

THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

“My experience of learning in the darkroom with black-and-white film had limitations that were helpful. There were fewer choices. When digital came along, I didn’t jump into it. But it was obvious that this is what was going to be. If you do this for a long time, everything changes.”

—Annie Leibovitz

SUBCHAPTERS

- Transitioning Into Digital
- Use Digital Tools to Enhance Traditional Photography
- Focus and Sharpness
- Case Study: Monument Valley

CHAPTER REVIEW

“I’m interested in content and not so much the technical side of photography,” Annie says. Which doesn’t mean that she is wedded to out-of-date equipment. She misses her Mamiya RZ67 camera and Polaroid film, but she moved to digital pretty quickly. Working at the computer is simply a version of being in the darkroom, with different, broader parameters.

Annie doesn’t mind images that are sometimes not as sharp as they might be. She reminds students of the work of Julia Margaret Cameron, who printed her famous portraits of eminent Victorians in a shed in her backyard on the Isle of Wight. Cameron’s son was patronizing about his mother’s sometimes fuzzy pictures. He inherited her equipment and became a photographer himself. But, as Annie says, his pictures, which were much sharper than his mother’s, were also very boring. Julia Margaret Cameron, on the other hand, is now recognized as one of the most important figures in the history of photography.

LEARN MORE

- Read [this brief history](#) on Kodachrome film. Many analog photographers lament its loss.
- Annie talks about apertures in this chapter. If you’re a newcomer to photography, you can learn about apertures, as well as shutter speed and ISO, [here](#).
- Annie greatly admires the photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron. See her work and learn about her [here](#).

ASSIGNMENTS

- Try experimenting with focus in your photos. Take a photograph that is completely sharp. Then, photograph the same thing, but make a portion of the photo out of focus. Which style do you prefer? Why?

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ASSIGNMENTS CONT.

- When Annie is taking a series of photographs, she plans her shoot out in advance. She imagines the frames that she wants to capture and storyboards them as directors do for film sequences. Try out Annie's technique of storyboarding and see how it works for you. Contemplate how you want to frame your subject and how the ideal composition looks in your mind. When you have a few ideas, sketch them out in storyboard form. After you've drafted your storyboard, try to capture with your camera what you've drawn on paper. It might surprise you how different the outcome might look from your projected idea, but as long as the outcome is better than anticipated, you win. At times forget about your sketch and just be in the moment and see what works.

PHOTO INDEX

7. THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF PHOTOGRAPHY



California
Early 1970s



Kim Kardashian, North West, and
Kanye West
Los Angeles, 2014



Monument Valley
Arizona, 1993

