

the Photographers' Formulary

David J. Spear- "*The Magic of Black and White Photography*"

Volume 22

Special Spring 2022 COVID Edition

April 2022



David J. Spear to teach "The Magic of Black and White Photography," June 5-10

Each of us comes to Photography by a different path. Long before Nicéphore Niépce made "A View from the Window" in 1826, opening the door to a new universe of permanently capturing an image, men and women, scientists and amateurs dreamed of the day when we would capture images for posterity on paper, on canvas, and most recently on "sim" cards and digital cameras.

David Spear's path to photography was one of serendipity. By

his own admission, as a high school senior in the 1970's he was struggling. He needed two three-unit classes to graduate and David was looking for the easy way out. He wanted to graduate, but without six more unit's graduation was beyond the horizon.

Thinking of photography as nothing more than aiming a camera and snapping a picture, David found his way to the school dark-room with his first roll of exposed film. His art teacher walked him through developing and fixing the film. As David puts it, he found magic and there was no turning back.

Not only did David graduate, he found his profession in photography. Since those early days in Connecticut he went on to become a well-recognized photographer, and a teacher, first in inner city schools in East Harlem, then and now at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana and as a teacher at Two Eagle River School, the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Alternative High School on the Flathead Reservation.

Here was a place, like NYC's inner city, where David could

make a difference. David is a quiet man, but tenacious. He worked with the CSKT Tribal Council to develop and raise grant funds to teach and carry out Our Community Record Two Eagle River School where he taught students basic black and white photograph. Soon after he was offered a contract to teach as



Students at Two Eagle River School, the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes alternative high school ©David J. Spear

an adjunct photography instructor at Salish Kootenai College just across the parking lot from the Tribal high school.

For nineteen years he had lived in the International Center of Photography in New York City. He was the staff photographer and the night watchman. His personal space was a 12 by 18' room, but he had freedom to roam the Center at all hours of the day and night.

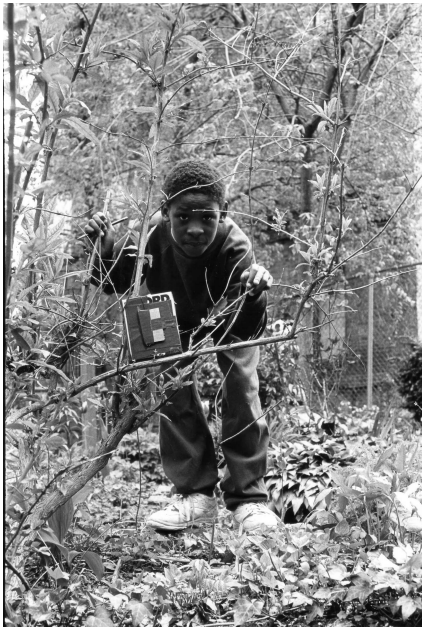
Though not a fervent fan of baseball Spear went to game after game of the New York

In this Issue

- • David Spear- "The Magic of Black and White White Photography"

• June 5 - 10, 2022

Registration Deadline: May 5, 2022



Young Earth School student on the Lower Eastside with his handmade pinhole camera balanced on a limb as he prepares to photograph in a vacant neighborhood lot garden
©David J. Spear

Yankees. For five years he would show up at Yankee Stadium on game day, buy the cheapest ticket in the highest “nosebleed” section and look down on the game hundreds of feet below.

Barely able to see the players far below, Spear took photographs, not of the players but of the spectators. Careful not to photograph their faces, David’s chronicle of those games is of the backs of heads of park patrons watching the action. Unidentifiable as anything more than anonymous members of the crowd in the most famous ball-park of the greatest ball team in the world, they are witness to more than five years of Abner Doubleday’s invention, America’s national past time.

In East Harlem on the Lower Eastside and in Hell’s Kitchen in New York City David worked with children in five inner city high schools teaching as many as seven classes a week. His goal was to expose kids to photography as a way of teaching them about the world around them. In one photograph a young boy is caught moments before opening the “shutter” on a pinhole camera he made from a box of Ilford 4x5 black and white film. It’s easy to see his joy in what he is doing.

