• S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 7

the Photographers' Formulary

•Volume 4 Number 10

ARTHUR LAVINE: SEVEN DECADES OF SEEING WITH AN INQUIRING EYE

"The Gasp"
©Arthur Lavine

In this Issue

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' FORMULARY, INC.
P.O. Box 950, 7079 Hwy 83 N
Condon, Montana, USA 59826-0950
E-Mail: Anthony Mournian, editor
Website: Photoformulary.com
Tel: (800) 922-5255 or (406) 754-2891
Fax: (406) 754-2896

TIM RUDMAN TEACHES FINAL 2007 WORKSHOPS

©*Tim Rudman*

There's a waiting list for the final two workshops of 2007. Both deal with the fast growing popularity of Lith Printing, and are taught by Dr. Tim Rudman from England. Tim last visited the Formulary in October 2005 when he taught similar workshops, also filled to capacity.

In this 3:55 minute movie taken from that workshop, Tim explains the elegant and effective technique of two bath development. It takes an extra tray of developer and a dose of patience, but the results can be exquisite in their display of subtle tones and textures.

If you are interested in a future workshop with Tim Rudman, let us know now so we can plan ahead. These are the only two workshops Tim is teaching in the USA during 2007.

Watch ***"Two Bath Development" here . . .*** , then send us a note if you would like to see more about the intriguing process of Lith Printing, or to take a future workshop taught by Dr. Tim Rudman.

"Lith Printing and Toning"

ARTHUR LAVINE OPENS SHOW AT MOPA

Arthur Lavine has more than seventy years behind him as a photographer. His early dream was to be a movie maker. But his many years as a commercial photographer make it easy to believe that that work was really his first calling.

"Working Hands"
©Arthur Lavine, 1947

Lavine recently opened an exhibit at the prestigious Museum of Photographic Arts (MoPA) in San Diego, California. Publication of his book of 150 photographs, *An Inquiring Eye,* was timed to coincide with the MoPA exhibit of 42 of Lavine's images, which form a partial retrospective of his long career.

"An Inquiring Eye"
©Arthur Lavine, 1952

Arthur is a bit bowed by time, but his easy and open smile, the sparkle in his eyes and the spring in his step belie his age. Now in his mid-eighties, Lavine still photographs, though he left the darkroom in the mid-1960's. He prefers to take the picture, and leave the printing of his images to others.

He received his first camera as a young boy. A simple single focus box camera, with a minimum focal distance of about six feet, was enough to get him started. He tried taking close-ups, but could not understand why they never seemed in focus. It was a couple of years before he realized that the box camera was beyond its depth whenever he moved in to take a photograph of a bug or a flower.

Still photography then was not his goal, however. Son of an affable doctor who really wanted to be an artist, and of an artistic mother and a sister who was very much an artist in her own right, Arthur wanted to make movies.

"Marion with Laurel and Hardy"
©Arthur Lavine, 2002

His first movies, in the 1930's, were

made using his mother's spring-wound 8 mm camera. He built sets, designed special effects such as model planes delivering bomb payloads on paper houses below, and on one occasion nearly set the family home and his father's medical offices on fire when one of the planes ignited the paper houses as Arthur was filming in the basement. Flames licked the ceiling of the smoke-filled "set," and fumes wound up the stairs into his father's medical offices. It wasn't long before Dr. Lavine dashed down to the basement, probably to help put out the fire but certainly to tell Arthur in the clearest of terms that Arthur had better not ever try that again!

"Parade Up Broadway for Iranian Hostages"
©Arthur Lavine, 1981

Arthur tells that story with laughter in his voice and a broad smile on his face. He remembers his father with good humor and great affection, and at one point in the interview showed off his father's portrait in oil, remarking that the artist, (his sister, Audrey) had caught their father's likeness perfectly.

Because his career spans so many years, it was impossible for MoPA to display all the photographs which are included in the book. Curator, Carole McCusker, focused on Lavine's street photography in New York City, preferring to highlight Lavine's skills in capturing the mood and the times of America's largest city. Many of the photographs, simply by virtue of when they were taken, have an air of history. Unaware at the time he was doing it in the 1940's that others, such as Walker Evans, had done it before him, and forbidden by law to take photographs on the subway, Lavine had to wait for cooler weather so he could wear a coat. He lived close to the 3rd Ave. EL, and would hide his camera under his coat before he went for a ride on the subway. Pretending to fumble with his coat, he would turn, pointing the lens at other riders, then quickly open his coat to surreptitiously snap their picture. Most of his subway photographs came out, others did not, but Lavine was never caught in the act. Who knows what might have happened had his dangerous little game been discovered!

