The Joys of (Film) Photography

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Elements and Principles of Art
- What is a "good" photo?

- Why film?
- How does film change how you take photos?
- The process

Intro

- Took photography for 4 years in high school
- Been interested for a lot longer
- Worked my way up to film from digital
- All the photos in this presentation are shot on film by yours truly

- And lastly, I don't claim any photos in this presentation are "good"
  - They are merely photos which speak to me

What makes up a photo?

What makes up….. this photo?

Elements of Art

- Color

- Value

- Saturation
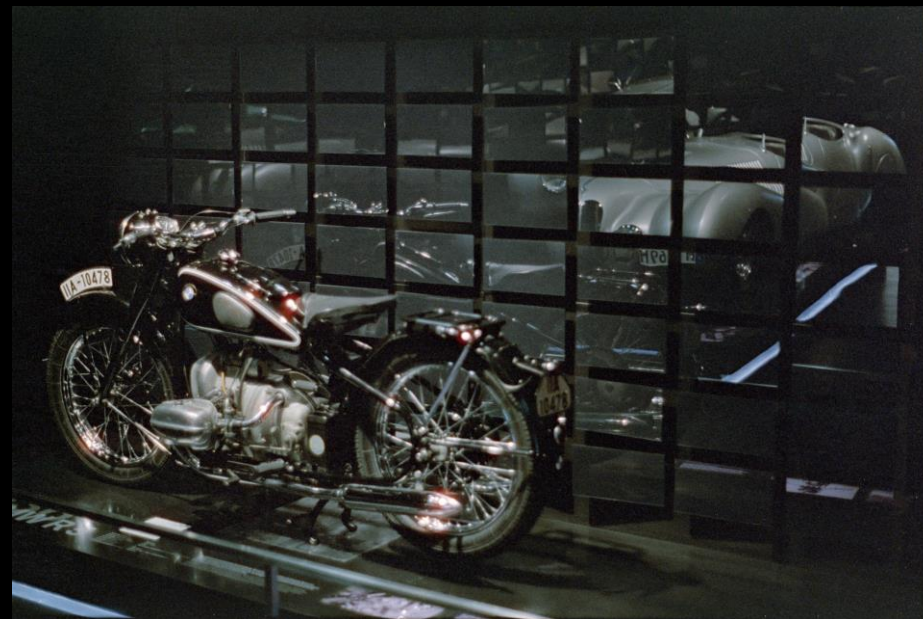
- Form

- Line

- Shape

- Space

- Texture

Principles of Art

- Balance

- Contrast

- Emphasis

- Rhythm/Movement

- Proportion/Scale

- Unity

- Variety

- Pattern

Color

Value

Saturation

Form
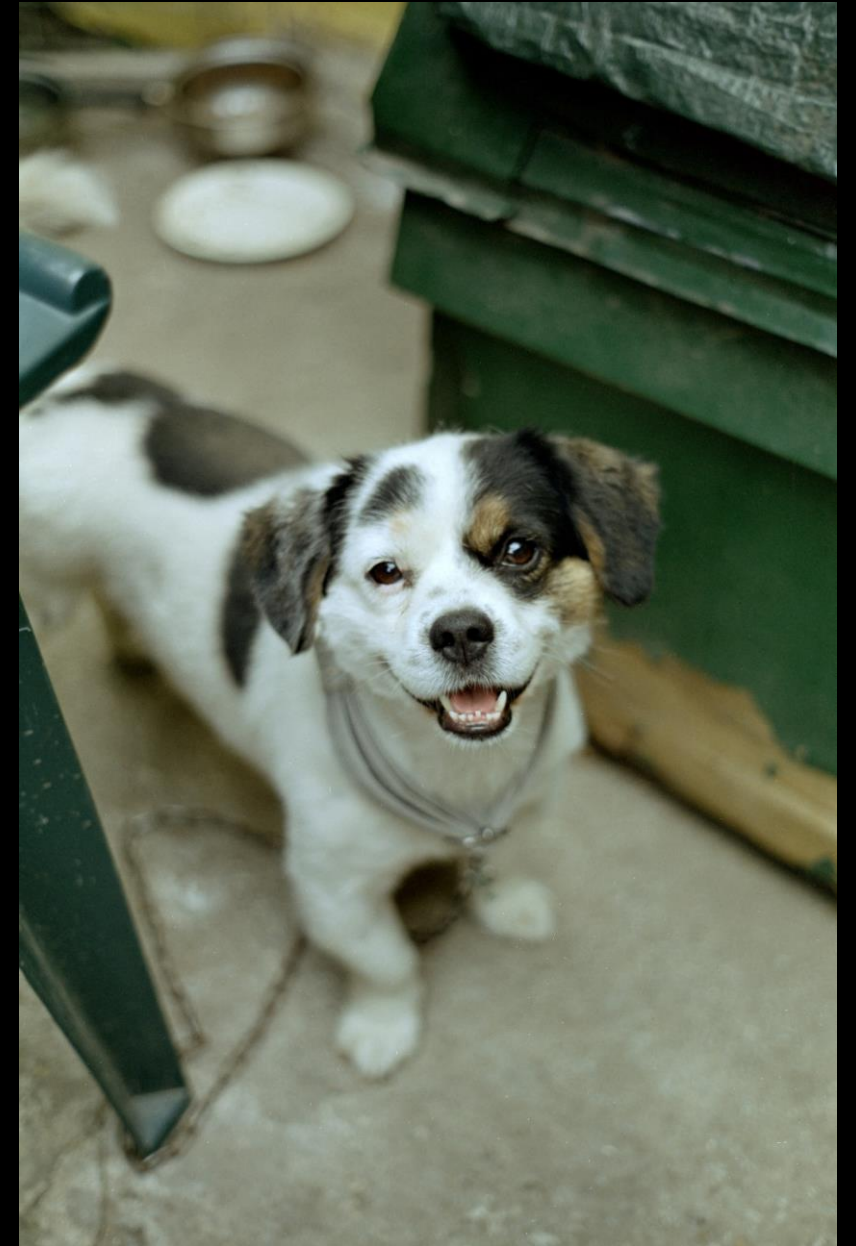
Line

Shape

Space

Texture

Elements of art are the building blocks,
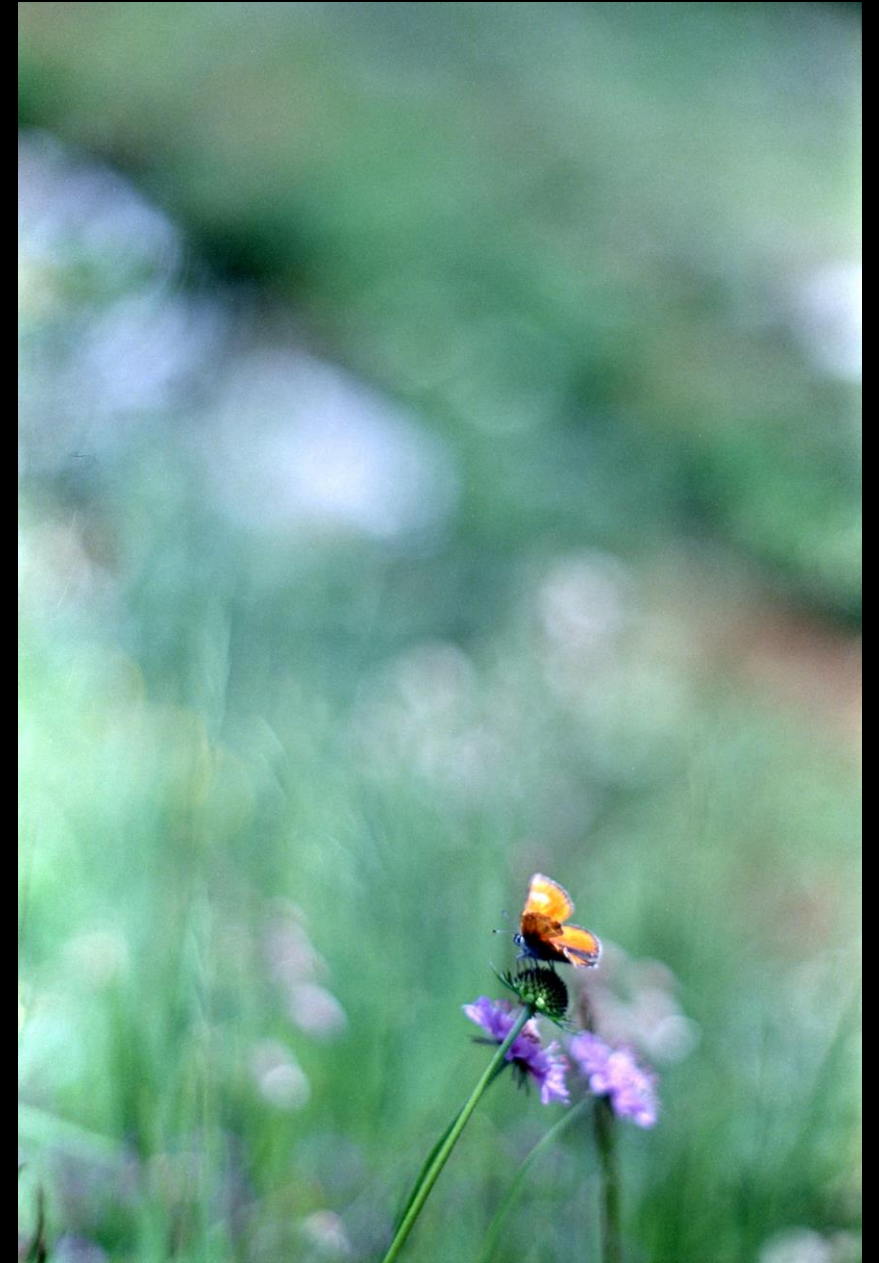Principles of art are the goals

