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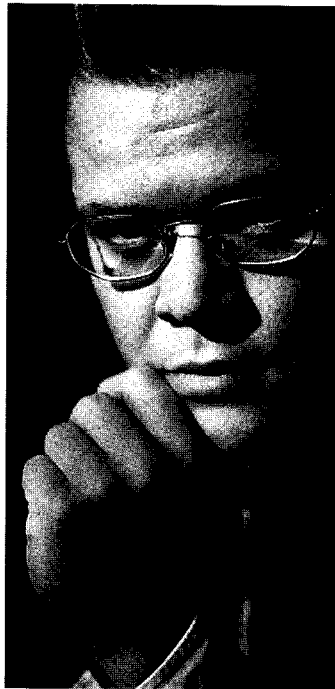
PAUL KOZAL

Paul Kozal moved from Chicago to San Francisco in 1996, but his admiration of the western landscape dates back to his first road trip in 1989. Up to that time, he had done little in the way of landscape photography. After 1989, however, Kozal, a self-taught photographer, was inspired to travel west as often as possible, taking trips that often lasted up to six months. During these trips, he amassed a large number of studies, often of the same dunes and buildings, photographed each year in an effort to capture the constantly shifting values of light.

Asked for an influence, he cites the work of self-taught painter Maynard Dixon, who in the 1920s painted Southwest desert scenes in a stark, highly rhythmic style, itself influenced by Cubism, but also references the work of the contemporary photographer Paul Caponigro.

Kozal employs strictly traditional methods and materials to craft his prints. He uses 35mm and 6x7 or 2 1/4-square-format cameras, preferring 135–300-mm telephoto lenses. Depending on the brightness of the day, Kozal will use infrared or Ilford HP5 film. The final mood of the image is further transformed by meticulous toning or hand coloring.

Interestingly, Kozal's work brings to mind both traditional and non-traditional works from a range of photographers as diverse as Alfred Stieglitz and



his *Equivalents* cloud series, through Jerry Uelsmann and the new breed of digital surrealists, to the contemporary artist David Berg, whose stratified landscapes—a bewildering hybrid of painting and photography—have a common graphic unity with *Mesquite Flat*, and others among Kozal's dunescapes.

The core site of Kozal's work, though, is decidedly traditional and much surveyed. *Taos Pueblo*, a building that he initially photographed in 1991, is one of several architectural sites in his portfolio to have been rendered in black and white and color by many other photographers. Kozal approached the building as something of an architectural puzzle that, at once, re-forms and resolves itself by virtue of

its own geometry in relation to the climactic conditions of the moment. His image, with its four strident crosses, vertical towers, and descending roofs, is a lushly brooding interpretation of what often passes as photographic cliché.

With regard to his artistic intent, Kozal remarks that "each of us, at some time, has encountered a person or a place that at once disarms our senses, seemingly transcending reality [and] forever altering our perspective. Capturing the essence of that moment, and embodying it in a photographic image, is my primary desire." Kozal's words remind me of how often the most vivid lesson to be learned from landscape photographers is that the "decisive moment" is not the province of the street photographer alone; nature's conjunctions of light and shadow, mortar and vapor, can also invoke epiphanies synonymous with any urban transfiguration, allowing our desire to share in the "glorious moment" to be gratified by a photographer of highly-stylized landscapes. —Rupert Jenkins

■ MESCALERO DUNE

"While observing a cloud slowly ascending over the Mescalero Dunes, I was suddenly struck by the razor-sharp demarcation between the dune and the horizon, and the manner in which those cold, featureless planes were punctuated by the warm, ethereal images of the cloud and grass." *Edition size: 200*
Image size: 5x5 inches

■ TAOS PUEBLO

"Deep morning shadows descending on the pueblo were shrouding the lower reaches of the elevation, while strong, early sunlight alternately illuminated the crucifixes set on their respective peaks. I selected a 210-mm lens to press the image against the dark sky and flatten the competing elements and thus bring greater immediacy to the image."

Edition size: 100

Image size: 7x5 inches

■ YUCCA MOON

"Scouting White Sands, New Mexico for images under the full moon, I encountered a sloping dune that mimicked the shape of the lunar surface. A 300-mm lens was used to compress and exaggerate the dune's contour to create the impression of a lunar landscape in our midst."

Edition size: 50

Image size: 7x5 inches

■ MESQUITE FLAT III

"Sunrise at Stove Pipe Wells, Death Valley, isolated the fluid grace of this solitary dune."

Edition size: 200

Image size: 7x5.25 inches

■ Information for all prints:

Type: Toned gelatin silver

Paper size: 8x10 inches

Matting: 14x18 inches

Signature: Applied to mat and on front of print

Prices: Starting at \$350

■ CONTACT

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