



**PERCEPTION**

Have you ever looked at one of your photos and thought, "That's not what I remember, that's not what I saw"? Many of us have had that experience.

The human capacity for perception and the camera's capacity to capture an image are radically different. The camera's dynamic range is far inferior to ours, and the camera's sensor treats all areas of the scene with the same detached technical uniformity.

Our capacity for perception includes eye-flow through the scene in front of us, and our personal interests direct our attention to the most meaningful areas. We edit in the significant and edit out the less meaningful. Elements in the scene cause us to recall iconic and personal memories that add meaning to the scene's story — meaning that is not in the scene but is in our "mind's-eye".

*"[The Impressionists] knew that the human eye is a marvelous instrument. You need only give it the right hint and it builds up for you the whole form which it knows to be there."*  
E. H. Gombrich, "The Story of Art"

These mind-brain processes can not be performed by the camera — they must be recreated in the digital darkroom to create a photograph. According to Ansel Adams, "You don't take a photograph, you make it."

**CREATING PERCEPTION IN THE DIGITAL DARKROOM**

The photographer's goal in the digital darkroom is to recapture and convey the original perception to the viewer. This goal is achieved by editing the image perceptually to emphasize the key story-telling elements in the scene, create eye-flow to those elements, emphasize the important and de-emphasize distraction.