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CREATIVE THINKING

SEE SERENELY

Explore the Zen-like power of photo minimalism

THE MAIN ADVICE photographer David Fokos offers: "Focus." (Aptly enough, he pronounces his name the same way.) Concentrate, he says, on the essence of the image, reducing or eliminating

everything else. The San Diego-based artist has been exhibited around the world, and his style is likened to visual haiku.

A student of Japanese art history, Fokos has refined his pho-

Exposure on Kodak Tri-X sheet film (ISO 320) for "Balanced Stones" was 2 minutes at f/64.

tographic minimalism over 15 years, striving to create images that express a profoundly telling sense of place.

"What I learned was that to make an image of a place that I experienced over time, I need the camera to experience the place over time, as well," he says.

He does this with an 81-year old 8x10-inch Korona view camera fitted with his sole lens—a



HOW * CREATIVE THINKING

210mm Rodenstock Sironar-S (equivalent to a full-frame 29mm wide-angle lens). He captures images on Kodak Tri-X sheet film (ISO 320) and develops his negatives in Kodak HC-110.

He shot "Balanced Stones" (on the previous page) in Port Townsend, WA, in 2002. He was driving along when the stones atop the post caught his eye. To emphasize them, he got as close as he could, giving the arrangement of posts some breathing room within his frame.

Fokos pays particular attention to how the visual elements

in his picture interact within the frame, eliminating distractions. With this photo, "I made a conscious decision to shoot a bit downward onto the posts so that none of them broke the line of the horizon," he says.

The camera position above the scene combined with a slight back tilt added depth and a slight angle to the posts. (This tilt is a movement view cameras can do thanks to bellows between imaging plane and lens.)

He found a big distraction, however, in the "visual noise" of the water's surface. He wanted

You can see more photos by David Fokos at www.davidfokos.net.

his picture to capture the essence of the serenity of the scene, not the water's choppy texture. To blur its distracting surface movement, Fokos needed an exposure of about 2 minutes. To achieve it, he used a 3-stop neutral density filter, which cut light transmission enough to allow such a long exposure time.

If you want to adapt this kind of minimal, disciplined approach to landscapes, restrict yourself to simple tools (e.g., one wide-angle prime lens and a good tripod) and convert your images to monochrome. —**Laurence Chen**

30-SECOND SOFTWARE

RAW OUTPUT SETTINGS

WHEN YOU USE Adobe Camera Raw to convert your RAW images, save time by telling it what settings to use for your output file. Choose them by clicking on **Current Settings**, a hyperlink below your image. Once you see your workflow options, choose a color space, bit-depth, resolution, and size. If you're headed into Photoshop, you usually want the biggest size without upscaling, 16-bit depth, and either the Adobe RGB or ProPhoto RGB color spaces. Or, if you want to export a small file for e-mailing, choose a small size, sRGB, and 8-bit. If you're shrinking the file to send or post online, use the pulldown menu to choose **Sharpen For Screen**. Then click **Save Image** on the bottom left. You're ready to upload.



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