

the Photographers' Formulary

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Per Volquartz: Opening Pandora's Box



Olmstead Point, Yosemite, 1976 ©
Per Volquartz

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

This article was first published in the April 2009 newsletter. It is republished to mark the passing of an excellent photographer, unusual man, and a fine friend. Per's wife, Rebecca, and his son, Christian, have given their generous permission to create visual links to a number of images on Per's website, Volquartz.com. Please click on the thumbnails to see a larger version.



Per Volquartz, as photographed by his son, Christian

PER VOLQUARTZ: IN MEMORIAM

Republished from the Los Angeles Times:

Born in Denmark July 30, 1947, Per Volquartz passed away July 11, 2011. Highly acclaimed artist, designer, and photographer in U.S., China, and Denmark. Survived by his wife Rebecca, son Christian, and brother Jorn Volquartz. www.pervolquartz.com

PER VOLQUARTZ: OPENING PANDORA'S BOX

Noted photographer, Per Volquartz, worked at his craft for more than 30 years. In 2009 he sent us his thoughts on his evolving view of photography.

You can tell when someone's been around for a long time when they describe an institution like Freestyle Photographic as a "cult" store for photographers on a very low budget.

Per Volquartz, who is not quite as old as dirt, tells of Freestyle in its heyday as a place where you could buy 35mm Ilford HP4 in

100' foot rolls, empty film canisters and bulk loaders. A place with minimal interior design, but with a staff helpful to even the worst photographic klutz.

A large format photographer for more than 35 years, Per reflects on what he has seen, and what has changed. He talks about how his photography was influenced by the work of painters, and wonders if he can use his photography to capture the essence of the image, and with it the spontaneity of the moment.



Yosemite 1976

I to r: Bob Kolbrener, Andy Schumacher,
Per Volquartz, Ansel Adams
©Per Volquartz

OPENING PANDORA'S BOX

by Per Volquartz

For over 30 years Ansel Adams and Edward Weston have been sitting next to God, telling him what kind of light to offer photographers, myself included.

I subscribed to the idea that the best images were seen, exposed in a controlled manner and presented in the highest fidelity to woo the viewer.



Mono Lake, Winter

©Per Volquartz

Looking back it becomes clear that spontaneity, which is part of life itself was absent in many instances. For years I have toiled under the burden of having to carry heavy equipment with me, often to turn what started as a simple visual delight or revelation, into a major complex production. While there were times where this great physical effort paid off, at other times the image - a moment that I so much wanted to freeze in time, had vanished and left me

wondering why I even stopped to photograph it in the first place.

At the same time I started to look at the work of painters such as Monet, Cezanne and Van Gogh among others. Many years ago in art school I had of course studied their paintings. However, at that time it was not completely clear to me how their artwork reflected and impacted today's world. But that has changed! Now I understand why they were seen as rebellious and avant garde as they moved outside the studio and painted in bold new ways. With quick and intuitive brushstrokes and their pallets loaded with color they let their feelings and ideas flow freely onto their canvasses. I was envious. Not of their skill, nor of their fame but envious of their ability to capture the essence of life. Their work needed not to be rendered in finite detail, which had been an important part of classic paintings. Instead they sought to capture the gesture, the feelings of the moment.

WAS THIS POSSIBLE TO DO IN PHOTOGRAPHY?

Would it be possible to somehow use my skills of large format photography and make my work spontaneous and still retain clarity of thought?

Landscape photography is to a great extent a medium of love. A love for the subject matter and a desire to reveal the unseen essence of the scene. It becomes important to show the forms, textures and scale of what is experienced. However, often the love and caring that is felt becomes sidelined by technique and presentation, which completely overshadows the basic idea of what was seen and felt.

Why does a photograph have to be sharp? Why does it have to show texture? Why does it have to have a long and expressive scale?

