

Point of View

Joe Constantino

Straight photography or manipulation, which do you prefer? Should the image captured on film or in your digital camera be presented as taken or should you manipulate it to have it presented as you think it should be seen? The arguments for each are endless and the debate has been going on for years. The champion of straight photography, Alfred Stieglitz, who incidentally has done more to have photography accepted as a fine art than any other person, believes that the image should be presented and seen as taken. As previously indicated this is not a new issue. Many photographers manipulated their prints in the conventional darkroom with outstanding results. Probably the best in that regard was Jerry Uelsmann. If you haven't seen his work you're missing a wonderful experience. He used seven or eight enlargers to get the effect and results that he was seeking. To view some of his work go to: www.uelsmann.com His work is well worth seeing. His unique concepts have resulted in many creative images.

With the advent of digital photography the manipulation of an image becomes much simpler. The taking of the picture becomes subservient to what is done with it on the computer. The emphasis is now on the computer rather than the camera. Are we headed in the right direction? The object should always be to present the image in its best possible light, pun intended. However, the balance appears to be shifting from the camera to the computer to achieve the best possible result. Those with the necessary computer skills to achieve their ends will naturally find their solutions easier to come by. That is not to say that the skilled photographer cannot compete with the skilled technician. There is something to be said for both sides of the argument.

One area in photography that cannot be manipulated is photo journalism. The image must be presented as taken because of the news factor. The image cannot be altered in any way and that is another point that separates photo journalism from street photography. A street photography image can be manipulated at the discretion of the photographer.

More emphasis needs to be put on picture taking technique. Know your camera and everything it can do. Take your camera off the automatic setting and be more creative with your picture taking techniques. The technique portion of your image can just as easily come from the camera as from the computer. In any event enjoy your picture taking and come up with the best image from your camera or your computer. I prefer the camera.

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