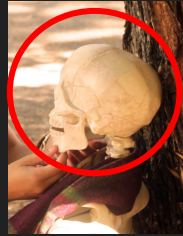# Process Portfolio

IB Visual Arts (HL)

Chilly Weather, Warm Colors

f/5.6
1/50 sec
ISO-320
Layla and Mortimer

In this image, a comfortable and contented atmosphere is created by the warm tones. The symbolism of the heart in the tree bark, which I added in PhotoShop, contributes to this theme.

The skeleton, placed in such a warm and tender scene, questions the validity of happiness by contrasting with the positive, secure atmosphere of the scene. This provides an undercurrent of discomfort and challenges rational perceptions of human emotion.

A memento mori, often a skull or skeleton, is a reminder of death and human mortality. In his painting "Still Life with a Volume of Withers Emblemes" (below) from 1696, Edward Collier features a skull memento mori in the upper left corner of the scene. This balances with the fruit on the bottom left, which symbolize life.

Collier's piece is also a vanitas painting, emphasizing vanity and frivolity. This contrasts with my image, which depicts an act of selflessness from the girl figure as she gives her scarf to the skeleton for protection from the cold.

(*Still Life with a Volume of Withers Emblemes,* Collier, acrylic on canvas)

Nature and Humans: Practicing Sandwiched Negatives

The existence of nature and humans together is portrayed in these film images, using the technique of sandwiched negatives to create the effect of layering detailed plant close-ups with scenes of humans. In the image on the left, a sense of captivity is communicated in the way the branches surround the figure and reach toward her from the side.

ULTRAFINE EXTREME DX 135, 400/27°

A feeling of captivity is found in the image on the right as well, though instead of in the plants, it is in the position of the figure herself as she strains against caution tape. The grass contrasts the horizontal movement of the figure and breaks up the scene in a manner similar to vertical prison bars.

This was my first time trying sandwiched negatives, and I feel like it was a success; all of the images came out clear.
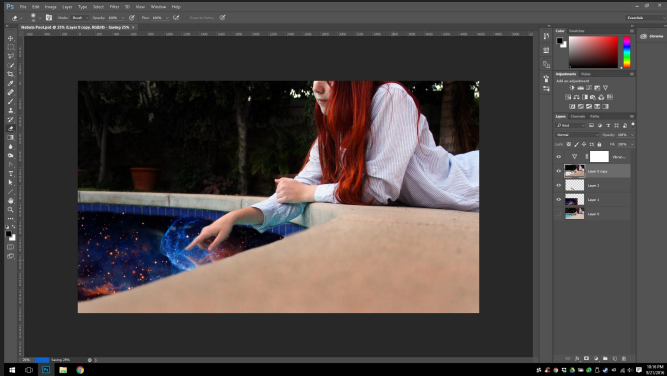

ULTRAFINE EXTREME DX 135, 400/27°

Photoshopping a Hot Tub Nebula

Taking the original image that I modeled in (left) I cropped it, adjusted the levels and saturation in PhotoShop, then began inserting the nebula. I used the eraser tool and feathered the edges of the layer for a smoother transition.

Left is a screenshot showing the layers in PhotoShop. I decided to flip the final image (above) because then the viewer's eye sees the figure first, then the pool, which seemed to make sense for the sake of telling a story.

Editing this image was great for practicing PhotoShop, which I admit I don't have much experience yet using.

A Study of Hands

Alfred Stieglitz (1864 - 1946) was a definitive figure in the world of photography in the early 1900's. Stieglitz allowed his unique artistic approach to evolve with the changing values of American photography, and believed that portraits should not be limited to the faces of subjects.

