

doncohen1: did you receive the email I sent shortly after our chat earlier today?

audela2000: No, got off line and wrote

audela2000: should I read it now?

doncohen1: yes

doncohen1: i think it will help tonight's session

audela2000: while I do, please pardon my obtuseness about the long statements / short pieces theme...I really did think you meant something altogether different...Now to your email...I'll be right back...

audela2000: back. yes, probably option 2. In addition to saying "over", how about I say "cont'd" at the end of each "installment"?

doncohen1: that would be very helpful.

audela2000: Let me, then, set things up so that I can archive this along with you, as a backup...

doncohen1: that's fine. I'll wait for you to get things started if you'd like.

audela2000: No, everything's done, and the Zip drive is saving it too, which means it's being saved also on hard disk, so let's go. I'll write a quick lead.

doncohen1: Sounds fine.

audela2000: Rather, let's do a quick lead together.

doncohen1: What'd you have in mind?

audela2000: Hello, Don, welcome back from vacation! Good to be chatting with you again.

doncohen1: Thanks, Ben. It was great (as usual to get away). Hope we can accomplish something worthwhile for both of us tonight.

audela2000: Yes. And since we've been emailing a little about how to make tonight more interactive, I think your suggestion is good. When my comments start to get long, I'll send them in short bits, so you can read them as they develop, and mark the end of each bit something like this: Cont'd

audela2000: So you know something else is coming, and when the statement's ended, I'll write "Over". How's that?

doncohen1: That will help me quite a bit; very workable. Over

audela2000: Great. Also, I agree with you that interruptions tend to create over-lapping thoughts, Cont'd

audela2000: Still, sometimes a thought is elusive, comes and goes in a flash, hard to recall later, so please, interrupt whenever you feel the need to

audela2000: Over

doncohen1: I will. Over

audela2000: Since I did most of the talking last time, I was wondering if there were topics raised in the first session that you had comments on, or would like to pursue...Cont'd

audela2000: Or if you have questions about things we talked about and would like to pursue those. Over.

doncohen1: To be honest, I'd rather start fresh, and 'focus' more on Photography. cont'd

doncohen1: I had difficulty relating to much of what you related last time, because we come from such different backgrounds and disciplines. cont'd

doncohen1: Makes certain types of communication difficult. So I thought a fresh start might help. We can bring up prior issues as appropriate, though. Over

audela2000: Good. What part(s), aspect(s) of photography would you like to start with. (By the way, I've got your portfolio up on my monitor.)

audela2000: over

doncohen1: Well, I hate to get into more intellectual, theoretical stuff, but I think it's important for you to understand what my goals and interests and motivation are with respect to photography. Over

audela2000: It's exactly the kind of input any teacher or critic or commentator should have, in order to speak directly to the photographer's needs. over

doncohen1: Put simply, I enjoy experiencing nature - seeing animals and plants, appreciating the beauty in the world. Cont'd

doncohen1: Being able to go out and capture some of that beauty to enjoy myself, to share with others through web images, or prints on their walls, is a joy for me. Contd

doncohen1: I really don't feel motivated (at this time, anyway) to make any kind of "artistic" statement, or have some type of hidden agenda, or inner vision, to express with this photography. Cont'd

doncohen1: That just puts what I'm interested in doing now, in a somewhat different category than "artistic" type photography. One's neither better nor worse than the other; they're just different. Over

audela2000: This is exactly what should motivate anyone to make pictures--this sense of pleasurable connection to the world and especially to those things in it that give the individual picture maker pleasure, make him/her glad to behold those things...For these are different for each individual picture maker. For some it's women, for others children, or nature, or buildings, or crowds full of life, for some it's small towns, for others big cities....Don't you agree? Over.

doncohen1: Yes, that makes sense to me. Cont'd

doncohen1: And I know I started it, but I'd rather spend more time discussing my photos in general or this type of photography in particular, and not get bogged down too much in abstract or theoretical issues. over

audela2000: Yes, but first I'd like to elaborate just a little on "for some it's women"--a minute or two, and here, instead of "cont'd" I'll just put three dots after the end of each little bit, like this...

