

HORIZONEWS #5

NEWS, THOUGHTS AND IMAGES FROM HORIZON PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

“The question is not what you look at but what you see.”

Henry David Thoreau



STUDENT PHOTOS: CLOSE-UP

A great way to learn how to control light is to work in the dark. In Horizon's Location Lighting workshop, held at historic Principio Furnace, students are brought inside a "coke oven," a round, domed, brick structure that was used a century ago to distill wood into coke, a substance that burns hotter than wood. (See photo, lower left.) The coke is then burned to extract pig iron from iron ore. Or so we've been told. (Hey, our expertise is lighting, not smelting.)

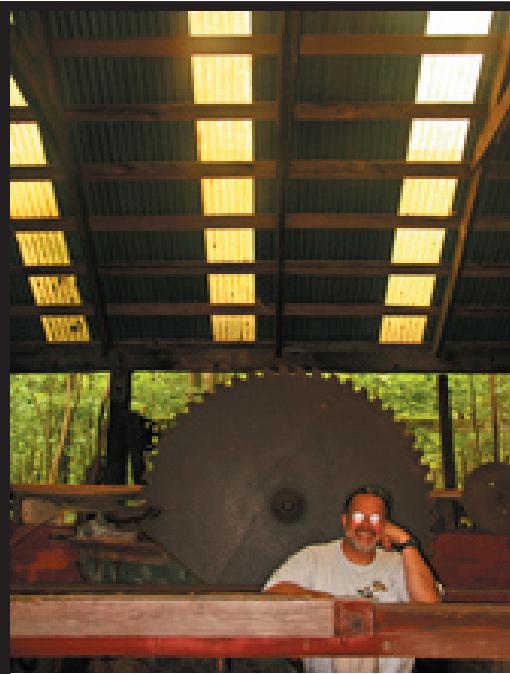
When you first enter the interior of the coke oven you can see very little until your eyes adjust to the dark. How dark is it? We're talking one second at f. 8 (ISO 200.) From inside the oven looking out—there is no door, just an opening—the eyes see a rather unphotogenic mix of grass, trees, an old stone foundation, and the corner of another historic brick structure. From this dark interior and unappealing exterior have come a variety of wonderful photos.

In the top photo, student William Barry posed Horizon Workshop Manager Brandon Clower leaning against the brick interior. One off-camera flash was used, placed six feet directly in front of Brandon's nose. (If on-camera flash had been used, the front bricks, which were three feet from the camera, would have washed out, while the rear bricks many feet away would have been almost black.) In the bottom photo, Robert Hasty produced a silhouette of fellow-student Karen Nussle inside the oven opening. Overexposing the outside light by nearly five stops washed out all detail, yet still there was so little light on Karen's "dark side" that it comes out black, with an edge of grey. In the middle photo, Carolyn Ballen's self-portrait used the same technique, but in this case two small flash units bounced off the ceiling and lit the coke oven interior, without throwing much light on her.



Photos:
William Barry, top
Carolyn Ballen, middle
Robert Hasty, right
Steve Gottlieb, lower left

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QUICK TIPS

Flash—both the flip-up kind and its big brother, the hot shoe battery unit—are magical pieces of electronic wizardry. In conjunction with the camera, they gauge the right amount of light, either as the primary light source or as fill for shadows on a sunny day. While their versatility is dazzling, we're not big fans of the look that on-camera flash produces. For one thing, light coming from

the camera position is stark, nearly shadowless. Faces have a deer-in-the-headlights look, while objects look flatly two-dimensional. Another negative: everything that's the same distance from the flash gets equal light; backgrounds may go unnaturally dark and small foreground objects may go white. Still, there are circumstances when on-camera flash is just the ticket.

In this photo taken in an old sawmill of student Joe Hoydis, **Steve Gottlieb** used his pop-up flash as the primary light source. Because the shot is vertical—which moves the flash head to the left of the camera lens—a thin, sharp shadow is thrown to the right side of the subject's head. This often looks unnatural, but here it neatly pops the subject from the background. The direct flash reflecting in the glasses is delightfully surreal. Importantly, because it was an exceptional dark day, a slow shutter speed (1/8 sec) was used—requiring a tripod—to capture the limited ambient light falling on the background trees and coming through the roof of the sawmill shed. If the camera/flash combo had been on automatic or program mode, a faster shutter speed would have been selected, turning the ceiling and trees to black.

END FRAME



Photo: Steve Gottlieb

SNAPSHOTS

Our updated schedule (August '05 — January '06) is now posted on our web site [www.horizonworkshops.com]. There have been several course changes, including the addition of a brand new course, "Marketing Your Images," with instructor **Diane Shapiro**. **Dain Simons** "Camera Basics" course has been condensed into Friday sessions from 1-5 PM; this class precedes many of our regular weekend workshops.

Photojournalism instructor **Frank Van Riper**'s latest column for www.washingtonpost.com discusses photo workshops in general and Horizon in particular. Based on his experience as both participant and instructor, Frank observes: "At the extremes there are two kinds of photo workshop: expensive total immersion classes that take at least a week, and one day (or partial day) seminars in which you look, listen and take notes--but rarely make any pictures. Happily, Horizon now offers a third alternative: weekend workshops that combine intense, hands-on experience with expert teaching, and still get you back in time for work on Monday." The full column can be found at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/09/AR2005080900576.html>.

Digital Basics instructor **Jon Cox** just returned from an extended trip to Vietnam with colleague Priscilla Smith to scope out a photo workshop they will offer. Before you sign up for what will surely be a great experience, there's a small catch: you need to be affiliated with the University of Delaware.

We truly appreciate it when people travel very long distances to attend our weekend workshops. One recent Creative Vision workshop was particularly notable in that regard. Carl Abrams arrived from Kuwait. (Okay, okay, he might have had a few non-workshop activities going on during his stay in the States.) Also traveling a long distance was our first three-generation family. Sheila & Kelsey Brauning (mother and daughter) flew in from Texas, while Ina Carpenter (grandmother) came from South Carolina. This photo is our memento of their visit.

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