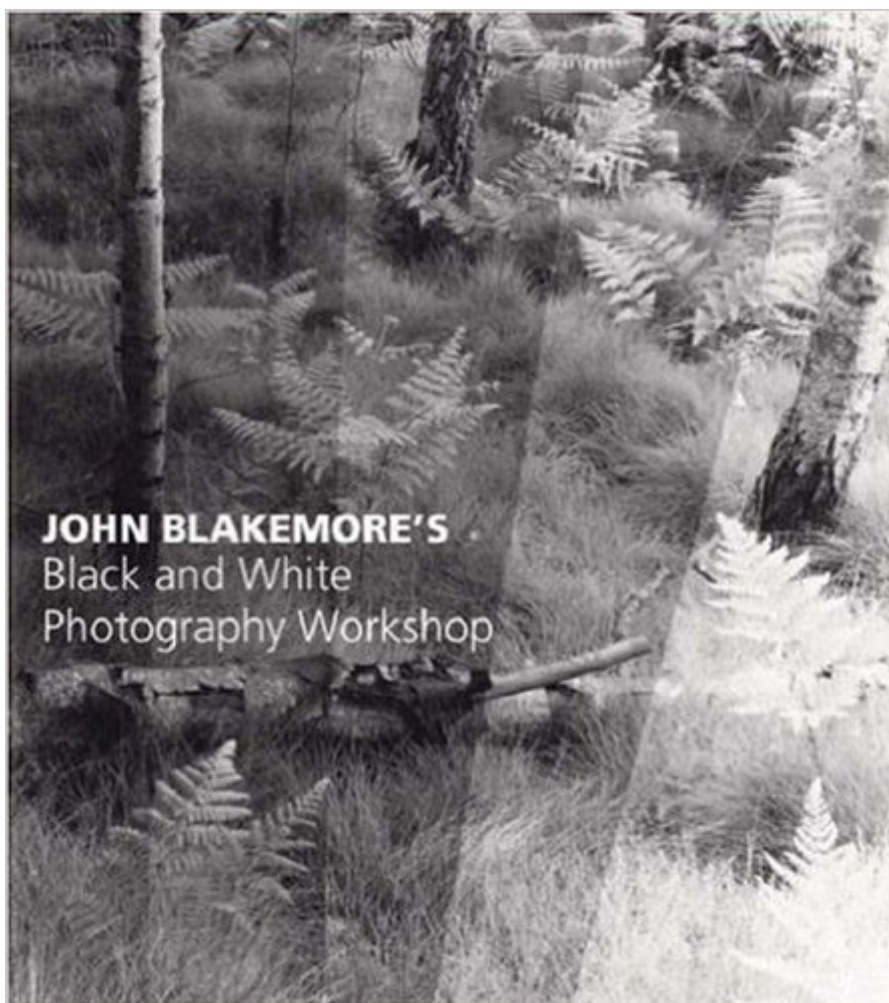


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John Blakemores Black & White Photography Workshop



Synopsis

Bringing his vast knowledge and experience to bear, John Blakemore explores the creative as well as the technical processes involved in black and white photography. Long awaited for the many thousands of photographers that have attended his legendary workshops over the years and essential for the many more that have never had the chance, this is a unique insight into the art of one of photography's most influential practitioners and an important document of the methods of one of photography's most important teachers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is not a technical book on black and white photography. Although the author provides some technical material, it assumes that you are already past the basics. This book is more about developing and refining your aesthetic, the part of photography that is harder to teach and may I say harder to learn. The author takes you on a journey through a series of images discussing everything from the original motivation behind the capture to the final execution of the print. Throughout it is sprinkled with delightful insights and perceptive observations. The author also shows prints that were left out of the final portfolio and discusses what artistic criteria they failed to meet. Quite instructive indeed. I found this book useful, despite the fact that I usually print digitally from film scans. I also found the images a welcome deviation from the usual punched up prints that are popular today. However, you need not ascribe to the author's taste to benefit from the book.

Putting aside the fact that almost everything in this book is, well, obsolete, I found this to be one of

the most engaging books on how to "make" photographs. Reading how John Blakemore analyzed what he was trying to attempt with his photography and how he honed every possible aspect of the photographic process until he got what he wanted simply intrigued me. There is no escaping the work that photography requires in order for it to be any good. But the good news is that all of this working through processes to make a photograph succeed can be a heck of a lot of fun, because of the exploration and discovery that is involved. This book has changed the way I look at taking photographs and has definitely broadened how I look at--and assess--the world around me.

After a certain point, I don't believe reading about your hobby is going to make you any better at it - you just have to practice. When I first started I read *The Art of Photography: An Approach to Personal Expression*, all of the Ansel Adams books *The Camera* (Ansel Adams Photography, Book 1), *The Negative* (Ansel Adams Photography, Book 2), *The Print* (Ansel Adams Photography, Book 3), and especially *Examples: The Making of 40 Photographs* several times each. About 1000 medium format B&W negatives, I've gotten to the point where I need a little "push" to make my photos better. This book gave me that push. It is an excellent blend of technique and application. It really got me rethinking a lot of my assumptions about tonality and contrast, and is helping me refine my personal style. Having just rescanned all of my negatives, it also got me to revisit many "failures" and reconsider them in a new artistic and technical light. This is an excellent book whether you are just learning the basics of B&W film, or you need to advance your technique and creative vision. I bought several copies to inspire my darkroom friends!

This book is similar to Ansel Adams' *Making of 20 photographs* in some ways, but Blakemore's images are more pictorial than Adams' and he focuses more on what he was thinking than how he made the exposures. There are almost no technical details, but plenty of insight into the creative process Blakemore uses to make his images, with a basic introduction of the Zone system for good measure. Personally, I could not get past the images, which are too soft and abstract for my tastes, to really connect with his thought process. If you think you would be interested in seeing into Mr. Blakemore's mind while he formulates these images, AND you like his soft focus style, you might enjoy this book. If you prefer more defined images, or are looking for more technical information on how the images were made, you will not find what you are looking for here. This book seems less of a workshop and more of a chat session with the photographer.

I can thoroughly recommend this book to everyone, even those who have gone digital. John talks

about how and why he has made a photograph and also discusses the Zone system. The zone system has always been a bit hard for a lot of people to follow but I think John has made it more accessible. The point is even if you are a Digital photographer the same principles apply. The rest of the book deals on "seeing" and "reasons" to make a photograph, also on burning and dodging, which is just the same in Photoshop as it is in the Darkroom. John is one of the Worlds finest teachers and photographers and this book should be on every photographers bookshelf. Even if you only just look at the pictures.

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