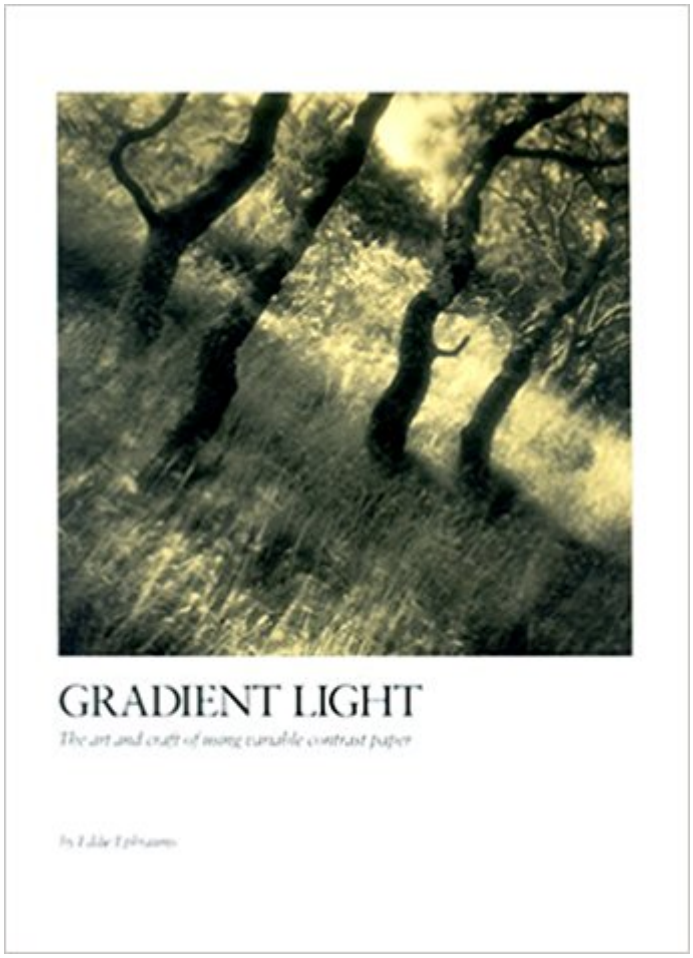
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Gradient Light: The Art And Craft Of Using Variable-Contrast Paper



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Synopsis

Book by Watson-Guptill

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Book by Watson-Guptill

I was looking for a good book for learning how to use split printing on variable contrast papers and any other useful sort of tips...P>Mostly this is a book about how this individual person used techniques to create certain prints that he fancies very good. Frankly, I’m not very impressed with most of them, and in fact I think the color slides -- that are shown to illustrate the scene "as it was" in comparison to the b&w negatives he took -- are often better than the resultant b&w print. Moreover he uses color toning as a crutch to prop up his inherently weak photographs; I have nothing against toning, and in fact I think a couple of the prints in here are quite good and helped by the toning, but if the print can’t stand on its own, blurring it for "artistic effect" and toning doesn’t really help that much.While he discusses the methods used to create each print, he does not discuss them very fully, and he doesn’t usually say how he came to choose those methods to get the "best print" he could. There is some how-to info in the back but it’s not very comprehensive.If I had known this was how the book was before, I would not have bought it. There is simply far too much white space and not enough useful information for someone wishing to learn the techniques to improve their own prints.

This book is invaluable to anyone struggleing to make prints like the master printmakers. Picture by picture analysis of negatives, lighting, exposure and split filtering to make it all work. While I do not take the kind of pictures used as examples, there is something in each one that is applicable to a very broad range of photographs. Thanks Eddie!