Hands (of Helen Freeman), Stieglitz

Stieglitz's photographic portrait of Helen Freeman (above) features her hands as the focus of the image. I have emulated the style of Alfred Stieglitz by photographing two hands with fingers intertwining (right).
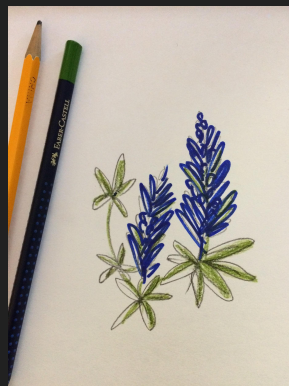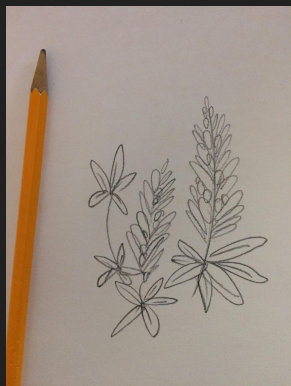

World War I caused a significant shift in American artistic values in the early 1900's. Simplicity, honesty, and transparency of style rose in renown. Simplicity is reflected in the elimination of color from my photo.

f/3.2   1/25 sec   ISO-400   *The Here and Now*

Painting Abstract Lupins

When I first set out to paint this, I expected to try out a realistic style. It was more interesting to go for a painterly effect with the acrylic, with all of the brushstrokes showing; to do this I had to apply the paint thickly and say goodbye to small details. I also decided to go for red and purple instead of blue and green, which was the original palette in the concept art.

I am happy with the result, and especially the fact that I can still feel the textures strokes even after the paint has dried.

Painting Versus Photographing a Beach

Juxtaposition of a photograph and a painting of a beach:

I have decided that I preferred painting the beach to photographing it; I had more freedom with the sort of texture that I wanted it to have. I also had the freedom to add cliffs closer in my field of view than they were in the photograph, and I could flip the view to make it easier to paint since I am left-handed.

Painting seems to me like a more hands-on process than PhotoShop, and I enjoy the aspects about it like the smell of a fresh canvas and the feeling of washing paint off of my hands later.

Harsh Sunlight: Trying to Achieve Chiaroscuro

Chiaroscuro is a Renaissance technique, typically used in oil paintings, that describes contrast between light and shadow. It is created by light falling on uneven surfaces, and serves to define shapes in three dimensions.

KODAK TRI-X PAN 400

While shooting in the harsh midday sunlight, I noticed how much contrast could be seen between the light and dark on the figures, making them seem very stark and dramatic. In the image on the left, the chiaroscuro look helps to create contrast between the sunlight and shade on the grass, making each blade visible. Rembrandt (below) was very well-known for this technique in Italy.

(*The Blinding of Samson*, Rembrandt, 1636, Oil on Canvas)

ULTRAFINE EXTREME DX 135, 400/27°

In the above image, I believe that the chiaroscuro-inspired lighting emphasizes the bare lifelessness of the tree. Without leaves to soften it or create shade, the tree is fully exposed, and the texture (made visible by the harsh light) is similar to that of bone.
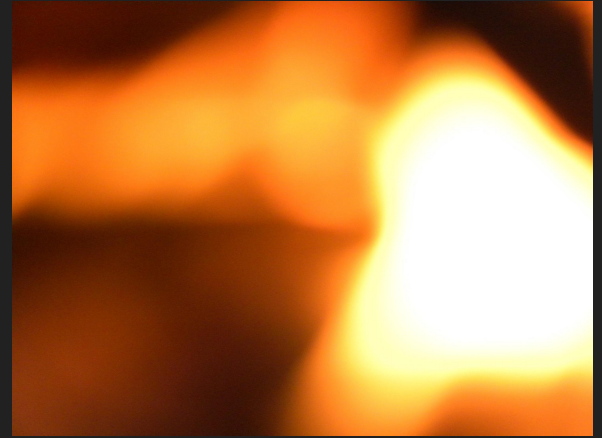
A Study of Abstraction

Note to remember: bringing an image out of focus is an effective way to check basic composition and framing. This is because the shapes become soft and colors are emphasized.

f/4.5   1/41 sec   ISO-400

f/4.5   1/80 sec   ISO-346

f/5   1/45 sec   ISO-400

Zooming in on a subject and blurring the image cause abstraction, reducing the photograph to the rudimentary elements of color and shape. This is useful for viewing the silhouette value of a subject or addressing the interaction of colors within a scene.

