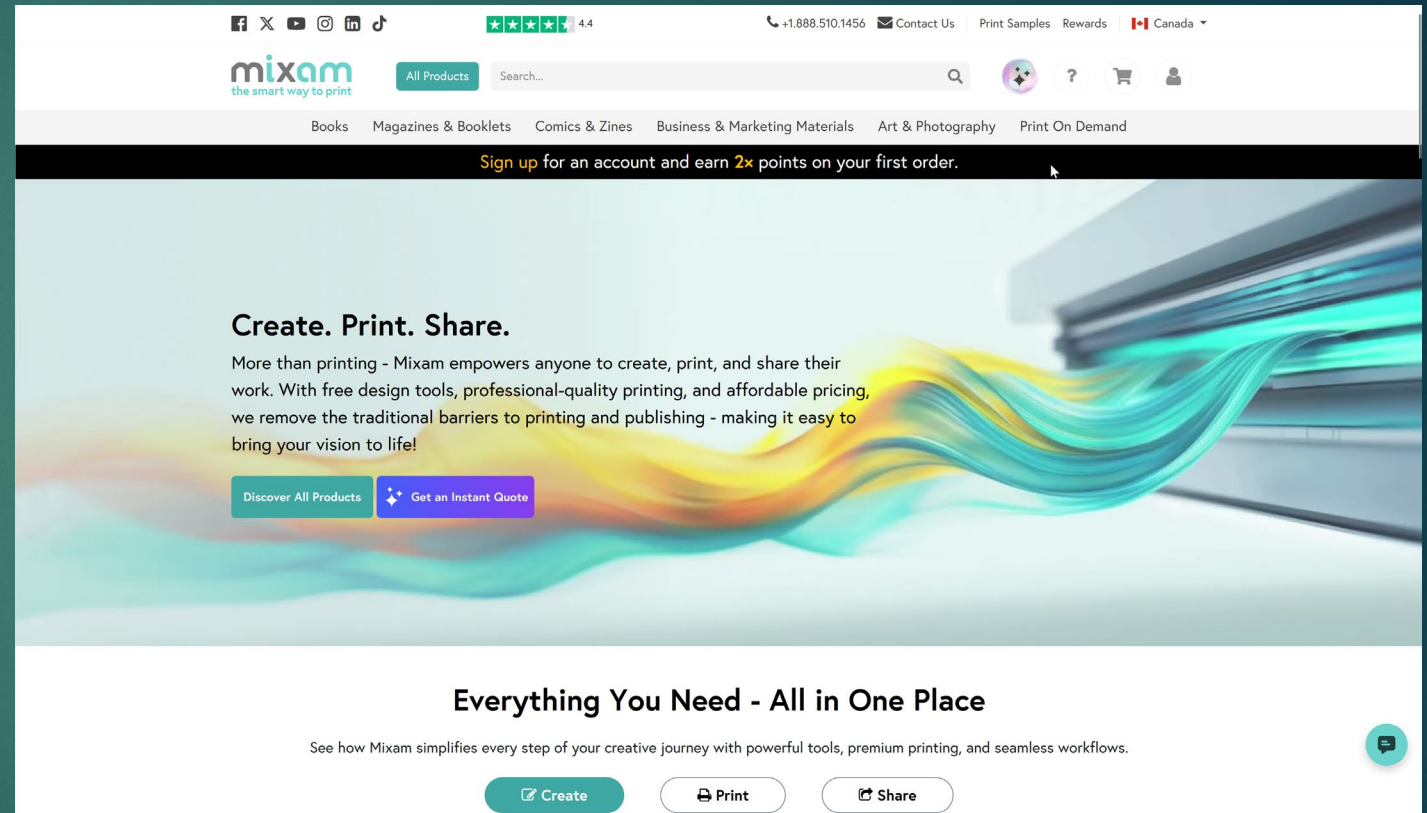
*Note: Not every book has all these parts

