



Photographers' Formulary

Bill Jay, Professor, Author, Photographer

New Book Captures Images of "Men Like Me"



"Jimbo" Bill Jay ©2005

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PROFESSOR BILL JAY

Rodney Dangerfield and Bill Jay share something: they got no respect. Expecting cheers and applause, or at least polite silence as his name was called at Graduation, Bill only heard laughter and cat calls when the Headmaster at Bill's private boys' school in England announced Bill's intention to become a photographer.

During the 1950's, British photography was not seen as an acceptable art form. There were few galleries which displayed photography as

art, and only a couple of schools offered anything approaching a Masters of Fine Arts in photography.

In art school Bill studied the technical side of photography. When he left two years later he could create, test and use his own emulsions on film or paper, but he knew little about the history or culture of photography. Strange, but true that this was in the land in which photography itself was born out of the genius of Henry Fox-Talbot and his Calotype process.

All Newsletter Images are "Dynamic"
Thumbnail images are "linked" to larger versions. **Click on the thumbnail, and the larger version will magically appear. Try it now!**

Bill remembers only two books on the history of photography available in those days, one of them Beaumont Newhall's "*History of Photography*." Newhall later became one of Bill's mentors, and a lifelong friend.

Bill set out to learn as much as he could about not only the early photographic processes, but about the men and women who had invented them. He decided to read every word of every journal in the english language about photography from its beginnings in the mid-19th century to the beginning of World War I. By the time he finished, almost fifteen years later, he felt that he had done exactly that.



"Big Bill" Bill Jay ©2005

When Bill was 19, and fresh from school, he was casting about for a way to fill his summer. He applied for an internship at *Practical Photography*, then Europe's most popular photography magazine. As part of the application process he was



"Clyde" Bill Jay ©2005

required to write an article. He was accepted for the internship, and his article was published by the magazine. Not a bad way to begin.

The life of a writer agreed with him. Bill churned out articles at an astonishing rate, sometimes several a day. He hated typing then, and does now, so he either dictated, or wrote his articles out longhand.

Many of his research notes were also written longhand, a habit he continues today. He carries blank 3x5 cards in his pocket, and jots down ideas that occur to him during the day. He explains that 3x5

cards fit easily into his pocket, and when he has filled a card with information or ideas he can file it for quick future reference.

His system worked. As Bill made notes, or hand copied articles from crumbling copies of 19th century photographic journals, he began to build files on any number of subjects.

When he felt a file was 'fat enough,' he would turn the contents into an article and submit it for publication. Bill has written more than 400 articles, published ten books and taught and mentored thousands of students in the history of photography and the early processes.



"Willie" Bill Jay ©2005

In 1968 he took over a magazine, editing *Creative Camera* for more than two years, and changing it from a magazine for rank amateurs in which writers were not to mention "f/stops" out of fear of confusing their readers, to a sophisticated publication with first rate articles on current topics in photography.

Two years later Bill started *Album*, a journal Beaumont Newhall later termed one of the finest photographic publications he had ever seen. *Album* was so good, in fact, that Newhall made sure the University of New Mexico had a copy of every issue, and that those issues were preserved in the Special Collections room of the university library. With contributions and interviews from leading photographers of the time, *Album* achieved an importance recognized throughout the world of photography.

Sandy King to teach “Carbon, Kallitype, Van Dyke and Palladium”



Carbon Print by Sandy King
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Learn it from Sandy King, the man who wrote the book on Carbon Printing. Sandy will teach you what materials, including light sources, you will need for printing with alternative processes, and how to use them. By the time you leave this workshop you will learn how to make the materials you will need, even those not commercially available. Then learn how to expose and develop in-camera negatives for printing with alternative processes, and how to make digital negatives using Mark Nelson's PDN system. Learn how to sensitize carbon tissue and prepare it for printing, and how to transfer it to a suitable base.

The final stage requires developing and clearing the carbon image, then finishing the print including touch-up.

Take this workshop and you'll also leave with full instructions for exposing, developing and clearing Kallitype, Pt./Pd. and Van Dyke prints.

Scheduled for June 11-16, **Carbon, Kallitype, Van Dyke and Palladium** will give you enough information, practice and personal attention to start you on the way to becoming an experienced Carbon printer.

Carbon, Kallitype, Van Dyke and Palladium

Cost: \$725.00

June 11-16 with Sandy King

By 1972 Beaumont Newhall and **Van Deren Coke** had recruited Bill to come to the United States to study at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. Two years later Bill had his MFA. He went on to establish the Department of Photography at **Arizona State University at Tempe, Arizona**, where he taught until his retirement in 2003.

He recalls teaching three sections of the history of photography to each freshman class. He tried to impress on his students that the single most important element of a portrait is the person's face. The images in this article clearly follow his rule. One need only look at the portraits of Larkin, Jesus, Willie, Big Bill, Clyde, or Jimbo in this article to see that the eyes have it.



“Jesus”
Bill Jay ©2005

After he retired from teaching Bill moved to Ocean Beach, a slightly retro neighborhood of San Diego. As he looked around he saw a large number of men with significant amounts of facial hair, often

graying, and skin roughened by the weather. He mentioned this to one of his daughters who pointed out to him, “Look, Dad, they're just like you!”

Bill says he knows little about homelessness, and feels no need to take a political position about it. It is enough, he says, to capture the images of these men, who have met life's worst, while somehow retaining a sense of self-respect, and to recognize that they are, indeed, **Men Like Me**.