Literary Inspiration:
Ophelia

This image is inspired by the character Ophelia in Shakespeare's play *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Ophelia is a young woman in the noble class of Denmark who drowns in a river. It is unclear in the plot whether her death is an accident or an act of suicide.

Part of the tragic state of Ophelia's character is that throughout the play, she is defined entirely by her interactions with others. The symbol of water is especially prevalent to this point because water is defined by the vessel in which it is carried.

To contrast with Ophelia's dependence on the other characters in the play, I used negative space to create a sense of isolation. The stark colors contribute to this idea as well.

f/4   1/60 sec   ISO-800   *Ophelia*

Concert Photography: Capturing Live Art

These photos are about uniting two different forms of art. Photography and music are obviously vastly different, but they both depend on taking charge of the moment. I was lucky enough to get a good vantage point at the Ventura County Fair during a Shinedown concert, and the bassist, Eric Bass, is the subject of these photos.

The bold warm colors emphasize the idea of a multi-sensory experience; music cannot be captured in visual form, but the presence of bright, saturated colors indicates other sensory elements at play.

(Right) I took this picture before the sun had set, and I think it is interesting to see the stage lights and rigging without the orange glow and fog.

f/2.2 1/30 sec ISO-25
Eric Bass Image 1
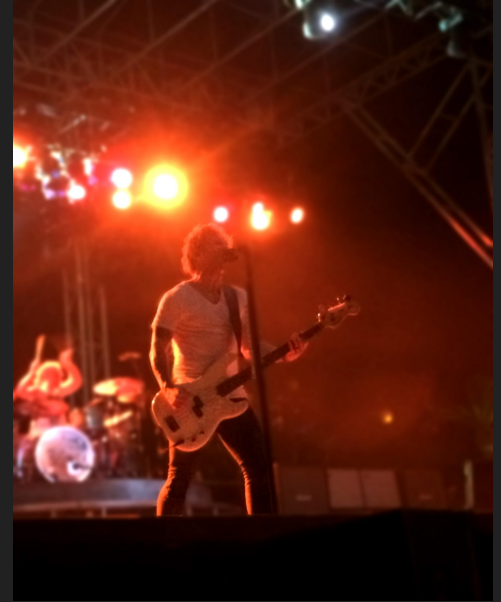
f/2.2 1/15 sec ISO-400
Eric Bass Image 2

Romanticism Connection

During the Romantic period, art reflected a wide range of turbulent emotions, in conjunction with surroundings of nature and shadowy scenes. This photo reflects the eerie Romantic aesthetic through the use of skewed perspective, blurring, and elimination of color. The figure in the background against the far wall adds to the ambiguity of the scene, which makes eeriness all the more apparent. I named the photo *Mary Shelley's Bedroom* in reference to the author of *Frankenstein*, one of the most prominent literary works of the Romantic period.

A prime example of the Romantic era style is Henry Fuseli's painting entitled *The Nightmare* (right). Though this piece was completed during the age of Enlightenment, the influence of the Romantic movement is evident in the intense emotional quality of terror. This is emphasized by dark colors and figure ambiguity, especially regarding the horse-like figure, known in mythological terms as a "mara". My photo on the previous slide utilizes these qualities as well. "The sublime" was a prominent idea during the Romantic period, referring to a mixture of awe and terror. This concept elicited a strong emotional response to artistic and literary works.