Balance
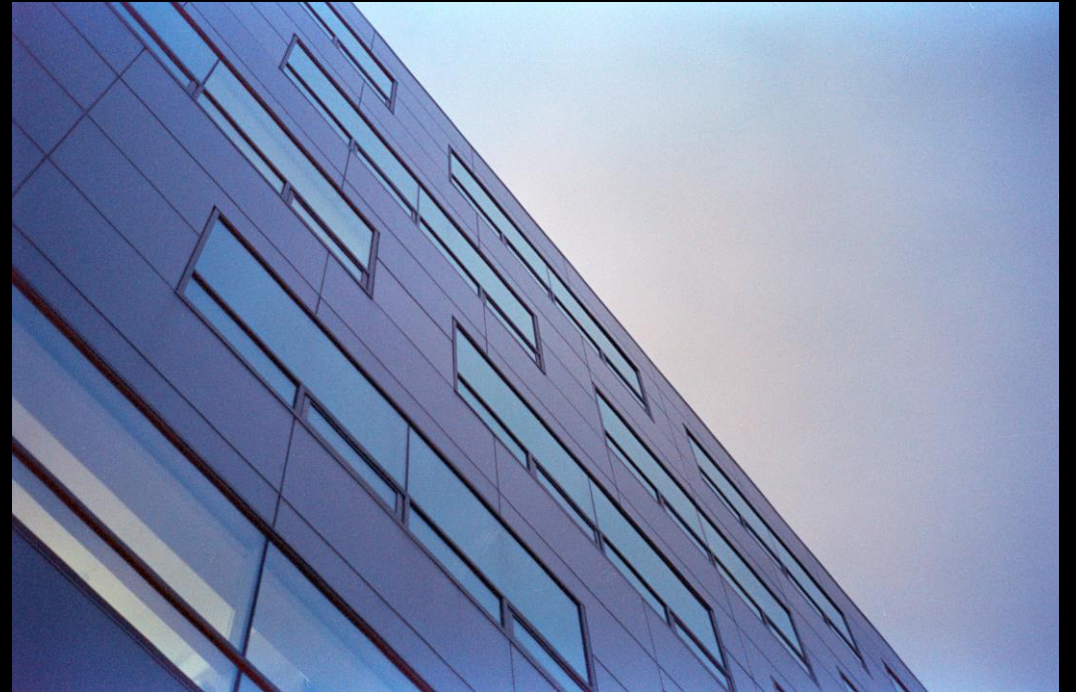
Contrast

Emphasis

Movement

Proportion/
Scale

Unity/Variety

Pattern

What makes up this photo (again) ?

What makes a good photo?

