

Sample



Alain Briot  
COLLECTED ESSAYS

2003-2004



ALAIN BRIOT  
PUBLISHING

# INTRODUCTION

## **1 – A gathering of essays**

The idea behind this collection is to make all the essays I wrote so far available in one place. Think of this collection as a *retrospective* of my writings on photography. No more multiple files strewn out everywhere, no more surfing the web to find one or the other, no more ‘mystery essays’ that cannot be found, no more looking for a loose printout somewhere. They are now all in one single place, conveniently organized by year of publication, and referenced in a table of content.

Several essays in this collection have been published previously. However, finding them all is challenging to say the least. This is because they are located in a wide variety of places: on the web, in print, in books, in magazines, etc. In addition, some of these essays were made available to students, or to newsletter subscriber, or for participants of special events. Finally, some of these essays have never been published, and some were started but not completed until the publication of this collection.

## **2 – Writing evolution**

This series of essays evolved over the years. When I started writing essays about photography I wrote product reviews about cameras, software and gear. However, as time went by, writing product reviews became less and less interesting. Many other photographers were doing it and gear was not what I was the most interested in.

I realized that I could make a more valuable contribution by writing about the aesthetic aspects of photography, rather than about which gear I was using. This shift resulted in a new series of essays on Photography and Aesthetic. These essays were the starting point for my first book: *Mastering Landscape Photography*.

As years went by I made further changes by starting a series of essays focused on *Reflections* on photography rather than on *Descriptions* of what I was doing. Many essays from this new series were included in my second book, *Mastering Photographic Composition, Creativity and Personal Style*.

Another subjects I enjoy writing about is marketing and selling photographs. These marketing essays resulted in the publication of my third book: *Marketing Fine Art Photography*.

I wrote many more essays than those featured in my 3 books, and the purpose of this collection is to publish the essays have not been featured in book format until now.

When working on this collection, I decided to not include the essays that have been already published in my books. I took this decision to prevent unnecessary duplication of essays. I did include a few book chapters that I consider to be ‘seminal’ essays, such as *Just say Yes*, or *The Eye and the Camera* for example. These are important in order to understand the changes that

# INTRODUCTION

took place in my writing, and as such they have their place in this collection. However, besides these few instances, these essays have not been published in book or eBook format until now.

This collection does include a selection of students essays. These essays were originally published on my site and I thought it was important to include them in this retrospective.

Finally, the collection includes a number of booklets, folios and portfolios. Most of these were never published as essays. They were either made available as printed booklets or folios, or were created only for my own personal use. This is therefore the first time they are made widely available.

Because this collection is organized in chronological order of publication, not all types of essays are available in each individual eBook. This makes collecting the entire series of collected essays eBooks particularly important.

## **3 – Additional sections**

I decided to add three sections specifically for this collection of essays.

These 3 sections are the *Quotes*, the *Thoughts and Tips* and the *Photographs Explained* sections. Each section consists of 5 pages per eBook, for a total of 15 pages per eBook. Some of these writings were published elsewhere but in a very limited manner. Some are entirely new. The quotes have not been published by themselves before.

These section pages are distributed throughout the essay collections. I tried to space them as evenly as possible to add variety and to make reading more interesting. You can discover these sections as you read through the text, or you can ‘jump’ to a specific page directly by typing the page number in the ‘Go to Page’ dialog box in your eBook or PDF reader .

## **4 – A few words about writing**

Writing is important to me. I would not have written so much for so long otherwise. Writing provides me with possibilities that photography does not offer. While photography is fantastic to share what I see, writing is phenomenal to share what I think. The two provide entirely different outlets. They also work very well together. Text and images were made to work together, or so it seems to me.

Alain Briot  
Vistancia, Arizona  
October 2011

ALAIN BRIOT - BEAUX ARTS PHOTOGRAPHY

ALAIN BRIOT  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
2003-2004

Collected Essays eBook Number 1

# List of Contents

30 Essays

365 Pages

## Five Thoughts & Tips

- 1 - A Fine Art Photograph is ...
- 2 - Landscape Photography is about Natural Light
- 3 - A Few Words on Perseverance
- 4 - Fine Art Printing and Manipulation
- 5 - Gratitude

## Five Photographs Explained

- 1 - Dancing Rocks
- 2 - Cove Arch
- 3 - Horseshoe Bend
- 4 - Sand Dunes
- 5 - Spiderock Sunset

Five Quotes

# 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

# ALAIN BRIOT COLLECTED ESSAYS 2003-2004

## Table of Contents

<u>Quotes</u> .....	4, 148, 209, 260, 352
<u>Thoughts &amp; Tips</u> .....	113, 181, 228, 284, 350
<u>Photographs Explained</u> .....	79, 152, 197, 216, 270
<u>Introduction</u> .....	5
1 - Diary-Epson 9600 .....	7
2 - Diary-Epson 4000 .....	80
3 - Diary-Moving your Studio .....	98
4 - Diary-Canon 300D Camera .....	114
5 - Apple Cinema Display Review .....	138
6 - Apple Cinema Display Calibration.....	142
7 - Fuji 617 panoramic camera Review .....	149
8 - Panoramic photos .....	153
9 - Epson 9600 review .....	158
10 - Homage to George Lamont Mancuso.....	165
11 - Homage to Edward Curtis .....	176
12 - Sunrise at White Sands .....	182
13 - How to mat your Photographs .....	189
14 - Be Prepared.....	198
15 - Photography Books .....	201
16 - Epson C80 printer review .....	210
17 - Epson Colorlife paper review.....	217
18 - Gitzo 2227 tripod review .....	220
19 - 4x5: The Agony and the Ecstasy.....	229
20 - Epson R800 printer review.....	237
21 - How to mount canvas prints .....	247
22 - Quickmats review.....	261
23 - Inkjet Control review .....	271
24 - Epson R1800 review.....	278
25 - 1Ds Mark II and 4x5 .....	285
26 - 1DsMk2 and Ektaspace.....	306
27 - Histograms .....	315
28 - DXO 3.5 Review .....	319
29 - A Rebel in Paris-Canon 300D review.....	331
30 - Thoughts and Photographs Series introduction.....	351



Alain Briot  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
*2005-2006*



ALAIN BRIOT  
PUBLISHING

ALAIN BRIOT - BEAUX ARTS PHOTOGRAPHY

ALAIN BRIOT  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
2005-2006

Collected Essays eBook Number 2

The introduction to this series is in eBook #1: Collected Essays 2003-2004



# List of Contents

30 Essays

181 Pages

Five Thoughts & Tips

- 6 - The main Challenge of Landscape Photography
- 7 - Showing what you feel, not only what you see
- 8 - Open Shade
- 9 - Financial Planning
- 10 - Fine Art Top 15- Part 1/3

Five Photographs Explained

- 6 - Spiderrock Snowstorm
- 7 - Monument Valley Shadows
- 8 - Chuska Sunset
- 9 - Tsegi
- 10 - Tsegi Winter