doncohen1: a good suggestion. over

audela2000: For some, like the photographer Edward Weston, it's women with their clothes off. For others, like the photographer Garry Winogrand, it was women with their clothes on. Winogrand loved women and he loved taking pictures of them, and he published one book only of pictures of women, called "Women Are Beautiful".....

audela2000: But in all the hundreds and hundreds of pictures he published and exhibited in his lifetime, there are almost no nudes. He was a 35mm photographer, and talked during the last years of his life of giving up the Leica and getting an 8x10 and making nudes with it in a studio, but he never got around to it.....

audela2000: BUT THERE WAS ONE SERIES, PUBLISHED ONLY AFTER HIS DEATH, of nudes: pictures taken on Photo Night (Wednesdays, I think) at a Los Angeles strip joint called the Ivar Theater....

audela2000: Now those pictures, showing the women on the runway, and the men all around them, ogling their naked bodies, those pictures were full of a strange kind of tension, a strange pleasure, the pleasure obviously Winogrand got from looking at and trying to understand this blatant manifestation of a certain kind (not his kind) of male pleasure in looking at women's bodies.

audela2000:

audela2000: Which brings me around to your photographs: to the idea of the particular kind of pleasure you feel....

audela2000: and the interest you experience....

audela2000: the way you feel and think differently from any other place or time....

audela2000: all this that happens to you when you look at, are in the presence of, see, behold, drink in with your eyes, EXPERIENCE, in a word, those beautiful parts of nature and those beautiful plants and animals you are drawn to, and which you want to photograph. over.

doncohen1: I agree that for me getting out in nature creates a different state of mind, where one leaves the worries of mundane life behind....

doncohen1: You feel a connection with something 'real'. Certainly it is not sexual in nature (and I realize that's not what you were suggesting), but there is a "physical" component to it, as apart to the more abstract day to day cares that tend to dominate our lives. Over

audela2000: Yes. 1980-1991, I spent 2 weeks every summer canoeing with my son through the northern Minnesota wilderness, not a soul in sight for two weeks, I know what you mean....

audela2000: I also get this relaxation, this escape, from fishing....Hours and hours in a canoe, perfectly still, on a lake...

audela2000: But I don't want to photograph it. The physical component you're talking about is at least partly--strongly involves sight, the visual aspects of physical nature. Yes? over

audela2000: (While waiting: The eye is part of the body, & the body is physical, so the pleasures of sight are in part physical: sensations, feelings.)

doncohen1: Finding and photographing nature is in a sense a celebration of life, in all its richness and variety. There is a joy in seeing things I've not seen before, in detail I've not seen before. So yes, I do want to photograph it....

doncohen1: It's the sense of wonderment at the incredibly beauty, symmetry, complexity of nature that fascinates me, and for who knows what reason, gives me joy in capturing some of that. Over

audela2000: I don't want to seem as though I'm harping on the same string, but: these words "wonderment" "fascinates" "joy", these too are in part sensations, feelings, i.e. physical. over.

doncohen1: They are all these things; where does this lead you? over

audela2000: They're going to lead straight to your questions about photography...In about three more little bursts of words...Maybe less...

audela2000: "Sensations, feelings, physical" i.e. pleasure...For people like yourself, who are driven to capture VISUALLY, IN PICTURES, the things that give you these pleasurable sensations, the medium of expression is visual...Some people want to express these things in words, others in music, but you want to express them in pictures....

audela2000: And here we are at the point. Shall I go straight into it? Or would you like to correct or add to anything we've said so far? over

doncohen1: Go for it. I have no problem with anything you've said so far. Over

audela2000: You do wish to enjoy the pictures after they're made, when you're far away in time and space from their subjects, e.g. Bryce Canyon, or even the, I think, nearby meadows or gardens where you made the flower and insect pictures in the portfolio, right? over

doncohen1: Yes I do, but.....

doncohen1: I don't know if this takes us away from the point you were leading to, but I do find that I prefer taking new pictures than just reviewing old ones....