(*The Nightmare*, Fuseli, 1781, oil on canvas)
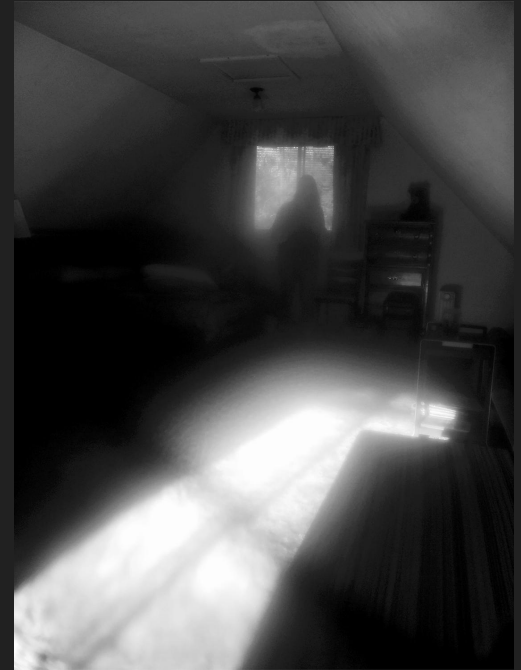
f/2.2   1/40 sec   ISO-32

Painting from a Cabin Photo

I took the original photo (left) one afternoon during the summer while I was hiking in the woods at Mount Madonna. I wanted to paint the scene because the light falling through the redwood trees is so luminous and soft. I captured the yellow hue in the painting (right), mixing the color using yellow, red and white on a paper plate palette (upper right).

Concept sketch
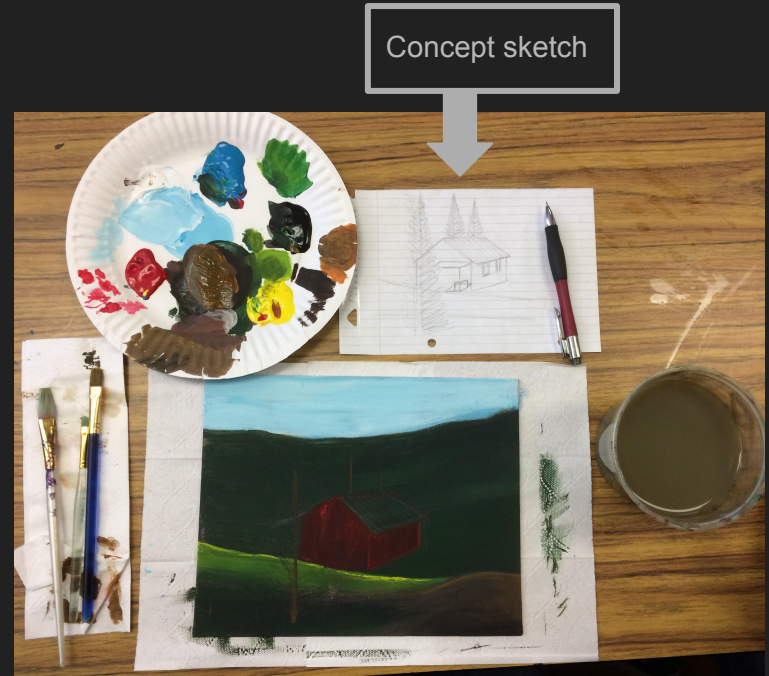
A Tree from Any Other Angle


f/2.8 10/228 sec   ISO-400

Trees are such a staple part of the experience of camping, the way I see it. Spending a weekend in Big Basin without devoting at least a couple of pictures to capturing an intimate look at a tree would have been unthinkable. In the image on the left, I included more detail on the leaves high above the tree, as well as the vibrant green hues. Contrarily, the photo on the right focuses more on the texture of the trunk of the main subject. The canopy of leaves is much less defined in terms of detail, and the black-and-white scheme helps to emphasize the light playing on the rough trunk.
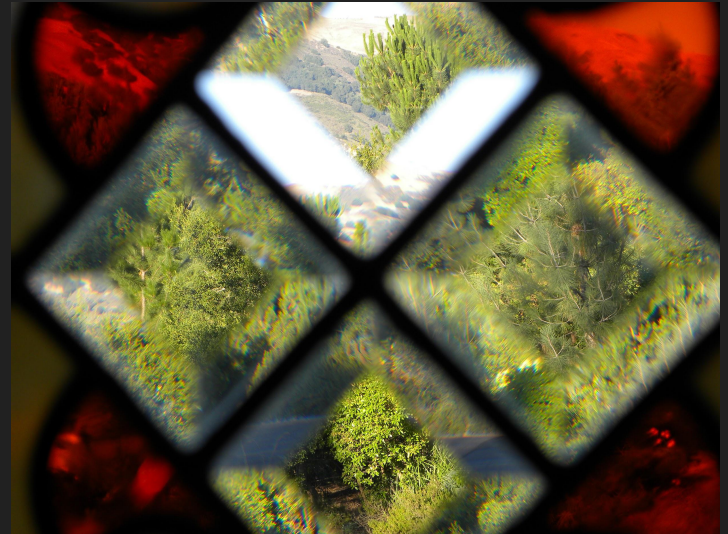