Five Quotes

# 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

# ALAIN BRIOT COLLECTED ESSAY 2005-2006

## Table of Contents

<u>Quotes</u> .....	4, 54, 76, 112, 180
<u>Thoughts &amp; Tips</u> .....	14, 47 ,72, 108, 173
<u>Photographs Explained</u> .....	27, 59, 82, 97, 145
31 - WhiBal _review.....	5
32 - Pixmantec Rawshooter essay & Interview .....	15
33 - 2005 Digital Summit Summary .....	29
34 - ImagePrint Review.....	35
35 - WhiBal as Lens Shade .....	42
36 - Lemons and Lemonade-1 .....	48
37 - Lemons and Lemonade-2 .....	50
38 - Lemons and Lemonade-3 .....	52
39 - Inspiration and Imagination .....	55
40 - You can't have your cake and eat it too .....	57
41 - Literal versus expressive Representations .....	61
42 -Tools of the Trade.....	63
43 – Transformations .....	66
44 - Canon 1DsMk2 and Better Light Digital Back.....	68
45 - The Desecration panel .....	73
46 - Art and Facts .....	77
47 - Art and Freedom .....	83
48 - Opening a Gallery.....	88
49 - Arctic Butterfly Review.....	93
50 – PhotoEidolo.....	98
51 - Transcend PhotoBank.....	103
52 - Reflections 1-Introduction.....	109
-53 - Reflections 2-Art and Science .....	113
54 - Using Bill Atkinson’s Profile Bouquet.....	116
55 - Alain Interviewed by James Morrissey .....	120
56 - Raw Developer Review .....	146
57 - The Coso Range .....	153
58 - Briot Speaks announcement.....	161
59 - Seeing like a Master .....	163
60 - New Lands Nights.....	174



Alain Briot  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
*2007-2008*



ALAIN BRIOT  
PUBLISHING

ALAIN BRIOT - BEAUX ARTS PHOTOGRAPHY

ALAIN BRIOT  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
2007-2008

Collected Essays eBook Number 3

The introduction to this series is in eBook #1: Collected Essays 2003-2004

# List of Contents

30 Essays

288 Pages

## Five Thoughts & Tips

- I1 - Fine Art Top 15-Part 2/3
- I2 - Fine Art Top 15-Part 3/3
- I3 - Beauty is a Need, not a Want
- I4 - Optimization is Part of Composition
- I5 - Photography is Changing

## Five Photographs Explained

- I1 - Round Rock Clouds
- I2 - Riders Panel
- I3 - Running Navajo Horse
- I4 - Wall of Hands
- I5 - Palaki

## Five Quotes

# I1, I2, I3, I4, I5

# ALAIN BRIOT COLLECTED ESSAYS 2007-2008

## Table of Contents

<u>Quotes</u> .....	4, 90, 154, 205, 287
<u>Thoughts &amp; Tips</u> .....	24, 122, 169, 218, 261
<u>Photographs Explained</u> .....	61, 116, 148, 199, 240
61 - Reflections 3-Subject matter and print size.....	5
62 - Reflections 4-Of Cameras and Art.....	15
63 - Reflections 6-Just Say Yes.....	25
64 - Reflections 8-Paradigm Shift.....	34
65 - Reflections 7-HDR Reflections .....	62
66 - Reflections 9-Owning your subject .....	67
67 - Reflections 10-Smaller is better .....	78
68 - Reflections 11-Why do your own printing.....	91
69 - Reflections 12-Collecting photographs .....	102
70 - What Makes your work so Special.....	117
71 - Photographing Cars-Part 1.....	123
72 - Pure dumb luck.....	131
73 - PhotArt Portfolio .....	140
74 - The Master File.....	144
75 - Becoming a Music Producer .....	149
76 - Wild Rivers Interview .....	155
77 - Art and Business Question-answer .....	162
78 - Marketing Importance .....	170
79 - Notes on a Nautilus.....	174
80 - Digital Photography book Review.....	188
81 - PhotArt Review .....	200
82 - How empty are Epson 9600 cartridges.....	206
83 - Holmes color space essay updated.....	210
84 - Cropping and composition .....	219
85 - Epson R260 review .....	226
86 - Memoires de ce que j'ai vu .....	241
87 - Introduction to composition.....	246
88 - Abstraction.....	257
89 - Presentation-Digital Photography & Aesthetics .....	262
90 - What is a Snapshot ?.....	282



Alain Briot  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
2009



ALAIN BRIOT  
PUBLISHING

ALAIN BRIOT - BEAUX ARTS PHOTOGRAPHY

ALAIN BRIOT  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
2009

Collected Essays eBook Number 4

The introduction to this series is in eBook #1: Collected Essays 2003-2004



# List of Contents

30 Essays

340 Pages

## Five Thoughts & Tips

- 16 - Vision
- 17 - Equipment versus Art
- 18 - Is Photography Over ?
- 19 - Passion in, Passion out
- 20 - Planning and Focusing

## Five Photographs Explained

- 16 - White House
- 17 - Yei Bei Chei Masks
- 18 - Tear Drop Arch
- 19 - Arrowhead Moonset
- 20 - Kaibito Arch

## Five Quotes

# 16, 17, 18, 19, 20

# ALAIN BRIOT COLLECTED ESSAYS 2009

## Table of Contents

Quotes .....	4, 115, 149, 184, 307
-Thoughts & Tips .....	52, 102, 139, 177, 283
<u>Photographs Explained</u> .....	73, 122, 144, 172 , 255
91 - DXO 5 Review.....	5
92 - A Printing Paper Continuum .....	25
93 - Canon G9 Review.....	52
94 - The EFSD Memory Card.....	75
95 – Grand Canyon Music CD Commemorative Booklet.....	82
96 - Elegance and the fine art print .....	96
97 - Art, Technique & Mastery.....	99
98 - Finding the Groove .....	103
99 - Brooks Student Interview.....	112
100 - Are you an artist .....	116
101 - Creativity Is . . . ..	123
102 - Photographing cars- Part 2 .....	128
103 - Antarctica-part 1 .....	132
104 - Antarctica-part 2 .....	135
105 - Emotional Light .....	140
106 - Personal Style.....	145
107 - Reflections on Studying Photography .....	150
108 - Two and Three Quarter Years .....	155
109 - Seeing presentation.....	159
110 - Luck or good fortune .....	168
111 - Photography is not reality .....	173
112 - Vision and composition .....	178
113 - Reflections on landscape Photography.....	181
114 - From Raw file to Master File.....	185
115 - Color and color control.....	203
116 - Kyaatataypi Solstice portfolio.....	214
117 - Death Valley Booklet.....	234
118 - San Juan River booklet.....	256
119 - Northern Utah Booklet.....	284
120 - Navajoland Booklet .....	308



Alain Briot  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
**2010**



ALAIN BRIOT  
PUBLISHING

ALAIN BRIOT - BEAUX ARTS PHOTOGRAPHY

ALAIN BRIOT  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
2010

Collected Essays eBook Number 5

The introduction to this series is in eBook #1: Collected Essays 2003-2004

# List of Contents

30 Essays

277 Pages

## Five Thoughts & Tips

- 21 - Longevity
- 22 - Rejection
- 23 - Selling Art and Selling Out
- 24 - Dealing with Adversity
- 25 - The Counter-Intuitive aspects of Photography

## Five Photographs Explained

- 21 - Hogan in Canyon de Chelly
- 22 - Canyon de Chelly at Sunrise
- 23 - Antelope Black and White
- 24 - Antelope Light Shaft
- 25 - Antelope Light Dance