"Subway Passengers"
©Arthur Lavine 1999

"Building Skeletons, New York's World's'Fair Construction"
©Arthur Lavine, 1963

Many of us remember historic events such as the ticker tape parade for the the Apollo 11 astronauts from the mission to the moon, or the return of the hostages from the U.S. Embassy in Iran. Lavine caught them on film. In black and white, as the colors of history, they are strong reminders of those times from a now distant past.

"Election Night, Times Square"
©Arthur Lavine, 1952

Even farther removed is a photograph marking the night that General Dwight David Eisenhower was first elected president in November 1952. Lavine was in Times Square that evening, focusing on the faces of spectators looking at the giant sign above the square as it flashed the message in ticker tape fashion, "Eisenhower Elected!" Faces in the crowd include look-a-likes for movie mogul John Huston, actor Mickey Rooney, and someday-Vice President to Richard Nixon, Spiro T. Agnew. Lavine can't say for sure that any of the three are pictured, but the resemblances are uncanny.

"Minna's Surprise Party - The Awe"
©Arthur Lavine, 1954

The only set of Lavine's images used by Life Magazine were eight photographs taken at a surprise birthday party for his father's sister, Minna. Three of them are in the book and record Minna's gasp of surprise, her glow of joy, and the pleasure in her moment of triumph. Emotions beam from faces now gone, but still preserved in silver and hanging on the wall.

"Moving Day"
©Arthur Lavine, 1952

Another set of photographs are of a family during the last day in their home of many years. The home, in a town owned by a large mining company, was to be demolished to make way for a strip mining operation. In one shot the father stands pensive by a small television from the early 1950's, while in another the mother sits quietly in a chair; her mood somber as she must be thinking of all the times about to disappear under the blade of the bulldozer. There are only four of these photographs, but more than enough to tell the story with nostalgia.

"Housewife on Moving Day"
©Arthur Lavine, 1952

To watch a 14:30 minute movie of portions of a longer interview, press here. . . Arthur Lavine now lives in Rancho Bernardo, a suburb of San Diego. He doesn't miss the cold of a New York winter, even though those winters gave him fuel for some of his most striking photographs of Central Park and New York City.

They say that after living six months in California you are a native. By that standard, Arthur has been a confirmed native for a very long time.

For your own copy of "*An Inquiring Eye*," you can send Arthur an e-mail here. . . . The price is $40.00, and worth every penny.

Scott McMahon and the Art of Pinhole

Scott's Camera Collection
©A. Mournian

Pinhole photography is based on the principles of the *camera obscura*. The effects of the camera obscura were noted as early as 1020 A.D. in Egypt by Alhazen. Originally used as a tool to draw landscapes, the camera obscura made it possible to capture lifelike landscapes with correct perspective.

But the drawing tool became something far more than that. With the development of chemistry based photography, and the works of Louis Daguerre and Henry Fox-Talbot in the mid-nineteenth century, the humble camera obscura evolved to the beginnings of the cameras we all use today.

Scott Inspects a Pinhole Negative
©A. Mournian

No matter how fancy the camera, no matter how expensive or fine the lens, the job of every camera and lens is to capture light and to focus it on a plane for capture on film or, nowadays, onto a digital chip. First came the camera obscura, then Talbot's little wooden box mousetrap camera with its huge lens. Then came the view camera, and finally the marvels of electronics so many photographers use today.

Scott McMahon is a master of pinhole photography. During a recent two day workshop by the Museum of Photographic Arts (MoPA) in San Diego, California, Scott began his presentation with a short history of the pinhole camera. He followed this with a display of the many different containers which have been used as pinhole cameras. These ranged from plastic suitcases from a Barbie Doll set, to a red bell pepper, made by Eric Renner, which acted as its own safelight.

Cardboard Shutter Assembly
©A. Mournian

The highlight of the workshop was the creation several very large pinhole photographs in a studio at Grossmont College's new Media Arts Center. The 4x6' photographs captured the landscape and buildings surrounding the arts center. Staff later made a 30' photograph after adjusting the exposure time. That giant image will go on display when fall classes open in late August.

Shutter Kit in Baggie
©A. Mournian

Scott's preparation deserves note and recognition. Each workshop participant found a small ziplock baggie at the participant's place at the table. Inside were several pieces of 600 grit sandpaper, pieces of aluminum and brass stock for pinholes, a needle to make the pinhole, and, best of all, a carefully constructed, ready-to-use, pinhole shutter made from matte board .

Cardboard Shutter on Wooden Camera
©A. Mournian

Al Weber's Remarks to the Audience at his Retrospective

As soon as Al Weber and David Vestal finished teaching their Formulary workshop in Montana, Al hightailed it to Reno, Nevada for the opening of Al's retrospective. Last month you watched Al as he gave a pre-tour of the show. Now you can watch as Al talks to the crowd at the end of the evening, explaining his craft, and his long career as a commercial photographer.