Why not just concentrate on the very essence and show this es-



Palm Leaf

©Per Volquartz

sence as an abstraction? Why isn't this approach more relevant and closer to what was seen and felt at the moment of exposure?

A great painter and art teacher of mine, Lorser Feilson spent his entire life moving from complex life like paintings, through anthropomorphic images to absolute minimalism. During the last years of his life his mind was occupied by simple forms and colors. He suc-



Leaf in Bowl on Canvas

©Per Volquartz

ceeded in proving that a simple line can in fact contain feelings close to the human heart. If simple lines and forms are capable of this maybe they are part of what makes us feel what we do when we observe a subject matter. If that is the case why not just photograph the basic forms and lines? Why be bothered by technical issues? Why not just hone our vision and learn



Ebony SV5X7U2E somewhere in the Western United States.

©Per Volquartz

to capture feelings and ideas quickly and without a lot of physical effort? These are questions I personally want to explore and hopefully find answers for!

Elementary truths:

When you are ready to shoot a scene you have already photographed it in your mind.



Sink, Butler's Pantry, Pasadena

©Per Volquartz

When you see and feel a scene and get excited it sometimes feels like being on a first date.

You have no clue about what, where, when...

You may even feel a certain level of fear. Will I get the image? What if I miss?

How do we keep this excitement alive though the generally technical photographic process?

To make our photographs come alive it may be necessary to pre-

vent ourselves from being infested by the complex knowledge of photography and our love for the technique. Instead we may be better off concentrating on our love for the subject matter and on the feelings we hope to reveal.

Sensual forms and expressive subject matter may in fact be all around us. We need to look harder at our own lives, what we do, where we live and how we think. Perhaps by revealing beauty and feelings in what appears to be without merit in our own surroundings we may in fact truly contribute to the art of photography.

I may be going over the edge, but unless I find out what's on the

other side of the edge... I will never know if I am right...

Pandora's box is open! What do you think?

Per Volquartz, April 2009

Pasadena, California

Explore Per's website here:

<http://www.pervolquartz.com>

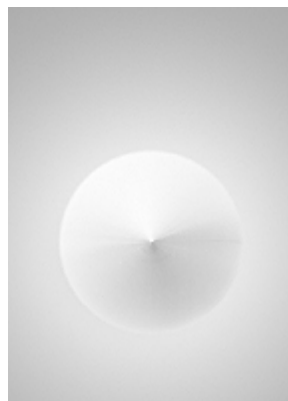
(Interactive: [Click here](#) to watch a five minute movie of Per as he discusses his work in black and white landscape and portraiture.

<http://tiny.cc/aLCVe>



"Limonized"

©Per Volquartz



Missile #2

©Per Volquartz

Per's final illness was unexpected and shocking to friends and family. If you care to make a donation to defray final expenses, please click [here](#)...

Click [here](#) to download a PDF of Tim Rudman's September Workshops at the Photographers' Formulary in Condon, Montana, USA

***"Look at it not for what it is, but for what else it is."
Minor White.***

"Tim Rudman's Lith Printing Workshop will guide you in discovering how to bring the 'what else it is' out of your negatives via a special kind of technical craftsmanship through which your own artistry can find its personal highest expression. Just to be able to view Tim's lith portfolios in person is an inspiring experience of the 'what else it is'. His well-organized workshop is packed full of information and hands-on experience as he personally guides each individual participant to an exciting new dimension of photographic communication."

Diane Kaye (USA)

Tim Rudman: About My Workshops

I began teaching practical workshops by request around 1995 and have found them both enjoyable and rewarding. Successful workshops don't just happen. They require a combination of planning, experience, knowledge and a desire to share it - and the ability to teach. Being a good photographer or printer does not automatically make a good teacher.



The ethic behind all my books has been the sharing and dissemination of knowledge and skills. The scientific community (medicine) from which I came fostered this principle, rather than the secretive attitudes sometimes found elsewhere. My long involvement with post graduate education as a medical trainer and educator provided me with teaching skills that are invaluable in the workshop environment.