## Five Quotes

# 21, 22, 23, 24, 25

# ALAIN BRIOT COLLECTED ESSAYS 2010

## Table of Contents

<u>Quotes</u> .....	4, 83, 124, 197, 277
<u>Thoughts &amp; Tips</u> .....	23, 78, 109, 142, 200
<u>Photographs Explained</u> .....	52, 93, 119, 191, 232
121 - Phase One P45 Collages .....	5
122 - P45 essay part 1 .....	10
123 - P45 essay part 2 .....	24
124 - Lensbaby portfolio .....	34
125 - The importance of Marketing-Part 2 .....	53
126 - The numbering affair.....	58
127 - Creative, Technical checklist .....	71
128 - Art, elegance, fine art .....	79
129 - The Reluctant Artist-Part 1 .....	84
130 - The Reluctant Artist-Part 2 .....	89
131 - The Reluctant Artist-Part 3 .....	94
132 - Tony Sweet Interview .....	99
133 - Photographic knowledge .....	110
134 - Leo Ridano, Selling photographs in Patagonia.....	114
135 - Finding The Personal in Art .....	120
136 - Of audience and best Sellers .....	125
137 - Creative exercises.....	143
138 - Landscape Blurs Essay-Part 1 .....	146
139 - Landscape Blurs Essay-Part 2 .....	158
140 - Landscape Blurs Portfolio .....	171
141 - What is a Fine Art Print .....	192
142 - The Desire to Photograph.....	198
143 - Better Digital Cameras Magazine Interview .....	201
144 - Marketing in a recession .....	215
145 - Stitching and Composition .....	221
146 - Luck and Art .....	233
147 - General Characteristics of FA Photography .....	243
148 - Luis Argerich Interview .....	251
149 - Antelope Canyon before and after.....	256
150 - Rules for Seeing .....	270



Alain Briot  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
**2011**



ALAIN BRIOT  
PUBLISHING

ALAIN BRIOT - BEAUX ARTS PHOTOGRAPHY

ALAIN BRIOT  
COLLECTED ESSAYS  
2011

Collected Essays eBook Number 6

The introduction to this series is in eBook #1: Collected Essays 2003-2004



# List of Contents

30 Essays

155 Pages

## Five Thoughts & Tips

- 26 - Art and Life
- 27 - We do not all agree about what is Art
- 28 - Complexity
- 29 - Showing what you feel, not only what you see
- 30 - Movement and Personal style

## Five Photographs Explained

- 26 - Monument Valley Afternoon
- 27 - Monument Valley Panorama
- 28 - Along the San Juan
- 29 - Hoodoos and Clouds
- 30 - Hoodoos

## Five Quotes

# 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

# ALAIN BRIOT COLLECTED ESSAYS 2011

## Table of Contents

Quotes.....	4, 50, 80, 127, 153
Thoughts & Tips.....	28, 54, 97, 130, 145
Photographs Explained.....	
151 - Lightroom and Photoshop .....	5
152 - Rethinking Talent.....	11
153 - The Counter Intuitive Aspects of Photography .....	26
154 - Fine art top 17.....	29
155 - Personal Style top 27 .....	36
156 - Rethinking Talent Follow up.....	40
157 - Fine art top 37.....	43
158 - Foundational Photographic approach.....	48
159 - 15 Thoughts on Composition.....	51
160 - Composition-Part 1/3 .....	55
161 - Composition-Part 2/3 .....	62
162 - Composition Part 3/3-Following Intuition .....	69
163 - Comparative Example.....	75
164 - Technical and Artistic comparison.....	77
165 - Being Prepared-Part 1 .....	81
166 - Being Prepared-Part 2-checklist .....	91
167 - Understanding Criticism-Part 1.....	98
168 - Understanding Criticism-Part 2.....	104
169 - Understanding Criticism-Part 3.....	110
170 - Not teaching from the book .....	118
171 - 19 Remarks on Photographic art .....	120
172 - Car photography as a Hobby .....	123
173 - Notes on Composition.....	128
174 - Moonrise.....	131
175 - Personal style and portrait photographs .....	134
176 - Steps to Style.....	136
177 - Photo as Technology .....	137
178 - Luck.....	142
179 - Photographing luxury products.....	146
180 - Using a Viewfinder .....	151



Alain Briot

COLLECTED  
MARKETING ESSAYS

**2011**



ALAIN BRIOT  
PUBLISHING

ALAIN BRIOT - BEAUX ARTS PHOTOGRAPHY

ALAIN BRIOT  
COLLECTED MARKETING ESSAYS  
2011

Collected Essays eBook Number 7

The introduction to this series is in eBook #1: Collected Essays 2003-2004

# List of Contents

30 Essays

268 Pages

## Five Thoughts & Tips

- 31 – Taking Control of our Destiny
- 32 - Deadlines
- 33 - Understanding Criticism
- 34 – The ‘Ego’ Issue
- 35 - Nature and Personal Style

## Five Photographs Explained

- 31 – Teepees Sunrise
- 32 – Storm along the Green River
- 33 – White House Storm
- 34 – White Sands Branches
- 35 - Face and Mountains

## Seven Quotes

# 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37

# ALAIN BRIOT COLLECTED MARKETING ESSAYS 2011

## Table of Contents

<u>Quotes</u> .....	4, 50, 100, 140, 162, 261
<u>Thoughts &amp; Tips</u> .....	29, 56, 96, 134, 155
<u>Photographs Explained</u> .....	34, 66, 93, 119, 244
181 - Crating Photographs for shipping .....	5
182 - Marketing Fine Art Photo book review .....	30
183 - A few words about success.....	35
184 - Year End Achievements .....	40
185 - What is Fine Art Photography-Part 1 .....	42
186 - What is Fine Art Photography-Part 2 .....	51
187 - What is Fine Art Photography-Part 3 .....	57
188 - Competition, fine art photo and success .....	67
189 - Judging art .....	71
190 - Setting up a Home Gallery.....	74
191 - About eBooks .....	94
192 - Marketing your photography today .....	98
193 - It's so film .....	98
194 - More about how you can do it too.....	104
195 - Financial Management Top 12 for artists.....	117
196 - Pricing your work.....	120
197 - Financial Success in Art .....	135
198 - Six Fine Art marketing tips .....	141
199 - Of Cakes and Plugins .....	143
200 - The importance of Marketing-Part 1 .....	146
201 - The importance of Marketing-Part 2 .....	150
202 - Marketing in a Recession.....	156
203 - How to mount, sign, mat and frame your work.....	163
204 - Quality and Quantity .....	245
205 - Fine Art Photography Challenges.....	246
206 - Marketing in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century .....	250
207 - They are Stealing our Work .....	251
208 - Hobbies and Professions .....	262
209 - Selling Matted Prints versus Rolled Prints.....	263
210 - High and Low Volume Sales.....	264
211 - Art and Luxury Goods.....	265



Alain Briot  
COLLECTED QUOTES  
*2003-2011*



ALAIN BRIOT  
PUBLISHING

# List of Contents

Fifty Eight Pages

Fifty Six Quotes



“  
*No amount of technology can make up  
for a lack of inspiration.*”

Alain Briot

From  
Collected essays  
2003-2004

# INTRODUCTION

## **1 – A gathering of essays**

Many of the essays in this collection have been published previously. However, they are found in a diversity of places: on the web, in print, in books, magazines, etc. Some of these were made available to students or to newsletter subscribers of my newsletter. Some have never been published.

The idea behind this collection is to make all these essays available in one convenient place. Think of it as a *retrospective* of my writings on photography. No more multiple files strewn out everywhere, no more surfing the web to find one or the other, no more ‘mystery essays’ that cannot be found, no more looking for a loose printout somewhere. They are now all in one single place, conveniently organized by year of publication, and referenced in a table of content.

## **2 – Writing evolution**

This series of essays evolved over the years. In the beginning I wrote about cameras, software and gear. However, as time went by I started to find writing product reviews less and less interesting. Many other photographers were doing it and gear was not what I was most interested in. I believed I could make a more valuable contribution by writing about the aesthetic aspects of photography, rather than about which gear I was using. This shift resulted in a new series of essays, several of which were included in my first book *Mastering Landscape Photography*.

As years went by I made a further change and started a series of essays focused on *reflections* on photography rather than on *descriptions* of what I was doing. Many essays from this new series were included in my second book, *Mastering Photographic Composition, Creativity and Personal Style*. Another regular subject of my essays has been marketing and selling photographs. These essays resulted in the publication of my third book, *Marketing Fine Art Photography*.