The movie was made using two cameras. Al's friend, Fernando Batista, was kind enough to operate one camera, while Anthony Mournian operated the other. It was a challenge keeping up with Al as he moved about on the floor of the exhibit space.

Learn more about Al as he talks about his early career photographing children, his work in architectural photography, and his aerial photography from small airplanes, (to include watching Ansel Adams walking along 500' below, view camera and tripod across his shoulder.)

Press here to watch Al's Remarks to the Audience. . .

"Al's Remarks to the Audience," shown here. . .

The pinhole shutter worked to perfection. It was a real gift, and an indication of the level of Scott's preparation. Tape over a pinhole would have been just as effective at blocking the light and closing the "shutter," but having an exquisite shutter there, ready to use, was a delight.

After a short slideshow to open the workshop, Scott turned to a demonstration of how to make a pinhole camera. He brought many of his own cameras, all different sizes and shapes, and he brought a number of "blanks" for people in the workshop to use, and to take home. The "blanks" ranged from little matchboxes to Quaker Oats boxes cut in half from top to bottom to form a half-moon shaped camera.

Piercing the Brass Pinhole
©A. Mournian

Scott left the forming of the pinholes to the participants, but he made sure everyone had exactly what they needed to get the job done. Attention to detail was flawless, with a small gauge sewing needle carefully taped to a small piece of matte board, and several 1 1/2" squares of 600 grit sand paper as well as four small squares of aluminum or brass also taped down to prevent them from falling to the floor.

Dan Checks Pinhole with Loupe
©A. Mournian

This is the kind of preparation that makes a workshop go smoothly, and gives the students confidence that they, too, will succeed in making a working pinhole camera.

Later in the workshop Scott opened a small hole in opaque plastic which had been taped across a large door on an outside wall of the building. He explained that the size of the hole controlled the clarity of the image, as well as the amount of light coming into the room from the bright morning sun. The class watched in delight as a person wandered back and forth across the scene outside, her inverted image racing upside down across the walls and floor of the room in which we stood. It was like watching a dimly lit Charlie Chaplin movie.

Jim Checks out the big Door
©A. Mournian

Scott explained that the camera obscura in which we now stood was acting exactly like our eye. Light comes in the front of the camera through the opening in the wall, or the aperture, just as light enters the human eye through the iris. Millions of rays of light come in at all angles, striking the retina at the back of the eye, to form an inverted image. In other words, what we see with our eye is upside down. Then the brain reverses the image for us, and we see the world as it is, held properly in place by gravity.

Self Portrait on the Sidewalk
©A. Mournian

Then there was Scott's explanation of the total depth of field in the image created by the lensless aperture. While a similar image forms on the retina, the human eye is not able to take focus on more than a single point at a time. We can look at the image formed by the pinhole, one piece at a time, but we cannot focus on all of it at once. As a result, the image is sharp at a single point of focus within the eye and we have to refocus every time we shift our gaze to a different spot on the image. The pinhole camera, on the other hand, does not have a single point of focus. In fact, every point at which the light strikes a surface is equally "in focus," resulting in an image that equally sharp at every distance from the pinhole aperture.

From all of this, Scott and the teaching staff at Grossmont College set up a "film plane" using a 4x6" white board. The distance from the aperture to the white-board determined the focal length, which in turn determined the size of the aperture, or the *f*/stop. Using the *f*/stop and a light reading within the room, Scott figured the exposure time. Not too critical, he said, but necessary to get within the ball park to prevent under exposure of the large sheet of photographic paper which was used as "film."

Twenty five minutes later the photographic paper had been adequately exposed. The "film" was taken down, rolled up and carted off in a lightproof bag to the dark room for developing and "fixing." A weak solution of Dektol was used to make it easier to control development, then once the image came up and was clearly visible, the print was moved to the stop bath, and on into the fix. It took a team of students and a large panel of "experts" to figure out how to best get the job done, but eventually they had it, a reverse negative image of the walkway and buildings outside the classroom studio. After a couple of hours drying under the warm sun, the image was ready for hanging as an example of the pinhole camera, and collective brilliance.

Large Pinhole Image Hangs out to Dry
©A. Mournian

Pinhole Negative becomes a Positive Image
©A. Mournian

The second large image hung on a drying rack in the foyer of the building for several hours, and itself became the object of a pinhole photograph. The negative image in the original photograph became a positive image as it appears in the photograph above, taken by newsletter editor, Anthony Mournian.

READY FOR A LUNAR ECLIPSE?