f/2.8 10/96 sec   ISO-408

One Subject, Two Methods
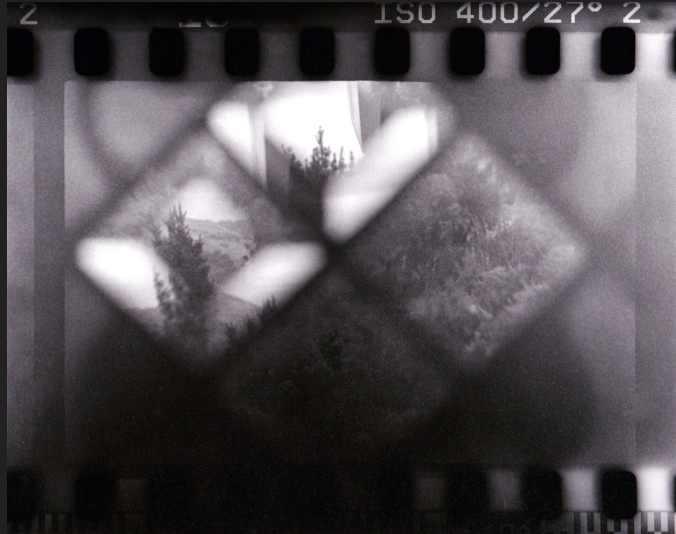
These photos are about the nature of the creative lens. The image on the left is film, and the image on the right is the same subject in digital. The fact that the subject is a stained glass window provides an additional lens through which the viewer sees the natural world.

Seattle Filmworks DX   ISO 400-20

f/4 1/136 sec ISO-64

Capturing the same subject with two different processes gave me perspective on just how different film and digital photography really are. They are described as two different worlds sometimes, but the reality is that they allow you to study the same exact world in vastly different ways.

Learning to Wire Wrap

Right side view

Left side view

Front View

Overhead view

Wire wrapping seemed at first to be an easy and simple task. As I took the straight wire and pliers and tried to make a bust, I quickly discovered that it is not as simple as it can be mistakes for. I poked myself in the palm with the end of the wire several times, and the bunny bust had trouble standing on its own until I reinforced the strong wire that acts as the spinal column. Eventually I was able to get the hang of it, and it was a very enjoyable activity after that. I hope this is not the last time that I wire wrap!

The Impact of Color

In the below image by Lisa Shalom, all of the original colors have been removed except for red. The absence of color gives the red dramatic emphasis, manipulating the image to communicate the message desired by the artist (in this case there is an apocalyptic theme and an allusion to violence though color.)


Yom Kippur Apocalypse, Shalom

f/4   1/40 sec   ISO-250   "Ruminating"

I have utilized the dramatic potential of color by eliminating all hues except for the red in my hair (above). The result is that the red becomes the immediate focus of the scene, drawing further attention to the pose as well. In art throughout history, red is representative of intense emotions such as courage and passion. In the context of my image, the vibrant red hue can be viewed as a symbol of these emotions in relation to individuality.