With a few exceptions, the essays published in my books are not included in this collection. I took this decision to prevent unnecessary duplication of essays. I did include a few book chapters that I consider to be ‘seminal’ essays, such as *Just say Yes*, or *The Eye and the Camera* for example. These are important in order to understand the changes that took place in my writing. As such they have their place in this collection.

This collection does include a selection of students essays. These essays were originally published on my site and I thought it was important to include them in this retrospective. Finally, the collection includes a number of booklets, folios and portfolios. Most of these were never published as essays. They were either made available as printed booklets or folios, or were created only for my own personal use. This is therefore the first time they are made widely available.

# INTRODUCTION

Because this collection is organized in chronological order of publication, not all types of essays are available in each individual eBook. This makes collecting the entire series of collected essays eBooks particularly important.

## **3 – Additional sections**

I decided to add three sections specifically for this collection of essays. These are the *Quotes*, the *Thoughts and Tips* and the *Photographs Explained* sections. Each section consists of 5 pages, for a total of 15 pages per collection of essays. Some of these writings were published elsewhere, but in a very limited manner. Some are entirely new. The quotes have not been published by themselves before.

These section pages are distributed throughout the essay collections. I tried to space them as evenly as possible to add variety and to make reading more interesting. You can discover these sections as you read through the text, or you can ‘jump’ to a specific page directly by typing the page number in the ‘Go to Page’ dialog box in your eBook or PDF reader .

## **4 – A few words about writing**

Writing is important to me. I would not have written so much for so long otherwise. Writing provides me with possibilities that photography does not offer. While photography is fantastic to share what I see, writing is phenomenal to share what I think. The two provide entirely different outlets. They also work very well together. Text and images were made to work together, or so it seems to me.

Alain Briot  
Vistancia, Arizona  
September 2011

ANTELOPE LIGHT DANCE



From  
Collected essays  
2010

I decided to end the portfolio with this image because it is one of a kind. I could not do it again no matter how hard I tried. While this is true for any photograph -no matter how much things look alike when I return to a location I previously photographed I never quite capture the same image- it is particularly true for this one. I could definitely not capture the same light shaft ever again. The swirls in it are just something you record once, if ever.

There is another twist to this image, and that is the ever-increasing popularity of Antelope Canyon. Since this image was taken in 1999, visitation in Antelope Canyon has grown from a few thousand people a year to tens or perhaps even hundreds of thousands. Near the Summer Solstice in the main chamber of Upper Antelope Canyon, the time and place where this photograph was created, the crowds are so large as to make large format or tripod photography nearly impossible. Not only is setting up a real challenge, it is also nearly impossible to not have someone in your frame, not to talk about the constant need to move and make room for the next, and the next, and the next photographer. In a sense I am very pleased I captured this image when I did so that now I can focus on other types of images in Antelope Canyon. Photographing light shafts demands very precise positioning and cooperation from other visitors, two conditions that are becoming very difficult to find in the face of the ever increasing popularity of this unique location in Navajoland.

It took me some time to realize that Antelope Canyon is part of Navajoland. I know this seems obvious, but being located just a few miles from Page, which is off of the reservation, and being accessed primarily through Page, often using tour guides hired in Page, Antelope Canyon is actually not considered as being "on" Navajoland.

When you go to Antelope Canyon, and when you return, you are on your way in and out of Navajoland. This last fact made this image, and the two previous ones, a perfect end to this portfolio. Let us now return to the world outside of Navajoland, or let us return to these images for another look, another visual exploration, another discovery, another journey. Let us make it a longer journey this time, a journey that perhaps never ends, just like the beauty of Navajoland never ends, just like there is always another photographs just over the mountain, beyond the butte or around the next bend in the canyon.

## THOUGHTS AND TIPS NUMBER 29

### SHOWING WHAT YOU FEEL, NOT JUST WHAT YOU SEE

To be art a photograph cannot just show what you saw. It also has to show what you felt. It has to show not just the subject but also your emotional response to this subject.

Showing what you felt is one of the biggest challenges offered by fine art photography because it involves showing emotions, not just objects.

If you have difficulties doing this, ask yourself: what moves me?

What subject gets me fired up, excited and emotional?

Being able to share emotions visually with your audience means solving one of the most important challenges presented by Fine Art Photography.

**Alain Briot**

**From  
Collected essays  
2011**

## Following your Intuition

*A good artist lets his intuition lead him wherever it wants*

Tao Te Ching

### 1 – Introduction

Landscape photography is a contradiction of sorts. On the one hand we need to spend considerable amounts of time to study the craft and the art carefully, to be at specific locations at the right time, and to wait for the light to be at it best. On the other hand, when it comes to taking photographs we usually have only minutes to do so. Typically, once at a given location, we wait for hours for the light to reach its peak. Once it does, everything happens very quickly and in a few minutes the light is gone. In practice we do have sufficient time, and we can certainly extend this time by photographing before and after peak times, but we certainly need to work quickly.

When you consider that landscapes are a static subject, that plants take years to grow, and that geological forces took millions of years to shape the landscape, having to hurry to capture what will be gone in a few minutes is somewhat of a contradiction. While the landscape is eternal, at least as far as our life span is concerned, natural light is ephemeral.

In this situation, pondering which rule of composition we are going to use seems quite inappropriate. There is simply no time to do so. At least not while trying to capture fleeting light. Certainly, training and study come into play, because what we learned and studied is present in our mind as we compose an image. However, at such times we rely on intuition rather than on conscious thinking to get the job done.

Personally, my approach in regards to deciding which composition to use is to ask myself which scene, which framing, which composition, excites me the most. Which one, in short, makes my heart beat faster. This sums up my approach accurately.



*Sunset, Canyonlands, Needles District, Utah*

## 2 – Intuition

*Intuition: thoughts and preferences that come to mind quickly and without much reflection.*

Kahneman, 2003: A Perspective on Judgment and Choice.

American Psychologist, 58(9), 697-720

Call it intuition if you will. I don't really have a name for it, nor do I need a name. All I know is that it works. When my pulse quickens, the composition gets better. That's good enough for me. If this does not sound very technical, that's because it is not. It is simply not meant to be technical.

There is only one "technique," if we can call it that, that we need to learn when it comes to intuition: trust it. Trusting our intuition is in large part letting go of what we have learned and of the work that has influenced us. Letting go of being like 'the masters,' of trying to do what they did, and of being as good as they were.

It's a big cleansing process, a big spring cleanup if you will. While learning what 'the masters' did and how they did it was important, it is now time to let it all go. Because you cannot unlearn, there is not risk that you will forget what you have learned. The rules, the techniques, all the knowledge you acquired will stay with you. But by letting go you will move beyond what you have learned and into a domain where only your taste, your feelings, and your inspiration matter. A place where intuition is trusted and listened to.

The most interesting aspect is that trusting intuition leads to creating better photographs more effectively than trying to do everything correctly. Of course, this implies that you are able to do everything correctly, that you have learned and practiced all that you need to do. However, once you have done so, letting go of constantly thinking about all this, and instead relying on an intuitive approach, is the key to moving to the next level of photographic skills.

## 3 – From limited to limitless

Lately, I have become fascinated by what differentiates achieved photographers from beginning photographers. While my goal here is not to publish the outcome of this research, I want to point out a specific aspect that is relevant to this conversation.

A commonly held belief among beginning photographers, one I hear frequently when I teach, is that: "everything has already been done." This belief, which is centered on the concept of limited possibilities, states that there are only so many possibilities out there, and that because we came "too late" (another limiting belief), all the possibilities were already taken by the time we got there.