"Close your eyes, breath deeply, let your mind wander to a distant seashore: It's late in the day, and the western sun is sinking into the glittering waves. At your feet, damp sand reflects the twilight, while overhead, the deep blue sky fades into a cloudy mélange of sunset copper and gold, so vivid it almost takes your breath away. . ."
Read all about this phenomenon in

Photos of the March 3, 2007, lunar eclipse. Credit: Antonio Finazzi and Michele Festa of Lago di Garda, Italy.

Dr. Tony Phillips' article on the NASA Science website. . .

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COPYRIGHT

The Photographers' Formulary thanks Mr. Arthur Lavine and Mr. Scott McMahon for the use of their photographs with permission.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

Several of our readers have written to say they don't really understand what to do with the newsletter after they have downloaded it to their computer. The average newsletter is 4-6 pages when printed, but when viewed using your internet browser it has a lot more to it.

So try this:

Every photograph is linked to a larger version. Place your mouse pointer on a thumbnail image and click. ¡Voila! You are instantly transported to a larger, much more visually satisfying version, or find yourself watching a short movie on YouTube.

The image or the movie opens for viewing, then goes away when you close the window. No clogging up your hard drive, no wasted space, and it's all free.

For text, place your mouse pointer on any blue highlighted text that looks like this. . . and click. You'll find yourself directed to a website related to the subject of the highlighted text, or perhaps a definition on Wikipedia, or another article hidden in the background.

SUBSCRIBE/UNSUBSCRIBE

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. A copy of the latest issue is packed with each order sent from the Photographers' Formulary. To automatically receive your copy each month, send us an email message by clicking here, and include the word "***Subscribe***" in the "***Subject***" block. In what we hope will be the rarest of instances, should you decide you no longer want to receive the electronic version, send us a message with "***Unsubscribe***" as the ***Subject***, and you will be removed from the mailing list.

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' FORMULARY, INC.
P.O. Box 950, 7079 Hwy 83 N
Condon, Montana, USA 59826-0950
E-Mail: Anthony Mournian, editor
Website: Photoformulary.com
Tel: (800) 922-5255 or (406) 754-2891
Fax: (406) 754-2896

September Newsletter Special

COMPLETE FORMULARY GUM BICHROMATE KITS

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THE GUM BICHROMATE PROCESS, THIS IS THE SPECIAL FOR YOU!

Cat. No. 07-2001
Regular combined total price: $90.00
Special Complete Kit price: $75.00
September Specials Code: 815

The **September Newsletter Special** is a combination of three of our most popular products for photographers wanting to try out an alternative process requiring a minimum of investment in new equipment, but giving the maximum opportunities for learning and experimentation.

We've put together three items from regular inventory to create the **Complete Gum Bichromate Printing Kit**. It comes with a Formulary high quality Ash printing out frame, twenty-five sheets of Cranes 90# 100% cotton rag paper, and the chemistry to make it all work.

Purchased separately, the printing frame, paper and chemistry sell for $90.00. Buy this kit and get it all for $75.00. You won't find a better deal.

To get the kit and the special pricing, be sure to mention the ***Specials Code: 815.***

Here are the kit items at their individual prices:

Contact Print Frames

are made at the Formulary from high quality ash, with a felt-lined, hinged back board for print inspection. Pressure clips hold your negative


secure while printing. All frames are made one inch bigger than the size quoted. (i.e. an 8x10 frame actually has a glass size of 9x11 so that you get a full 8x10 print). Frames are stained with a natural finish.

Cat. No. 07-2000
Regular price: **$49.95**

Cranes 90# 100% Cotton Rag Paper

9x11 @ 25 sheets
Cat. No. 07-0142
Regular price: **$15.00**

Formulary Gum Bichromate Chemistry Kits

are one of the most versatile and least complicated of the non-silver processes. We now offer two Gum Printing kits; the Classical containing only black pigment, and the Contemporary, containing red, blue, and yellow pigment. Both kits have liquid Gum Arabic, Ammonium Dichromate, and extensive directions for their use. Gum Printing is unique among all the printing processes. It is distinguished by unlimited flexibility. The printer has complete control and may produce prints of any color or contrast. These prints are characterized by a long, open scale that is soft and romantic, but fine detail is not possible.

Gum Printing uses water color pigments rather than metal to form the base. The paper is coated with the gum arabic and a dichromate salt. When dried paper is contact printed, the exposed areas become water insoluble. A warm water development dissolves the gum from the unexposed areas. The pigment in the retained areas forms the image. Multiple printing with different colors is a common technique.

The difference between the **Classical** and the **Contemporary** kits is the **Classical** will only do black and white while the **Contemporary** contains 3 color pigments.

Kit will make 25 8x10 prints.
Cat. No.: 07-0100
Regular price: $24.95