The Color Roll Experiment
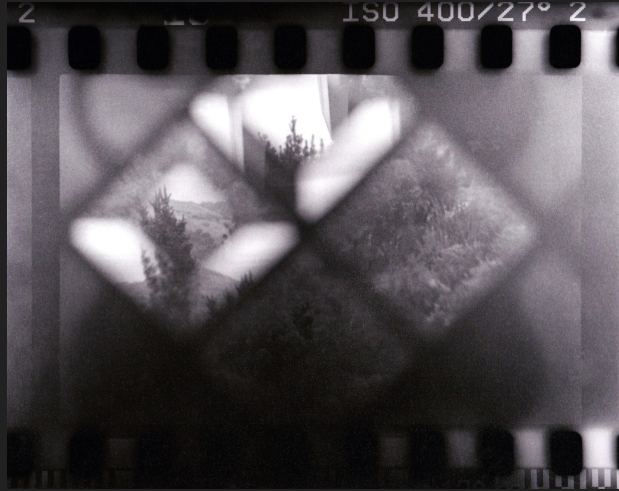
Seattle Filmworks DX   ISO 400-20

In a conversation with my neighbor, a photographer, I learned that back when she was in school, she once accidentally developed a color roll of film using black and white chemicals. Her recollection of the mistake was that the resulting images had interesting shadows and irregular levels of contrast.

I found this story fascinating. Given that I had an old color roll that I would probably never use, I decided to do an experimental shoot and develop the images using the black and white chemicals available at school. As it turns out, my neighbor was right about the shadows and contrast. As you can see in this image, it has a lot of shadow, which I believe gives it a soft and vaguely ambiguous quality. The film itself turned a dark bronze hue, and long exposure times (25-45 seconds) were necessary in order to achieve the desired images.
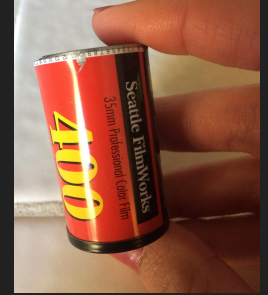
Overall, I think that this experiment was a success. I don't think that I would truly learn anything new or make creative and original photos if I were afraid of taking risks for my art.

Repetition: Medium Format Neg. Carriers

Seattle Filmworks DX ISO 400-20

Out in nature, repetition can be seen almost everywhere around us as a natural part of the environment. After capturing several plant life photos, I was not content with the idea of simply developing the images as they were; it did not seem like that was thinking far enough outside the box.
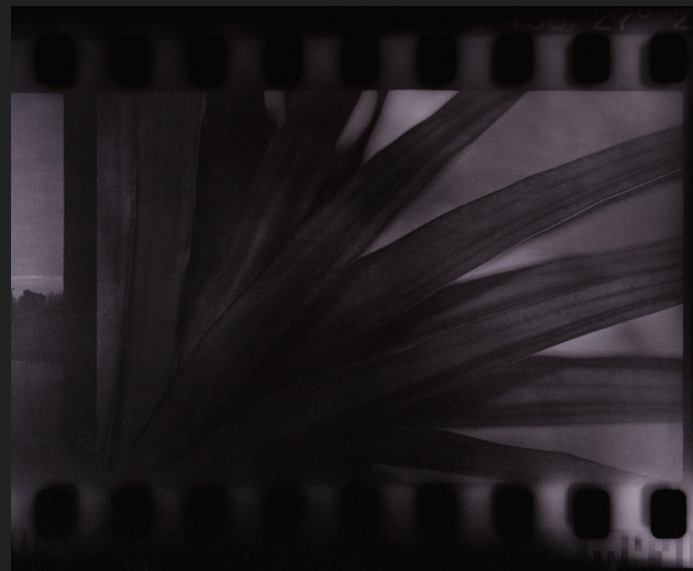
Seattle Filmworks DX ISO 400-20

Using medium format negative carriers gave me the chance to learn a new technique, and add another visual aspect and framing device to my photos. The perforations echo the petals and leaves and continue the repetition that naturally occurs in the plants.