There is a fundamental flaw in this belief and that flaw is exposed by simply asking: "when should we have arrived so that we were not 'too late'?" Answering this question is simply impossible because unless we were the first people on earth, no matter when we arrive there will be someone there before us. In other words, this belief is based on a false syllogism (a syllogism is a 3 parts proposition). In this instance, this false syllogism goes something like this: there is a right time to take advantage of opportunities, I did not arrive at the right time, therefore I could not take advantage of opportunities.

The problem is that while there is indeed a right time to take advantage of a specific opportunity (singular, no S), there is no right time to take advantage of opportunities (plural, with an S). This is because new

opportunities come up regularly. Therefore, the goal is to keep an eye out for opportunities instead of assuming that each one is already taken. Following this approach leads to this accurate syllogism: There is a right time to take advantage of an opportunity, I do my best to find this right time, therefore I will be able to take advantage of specific opportunities.

While this approach may not work the first time, or the second time, or even the third or subsequent time, it will work *eventually* because opportunities present themselves regularly. In other words, the basis for this approach is the limitless nature of opportunities. Because opportunities are limitless, they will present themselves regularly, and by keeping an eye for them you will eventually be able to take advantage of one. This is an accurate syllogism. It is also a message of hope.



*S-Curve Rock, Navajoland, Arizona*



#### 4 - How does this apply to photographic composition?

Exciting compositions are opportunities for strong photographs. As such, finding photographic compositions follows the same approach as finding any opportunity. In other words, one can consider compositions limited or limitless, as I discussed above. For the beginning photographer an important milestone is moving from approaching composition as offering limited creative possibilities to approaching composition as offering limitless creative possibilities.

So why is it that not more people approach composition, and by extension art as a whole, as limitless? Why is it that they do not embrace the freedom that it offers? I think it is because looking at things as limitless means that you have no place to hide. What you show, what you do, your art in short, is you. It is no longer about someone else. It is now explicitly about you.

It is also because even though you are following your intuition, you are first and foremost following your vision. Vision is what comes first. Intuition is the vehicle through which vision is expressed. Having a vision for your work is not something everyone has. It requires that you sit down, so to speak, and think about what you want to express with your work. It demands that you think about why you are taking photographs. It asks that you make a deliberate decision about the visual message you want to share with your audience.

This is not something that everyone does. In fact, this is not something that everyone wants to do. Nothing wrong here, it is just a matter of personal choice and I respect that. However, without a personal vision you are left to continue doing what has been done before because your guide is someone else's vision. This may not be a conscious thing, in fact it is rarely a conscious thing, but it is a reality. You have to follow some form of guidance. If you do not follow your vision, then by sheer necessity you follow someone else's vision.



*Dusk Clouds over Black Mesa, Navajoland, Arizona*

## 5 – Nebulousness

As you see this is a lot more nebulous than the two previous parts of this essay, part that focused on the rules of composition. Sorry about that. I just don't see any way around it. It's either 'follow the rules' or 'let go of the rules and follow your intuition.' There's not really another way. Anything in between is being wishy-washy, straddling the fence or dancing on one foot, to use popular metaphors that describe indecision.

Fact is, this is a progression. You have to learn the rules, just like you have to acquaint yourself and be influenced by the work of the masters, then move past these rules –unlearn if you will- to let go of everything and follow your intuition. It's a simple process: learn, unlearn and let go. The hard part is unlearning. It's a lot harder to unlearn than it is to learn. That's because once you learn something and you consider this thing valid, it takes a lot of guts to look at all the work that went into learning as being no more than a starting point. The acquired belief is that learning leads to knowledge. What we are talking about here is learning that leads to letting go of knowledge.

Letting go of knowledge is challenging. However, in this instance doing so leads to the acquisition of higher-level knowledge. It also leads to the awareness that possibilities are limitless. Letting go of knowledge and operating on the basis of your intuition opens the door to limitless possibilities. In reality we never truly unlearn because we have no way of erasing the memory of what we learned, of what influenced us. All we can do is push this knowledge down to a lower level of awareness so that it is not at the forefront of our thoughts. The knowledge itself is still there, we just don't think of it constantly. It is no longer an obsession, or a guiding principle. Instead, intuition and the desire to be ourselves take over.



*Colorado Plateau Cloudscape, Navajoland, Arizona*

## 6 – Learning Stages

Because I feel inadequate ending this essay on a section titled *nebulousness*, I decided to add a few words on what I call *Learning Stages*. Recently, I have been working on outlining the stages we go through as we learn to practice fine art landscape photography to the best of our abilities. This research is motivated by the desire to help students reach higher levels of photography, and help them create photographs in which they express something intentional, personal and eventually, unique.

Many elements are needed in order to create unique photographs. First, we all need a point of departure. Often, this is the discovery of work that impresses us and that we seek to emulate. Second, we need an education in what makes two-dimensional images work. Finally, we need intentional and dedicated study and practice.

But how do all these elements interface? Which one comes first, second and last? What is the progression from one to the next? In the table that follows I tried to outline how I see this progression. At this time I offer it as a conclusion to this essay. In future essays I may detail what each part consists of.

This list is presented as a pyramid even though I did not draw a pyramid shape around it. This implies that the first step is at the bottom and the last step is at the top. I numbered each step from 1 to 9, starting at the bottom. Think of the first steps as the foundation and think of the steps above it as the structure that is being built on this foundation.

### Stages

#### 9 - Intuition

Reliance on intuition while using our previously acquired knowledge base to express our personal vision

#### 8 - Vision

Formulation of a personal vision

#### 7 - Letting go

Realization that we need to let go in order to create work that is new and personal

#### 6 - Disappointment

Our work, though rather good at this stage, is not gaining recognition because it is neither new or personal

#### 5 - Copy

Creation of photographs that are essentially copies of the Masters' work that so impressed us

#### 4 - Study

Dedicated study of technique, composition and art

#### 3 - Equipment

Acquisition of camera equipment comparable to that of the Masters who impressed us

#### 2 - Realization

Realization that specific knowledge and equipment are required to create similar work

#### 1 - Discovery

Discovery of Master Photographers work that impresses us deeply

Alain Briot  
Vistancia, Arizona,

From  
Collected essays  
2011

### 3 - Raw Conversion In Lightroom

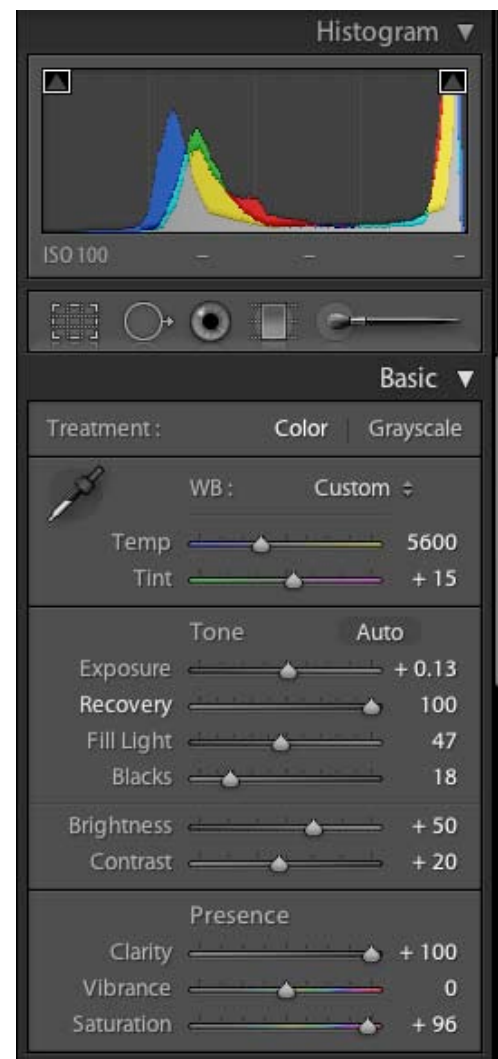
My first step is converting the image from Raw to Tiff format. I currently use Lightroom for this part of my workflow, but other converters can work just as well. In fact I use different raw converters for the conversion of other types of photographs. My choice of raw converter is based on the needs of each photograph.