doncohen1: Perhaps it's the perfectionist in me, but once the images are there on my computer (or page), I see the imperfections as much as or more than the virtues, and I want to go back out again and do better. Over

audela2000: It doesn't take us away from the point. Anyone who makes pictures with your kind of commitment, passion, repeated effort, etc. always wants to go on and make newer ones, that curiosity about what else one can do is universal to people who make things. Also, everyone who works as seriously as yourself has that perfectionist in him, wants the things he makes to be better each time, wants the flaws to drop away, wants to master the craft...

audela2000: A little anecdote...

audela2000: When Picasso turned 60 lots of journalists interviewed him, of course, and to the question, "What does it feel like to be 60?" when asked directly, he'd say,

audela2000: "Well, I'm much less interested in sex now, and I'm really glad, because maybe it means I can finally concentrate on my painting, and maybe I'll learn how to paint well."

audela2000: over?

doncohen1: I can certainly appreciate how someone with abilities typically is their own worst critic, which drives them ever higher. over

audela2000: Great phrase, "own worst critic!" because it brings us right back to the point, because every picture maker must be, of course, his/her own critic....

audela2000: Well, almost to the point. You also said you like the fact that others enjoy your pictures, as prints on the wall...yes? over.

doncohen1: I must confess, yes. I guess there's a part in most of us that looks for affirmation from others.....

doncohen1: It shouldn't be that way, of course, and ultimately you need to get that from within, but after all, we're only human. over

audela2000: No, no, affirmation from others is important...It's part of what keeps anyone going...But its importance notwithstanding, the part of what you said earlier on that's important here is the part about people enjoying (not approving of, enjoying) your pictures as prints on the wall. (I assume this means their walls...) over

doncohen1: Yes - on their walls, as 'wallpaper' on their computers, etc. over

audela2000: And the word "enjoying" means, in part, "take pleasure in, receive pleasure from". "In," "from" what? Looking. Looking at what? The picture. So we are now absolutely at the point. Do I go on?

doncohen1: Please do

audela2000: With any picture--let's say, here, with any photograph--there's a three-way relationship: PHOTOGRAPHER: PHOTOGRAPH: SPECTATOR...

audela2000: (spectator can be either the photographer himself, looking at the photograph once it's made, or someone else, your friends, looking at one of your photographs as a print on the wall or on their computer screen etc.....

audela2000: Now for someone like yourself, who is motivated in part by pleasure--pleasurable sensations from just plain looking at something, pleasurable thoughts about the variety of nature, pleasurable concepts like the celebration of nature and of the wonderment we feel when in it....

audela2000: There is also a two-stage process of communication....

audela2000: Not communication so much as TRANSMISSION....

audela2000: of all this pleasure including the pleasure of the understanding....

audela2000: and remember, a lot of this is simply subliminal, happens in a flash, while you're out there looking, in that moment between when you say or feel "I've got to photograph this" and the moment when the camera is at your eye and you've got to start working...

audela2000: TRANSMISSION of all this stuff goes like this: PHOTOGRAPHER---

>PHOTOGRAPH, and, later, PHOTOGRAPH----->SPECTATOR

audela2000: PHOTOGRAPHER----->PHOTOGRAPH PHOTOGRAPH----->SPECTATOR

audela2000: over

doncohen1: I'm not sure I "get" what you're trying to say here. I understand what you're outlining, but I'm not sure what conclusion is supposed to be drawn. over

audela2000: The conclusion, if you wish, has to do with the middle term, "photograph" and with the fact that the photograph is a picture, and with the fact that a picture is not the landscape or garden or insect or animal that made you want to take the picture in the first place.

audela2000: over,

doncohen1: The photograph of an insect is not the insect itself, but I guess the intent is to recreate in the "spectator" some of what was experienced when the insect was encountered and photographed. Perhaps not unlike symbols being used to represent other realities? over

audela2000: Not like symbols. I could tell you why but it will take a long time. The better word is "representation". I can explain, but again it will take a long time, and I'd rather try to talk about the dynamics than about the terms, Okay? over...

