

From: Abstract Earth – A View from Above

The aerial perspective is an inspiring one especially in Australia because of its flatness and lack of roads in the outback and some coastal areas, all of which make for an interesting approach from which to appreciate the variations and abstractions in our landscape. Each flight becomes a flight of discovery as landscapes tell us something about their natural history and reveal their evolution.

I like to be inspired by what the landscape tells me and I make my observations mainly from a height of 1000 metres, depending upon the visibility. I have a preference for aerial perspectives and it is fortunate that the light aircraft is readily available throughout most of Australia and that in combination with the good weather we generally experience makes it all possible. The challenge is how to interpret the complexity of information and this is where a selective observance is needed.

There are so many images worthy of consideration whether they be rivers, coastal plains or deserts all of which vary seasonally and at different times of the day. As much as possible I like to be inspired by what I see and this is where I experience a sense of wonderment of a world so complex, varied and beautiful. Of course there are many ways to appreciate the landscape. My involvement is to photograph the highlights and to interpret them with the camera in a painterly way. I emphasise these highlights by pointing the camera down and focusing on the subject, excluding the horizon so one loses a point of reference and the reality often takes on an abstract view. I hope that the character of the subject is enhanced and that it reveals more through isolation by the camera angle. It is a very personal approach but at all times I take great care to retain the optical reality of what is there. It is important to remain open to any subject and to be inspired by it.

We now have more technical gadgetry at our disposal and there is no doubt it can help us to get a better photograph. But that in itself means little unless it enhances our understanding of the world around us. It is more important to use our creative spirit and gain wisdom than purely use it as a tool. Today in our digital age we have Photoshop with its possibility to enhance or to completely distort or create our own image using photographic components. We have become so image conscious that we often forget the beauty of reality.

The subject of photography can either be concrete or intangible. In the first case the picture is basically realistic, where as in the latter case it is essentially abstract. But what makes photography so interesting is that by combining both we can introduce creativity in the subject and have the best of both worlds.

Although many photographers can take photographs and do it well, it is the work done in the full utilization of that creative spirit that stands out. It should be influenced by the subject itself and come from within oneself. Vincent van Gogh wrote: I still can't find any better definition for the word Art, than this. Nature, Reality, Truth, but with a significance, a conception, and a character which the artist brings out in it and to which he gives expression, which he disentangles and makes free.