Below are screenshots of the adjustment settings I made to the image. For each setting I provide a before and an after screenshot. The image these settings were applied to is the one presented at the beginning of this essay: *Saguaros Blur*.

#### A- Histogram, color balance and exposure adjustments

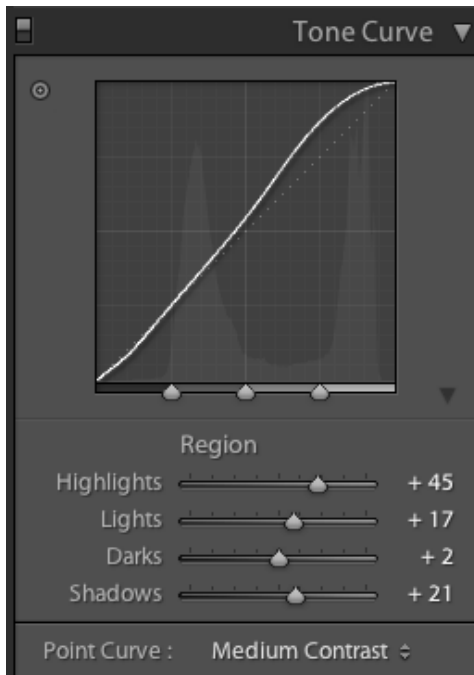


As shot

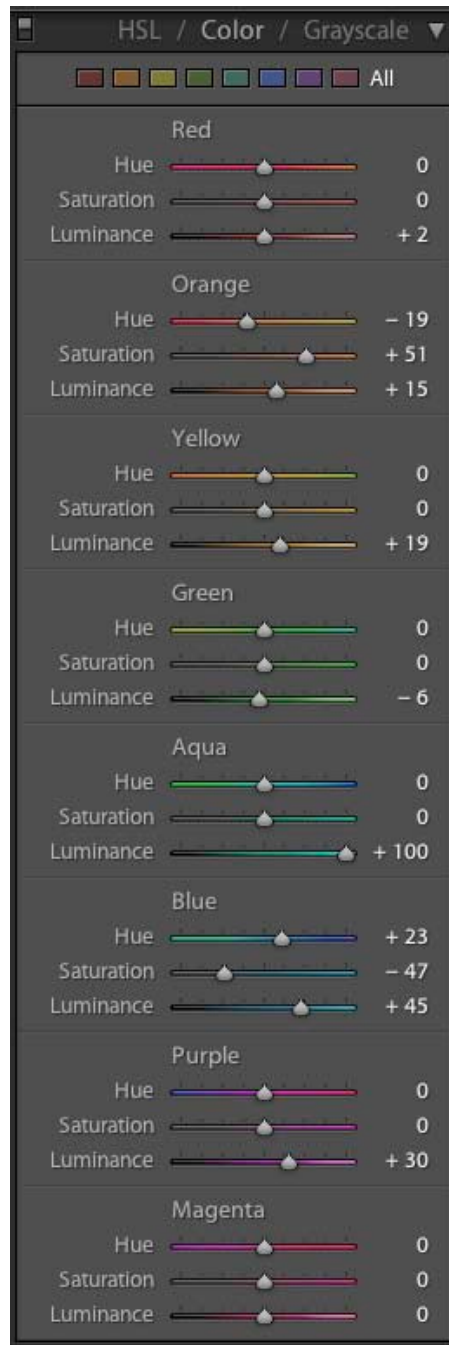


After adjustments

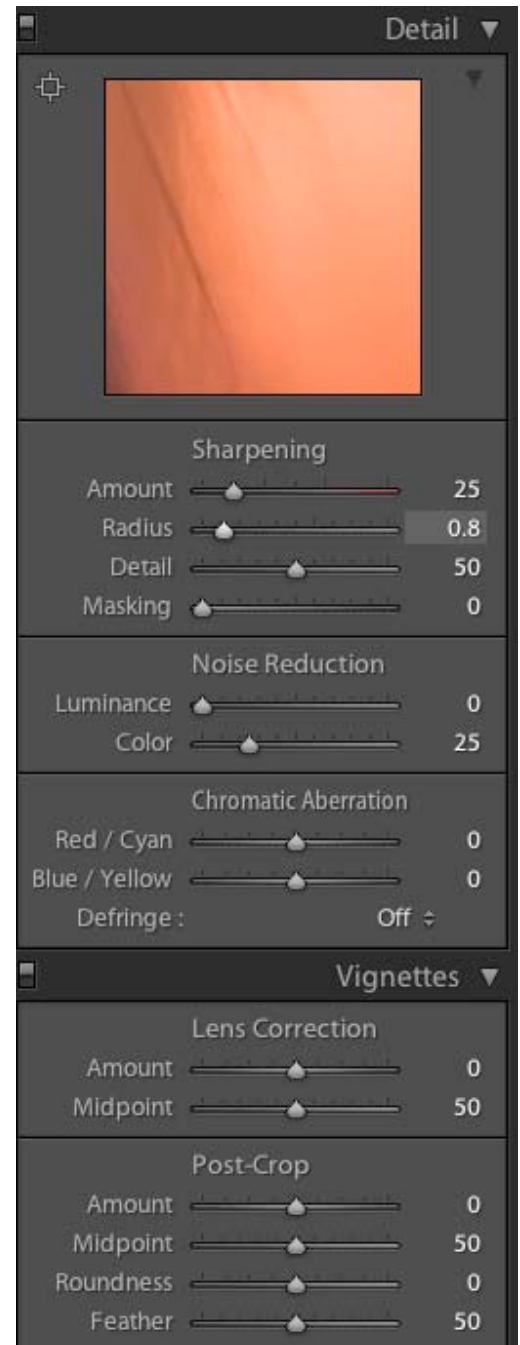
## B-All the other adjustments I made in Lightroom:



