

Photoimpressionism:

Creative Techniques from an André Gallant/Freeman Patterson Workshop

Presentation by Nancy Myer and Craig Lewis

Multiple exposure techniques

- The easiest way to do multiple exposures is to multiply the ISO of your film by the number of multiple exposures you want to take (usually—but not necessarily—2, 4, 8, 16, etc.).
- Some cameras can't do multiples or limit the number they can do. Know your camera! Find out if it can do multiples and, if so, how.
- The number of multiple exposures that works best varies with the subject and your own aesthetic sense.
- The amount of movement between each exposure creates different effects. Shoot several versions because the results are only partially predictable.
- A viewfinder grid is very helpful but not essential for these techniques.

1. Hand-held multiples

- These techniques **CAN** be done on a tripod (if you insist!) by deliberately shifting the camera between exposures. However, shutter speeds during multiple exposures are fast enough to allow hand-holding and it's easier to do when hand-held.

Variations:

- A. Act AS IF** you're trying to hold the camera steady on one point. (This can give a painterly effect but **too many** multiples often produces a confusing image that just looks out of focus)
- B. Rotate** the camera around its horizontal axis keeping one point in the viewfinder in the same position between exposures. (This produces a circular pattern. Two or more points can be used for each of several exposures to produce intersecting circular patterns.)
- C. Combining** multiples with moving the camera up, down, left, right, obliquely, in a circle, etc. Each pattern of movement creates different visual effects.

2. Tripod mounted multiples

- These techniques are probably possible but not very feasible without a tripod head that allows controlled incremental movements (e.g. a gear head).
- A viewfinder with a grid screen can be especially helpful here.
- Whenever doing multiple exposures involving zooming, recheck the focus before each individual exposure in the sequence; it may change during the zooming.

Variations:

A. Combining multiple exposures with zooming

(**Hint:** Zoom from the **shorter to the longer** focal length so you don't get extraneous material at the edges.)

- 1. Symmetrical** (centered zoom effect) Camera remains in the same position while the lens is zoomed between the multiple exposures.
- 2. Asymmetrical** (off-center zoom effect) Keep a single focal point in the same position in the viewfinder. After each zoomed movement, reorient the camera until that same point is in the same position in the viewfinder. That point may be anywhere in the frame—except the center).

B. Combining multiples with both zooming and rotation around the horizontal axis (Spiral effect)

(**Hint:** Higher numbers of multiples tend to work best for this.)

(**Hint:** The greater the amount of rotation between each exposure, the tighter the spiral that will result.)

- 1.** The focal point can be anywhere in the scene. After each zoom-plus-rotation, return the same point in the viewfinder to the selected focal point in the scene before shooting the next exposure of the sequence.

3. Multiple exposures of different subject matter

- This can be done either hand-held or on a tripod, depending on what you're combining.
- A viewfinder with a grid screen can be especially helpful here.
- Pre-visualization (and, sometimes, dumb luck!) helps with this technique!
- Multiples incorporating too many different images can become cluttered.
- It's recommended that you don't combine in-focus with out-of-focus subjects in the same image.
- Experiment with several numbers of multiples on the same subject matter.

Montage ("Sandwich") Techniques (André Gallant calls all of these "Dreamscapes")

- Montages/sandwiches combine at least two separate overexposed images to create a new image.
- Generally, images to be montaged need to be **at least 1 stop overexposed** so the final image isn't too dark to see. (Occasionally very light-toned subjects don't need overexposure or very dark-toned subject more than one stop of overexposure.)

(**Hint:** For any of the montage techniques, it is advisable to scan or re-photograph the resulting montage to make a new slide, while the original film chips are stored separately to assure that they don't stick together over time. This also allows you to use the same image more than once.)

(**Hint:** If the **emulsion sides are together** it increases the chances of the film sticking together in the slide mount over time.)

(**Hint:** If the **non-emulsion sides are together**, the bowing of the film chips away from each other may make it hard to make duplicates that are in focus throughout the image.)

Three basic types of montages ("Dreamscapes):

1. **In-focus/out-of-focus images of the same subject** with same composition and orientation
2. **Images of the same subject** reoriented
3. **Images of different subjects** (Orientations of included images may or may not be altered from the way they were originally shot)

1. In-focus out-of-focus example: "Surreal Dreamscapes"

- This technique produces images in which subjects appear to have an "aura" around them or, if not an "aura", at least a soft, dreamy quality.
- (**Hint:** It usually works best with light-toned or mid-toned subjects.)
- Use a tripod for images to exactly register when sandwiched.
- **Lenses wider than 100 mm.** may not be allow you to sufficiently defocus the out-of-focus image.