Book Design

- ▶ Editing
 - ▶ Layout
 - ▶ Sequencing
 - ▶ Book Dimensions
 - ▶ Page Numbers
 - ▶ Typeface Choice
 - ▶ Type size
 - ▶ Continuity
 - ▶ Proof Reading
- ▶ Printing
 - ▶ Online Publishing
 - ▶ Hand Printing
 - ▶ Binding

Digital Publishers

- ▶ Blurb
 - ▶ <https://www.blurb.ca/>
- ▶ Mixam
 - ▶ <https://mixam.ca/>
- ▶ Picto
 - ▶ <https://www.picto.com>
 - ▶ Premium quality
- ▶ Unit price depends on number of units purchased





Media Specific

WEB-BASED

Portfolio – Personal Website

- ▶ Cost - \$\$
- ▶ Custom website
 - ▶ Number of images
 - ▶ Number of pages
- ▶ Other content
 - ▶ Blog
 - ▶ About photographer
 - ▶ Contact me
- ▶ Requires Domain
- ▶ Suppliers
 - ▶ Wordpress
 - ▶ WIX
 - ▶ Squarespace



<https://www.manfredm.ca>

Online – Community / Portfolio

► Cost - \$ - \$\$

Glass

► <https://glass.photo/>

► Flickr

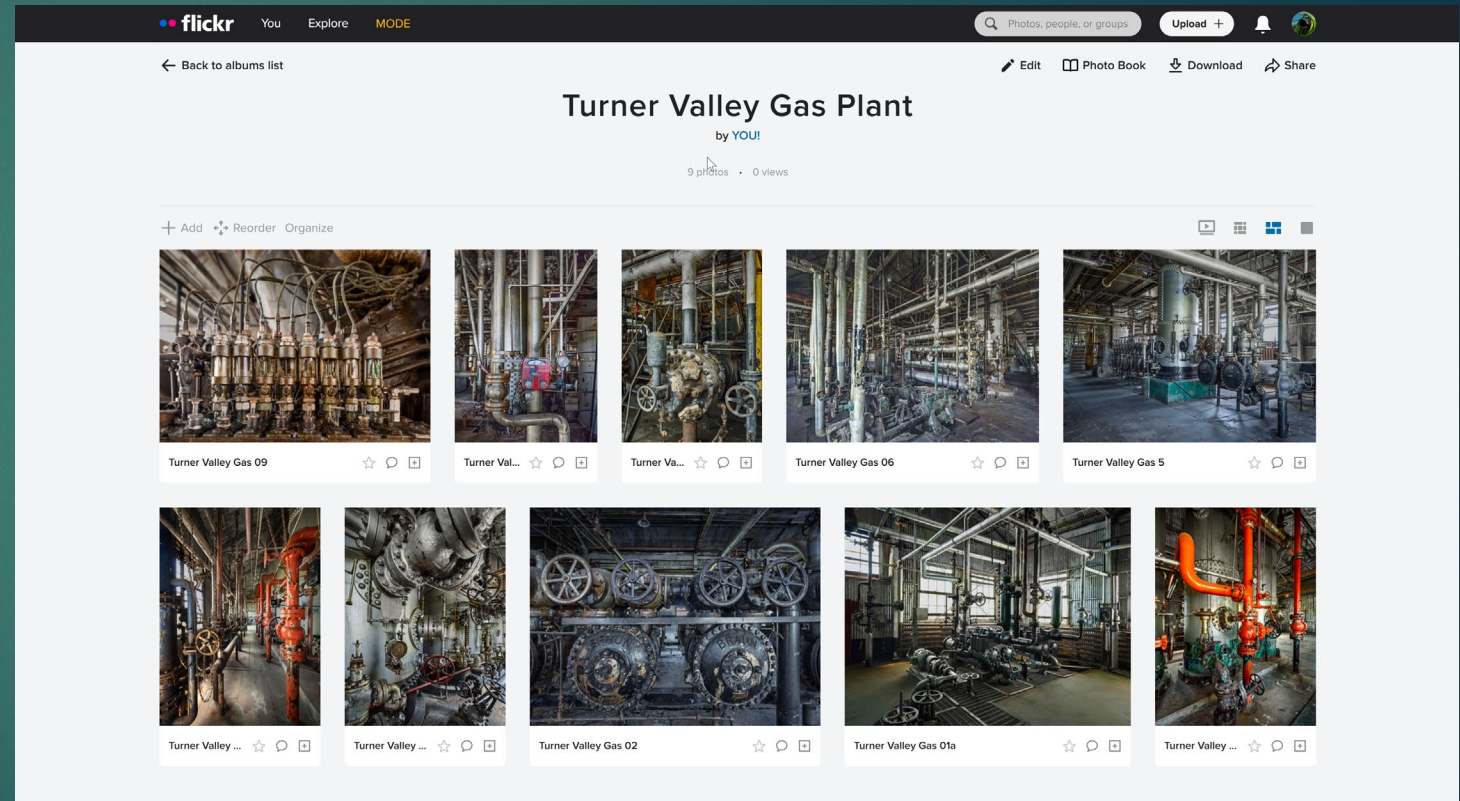
► <https://www.flickr.com/>

► 500px

► <https://500px.com/>

► VSCO

► <https://www.vSCO.co/>



Online - Curated Portfolio

- ▶ Format
 - ▶ <https://www.format.com/online-portfolio-website/photography>
- ▶ Adobe Portfolio
 - ▶ <https://portfolio.adobe.com/start>
- ▶ Pixieset
 - ▶ <https://pixieset.com/>
- ▶ SmugMug
 - ▶ <https://www.smugmug.com/plans>



Media Specific

AV PRESENTATIONS

AV Presentation

- ▶ Cost – 0 - \$
- ▶ Number of images
 - ▶ Length < 4 minutes
 - ▶ Show an image < 7 seconds
- ▶ Other content
 - ▶ Video
 - ▶ Graphics
- ▶ Soundtrack
 - ▶ Music
 - ▶ Voice over



Flow – Story Telling

