

STRANGE NEIGHBOUR



©Robert Marnika

Image Process: Pseudo solarisation of film

ADVANCED DARKROOM COURSES

ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUES
FOR THE BLACK AND WHITE
DARKROOM

ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR THE BLACK AND WHITE DARKROOM

By Robert Marnika

This advanced printing class will survey a variety of non-traditional techniques that expand artistic possibilities for darkroom photographers.

Class will begin with an overview of various photographers that approach photography in a unique way. Our following lessons will take place in the B&W darkroom where we'll print with altered negatives and photo paper, create photograms and chemigrams, make Sabattier prints (solarisation), and apply photo chemistry with brushes and other tools. This class will also explore toning prints in coffee as well as experiment with self-prepared toning and bleaching baths.

We will also experiment different darkroom techniques such as light painting on paper, double exposures, vignetting, zooming in exposure, embossing, spray developing, reticulated negative and burning negative.

The attention will be posted on creativity of every participant and with teachers help they will be able to realize their own artistic work.

"It is of utmost importance to enjoy the process of experimentation and not seek an end product of perfection. Desiring perfection at the start is a killer for creativity! Going with the flow of process, with no specific outcome in mind, allows for creative energy to grow and new discoveries to be made. How many experimental processes were born from mistakes? My personal discoveries were. It is so important to let go of perfection and have fun playing."

Course Information:

Start date – Wednesday, May 13th, 7 -10pm

Course runs every Wednesday evening for six consecutive weeks, 7 – 10pm.

Cost: \$495



Image Process: Zooming enlarger while exposing through transparent textile

Biography – Robert Marnika

Robert Marnika has been a photographer for more than 20 years. He has a wealth of experience in a range of photographic styles and services, from industrial and sport photography to portraits. He has dedicated most of his career to teaching techniques in the darkroom and to artistic photography.

Marnika has been running intensive photographic workshops for more than 12 years in Italy, Croatia and Spain, both on digital and analogical techniques.

He has shown his works in more than 40 national and international exhibitions and he has published a book on his memories about the Croatian war (1991).

Marnika has won several photographic awards and in these last years, he expresses his immense passion for music, in particular jazz, portraying internationally renowned musicians.

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The essence of photography lies in its seemingly magical ability to fix shadows on light-sensitive surfaces. Normally, this requires a camera, but not always. Several artists work without a camera, creating images on photographic paper by casting shadows and manipulating light, or by chemically treating the surface of the paper.

Camera-less photographs show what has never really existed. They are also always 'an original' because they are not made from a negative. Encountered as fragments, traces, signs, memories or dreams, they leave room for the imagination, transforming the world of objects into a world of visions.

A Photogram

Is a generally a contact print. It is made by placing something opaque or translucent on light sensitive material and then exposing it to light. This blocks out part of the light, and makes a pattern or picture on the light sensitive material when it is exposed to light. Unfortunately with continued exposure to light the picture can disappear as the rest of the light sensitive emulsion changes colour. Once the subject is removed to look at the picture, the white parts will gradually darken, so the picture begins to fade away. To make the image permanent it is immersed in a dish of fixer for a few minutes and then washed in clean water. Paper that has been darkened by the sun changes its colour in the fixer and again when it dries.

Luminogram

Is variation of the photogram. In a luminogram, light falling directly on the paper forms the image. Objects placed between the light and the paper (but not touching the paper) will filter or block the light, depending on whether they are transparent or opaque.

Chemigrams

Are made by directly manipulating the surface of photographic paper, often with varnishes or oils and photographic chemicals. They are produced in full light and rely on the maker's skill in harnessing chance for creative effect. Documented experiments are often an important part of the process.



Image Process: Sandwich of two negatives

Vignetting

Is used to make the image fade gradually away at the edges, thus making the subject stand out by eliminating distracting background detail.

Certain images, such as portraits, particularly when they are light and airy, are often improved by vignetting. No background or other extraneous detail then remains to distract attention from the sitter's face.

The effect is produced by allowing the central part of the paper to be exposed normally, while 'holding back' the edges and corners so that the image gradually merges into whiteness. This is done by holding a mask formed by cutting a suitably shaped hole - usually round or oval - out of a piece of card, about half way between the enlarging lens and the paper during the printing exposure. To make the transition soft, do not use too small a lens aperture, and keep the mask moving as in all forms of dodging; a slight circular movement will usually be found suitable. Another way of making the transition more gradual is, in addition, to cut the edges of the mask in a serrated (saw - tooth) pattern.

Dodging and Burning

Very few high quality prints are made by a straight exposure. Shadow areas often need lightening, to prevent them filling-in to a solid black; highlights may need more exposure to avoid featureless areas of solid white. Local density control is the key. Burning (or burning-in) adds density by giving extra exposure to highlight areas; dodging (or holding back, or shading) reduces the exposure and therefore the density in shadows.

When burning, give the whole print a basic exposure, then add extra exposure to the highlight areas. To do this, use a sheet of cardboard with an irregular hole cut in it: hold it half-way between the enlarger lens and the baseboard, and keep it constantly moving during exposure to blur edges. You will be able to see an image of the negative on the card, and position the hole where you want the extra exposure. When dodging, use your hands or a simple dodging tool during the main exposure to reduce exposure where required. Dodging tools are easy to make – just fasten a piece of modelling clay or cardboard to a piece of wire.

Combining Negatives

This technique involves exposing two images onto the same sheet of paper. The principle of combination printing is simple: you cut positive and negative masks to match the shapes of the two image elements you are combining. In the landscape example, you would cut the mask to follow the horizon.

After exposure and contrast testing, you expose one image using the positive mask to shade part of the paper. Then you change the negatives over, and print the second image, using the negative mask to shade the area exposed earlier.

To help with positioning the individual images, you will need to mark their locations on a guide sheet. Then test each of the images for exposure and contrast, and assess which areas need burning in or dodging.

Silhouettes

The silhouette contains pure black and white, with no mid-tones at all: the subject is reduced to pure shape. Therefore choose a negative, which has a strong shape, and preferably a simple background, when you come to make silhouettes.



Image Process: Embossing – using negative and positive film

The technique is simple. Put the No. 5 MULTIGRADE filter into the filter draw of the enlarger and make a high contrast print. Use this as an interpositive, and make a contact print to get a high contrast internegative. Then create the final print by making a contact print on a new sheet of paper against the internegative print – each time using the No. 5 filter. The final result should be pure black and white, with no half-tones at all.

The Sabatier effect

Is produced by re-exposing a photographic material to light part way through the development process. This gives the resultant image both positive and negative qualities. It is sometimes incorrectly referred to as “solarisation”.

More than a hundred years ago, Sabatier discovered that when a plate was exposed, developed, and washed but not fixed, it could be given a second exposure to light which would partially reverse the image when development was continued.

Re-exposing a print to light part way through development is inevitably something of a hit and miss affair, and the results are rather unpredictable.

Paper Negatives

You make the paper negative by sandwiching the original positive print, emulsion-to-emulsion, with a fresh sheet of paper, and pressing them tightly together under a sheet of heavy glass. You then expose the “sandwich” to the light of the enlarger, just as if you were making a contact sheet from a roll of film negatives.