After many years in crowded quarters the International Center of Photography moved to more spacious “digs” in a well secured building on the Avenue of the Americas. There was no more need for a night watchman. David was without a job.

In 2000, David came west to Montana, and he’s been here ever since.

David takes on short term projects as well. In a visit to Choteau, Montana on the east side of the Rocky Mountains as part of an artist’s residency with the Montana Arts Council David went to teach for two weeks at Choteau High School. During a break from his work at the high school he visited a small colony of the Hutterite religious sect. He stepped into another world.

The Hutterites are a deeply religious, tightly knit community. They live in small “colonies” of about 100 members and share all worldly goods. Unlike the Amish, Hutterites have no reservations

about using modern equipment and appliances, though they do not watch television because it intrudes on their sense of community.

The Hutterites are one of Montana’s largest producers of pork. The Miller Hutterite colony near Choteau also recently began shipping “farm raised” Coju “Sweet Spring Salmon” for sale in Washington and Oregon.

Hutterite regard for and their care of their children is well known. When David visited the Miller Colony, he exposed three rolls of film in a very short time, recording schoolchildren playing during “recess.” He says Elders of the colony allowed the children to look through the camera viewfinder, but the children were



Miller Hutterite Colony Schoolchildren at play during recess ©David J. Spear

not allowed to touch the shutter button.

It was only during a fifteen-minute recess David seized the opportunity to photograph the children without interruption by the teacher. His 16x20 enlargements of those three roles have pride of place in his darkroom as examples of rare “decisive moments.”

In 2007 David applied for a grant to bring a group of his students to the Photographers Formulary for a day in the Formulary darkrooms. Like many young people of limited means, this was their first chance to see a world outside their very small living space. The field trip was a success.

David followed up with a much larger project. He applied for national grants and tribal financial aid to take a group of fifteen students to New York City for a week. Students held fund raisers and in May 2016 David and his students headed east for a trip of a lifetime.

Because of his long association with the International Center for Photography David was able to draw on professional contacts and associations. David's students came with examples of their work and mounted a show at the Lower Eastside Girls Club of New York City. They met with noted professionals and received critiques and advice about their works.



Members of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes on the Flathead Reservation.
©David J. Spear

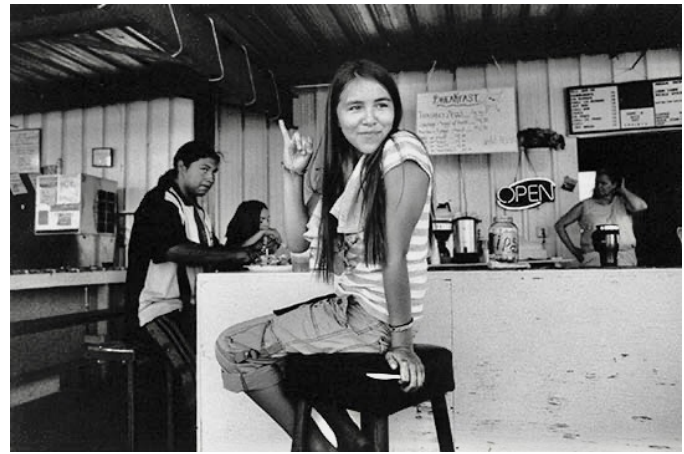
Each student's portrait was taken, allowing them to observe lighting techniques, and to experience being a model. When they returned to Montana each student had a color portrait to show friends and family.

One result of the trip was a student movie of their trip of a lifetime. Titled, 'REzMaDe' the film documents the Native American students' "Eye-Opening Field Trip." You betcha.

With his many years of teaching students of all ages, David brings special talents to the Photographers Formulary workshop, "The Magic of Black & White Photography," during the week of June 5-June 10.

"The Magic of Black & White Photography" is open to anyone and at any level.

David will explore the camera and work with a variety of subjects. Included will be film exposure, processing and printing in the Formulary's spacious darkroom where we'll also share some of the magic of this art form. In addition to



Two Eagle River School, student at Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Alternative High School on the Flathead Reservation.
©David J. Spear

their gained experience, you will leave with a new portfolio of work. If you don't own a film camera, we'll provide one for use during the workshop.

