



Fine Art Photography Top 16

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The purpose of the artist is to express reality as felt. - Robert Motherwell

What are the most important aspects of Fine Art Photography? The answer to this question certainly varies from photographer to photographer because each of us places more importance on some aspects than on others. What follows is what I personally consider to be the most important aspects of Fine Art photography.

This list is excerpted from a longer list that I use for teaching during my workshops and seminars. The decision to create a shorter list, with only 16 items instead of 37, stemmed from the desire to focus on the essential aspects of Fine Art Photography regardless of which scenes we photograph, what subject we are study or what next step we are working towards. The resulting list is free from a particular teaching emphasis and represents what I look for in a Fine Art Photograph.



Four Tufas at Dawn, Mono Lake, California

1 - Become An Expert In Light

The most important aspect of photography is not the gear you own or the techniques you use.

The most important aspect of photography is light.

2 - Compose Your Images Carefully

Slow down.

Use a viewfinder.

Walk the scene.

Give equal importance to all the areas of the frame.

Refine your compositions progressively.

3 - Study Colors And Contrast

Study the contrast of the scenes you photograph.

Study the color palette of the scenes you photograph.

4 – Create Images That Represent What You Felt, Not Just What You Saw

Study the differences between objective and subjective representations.

Technique is objective and emotions are subjective.

The camera is objective and the artist is subjective.

Study the differences between documentation and personal expression.

Documentation is showing only what is in front of the lens.

Personal expression is showing your emotional response to the subject.

5 - Focus On Quality Not Quantity

The goal of Fine Art is not to create a lot of images.

The goal of fine art is to make a small number of great images to be enjoyed for a long time.

6 – Master Both Art And Technique

Fine art is about both art and technique.

Do not study just one or the other.

Study and practice so that you master both.

7 - Master All The Aspects Of Fine Art Photography

Photography is a multi-parts process.

These include composition, conversion, optimization, printing, curating, exhibiting, etc.

Learn how to complete each step to fine art standards.

8 - Optimize Your Photographs Using Layers In Photoshop.

Don't do all the optimization work in the raw converter.

9 - Make The Final Print Your Goal

Do not just learn how to take and optimize photographs.

Learn how to print them well.

Nothing is as beautiful as a fine art print.

Photographs in books, magazines, on the web, etc. are all reproductions.

10 - Mat And Present Your Work In A Professional Manner

The print is not the end of the process.

A Fine Art photograph needs to be matted and framed.

11 - Focus Your Work And Efforts On Projects

Don't photograph everything that attracts your eye.

Be selective and deliberate in your choice of subject matter.

12 - Share Your Work With Others And Build An Audience

Do not keep your prints in boxes.

Learn how to exhibit and promote your work so you can share them with others. It is by exhibiting your work that you will find an audience.

13 - Do Not Try To Recreate The Wheel

Instead, learn from those who know and teach how to do what you want to do.

Get advice from those who are where you want to be.

14 - Create A Personal Style

This is what will make you stand out from everyone else.

15 - Do not expect success overnight

It takes time to do this well.

Patience, perseverance and not giving up are the keys to success.

You can only progress step by step.

16 - Do Not Overestimate Talent

Talent is not within our control.

Hard work and not giving up are within our control.

Many more succeed because of hard work than because of talent.

We succeed because we control what we do.

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Alain Briot creates fine art photographs, teaches workshops and offers DVD tutorials on composition, raw conversion, optimization, printing, marketing photographs and more. Alain is also the author of *Mastering Landscape Photography* and *Mastering Photographic Composition, Creativity and Personal Style*. Both books are available from Amazon and other bookstores as well from Alain's website.

You can find more information about Alain's work, writings and tutorials as well as subscribe to Alain's Free Monthly Newsletter on his website at <http://www.beautiful-landscape.com>. You will receive over 40 essays in PDF format, including chapters from Alain's books, when you subscribe.

Alain welcomes your comments on this essay as well as on his other essays. You can reach Alain directly by emailing him at alain@beautiful-landscape.com.



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