The book was a three year project. Bill took almost every photograph within a two block radius of his home.

Most were taken shortly after sunup, because that's when the weather-beaten men came out of the shadows. Earning their trust took some time. But one photograph led to another, especially when Bill made it a point to give his subjects a copy of the images he made.

One day one of the men led Bill down an alley to a converted garage. It was a gathering place, and used to get out of the sun, or the



“Larkin”
Bill Jay ©2005

infrequent rain. Bill stepped inside to find the room filled with the men he had photographed, and the walls covered with the images he had taken. Their self-deprecating title for the exhibition was “Wall of Shame.”

As Bill struggles to meet deadlines, he is putting finishing touches on the text for his next book. A writer who grew up B.C., (Before Computers,) Jay fondly recalls his dictation machine, and the secretaries who turned his dictation into gold.

Now he is expected to produce his own typed work, complete with spell-checking, tasks he views as tedious as he finds odious. Dictation software has been his salvation, though it sometimes garbles Bill's words, as it did when he dictated the note, “I would like to produce a collection of articles called Something Photographic,” only to read the result, “I would like to produce a collection of articles called Sun in the Blood of the Cat.” The unexpected turn of phrase sufficiently delighted him that he used it for the title of his 2001 book of the same name.

The plan for this issue of the Formulary newsletter had been to write an article about Bill Jay's new book, **Men Like Me**, and to discuss his upcoming book, **Photographing Photographers**, all in the context of his career as a magazine editor, print critic and college professor. With so much material, more than one article is the answer. So this is the first. Stay tuned.

Published by the Nazraeli Press of Tucson, Arizona, **Men Like Me** can be purchased [here](#). . .

To watch a five minute interview with Bill Jay, [press here](#). . .

If you should decide you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please send an email to Formulary@Blackfoot.net, and your name will be removed from our mailing list.

Les McLean teaches

“Seeing and Making Fine Black and White Prints”



“Sand Dunes”
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Les believes that the aesthetics of image making are of prime importance and that darkroom method and technique are essential to properly express one's reasons for making a photograph. So expect emphasis on artistic expression during the whole of the workshop.

There will be field trips to make negatives to be printed later in the workshop. Les will show his approach to using light to make landscape photographs. The first two days require an early start to catch the first light of day.

It's going to be a busy time in the darkroom as Les supervises your work using his methods that include split grade printing and single grade printing using graded papers, one and two bath print development, water bath print development, print contrast control using over and under exposure and development, pre and post flashing, f-stop printing using the RH Designs Stop Clock Pro compensating enlarger timer, selenium and gold toning including split toning and if time allows a session of lith printing.

Seeing and Making Fine Black and White Prints

Cost: \$725.00

June 11-16 with Les McLean

SANTA FE CENTER FOR PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

[Look here](#) . . . for the winner and runners up in the 2006 annual Santa Fe Center for Photography contest.

WORLD PINHOLE PHOTOGRAPHY DAY



Tom Miller makes in-camera montages, like the one above, using a Pinhole Blender. The camera uses a single sheet of film, which is exposed three times using three different pinhole apertures. Take a peek at Pinhole.com . .

[Click here](#) to read Tom Miller's Sporadic Pinhole Newsletter, and all the news about current events in the world of pinhole photography. . . .

2006 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE UPDATE

Here's the workshop schedule as of March 15, 2006. Make your reservation now, and join us in Montana this summer!

June 11-16 2006 *Carbon, Kallitype, Van Dyke, and Palladium* - Sandy King

Seeing and Making Fine B&W Prints - Les McLean

June 18-23 *Emulsion Making and Coating* Ron Mowrey

Digital Painting Workshop for Photographers - Tim O'Neill

June 25-30 *Traditional Photography at its Best* - David Vestal and Al Weber

Cyanotype/Artists' Book - Laura Blacklow

Traditional Enlarged Negatives - Agnes Weesies

July 2-7 *Seeing Planning and Printing the Fine Photograph* - **Bruce Barnbaum**

Wet Plate: Mammoth Plate Outdoor Photography - Luther Gerlach

July 9-14 *Teaching Teachers or Students the Fine Art of Digital Negatives*- Dan Burkholder

Large Format Negatives - Andy Eads

July 16-21 *The Art of Bromoil and Bromoil Transfer*- David Lewis

Polaroid Transfers, Photoshop/Digital Printing - Kathleen Carr

July 23-28 *The Art of Collodion* - Will Dunningway

Gum Platinum Printing - Kerik Kouklis

July 30- August 4 *Daguerreotype: A Contemporary Approach* - Jerry Spagnoli
The Allure of Albumen - Zoe Zimmerman

Aug 6-11 2006 *The Beauty of the Traditional Platinum Print* - Dick Arentz

The Contemplative Landscape/Glacier National Park Field Trip George DeWolfe

August 13-18 *Precision Digital Negatives & the Platinum/Palladium Print for the Beginner* - Dick Arentz & Mark Nelson

August 20-25 *Precision Digital Negatives & the Platinum/Palladium Print for the Advanced Printer* - Dick Arentz & Mark Nelson

Aug 27-Sept 1 *Personal Vision; Portfolio Workshop* - Kate and Geir Jordahl

The Awesome Technique of Semi-stand Development - Steve Sherman