How to achieve the "Surreal Dreamscape"

a. Shoot one image with **adequate depth of field and overexposed by two stops**. (The resulting image will be a "skeleton" image of the original subject.)

(**Hint:** Shoot a couple of in-focus shots in case you want to sandwich an in-focus image with more than one of the out-of-focus shots. Save any unused shots for possible later sandwiching.)

b. Keeping the framing exactly the same, defocus the lens as if focusing closer than the subject—**to enlarge the image and eliminate detail**.

c. With lens still defocused, shoot an image at the **widest aperture** available—for lack of depth of field and little or not detail—and **one stop overexposed**. (This produces an image with a wash of fuzzy color)

(**Hint:** It's a good idea to "bracket" the amount you defocus the subject here. It's hard to tell which will work best when sandwiched.)

d. Pair one in-focus image with its corresponding out-of-focus image.

e. Remount any you like in another slide mount.

Procedures for montaging 3 pieces of film (same as above except):

a. In-focus image **3 stops overexposed**

b. Two out-of-focus images—**1 overexposed by 2 stops; 1 overexposed by 1½ stops**

2. Images of the same subject, reoriented:

How to achieve this type of sandwiched image:

- a. Shoot two identical frames, **both overexposed** (usually 1 stop of overexposure is enough, but experiment; some may need more, others less overexposure)
- b. At a light table, place one image atop the other and try out different orientations. Feel free to experiment! (This is the fun part!)
- c. Remount any you like in another slide mount.

Types of Dreamscapes produced this way:

i. **“Mirror dreamscapes”** Created by flipping one slide over (either horizontally or vertically) atop the other one (i.e. either the emulsion sides will be together or the non-emulsion sides will be together)

(**Hint:** It may help to include an element in the scene that slants toward the center but doesn't go completely across the frame because such elements will probably cross in the final image and can create interesting effects.)

ii. **“Crossed dreamscapes”** Consider crossing the images at right angles to each other to create a square format (tape one film chip to one piece of the slide mount and put the other chip under the clips on the other piece of the slide mount.

iii. **Other orientations**, whether flipped over or not, may work as well or better, depending on the subject matter. Try all possibilities and see what you get! Again, this is the fun part! See what emerges!

(**Hint:** simple shapes/subjects work best for this.)

3. Images of different subjects—possibly reoriented:

“Composite Dreamscapes” (Two—or more—different images sandwiched) (**“Crossed Dreamscapes”** can also be formed this way.)

How to achieve this type of montage or “Dreamscape”:

a. Deliberately shoot overexposed images you think might work well sandwiched together with other subjects.

(**Hint:** Create a stock of images for possible montages by shooting overexposed slides of such subjects as:

1. Patterns (stones, grasses, fields of flowers, ripples of water, etc.)
2. Textures (rock faces, weathered wood, stucco, etc.)

b. Keep slides that are overexposed, even accidentally.

c. Then, periodically sit down at a light table and match up different overexposed slides you've collected to see if any will make interesting images together. You may be surprised at what you'll find! (If more than two pieces of film are sandwiched, the amount of overexposure for each needs to be greater.)

Additional Resources:

Freeman Patterson and André Gallant. **Photo Impressionism and the Subjective Image**. Key Porter Books Ltd., 2001. (ISBN: 1-55263-327-6) (Describes and illustrates most of the techniques described in this presentation.)

Freeman Patterson. **Photographing the World Around You: A Visual Design Workshop**. Key Porter Books Ltd, 1994. (ISBN: 1-55013-590-2) (Describes the “Building Blocks of Design” and how to put them together. This book is very useful in improving the composition of one's photographs.)

Freeman Patterson. **Photography and the Art of Seeing**. Key Porter Books Ltd., 1985 & 1989. (ISBN: 1-55013-099-4) (This book deals with learning how to observe, imagine and express photographically. It also deals with elements involved in visual design.)

Freeman Patterson's web site: www.freemanpatterson.com

Recently-Published Resource:

André Gallant. **Dreamscapes: Exploring Photo Montages**. André Gallant, 2004. \$30 + about \$6 shipping and handling (ISBN: 0-9734714-0-9) Copies can be purchased by e-mailing Freeman Patterson's office manager, Kim

Nickerson, at freepatt@nbnet.nb.ca. or they should be available from sources like Amazon.com and others. (This book refines the terminology taught when Nancy originally attended the workshop and contains many examples of each technique. We've adopted these refinements in our presentation.)

Related Resource:

Tony Sweet. **Fine Art Nature Photography: Advanced Techniques and the Creative Process.** Stackpole Books, 2002. (ISBN: 0-8117-2750-5) (This book describes and illustrates many different techniques for creative nature photography. It is lavishly illustrated with each illustration giving extensive technical data about how the image was created.)