The workshop begins with Bud and Lynn Wilson's Welcome dinner on Sunday, June 5. Cedar-plank baked salmon with all the fixing is served in the Formulary Workshop dining room. It's a chance to meet workshop classmates and for David to give a preview in the main classroom of the Formulary darkroom of the week's schedule.

"The Magic of Black & White Photography," is a great introduction to black and white photography. It's a workshop designed for students of all ages and levels of experience. David's long years of working with students of various levels will make it easy for new photographers to find a level of comfort in the darkroom.

Each morning begins with a self-serve Continental breakfast. Morning classes pass quickly and before you know it there's the

bell for lunch. The Formulary is situated on 26 acres of forest on the banks of the Swan River. Students are encouraged to take their meals onsite. Lynn and her kitchen crew make every meal special. Afternoon classes end with a call to dinner.

After dinner you'll have free run of the Formulary's state of the art darkrooms. There are three darkrooms, two for Alternative Processes and a traditional "wet" darkroom. Formulary staff refresh the chemistry on a regular basis so you have the best chance for success, no matter your skill level.

The week passes quickly and before you know it Friday morning rolls around and with it the final chance to show your stuff and to exchange prints.

So sign up now for "*The Magic of Black & White Photography*," and be prepared for a unique experience at the Photographers Formulary. You'll leave with new skills and a portfolio of your latest work. By the way, Lynn Wilson will make sure you don't go home hungry!



Student-Seward Park High School
©David J. Spear

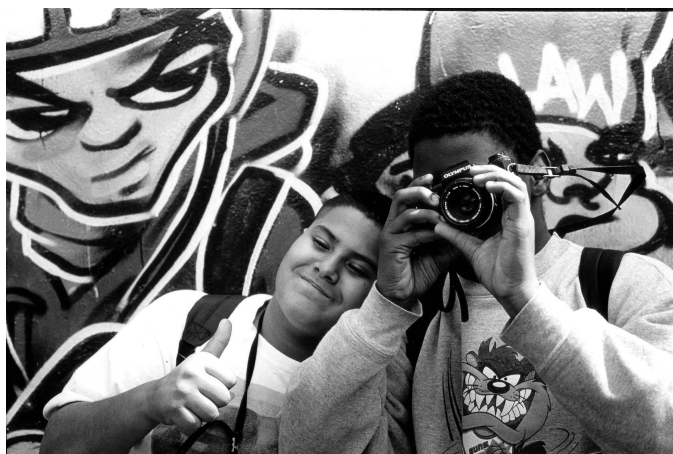


Creative Learning Community School in East Harlem 2 Brothers
rewinding a roll of film they shared photographing in the neighborhood. ©David J. Spear

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“Through Eyes of an Inchworm”
©David J. Spear



Students from Creative Learning Community School in East
Harlem: “Friends with cameras in the school yard.”
©David J. Spear



Creative Learning Community School Student in East Harlem:-
“Self Portrait”, ©David J. Spear

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Rainbow over the Mission Mountains west of the
Photographers Formulary

Just in Time for Summer!

Here are our Specials for **April 27 – May 25, 2022**

All Alternative Process kits shown here are 20% off.

07-0080 Formulary Van Dyke Printing Kit 25 8x10 142g regular \$58.95 **NOW \$47.16**

07-0091 Formulary Cyanotype Kit 24 8x10 **2.9 lb.** regular ~~\$24.95~~ **NOW \$19.96**

07-0092 Formulary Liquid Cyanotype Kit **20 4x5 .9 lb.** regular ~~\$24.95~~ **NOW \$19.96**

07-0095 Formulary New Cyanotype Kit 50 8x10 95g regular ~~\$24.95~~ **NOW \$19.96**

07-0100 Formulary Classic Gum Bichromate Kit 35-40 8x10 482g regular ~~\$34.95~~ **NOW \$27.96**

07-0105 Formulary Contemporary Gum Bichromate Kit 35-40 8x10 502g regular ~~\$49.95~~ **NOW \$39.96**

07-0110 Formulary Salted Plain POP Kit 20 8x10 198g \$76.95 regular **NOW \$61.56**

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