

Sunshine and Shadow: Outdoor Photography Lesson



Objective: Students will be able to take outdoor photographs that incorporate the play of sunlight and shadow in a composition to evoke emotion, sense of place, or formal values.

Grade Level: Middle School and up

Time required: one class period to photograph; one

period to critique finished photos. (Students could also mount and display best photos with comments in an exhibit or online, on a CD, etc.)

Online Collection:

<http://www.museum.state.il.us/ismdepts/art/collections/sadorus.php>

Other Sadorus Resources:

[Double Exposure](#) Web module on the ISM Web site

Bial, Raymond. 1983. *Upon a Quiet Landscape*. Champaign County Historical Archives, Urbana, Illinois

Materials:

Digital or disposable cameras

Computer (with writable CD drive or web site)

blank CD

Software to manipulate images (Photoshop, et al)

Display Board for critique

Mounting supplies (mats, frames)

Motivation: Frank Sadorus was very interested in how photographic film could record light and shadow. His outdoor photographs contained the play of light and dark across the composition, to dramatize a composition, and to add details to his compositions. Snow, ice, sky, clouds, water, and textured areas (such as tree bark) were often featured as his choice of subject matter. Students can experiment with camera effects and with their choice of compositions to create these light effects.

- Directional diffused lighting comes basically from one direction with some light that has been diffused or scattered from other angles. Edges are softer and shadows have more detail.

• Fully diffused light comes from many directions and shows very little or no directionality. Shadow edges are indistinct and the subject seems surrounded by light. Sadorus's *Elmer with Cat* is an example of this type of lighting.



• Silhouette lighting is the back-lighting of a subject so that the contour of the subject is sharp, but the details toward the viewer are in shadow. Sadorus's *GWB in Window* is an example of silhouette lighting. Students can do this, too.

Concepts to keep in mind with outdoor lighting are:

- Clear, sunny days with bright light produce dark, strong shadows.
- On overcast days or at dusk light will be diffused and soft. This is a nice light for portraits because it molds the planes of faces and softens skin. Many photographers love to shoot at dusk because of this.
- In the morning and late afternoon when the sun is low in the sky, there are long shadows and an increased sense of texture and volume.

Procedure:

- Students will look at Frank Sadorus' photographs on the Museum's web site. Class discussion of chosen images will focus on his capture of light, shadow, and contrast.
- Teacher reads Photography Tips and presents principles to students with examples of lighting.
- Students go outside (school grounds, home, field trip, etc) and take photographs, keeping principles in mind.
- Photographs are developed professionally (or digital ones downloaded into computer).
- Prints are displayed on a board for a critique of their composition's use of light and dark. Each student can describe what he/she was trying to capture. Peers can comment on what the

images evoke as they view the image.

· Students choose their best image and mount it for display or for a CD or Web site. (They can also manipulate their image in photo software to enhance their composition, either before or after the critique.)

Assessment:

Student, peer and teacher comments are recorded for each photographer to learn from (if this works with your class). Students may self-assess with a point system or critique in a group as to how they rate their own and others' compositions with regard to:

- 1) balance of contrast in the composition
- 2) creation of a discernible mood or feeling through use of light and dark
- 3) how they manipulated their image to adjust contrast to create the mood they wanted.

Illinois State Board of Education Goals Addressed:

Art: Middle School: 25.A.3e Analyze how the elements and principles can be organized to convey meaning through a variety of media and technology.

Early High School: 25.A.4 Analyze and evaluate the effective use of elements, principles and expressive qualities in a composition/performance in dance, drama, music and visual arts.

Late High School: 25.A.5 Analyze and evaluate student and professional works for how aesthetic qualities are used to convey intent, expressive ideas and/or meaning. **Middle School: 26.A.2f** Understand the artistic processes of printmaking, weaving, photography and sculpture.

Early High School: 26.A.3e Describe how the choices of tools/technologies and processes are used to create specific effects in the arts.

Late High School: 26.A.4e Analyze and evaluate how tools/technologies and processes combine to convey meaning.