



Abstracting Nature in a Photograph (or Playing with your Camera)

Instructor: Hank Erdmann

Class #6 – Thursday & Friday, July 14 & 15 from 9-4

(Supply List details below)

Dear Clearing Student and Photography Enthusiast:

Welcome to "Abstracting Nature in a Photograph", a class about abstracting natural and other subjects and "playing with your camera". The class dates are July 14 & 15, 2022. Thank you for signing up for the class. I look forward to meeting you or seeing you again and sharing an appreciation for the natural world through the art of "fixing a shadow". I know you'll enjoy the class as much as I enjoy teaching it.

Making abstract images isn't just a lot of fun, unbelievably creative and the subject matter unlimited, learning to make abstract images allows you to make images, and very, very good ones at that, when traditional tactics just don't work

First a little background info. I have been in commercial and industrial photography for more than forty years, and nature photography even longer. Photographing nature is what first interested me photographically and what still keeps me excited about the art of photography. I ran Lake Effect Photographic Workshops and Tours until the summer of 2013 when I shut the business down. With competition to Lake Effect events from camera clubs and other entities limiting sign-ups, I decided to concentrate running outings and workshops for schools like the Clearing and others.

I've also teach or have taught seminars and classes for The Audubon Society, Numerous Camera Clubs and the Chicago Area Camera Club Association (CACCA), Many other Camera Clubs across the country, The Cornucopia Art Center in Lanesboro, Minnesota, Dillman's in Lac du Flambeau, WI, the Madeline Island School of the Arts in Ashland County, WI, NANPA (North American Nature Photography Association), The National Park Service, Northeastern Illinois County Forest Preserve Districts, The State of Indiana DNR, Peninsula Art School in Door County, The Sierra Club, Whitefish Bay Farm Gallery in Door County, as well as numerous other non-photographic groups and organizations.

I have been published in hundreds of books, magazines, newspapers, calendars and digital publishing and by hundreds of publishers across the world.

I am currently a Board Member of NANPA (North American Nature Photography Association) and active on their Regional Events Committee.

The Clearing has supplied you a simple supply list. I'd like to expand upon the equipment portion slightly. A tripod is the most important piece of gear after your camera. You NEED one for this class to get the most out of the class. If you haven't used one in the past, this will also be a primer in learning to use one and why. A tripod is the only pre-workshop expensive piece of gear I'd recommend. If you can borrow or rent a decent one, that would be fine for this class. Some tripods are good for nature and outdoor work, some are not. If you do want to consider buying one, I have an information sheet on what to look for and cost ranges of tripods that are good for nature photography. I'd be happy to email

it to you, The tripods listed will be good for any other type of photography but this is not true in reverse, some very good studio tripods are a royal pain in the field. I have an extra tripod available which will be available for all participants to try out, but not for one person to use for the whole day. If you are serious about doing a lot of outdoor photography and have been thinking about purchasing one, call or email me, I will send you the tripod document, I'm pretty sure I can guide you in the right direction. Having said that, a decent tripod system (legs, head, quick-release), not a top-of-the-line tripod, but a very good one that will serve you well for years is not inexpensive costing somewhere in the neighborhood of \$200.

Miscellaneous stuff that's real handy: a couple square foot (4x4 foot) piece of heavy duty plastic, it keeps the knees dry on wet ground and a foam garden pad makes kneeling more comfortable.

We will photograph in almost any weather even a light drizzle. Unfortunately a one day class cannot offer a field alternative if it's raining hard when we're scheduled to be outside. I will have some props and materials on hand we can use to make some images indoors if heavy rain is an issue. We will be likely be photographing only on the Clearing grounds so we're close to the classroom if the heavens open up unexpectedly.

We'll discuss techniques and skills for making abstract with morning lectures. After lunch we'll head outside weather permitting to make numerous abstract images. I'll demonstrate some techniques and assist you in making some as well.

A laptop with some image processing software to work on your images if there is open time (I doubt it!) might be handy but a laptop is not required for this class.

Phone cameras while not sufficient for your primary camera use during the week, can be handy for snap shots and are worth bringing along. And while I hope it doesn't happen, any extra camera is handy if your primary camera breaks or stops working. IE; have a back up!

We escape to a place like the Clearing to get away from schedules and day to day normal activities. I'm a pretty low key and laid back instructor, I like to have fun and "go with the flow". My firm belief is that first and foremost any workshop should be fun, a lot of fun!

I know we'll both have a great experience at the Clearing. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at home (also my office) at 815.260.8800 between 9 am and 7:30 pm.

Hank Erdmann

Hank Erdmann Photography Workshops

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Images on the Web at; <http://hankphoto.photoshelter.com>

Supply List

Required Camera Equipment

Camera: 35 mm DSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex) or Mirrorless camera with lenses you already own. Point & Shoots or Cell phone cameras are not acceptable choices for your principal camera as they would limit your ability to take advantage of the workshop lessons. Students who have medium and large format equipment and wish to use it occasionally during the workshop are welcome to bring it, however a 35 mm DSLR should be your primary camera as all the instruction and demonstrations are based on and made with 35 mm gear. Point and shoot and cell phone cameras can be advantageous however for snap shots of class activities, course-mates, demonstrations, and simple documentation, and as a back-up if you do not own a spare body. They may be well worth bringing along if you already own one

Accessories: Lens(es), cable release, and tripod required. Other accessories already owned. **Your Camera Manual!**

Digital Media: Have a good supply of media cards. A laptop is not required but might be handy!,

Tripod: A tripod is a must, a good one even more so!!! If you don't own one, try and borrow or rent one. You are looking for a field tripod, not a studio tripod. I have one extra tripod that students may try during the workshop, and I want to leave it available for all participants to try if they'd like to. It likely will not be available for one person to borrow for the whole day. If you are in the market for a new tripod, and this is the only pre-workshop purchase I'd recommend before the workshop, I recommend Manfrotto or a few other tripods, call or email me if you are interested and I'll send you a document of what to look for in a tripod and current brands and model numbers (they change so fast I don't put model number in these notes made a year ahead of the workshop) These are not the top end most expensive tripods, but good quality tripods that will give you years of service. They are not inexpensive pieces of equipment but they are the least expensive good quality tripod that I can recommend. If you're considering such a purchase, and a good tripod makes your photography easier and better, call me and I can help you select the right tripod head for your use.

Clothing Requirements

Dress for the weather. Quality rain gear is a good idea, as we'll continue with field sessions in the rain IF it is a very light drizzle. Umbrellas and large heavy weight Baggies are recommended to help protect camera equipment. The inexpensive motel room give-away shower caps are the best camera rain gear I've yet to find! Some abstract images require intimate contact with the ground, in other words, clothing for field sessions should be of a value that soil and moisture wouldn't adversely affect. An inexpensive gardener's foam knee pad, available at most department stores is a great photographer's tool that is light and can be lashed or tied to your camera bag. A 4x4 square piece of heavy plastic or tarp material is a handy thing to have for wet ground. If it is raining heavily I will have on hand props and materials for us to make abstract images inside.

Recommended Reading Material

Recommended is any book by Freeman Patterson but especially "*Photo Impressionism and the Subjective Image*". All of Tony Sweet's books are great resources. Last, "*Impressionistic Photography*" by Charles Needle is another good resource.

Miscellaneous "An open mind and a healthy enthusiasm"

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