doncohen1: That's fine. Representation works for me. over

audela2000: Good, because you've expressed the dynamics exactly when you said "to recreate in the 'spectator' some of what was experienced when the [subject] was encountered and photographed." I've thought this was true of you ever since I read your first statement, the one you submitted with the portfolio, and saw the pictures. Are you comfortable going on from there, to a re-phrasing of it in terms that will, I think, be very useful to you as you work to make your pictures better? Over.

doncohen1: That's the bottom line for me - so proceed. over

audela2000: Fine. A quick anecdote from my own photographic efforts. I once worked for about three years on a series of pictures of a particular group of people in Boston who fascinated, thrilled me, made me feel, when I was with them, the kinds of things you said above about your feelings in nature, what makes you want to photograph...

audela2000: When it was done I managed, through a friend with influence, to get a half-hour with a very busy & important expert in the field of photography...He looked through my 80 carefully printed 11x14 b&w pictures in about 7 minutes and said, "You failed to turn a life experience into a picture experience." End of interview, I was shown to his office door.

audela2000: over

doncohen1: Did you agree with his assessment? over

audela2000: Later, yes, absolutely. Also, it was the beginning of my questioning about photographs. Until then I'd just taken pictures and tried to make them better--as far as I understood "better"--and was glad when other people liked them, put them on their walls (after I'd given them as gift)--Mind you, at the time, I was making my living as a photojournalist, big national magazines, and was teaching photography at the California Institute of the Arts..But I blush now with shame, really, at any of my teaching before, say, 1988....

audela2000: over,.

audela2000: No, not over....

audela2000: Making successful photojournalistic pictures is sort of like finding the right cookie cutters and then stamping out the cookies faster and maybe a little sharper, cleaner than others could....It's formulaic work and has nothing to do, really, with picture making...

audela2000: over

audela2000: over

doncohen1: When I look at somebody else's picture, I react fairly quickly either positive or negative....

doncohen1: In your terms, I'm probably reacting to whether or not that photo was successful in bringing the subject to life, and I agree. I have used the phrase as whether or not the picture "works" and I think we're talking about the same thing. over

audela2000: Maybe. "Works" yes, but I don't know if we mean the same thing by the word...Let's get back to this dynamics. A picture is a high energy/high pleasure construction. Into it goes the energy/pleasure the photographer feels etc. when he looks at the subject. Out of it comes the energy/pleasure that the spectator feels when he looks at the picture. But the energy/pleasure IN the picture is a construct made out of only those visual elements of a picture, and out of how they're assembled, used, within the picture. It's not the pleasure/energy that flowed to the photographer from the subject. And for the spectator, it's not the energy that flows from the photographer to the picture. It's the energy/pleasure that flows to the spectator from things, visual things, pictorial things, things that occur

audela2000: things that occur in the picture and occur because of the laws that govern pictures, the principles that underly them, and so on....over for questions and comments.

doncohen1: Undoubtedly there are rules and patterns that help one understand how a "successful" picture is crafted. I guess I'm more inclined to discover them on my own than learn about them in a book. Perhaps that's inefficient, but it sounds like more fun to me. And I've lived long enough to trust my instincts, and enjoy seeing where they lead me. over

audela2000: But I'm not talking about rules and patterns, and I'm not talking about "successful" pictures, and I wonder if we mean the same thing by "crafted"? over.

audela2000: Not over: THERE ARE NO RULES.

audela2000: over.

audela2000: no, not over:

audela2000: THERE IS REALLY NO FORMULA FOR A SUCCESSFUL PICTURE.

audela2000: over.

doncohen1: I agree. I thought you were leading toward the need for studying the "laws that govern pictures, the principles that underly them" that you referred to. That might have been an incorrect assumption, but I was just indicating that I'd rather discover them on my own than read about them in a book. over

audela2000: They aren't to be found in books. They're to be found in pictures. over.

audela2000: No, not over. They're to be found in pictures, but for people like ourselves, at early stages of development, they're not usually found in our pictures, even though they might exist there, because we don't know how to recognize them when we see them. over.

doncohen1: Well, I certainly enjoy looking at good pictures, and I'm sure that both consciously and unconsciously I analyze them to see what makes them "work" what I can utilize in my photography, etc.