Mr Ephraums books are a constant source of inspiration for me

If you look at some of the reviews on regarding this book you will see that some people were disappointed that this book did not delve into the practice of Variable contrast printing enough. I disagree completely. This book basically is about teaching one of Eddie Ephraums signature styles when it comes to nature photography and VC paper plays a significant role. If anything the fact that this book is so focused in its purpose makes it that much better as all too many books simply try to teach too much and hence do not focus enough on particular styles and subjects.My single favorite aspect to this book is its instruction in regards to toning. Toning is a technique that IMO simply doesn't get used enough. It can really add a lot to a print especially when used in a very subtle manner. This book also does a fantastic job at teaching you how to start pre-visualizing what you want your final print to look like. This can be very difficult at first yet with a lot of practice it actually becomes 2nd nature and is an INVALUABLE component to printing. You no longer go into a printing session not knowing what to expect in fact its the exact opposite. You go in knowing exactly what you do want to get out of a particular session or a particular negative. Its just as important as pre-visualizing a picture before you actually take the shot with the camera.Another very important lesson that this book teaches is that you can do a lot with a particular negative. A tilt of the easel here, a zooming into the negative there can dramatically alter the final picture from what is on the original full frame negative. This was very helpful for me in particular as I always loved to print full frame. In fact there were periods of my career that I resisted not printing full frame. Well this book, combined with a fantastic workshop I did with John Sexton, really showed me that what portion of the negative you print is just another very powerful tool in any printers arsenal. There are still times I print full frame but I am also not afraid to find new composition within the negative. Again its just one of the many tools a printer has at their disposal.The bottom line - This book is really about teaching you how to print and tone to get a very specific style of finished print. Of course you can take what you learn in this book and use it in any way you see fit but that doesn't change the fact that this book is very specific in its goals. As I stated before this is one of the things that makes this book so

outstanding. It allows Eddie to really focus his attention and teachings to this one specific style and al of the different things you can do within this style.I actually purchased this book quite some time ago and the reason I am posting this review up now is because with the relentless advance of digital there are going to be fewer and fewer people printing in general let alone doing this kind of very specialized printing. This is a great opportunity for people who are interested in film based photography to learn some of these skills that can really set your work apart from all the other work out there. I have yet to see any digital work that can even come close to replicating this style of printing. In fact digital paper doesn't really even have the capability of mimicking this sort of printing. This style of printing is simply one of the many things you can do in a darkroom that digital simply just cant touch.If you enjoy landscape film based photography then I simply cant give this book a higher recommendation. Its one of the more unique printing books on the market!5 Stars!

'Gradient Light' is another excellent book produced by master printer Eddie Ephraums. He really takes the use of variable contrast black & white paper to a higher level with detailed examples of his work and information on the entire process from conceptualizing the shot and the print, to shooting, developing the negative, and printing and toning. This book presents a precise system for creating high quality prints in the darkroom. Mr. Ephraums has presented the serious photographer with a Zone system for VC paper. A definite addition for any serious printer. Even a beginner can distill good information and learn the importance of careful note taking and planning and execution of their photographic vision. I can't wait until Ephruams' next book.

Dodging, toning and related topics for the advanced printer. Skips basic lessons on the orginal print process and delves right into advaced techniques; superb in this regard. Split contrast printing delt with in detail. If you wish to use VC papers this book would be a good investment, as he teaches a printer some really crafty tricks in this area (such as using a #1 filter to burn-in clouds while using a #3 or 4 filter for the rest of the exposure). Great for fine art printers everywhere.

I was disappointed in this book because I had expected useful information and techniques. The photographs chosen do not seem to convey much and the "technical" explanations of the manipulations involved to utilize the characteristics of variable contrast papers do not (for me) illuminate the process at all! In fairness to the author my dissatisfaction may well stem from the fact that I quite simply do not relate to his photographic style and fail to see anything here worthy of emulation.

I am an avid B&W photographer who does all my own darkroom work. i have many books on the science/art of B&W and use VC papers (FB and RC) exclusively. I looked forward to reading Eddie Ephraum's treatment of this with great anticipation. Yet I was, overall, disappointed. Frankly I am not impressed by his work anyway which I am sure contributed to my feelings in this regard. This book is useful if you are an avid toner and want another perspective on the issue, but overall my two star rating is generous!

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