

Personal Vision

by Fred Herring, Dallas photographer

“When it’s time for me to photograph something, I remind myself once again how important it is for me to see as the camera ‘sees’.”

“The human eye has panoramic, three-dimensional viewing and is affected by the sights, sounds and smells of the environmental surround. What I ‘see’ in my mind’s eye must be re-evaluated at the lens-level of perception. The photographic image is flat and two-dimensional and has borders that define what is included and what is not; its point-of-view and content are fixed at the moment of exposure and are not influenced by the mobility of the human eye.”

“With this in mind I search for a subject that interests me; this is the key to excitement. When the intended subject is located, it is examined from many positions: nearer and farther away; laterally to one side and then to the other. Consideration is given to the visual relation of near objects to the more distant ones. And the assumption is made that the first camera position is incorrect.”

“In a small town I always look for a deserted street, or a storefront with a special ‘character,’ and any play of light and shadow across the ‘heart’ of the town, etc. But I prefer the natural scene in rural and mountain areas; such has been photographed before, so my visualization of the final print must be something unusual, most likely with an expanded contrast.”

“Finally, I must remember that it is not the tree or the flower or the snow-capped mountain that ‘makes’ the photograph; it’s the light. It is not the pounding surf, or the rippling river or the waterfall. Nor is it the turn-of-the-century building, or the narrow, winding street, or the warped and weathered wood of the old prospector’s shack. And it’s not the morning mist on the waters, or the dust devils in the desert winds, or the blowing sands across the dunes.... It’s the light. The light may be soft and delicate, or it might be bold and intense. The subject matter may be bright and revealing, or it might move intermittently but thunderously through the shadows. But it’s still the quality of the light that makes all these things in the world around me so beautiful for the eye to perceive. And I look for it.”