

Lotem Sella
Flow Visualization
February 28, 2013

Context:

The purpose of this assignment was to investigate different cloud formations and how a particular formation relates to statistical weather entries. For the assignment I wanted to bring an element of formal photography to the mix so I simply walked around with a thirty-six-exposure roll snapping pictures of the Hill as well as clouds above the neighborhood. The thinking behind just walking around and taking pictures is that I would be in a certain photographic creative zone so that the clouds picture would be both artistic and scientific.

Weather Phenomena:

I unfortunately did not look at the Skew T diagram the day I took the picture and that has led to me not being able to find a diagram. I took the photograph on the ninth of February of 2013 at approximately two o'clock in the afternoon. When I finally realized that I needed to look at the diagram the day of the picture or otherwise it would be removed from the web it was too late. But anyways just by looking at the image and remembering the unstable environment of the day I would have to assume that the clouds are Cumulonimbus.

Visualization Technique:

The only technique I used was going outside and taking a picture of some clouds. I wanted to capture the complexity of the clouds while not sacrificing contrast and detail. The way I did that however is a photographic technique.

Photographic Technique:

There are two ways to approach photography, and both methods should be applied to every outing. The first is the spiritual side in that the photographer must be at ease and understand the essence of the day in order to expose the spirit behind the photograph. This might seem cheesy to say, but photography is all about understanding the essence behind a particular event that is trapped in time. Comprehending this phenomenon from a human perspective is the first key to understanding why we are out there taking silly pictures in the first place.

The second method is approaching photography from the technical aspect. There is a world of possibilities when it comes to the ways a camera can be set to take a photograph and the post-manipulation after the fact. Understanding that every picture is unique due to technical constraints, can relate back to the first method.

Ok so enough philosophy; here is how I applied these methods to my photograph. Like I said earlier when I took the clouds picture, the other pictures on my roll of film were not all clouds. I knew that I had to get in the mood of the day around me. So I experimented with looking through the viewfinder and understanding how the frame closed off everything but what was inside of it. After getting focused and in the mood I also took pictures of clouds so that they wouldn't be just images of clouds but so that I could show they belonged to February the ninth and all of the ethos found in that day. Second I looked at my built in reflection meter and I exposed the whole frame for middle gray. I eventually settled on an F-Stop of 8 with a shutter speed of 1/250, and an ISO of 100. I didn't want to overexpose or underexpose because I was afraid that would push the composition out of its intended latitude. That's about it, I chose Black and White film because I am pretty good at hand processing it myself and I think it captures a truer spirit of the world around us. At the darkroom I developed the negatives with a standard D76 solution and after that I scanned the negatives, inverted them in photoshop, and then messed with curves.

Revelations:

This journey to find a great clouds picture has taught me a lot about what it means to be a photographer. Spending all that time alone walking with my stupid camera really gave me time to reflect on the whole process. However in the future I think I would like to do this assignment a little different. Instead of focusing on the mood of the day through taking other photographs, I want to just naturally observe it and then focus more on the scientific part of the exercise. For the next clouds assignment I will only take pictures of clouds and vary the shot up every time. Since I am using black and white film it will not record color, but that does not mean it doesn't see color. What I want to do is experiment with different colored filters in front of the lens and see how that affects contrast and exposure. So I want to use five different color filters and then bracket the exposures over a three-stop range in order to truly find out what works best. Although every photograph is inherently unique, I want to experiment as much as possible so that I have solid confidence in taking future cloud photographs.