doncohen1: over

audela2000: i.e., not found by ourselves, we don't find them there...other people must point them out to us at first, things like the use of planes, the address to, or the recession from the picture plane--two things which anyone who makes pictures must consider. over.

doncohen1: Perhaps. But you make this sound way too "serious" a venture. I'm doing this for enjoyment, and while I work very hard at it, it is still fun! over

audela2000: I'm confused. over.

doncohen1: You refer to the virtually necessity of having somebody point out to me "the use of planes, the address to, or the recession from the picture plane..." etc.....

doncohen1: That sounds to me like a potentially helpful way of looking at things, but in part is somewhat of an "abstraction" superimposed by analytical thinking and analysis. I'm not saying that's a bad thing, but it doesn't seem to appeal to me just now. Perhaps I may change my

attitude later, but I'm still learning and exploring and discovering as I go, and don't want to get too "formal" with it. over

audela2000: The picture plane, the various planes in a picture that recede from it toward the horizon, these and other things, like the difference between a composition and an arrangement, these are not abstractions imposed by analytical thinking and analysis. These are physical elements of a picture. They are what everyone who makes pictures must deal with, everyone: the person who makes soft-pencil drawings of women in clothes for fashion advertisements, the person who photographs objects for mail order catalogues, Watteau when he made chalk drawings of women in clothes for his sketchbooks, Edward Weston when he photographed green peppers....They're not abstractions any more than the main spring of a watch is an abstraction for a watchmaker or a piston and piston rings and timing gear belts and fuel

audela2000: injection nozzles are abstractions for an automobile engine mechanic. over.

doncohen1: Just because I'm saying they are somewhat "abstract" doesn't mean they're not real or that they're not there. I'm just saying that I think it's possible for someone to take successful photographs, or be successful in those other things, without having an intellectual knowledge of those processes.....

doncohen1: I'm not attacking or saying those things aren't real or useful, just that at this stage, I prefer to see what I can learn and create on my own. Perhaps this is foolhardy and doomed to failure, but for me the joy is in the discovery and learning. And in time, I may change my attitude and seek to learn these things. over

audela2000: One person did, Jacques Henri Lartigue, who photographed between the ages of about 9 and 16. Children, from time to time, aged 6-9 or 10, when given cameras to go out and play with, but as is true of children's art generally, it's only from time to time. Otherwise, I can't think of anyone who consistently makes good pictures without knowing about all this....

audela2000: (Lartigue was consistent during his childhood and early adolescent. Scores and scores of really fine pictures. But then he grew up in a rich family, lots of art all around him.) I have seen work by talented photographers who didn't know about all this, there are usually a few good pictures per thousand, but the photographers don't know which ones they are, and so they keep making pictures like the thousands that aren't good. over.

doncohen1: Remember, Ben, this is not a career, nor an academic discipline for me. I'm not striving to create work that will live for centuries. I'm just trying to capture nature as I love and experience it, and share it with others. I'll hone my skills and abilities as time goes on, but beyond that, I am really not concerned. over

doncohen1: If I get to the point where I'm no longer happy doing this, then I'll stop and pursue something else. (excuse the interruption in protocol) over

audela2000: But you did say you want to make your pictures better. Want to eliminate mistakes. Don't want to dwell on pictures made but want to go on to make better ones. Want them to give pleasure. What I'm trying to do is identify the things that make pictures good, make them clear and plain to you, understandable, point them out when they occur in your pictures, refer you to pictures where you can observe, clearly, concretely, specifically, not abstractly, other things, so that you can begin to apply them to your own work. Intending no disrespect now, but simply trying to put it in clear terms...

audela2000: What you're proposing when you say you want to improve your work without learning about what makes pictures work is sort of like not knowing either what the parts of an automobile engine are called, or how they fit together, or what they do when they do fit together, and feeling that the car, well, it drives kind of nicely, it's a pleasure, and it's fun to change the spark plugs and check the oil and tighten, maybe, the alternator belt, and wash the car, and keep the tires at the right pressure, but still, the car could run a little better, so let's just take the whole engine apart and put it back together again....