Tone curve



HSL

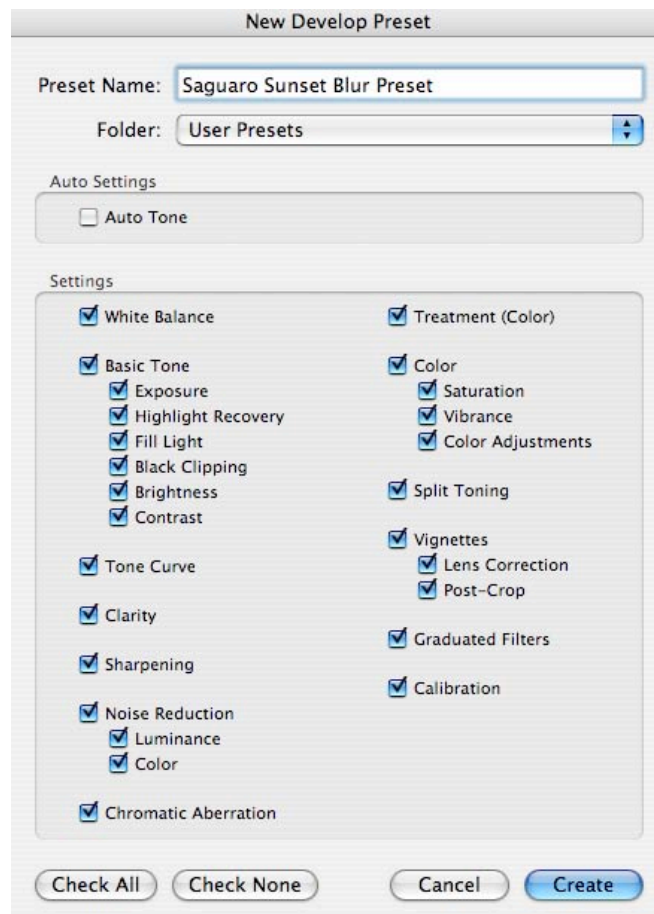


Sharpening and noise reduction

From  
Collected essays  
2010

### c - Lightroom presets

I found that saving the image adjustment settings for specific images as presets in Lightroom to be very useful. The reason for that is simply the complexity of the adjustments I make to each image. It is very difficult to remember exactly what those are when you go from one image to another. It is when you want to use previous settings on a new image that the presets come in handy. Using presets is very simple, all you need to do is click on a specific preset and the settings saved in it will be applied to the image you are working on. I usually name each preset after the photograph they were originally designed for since this helps jog my memory about what each preset does. In case of doubt, or to quickly check what a preset looks like, all you have to do is pass the mouse pointer over the list of presets and the effect of each preset will be applied to the large thumbnail in the preview window. Once you find one you like simply click on it and the preset will be applied to the image you are working on.



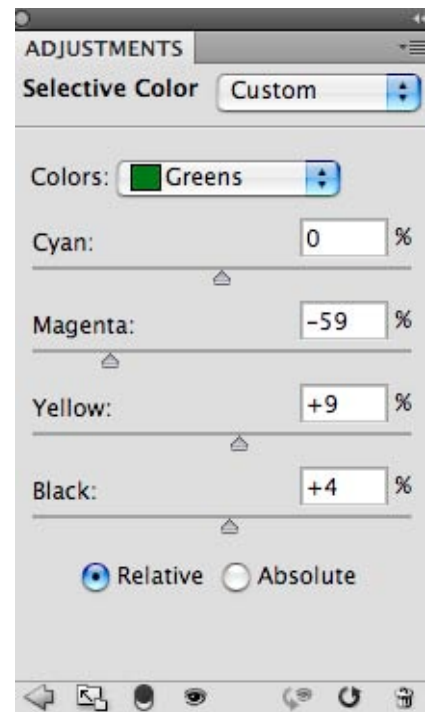
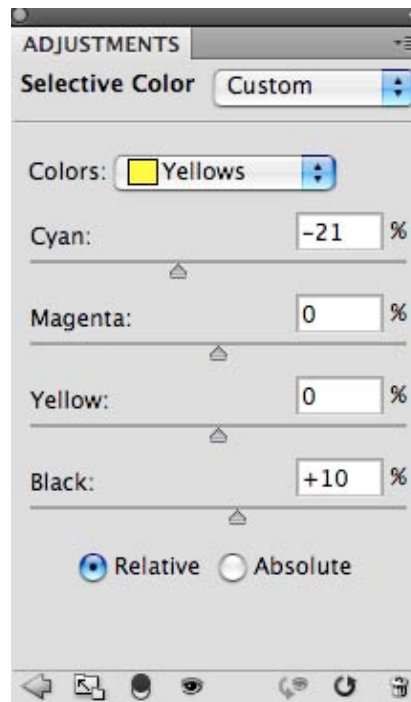
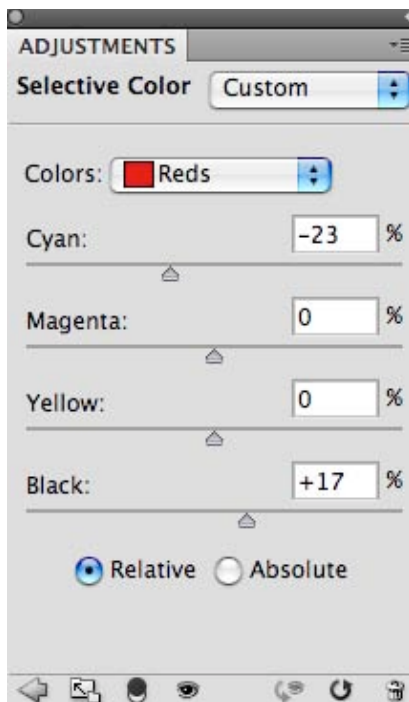
From  
Collected essays  
2010

#### 4 – Image optimization in Photoshop

##### A-Selective Color

Using Selective Color instead of curves allows you to darken a color without increasing the contrast of the image. This is achieved by adding black to a specific color (reds for example) instead of lowering the curve for that color. Lowering the curve means modifying not only the density of one color but also the contrast of that color. The two work together because curves do not provide a way to modify color without modifying contrast.

Selective color on the other hand allows you to modify color and contrast separately by affecting the density of a specific color. Increasing the density of blacks will add contrast to the image (contrast is largely defined by the black and white points settings) just like increasing or decreasing the level of whites will either lower or raise the contrast of the image.



From  
Collected essays  
2010

From  
Collected essays  
2005-2006

Rethinking Talent



by  
Alain Briot



# Rethinking Talent

*I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious*  
Albert Einstein

## 1 - Introduction

I am often asked about the role that talent plays in the creation of art in general and of Fine Art Photographs in particular. I have to say that, honestly, I do not like this question very much. Why? Because underlying this question is the assumption that talent is something innate, something that you either have or do not have. Behind this question is the assumption that some people can create art while others cannot, the assumption that those who have talent can create art while those who do not have talent cannot.

This assumption is based on the belief that those who have talent do not have to work at creating art, or at doing whatever it is that they are doing well. Instead, they can magically *tap* in a source of innate knowledge that is within them, tap in a well of talent if you will. On the other hand, those who do not have this well can work as hard as they can but, unfortunately, they will not reach success and will not be able to create fine art photography.

The problem with this assumption is that when you believe in it, finding out if you can or cannot create Fine Art Photographs becomes reduced to finding out if you have talent or not. If you do have talent, then you are going to create great work. It is simply a matter of getting started, of purchasing the necessary equipment and of getting proper guidance in the form of books, tutoring, workshops or other learning venues.

If you do not have talent, then you might as well quit right now because you will not find success, no matter how hard you try and regardless of what equipment you use, which books you read or which teachers you study with. Success is simply not possible because, well, you do not have talent.

## 2 – Rethinking talent

*I believe that every person is born with talent*  
Maya Angelou

As I said, I do not like this question. But I wasn't sure why I did not like it until I put it to the test and scrutinized what is involved when we talk about talent. In other words, I was not sure what was unsavory about this belief until I considered carefully what talent is and until I engaged in rethinking talent.

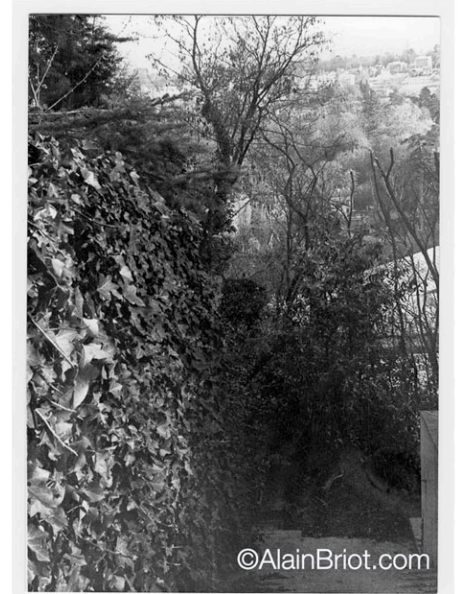
To rethink talent I went back to my own artistic education and asked myself what role talent played in my artistic career. I decided to use myself as the subject of my study because, after all, I know more about myself than about any other artist. I also have access to my early work, work that I have not shown until now. I would not have had access to such work if I had studied the life of other artists.

