

PERSONAL STYLE

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You'll know you're starting to develop a personal style when you begin to see consistent themes in your work. Don't mistake this with redundancy.

When I say themes I mean:

- ways of using backgrounds...a particular style of incorporating them into your images...
- ways of using lines...
- ways of using light...

Notice that these are some of the items we discussed in the section on Composition.

I think style is a result of spending more and more time in the viewfinder. Rather than "developing" a personal style...it is a consistency in your "emotional response" to what you're seeing and experiencing when you're in the viewfinder; your emotional response to these visual themes, compositional elements, quality and type of light.

At first, you're not recognizing that you are having an "emotional response" when you shoot a picture. The more time you spend in the viewfinder...the more these emotional responses repeat themselves...the more you begin to realize you're "developing" a personal style.

As you shoot more often and generate more images, you'll begin to see these recurring themes in your work; the way you respond to certain visual themes, certain compositional elements, certain types and qualities of light.

Since this doesn't happen overnight it appears as though the style is something you developed - when in fact it is something that was there and could only be seen as your body of work grows.

At the point of recognizing these emotional responses (and how they reflect in your work), you can then begin to "develop" your style. You become aware of what turns you on in the viewfinder and you begin to seek those themes out every time you get in the viewfinder.