

Dunes

Photographs

by Joe Lipka

DON'T MAKE PHOTOGRAPHS.

MAKE PHOTOGRAPHS, BUT DON'T CONCERN YOURSELF WITH WHETHER THEY ARE GOOD OR SATISFYING.

MAKE PHOTOGRAPHS, BUT PRETEND THAT YOU DON'T CARE WHETHER THEY ARE GOOD OR SATISFYING.

MAKE PHOTOGRAPHS, AND HAVE YOUR FRIENDS ASSURE YOU THAT THEY ARE GOOD OR SATISFYING.

MAKE PHOTOGRAPHS THAT YOU KNOW ARE GOOD OR SATISFYING BECAUSE THEY LOOK AS GOOD AND SATISFYING AS THE ONES IN POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY.

MAKE PHOTOGRAPHS THAT YOU KNOW ARE GOOD BECAUSE THEY LOOK AS GOOD AS YOUR FAVORITE ARTIST.

MAKE PHOTOGRAPHS THAT ARE GOOD BECAUSE THEY SATISFY THE TRUTH YOU FEEL IN YOUR HEART - THE TRUTH YOU FEEL THAT OWES NO DEFENSE OR APOLOGY OR REFERENCE TO OTHERS, WHEN THE THREE FEARS ARE SET ASIDE;

THE FEAR THAT YOU WILL NOT BE LOVED,

THE FEAR THAT YOU WILL NOT BE IN CONTROL,

THE FEAR THAT YOUR WORK IS NO GOOD.

DAVID BAYLES

APRIL 27-29, 1984

























Communication is learned. A baby's gurgling becomes syllables, then words. Words are linked together to form phrases and then phrases connected become sentences. Learning a physical activity follows an analogous path. Crawling, walking and running are learned in that order. A pattern of learning is established. Simple tasks are learned by observation and mastered. When skills have reached a sufficient level, more complex tasks are undertaken. The learning process resumes again, but with deeper meaning. Assignments from teachers are completed, each with a specific skill to be learned. Works of masters are studied, critiqued and imitated. Poetry, short stories and novels are the ultimate form of verbal communication. The beauty of a dance or the grace of an athlete demonstrates the work of a physical artist.

It is the same with visual communication. This process is also learned. Composition, visual grammar, is learned by example. Photographers seek out the places that were important to their photographic heroes and record the same scenes through their own eyes. Honest and insightful critique of these early efforts, encouragement and sharing of experiences "along the way" are key in the development of a personal vision. We all experience these stages in our personal photographic journey. David Bayles' observations on the path to making photographs my own was given to me around the time these images were made. Looking back on these photographs more than fifteen years later, I can see exactly where I was on my journey.