I started by looking back at the earliest “works of art” that I created, and because we are talking about photography, to the earliest photographs that I took. I was fortunate to have kept those, for

whatever reason, and I was fortunate that somehow they made it from France to the US, even though I do not remember packing them.

Let me cut to the chase by saying this: it was a humbling experience. Memory distorts things they say, and in this instance I have to agree with this statement. While my memory of these photographs was “romantic” to say the least, the evidence said otherwise. The fact that I was looking at them about 35 years after they were taken allowed me to take a certain critical distance because I could look at them differently than if I had made them just a few days ago. In some ways I was able, for a short time, to see them as *someone else’s* work. Not for long mind you, but for some time, and that time was enough.

It was enough to see that these first photographs, which at the time I considered important enough to be printed, were nothing to write home about, to use a popular metaphor. But the fact is that at the time I took them, they were reason enough to write home about. I was proud of them, I thought greatly of them and I believed they were the result of talent.



*My first three photographs*

These images are scanned prints. The original 35mm film was lost and I am fortunate that these 3 prints survived. I have no idea what else was on the film, but from what I remember many photographs were totally underexposed. Also, the film had not been properly developed and fixed. Part of the film was only partially developed, and part of it had been damaged by fixer left on the film because washing had not been done properly. These three images had to be the ones that were printable. All three were taken in a public part located near where I lived at the time. From what I remember they were the first three images on the roll of 35mm film, or at least the first three printable images. As I said, many frames were greatly underexposed and virtually blank.

### 3 - Let's go back a little further

*Motivation will almost always beat mere talent.*  
Norman Ralph Augustine

I took these three photographs with the first camera that I purchased with the intent of creating fine art photographs. This camera was an Exa 500 with a screw-mount 50mm lens and a focal doubler. This setup effectively gave me a 50 and a 100 mm lens. I thought the world of it at the time, not realizing that it was in fact very limiting since I did not have a wide angle lens or a real telephoto.

The Exa 500 was my first single lens reflex and my first 35mm camera. It was also the first camera that I bought. I bought it used, from a classmate and for a small amount of money, but I bought it myself and that was what mattered most. Prior to the Exa 500 I had been given various cameras, including a Polaroid Land Type 80 and a folding Zeiss Icon camera, somewhat of an antique, but while I had fun with these cameras I never attempted to take more than family or souvenir photographs with them. My parents also owned a Kodak Box camera, but again in the rare instances that I used it I never attempted to do more with it than record family scenes.

The Exa 500 was different in that it was to be used for creative purposes, not just for recording things. The time that I acquired it was also important. I was enrolled as a student at the Academie des Beaux Arts at the time, and my primary occupation was the study and practice of drawing and painting.



The Exa 500

### 4 - Talent and the Beaux Arts

*Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There's plenty of movement, but you never know if it's going to be forward, backwards, or sideways.*  
H. Jackson Brown

Interestingly, talent considerations were not really part of the Beaux Arts curriculum. Certainly, we talked about “talented artists” but teaching was centered around technique and practice, not around nurturing talent. Although I did not give much thought to this at the time, in retrospect I can see how this teaching approach was implemented in the school’s approach to teaching art. Acceptance to the Beaux Arts was based on successful completion of a week-long entrance examination, an examination so thorough that preparation for this exam required attending a private school of drawing and painting for a year. Certainly, any student could present himself at the Beaux Arts Exam without having attended a preparatory school. That is, attending a preparation school was highly recommended but not required. However during the 5 years that I studied at the Beaux Arts, I do not recall a single instance in which a student successfully passed the entrance exam without previously attending a private school to prepare for the week-long test.

The test was that hard, or that thorough, as you prefer to put it. One can certainly ask why, especially in light of the fact that, after all, we were “just” painting and drawing, activities that, if one believes in talent, are supposedly essentially talent-based. The answer is that the school board approached entrance to the Academie des Beaux Arts the same way a school board for a technical school would approach entrance to their Academie, college or university.

### 5 - About the Beaux Arts Entrance Test

*However great a man's natural talent may be,  
the act of writing cannot be learned all at once.*  
Jean Jacques Rousseau

In other words, the Beaux Arts school board approached acceptance to the Academie des Beaux Arts seriously and with great rigor. The entrance test was taken over a one-week period during which prospective students were tested on their ability to draw and paint the gamut of classic art subjects: portraits, still life, nude, landscapes, etc. There were two tests per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. All tests were timed, the timing based on the type of subject matter and drawing or painting type. From what I remember most tests lasted about an hour, although some were longer. Some tests were done in testing facilities, for lack of a better word, meaning there were scheduled outside of the Beaux Arts. Some tests were done at the Beaux Arts, essentially because they would have been challenging to offer elsewhere, either because they involved the use of a displayed subject (a still life for example) or a model (a nude for example). For each subject we were tested on both the ability to draw and to paint this subject, painting being done in the morning and drawing in the afternoon, or vice versa, of the same day.



The main entrance to the Academie des Beaux Art in Paris

After this week of testing our scores were calculated, and once that was done the last part of the test was scheduled. This last part, which was done in person, consisted of presenting our portfolio to a review panel consisting of a group of teachers essentially composed of the teachers we would be studying with the following year if we were accepted. Our portfolio consisted essentially of work created during attendance to the preparation school, although it could also contain personal work done outside of the school. The portfolios were “raisin” size, meaning approximately 20” x 25” and filled with about 25 different projects, drawings and paintings done on sheets of art paper.

The portfolio presentation was essentially silent, with us showing our work, pausing a minute or so between each piece to give review panel members a chance to evaluate each project. Members of the review panel could ask questions, and if so we had to answer as best as we could. Once the presentation was completed we were asked to leave our portfolio with the review panel so that they could refer to it later on if they needed to.

We were informed of the final outcome of the entrance exam a couple weeks later. In my case, I learned that I failed the exam. I failed despite the fact that I studied for one year to prepare for the test, I failed despite the fact that all I had to do was draw and paint for a week, something I had done pretty much all my life, and I failed even though most people I had told about this test believed that no one could fail such a test if they were talented.

I was left with the overwhelming feeling that talent was not all that it was supposed to be. I was left with the feeling that talent was way overrated.

Yet I did attend the Beaux Arts the following year, thanks to the last part of the test which, as I mentioned, consisted of us leaving our portfolio for further review if necessary. One of the teachers had been particularly impressed by the work in my portfolio, and exerted their right to accept me on the strength of the portfolio rather than solely on my test results. Certainly, the tests results were considered, but they were not the only deciding factor in that instance. I was in, left to ponder if my

# Comprehensive List of Contents

Eight eBooks

210 Essays

1862 Pages

Thirty Five Thoughts & Tips  
(see individual lists)

Thirty Five Photographs Explained  
(see individual lists)

Ninety One Quotes  
(see individual lists)

# Alain Briot

---

## This collection Includes:

- 1 - COLLECTED ESSAYS **2003-2004**
- 2 - COLLECTED ESSAYS **2005-2006**
- 3 - COLLECTED ESSAYS **2007-2008**
- 4 - COLLECTED ESSAYS **2009**
- 5 - COLLECTED ESSAYS **2010**
- 6 - COLLECTED ESSAYS **2011**
- 7 - COLLECTED MARKETING ESSAYS **2011**



COLLECT THEM ALL



ALAIN BRIOT  
PUBLISHING