The emphasis in my workshops is on informality, co-operation and fun. Like children (aren't we all at heart?) we learn best when playing and so the learning value of 'playtime' is emphasized, along with risk-taking (what happens if ...?), being prepared to make mistakes ('There is rich learning in disaster'), and group sharing. There is a high return rate amongst my 'students' and it is always fun to renew these friendships year on year.

I'll see you in September at the Photographers' Formulary in Montana! This will be my final workshop series in the United States. Don't miss it!

Tim

Call 1-800-922-5255 to reserve your space.

A limited number of spaces are open in both levels of workshops.

Tuition: \$995.00

Visit Tim's website here. . .

<http://www.TimRudman.com/>

Call the Formulary at 800-922-5255 to reserve your spot in this final series of Tim Rudman workshops in the USA!



AUGUST 2011 NEWSLETTER SPECIALS

COPPER TONER



Cat. No.: 06-0010

Regular \$10.95

Special Price: \$9.31

FORMULARY COPPER TONER contains

copper sulfate, potassium ferricyanide, and potassium citrate which results in an image toned with copper metal. The toner produces a variety of colors ranging from warm brown through coppery hues to chalk red. The exact color obtained depends on the length of toning time. The process is rapid and progressive. It is possible to remove the print from the bath at any stage of its toning. Although fiber based papers work best, resin coated papers will work nicely also. The chemicals contained in the kit are used to make two stock solutions, which are mixed in equal volumes to obtain the working solution. The stock solutions are stable for a reasonable period of time, but the working solution should be discarded after use.

<http://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-190/COPPER-TONER%2CSwan-Valley/Detail.bok>

IRON BLUE TONER



Cat. No.: 06-0020

Regular \$14.95

Special Price: \$12.71

FORMULARY IRON BLUE TONER is an inexpensive and effective blue toner

similar to Ansco Toner 241. It is

often used on snow scenes and seascapes. Prints are toned in a single solution of ferric ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide until they appear green. After washing they turn a clear blue color. The tones can be softened in a borax bath.

<http://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-191/IRON-BLUE-TONER/Detail.bok>

POLYSULFIDE TONER



Cat. No.: 06-0190

Regular \$12.95

Special Price: \$11.00

FORMULARY POLYSULFIDE TONER

yields rich, dark

brown and is similar to Kodak T-8. The toning bath contains potassium polysulfide (liver of sulfur) and sodium carbonate. Formulary Polysulfide Toner, like Hypo-Alum Toner, deposits silver sulfide on the image. The difference between these two toners is the depth of the resulting brown color. Polysulfide Toner gives a rich, dark brown tone while tones obtained using the Hypo-Alum are much lighter. Both toners give permanent images. Toning with the Polysulfide Toner takes about 15 to 20 minutes at room temperature. We recommend fiber based paper only for this toner. The chemicals in this kit are used to prepare 1 liter of working solution,

which has a capacity of about 35 8x10 prints. A second package of sodium carbonate to be used to partially rejuvenate the spent working solution is included. The working solution is stable for extended periods of time.

<http://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-201/POLYSULFIDE-TONER%2C-KODAK-BROWN/Detail.bok>

IRON GREEN/BLUE TONER



Cat. No.: 06-0190

Regular \$20.95

Special Price: \$17.81

FORMULARY IRON GREEN/BLUE TONER can produce either

green or blue tones on fiber base papers. The green tone is a true green unlike most green toners, which have blue-green shadows and light green highlights. The blue tone produced is a bright blue, brighter than Formulary Iron Blue Toner. This kit has a high capacity for prints. This formula was reformulated in 1989. If you tried it previously and were concerned with some of the hazardous chemicals it contained, you will be happy with the new version.

<http://stores.photoformulary.com/-strse-202/IRON-GREEN-fdsh-BLUE/Detail.bok>

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OR COMMENTS**

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