audela2000: and kind of learn about the workings and the principles of the computer-aided fuel injection internal combustion engine, the transmission, the drive chain, as we go along. over.

doncohen1: In part I'm saying someone could take a car, dismantle it and learn through the experience how it operates, and learn how to make it better. Clearly this wouldn't be a good strategy for someone working for GM, or a mechanic repairing a vehicle for someone else. But a "tinkerer" in the backyard who for their own pleasure likes to take things apart, and put them back together again....

doncohen1: But enough generalities. I'm all for learning, so perhaps we could look at a picture or two of your choice, and you can point out to me, in whatever language or manner you prefer, what is helpful, what is not, what works against my purposes, what helps, and specific steps on how to make it better. over

audela2000: Fine, but it's important to keep in mind that when you say "capture nature as I love and experience it, and share it with others," the sharing it with others depends on the experience in the picture, in pictorial terms...

audela2000: To the portfolio...

audela2000: The lion...

audela2000: First, good still pictures of animals (drawings, paintings, photographs) almost always show the animal in motion. This is for two reasons....

audela2000: (and please remember, this isn't an abstraction, what's to follow, nor is it the result of intellectual analysis. It comes from looking at hundreds and hundreds of pictures of animals or with animals in them, and from asking, "It's true here, is it true here? And here? And here?")...

audela2000: There are exceptions: George Stubbs, 18th c English horse painter. But Stubbs had composition, and surface...A photograph has no surface. Reason 1: In motion the various parts of the animal are performing different aspects of the gesture. There's physical variation of the motifs. Variation of the motif is essential to a picture's life. It helps keep the surface active: something new for the eye every time the eye moves from one part of the picture to another. This is especially important for photographs, which have no surfaces....

audela2000: Reason 2: An animal in motion is essentially an animal in the midst of behavior. Behavior is active, and it has psychological and emotional dimensions.

doncohen1: In general, I agree with you - more is conveyed by showing an animal in action, as it shows who and what they are. I guess I liked this shot despite this, because of the "plaintive" look, expressing the contrast between what this animal is and can do, with the circumstances he's in, which prevent him from being/doing that. That may not come across, and if so, that's fine, and I'll keep at it. So yes, action is generally better, but there can be exceptions (despite whether or not this shot 'works').

doncohen1: (again, excuse the interruption) over

audela2000: there are exceptions, but as far as I know, and I've looked at thousands and thousands of photographs, there are very few exceptions in photography. Rembrandt made a now-famous drawing of a male lion, at rest. Although the lion is at rest, the drawing is extraordinarily active. Where's the action? On the surface, in all the marks of the pencil...Such lines! Photographs have no surface. The image of a photograph is not made by marks (pencil, charcoal, paint brush, etc.) on a surface. This is the photographer's chief obstacle to good pictures. over.

doncohen1: Again, I don't disagree with the importance of action, and if this one isn't an exception, then I can accept that, and move on. over

audela2000: The bee in the garden...

audela2000: It's almost a picture. If it were a painting it would probably work. Because (I'm waiting for the big image to download)....

audela2000: Because all that out-of-focus material would, if paint, have surface, lots of it, lots of variation in the surface...You can see this from all the different values (values = tones) of greens, yellows.....

doncohen1: And remember the "big image" is still much smaller than the original, and size does matter with certain types of pictures, I agree over

audela2000: and the mauves and browns and blues at the top would have more values too, and more surface....and with a brush, the forms, shapes (the two words are almost interchangeable) of the out of focus leaves would at once be more distinct as shapes and forms and have their own surface activity....

audela2000: With digital photography these things might be enhanced via the computer....make the leaves more definite, get as much shape and form out of them as the digital program will permit...

audela2000: and play around with the values...differentiate between them more...and create shadows, intensities of value that aren't in the raw image....

audela2000: This, of all the six pictures, is the one which, with a lot of computer work, might be the picture...

audela2000: After all, the bee itself is so small the spectator's interest in it, and the pleasure it discharges to the spectator, are soon exhausted...

audela2000: But if it's this one precisely drawn, precise, concrete subject in a swirling world of shapes and forms and values...