"Oldschool"; A Tribute to Film Photography

This image is a tribute to film as the older style of photography. Spending time in the darkroom over the course of the year has played a huge part in facilitating my love for photography, and I believe that even digital photographers should recognize film as the true progenitor of the art. Using Kodak for this shoot, not to mention the rather old subject matter of a typewriter, is a way to hark back to the retro aspect of film.

I used a medium format negative carrier, 80mm lens, and no. 5 filter to show the perforations from the edges of the film strip. This was to emphasize as much of the darkroom process as possible on the image.

In PhotoShop this image needed a lot of cleaning up with the spot healing tool; there were lots of dust particles on the print when I scanned it. I have included a screenshot (left).

KODAK TRI-X PAN 400

Repetition of Lines and Shapes

In this film image, repetition can be seen in the visible edge of the film strip, the stairs, the railing, and even the plaid pattern of the figure's shirt. This unifies the scene.

The film strip can be seen because a medium format negative carrier was used, with a number 4 filter to prevent the light leaks from ruining crisp details. I had a lot of fun trying this new technique in the darkroom.

The prominent emotion in this photo is stress; the fact that the figure has stopped to sit down at the bottom of the stairs represents a setback, or something preventing him from moving along in his figurative journey. The position of his body displays tension, particularly in the angle at which his head is turned down, and his hand on his head.

KODAK TRI-X PAN 400

Sensory Appeal; Music

In the words of the classical Greek philosopher Plato, "[m]usic is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything."

f/5   1/190 sec   ISO-64

Music is an incredibly important aspect of life from a cultural, social, and even a scientific standpoint. In the human brain, neuroscientists have found, there is a neural population in the auditory cortex that serves specifically to recognize music.

In my image (left) I aim to underscore the importance of music as a cultural staple. The man in the photo is holding a violin at a live performance for the annual Highland Games in southern California. He is surrounded by drums in the background, and appears to be staring, lost in thought, past the audience. The man is isolated in this shot to show the effect of music on an individual in a single moment, regardless of whether or not there happens to be an audience.

Christie Goodwin is a London-based photographer who specializes in shooting live music. I think that her work really captures the emotional aspect of live music, especially her Ed Sheeran photo (right). That photo inspires me to seek out photo opportunities of music in action.

(*Ed sheeran*, Royal Albert Hall, London, 2014.)

Harmony of Humans and Nature

I feel very passionately about the relationship that we, as humans, have with nature. The goal of this film image is to represent the peaceful interaction that can happen between humans and nature. Two hands are gently cupping the rose, and the positivity of the scene is enhanced by the surrounding lights, which are out of focus to create depth.

Contrast is evident between the rough texture of the hands and the smoothness of the rose petals. Even so, the the subjects are harmonious and the image is unified. This helps to portray the idea that despite possessing many differences, humans and nature can coexist and flourish peacefully.

I was not anticipating the grainy quality of this image, but I have decided not to alter it. It has a characteristic darkroom look that I am beginning to like very much.

KODAK TRI-X PAN 400

Contact Sheet from Shooting at El Capitan

This photoshoot was the first time that I got truly immersed in nature and photography together. I tested out a macro lens on leaf textures and closely observed the colors in a campfire.

I also explored the importance of the element of line when I photographed a large metal bridge from various angles. Overall, I would say it was a success, especially considering all of the practice I got.

DSCN3564.JPG   DSCN3562.JPG   DSCN3560.JPG   DSCN3702.JPG

DSCN3275.JPG   DSCN3280.JPG   DSCN3325.JPG   DSCN3326.JPG

DSCN3550.JPG   DSCN3781.JPG   DSCN3792.JPG   DSCN3790.JPG

Proof Sheet

I find darkroom to be the most compelling form of photography that I have experienced thus far. According to John Sexton, an American fine art photographer who specializes in black and white photography, "[f]or me the printing process is part of the magic of photography. It's that magic that can be exciting, disappointing, rewarding and frustrating all in the same few moments in the darkroom"