- ▶ Start of presentation
 - ▶ Establishing shot
 - ▶ Shows the overall location and environment
- ▶ Extreme wide shot
 - ▶ EWS



Dubrovnik City Walls and Old Town - 2025

Flow – Story Telling

- ▶ Wide Shot (WS)
 - ▶ Shows the subject within the environment
 - ▶ Establishes spatial relationships
- ▶ Use to establish new topic in presentation



Dubrovnik City Walls - 2025

Flow – Story Telling

- ▶ Medium Wide Shot (MWS)
 - ▶ Brings the viewer closer
 - ▶ Retains environmental context



Dubrovnik Side Street - 2025

Flow – Story Telling

- ▶ Medium Shot (MS)
 - ▶ Concentrates on:
 - ▶ Person
 - ▶ Subject
 - ▶ Activity



Dubrovnik Hanging out the Laundry - 2025

Flow – Story Telling

- ▶ Closeup (CU)
 - ▶ Concentrates on details



Dubrovnik – Window Details - 2025

Flow – Story Telling

- ▶ Ultra Closeup (UCU)
 - ▶ Concentrates on fine details



Dubrovnik – Dinner - 2025

Re-energize your Photography

- ▶ “Photographer’s Block” cure
 - ▶ If you run out of inspiration, work on a project

Summary:

1. PROJECTS ARE AN EXCELLENT APPROACH TO IMPROVING YOUR WORK
2. STORIES ARE EASIER TO TELL WITH A SERIES OF IMAGES THAN WITH A SINGLE IMAGE
3. BE PROUD OF YOUR WORK AND SHARE IT
 - Get feedback
4. YOUR PERSONAL STYLE WILL EVOLVE OVER TIME.
 - It can't be rushed
 - Understand the visual language you gravitate towards your work
5. YOUR BODY OF WORK WILL BUILD OVER TIME

The End!

QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?

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