More specifically, what is "good"?

What makes a photo "good"?

- You don't need to respect any formula to take good photos
  - They offer groundwork, not hard rules
- Photos should make you feel something
  - Oftentimes a narrative promotes emotion

- Photos which lack technique can still be emotionally impactful
  - Technique can bring clarity, but sometimes it detracts from emotion
  - Take: blurry marriage pics, grainy blacks, shakiness
- The way a photo is taken tells as much of a story as its contents

Directing focus (literally)

- Treat photos like they're paintings
  - If something doesn't matter, it shouldn't be there
- The best photos are those which have focus, and direct the viewer to what matters
  - Often this is a central subject
  - Sometimes the viewer is directed through the photo by the elements it contains
  - Controlling parts of the image that ARE in focus is critical

Building a narrative

- Some photos have narratives, some don't

- Humans are social animals,
so we latch onto narratives

- Non-narrative
driven works offer
an alternative form
of generating
emotion

Well, what about film then?

What would you expect changes when you move to film?

Film is a ton of fun

- The ritual of it
  - Crank that (soulja boy)
  - You have physical stuff, and that stuff holds memories
  - A film for every occasion!
    - "oooh but Kodak has nicer reds than Fuji"
    - "You get different curves if you develop Vision3 in ECN-2"
    - "I always do a 1 stop pull on my color films 😫😫"
    - The film stock/dev rabbithole has a width measured in light-seconds
  - Each frame you hold in your hand saw that image
    - I know this is true for any camera, but it's still nice, ok?

Ramblings of the clinically insane

Film is a ton of fun

- Shake that (film reel/tank in 39C water)
  - I personally find developing film a ton of fun
  - Tanks, reels, all sorts of paraphernalia
  - Plenty of quick-time events!
- Darkroom printing
  - In ye olden days, we'd have to expose photo paper from negatives to get a print you could hold in your hand
  - It's very relaxing
  - I listened to the entirety of "ghost of the machine" by the police on headphones while doing a set of prints for my friends in an otherwise empty darkroom, and I still remember that day well

Film is a ton of fun

- The community
  - Some snobs
    - "Back in my day we'd roll our film out by hand with a rolling pin and lick it clean before coating it with our palms"
    - Easily ignored
  - Some really chill people
    - Tons to learn, tons of people trying things out and reporting their findings
    - Chat up the clerks at Beau photo, they know their shit (and nab all the best consignment gear before I get to smh)

Film has "a look"

- Things we expect:
  - Grainy ass shadows
  - Desaturated, melty colors
  - Dust/scratches
  - Bloom
- It feels grittier, in a way you can't place
- Can achieve in digital, but it comes for free with film
- Objectively a worse medium, but hey, it's art

Film makes you slow down

- You get 36 shots and…. That's it
  - Better take as many rolls as you need buckaroo
- Limited shots means limited time staring through a camera
- Make every moment count
  - If I put my eye up to the viewfinder and don't feel something, I don't take the photo
- You look at the world in a different light
  - Take a step back, appreciate the little things
  - Let yourself observe, and you'll find a photo anywhere
  - Slow down and just enjoy what you see

How do you develop film anyways?

The chemistry (black and white film)

- Grains of silver halide are the light-sensitive component
  - Suspended in a gelatin emulsion
- Development turns silver halide into silver metal
  - Exposed silver halide reduces faster
- Fixing removes unused silver halide

- Modern BW films have many layers, because it's possible to "sensitize" the halide to different colors

The chemistry (color film)

- Sensitized halide can have dyes bound to it
  - These dyes are left behind, encode color information
  - Each dye is associated with its respectively sensitized halide layer
- Additional Bleach pass after fix to leave just the dyes, and take out all silver metal
- Remjet is the work of satan
  - Movie picture anti-halation and anti-seize layer made of carbon black
  - Can be removed pre-exposure for lovely effects
  - Destroys typical chemistries

The process (color film)

- In the dark:
  - Reel the film onto a big spool
  - Place into tank
- In the tank at 39C (on penalty of over/under exposure)
  - 3.5 minutes of developer
  - 8 minutes of blix
- In the light
  - Rinse
  - Hang to dry

And now, a challenge!!!
with a prize >:)