doncohen1: The line between photography and art gets very blurry here, when you speak of major digital manipulation. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but it is a different dimension.

audela2000: And if you manage the recession of all those planes one back to the next back to the next back to the next all the way to the horizon....

audela2000: Anything that makes a photograph work is photography.

audela2000: anything.

audela2000: anything at all.

audela2000: Charles Negre, 1850s, making documentary studies of the gothic architecture of france, with paper negatives, drew with pencil on his negatives to block up the highlights and make the walls of certain buildings brighter

doncohen1: I'm not disagreeing with that, as I feel free to manipulate if it will lead toward what I'm trying to create, but photographic skills are very different from the kind of artistic/painting skills you refer to, and sadly, I have none of the latter. That's probably part of why I enjoy photography so much. over

audela2000: Bill Brandt, making nudes in the 1950s, when he didn't like the way a shoulder or a hip went in the print, he would make the shoulder or hip thinner by using spot tone, putting long sections of black along the shoulder or the hip, to make it blend with the black background...

audela2000: You don't need the skills, somebody who has them can use them. Helen Levitt, New York, 1939 or so, made this fabulous picture of a woman crossing a street...

audela2000: With a guy on a bicycle zooming down the street behind her...

audela2000: But there was a pedestrian on the sidewalk who messed up the picture...

audela2000: So Levitt made a print...Interrupt me if I told you this...and took it to an airbrush retoucher, who retouched the pedestrian out of there, and Levitt made a copy negative of the retouched print, and that's what she still prints from to this day, when people want a print of this small masterpiece...

audela2000: And so on.

audela2000: And there's no different dimension. There's only the picture, and what makes it work. As a picture, now, I'm not talking about art. over.

doncohen1: Well, I hate to do this again, but time is beginning to be a factor for me, so we need to start drawing to an end. over

audela2000: i.e not talking about art with the bee picture. i'm talking about how to make that picture better, discharge its subject, make someone look at it and feel the thing...physically...

audela2000: No, it's fine. I'd suggest you read this over, think about it, think about what you really want from the pictures (from the pictures as opposed to the experience of making them, which is altogether a different thing from the pictures themselves...Many wonderful pictures, not art, are made by people who have a great deal of difficulty and pain and trouble and etc. making them), and get back to me, we can go at this again....Send me some new pictures...And like that...And it would also be a good idea, maybe...

audela2000: If you could tell me what kind of picture you're working toward. Who else makes them. Where you see them. Look, I'll say it again, if it were National Geographic nature and animal photographs you want to make, and you'd send me three years' back issues, in six months, with semi-weekly sessions and assignments, I could teach you how to make them well enough that they'd give you the same kind of pleasure Nat'l Geogr. pictures do...You'd be in the ball park...But you'd be looking at a lot of reproductions of paintings along the way, so as to understand and learn the things that make those pictures good...

audela2000: Six months.

audela2000: over.

audela2000: No, not over. I'm not trying to get you to do this, mind you, I'm just saying that if you can give me a better idea of the kind of pictures you're trying to make--and everyone at early

stages of development, everyone, works with respect to models received from other sources-- someone else's pictures, some kind of pictures seen in certain places--if you can tell me this and send me a bunch of new pictures we can forget this transcript and talk about the new pictures and why they do and do not conform to the models you have in mind....

audela2000: over.

audela2000: I do want to be useful to you and am frustrated that so far I am not. over.

doncohen1: I don't really know exactly where I'm heading, don't have a firm goal in mind; I'm just following my nose, so to speak, and seeing where it leads. Very different from my career/professional orientation, which is obviously quite goal oriented....

doncohen1: I would say the fault is mine because in a sense, I'm not really looking for a teacher as such.....

doncohen1: As I've said, I'm enjoying just discovering and learning on my own, drawing occasional inspiration from others doing similar photography.....

doncohen1: An odd comparison: I enjoyed mathematics as a child, because I could independently derive many of the formulas and theories, rather than just having to memorize them. If I forgot one, I could just figure it out on my own. Certain similarities to what's going on here. over

audela2000: Maybe. Mathematics is different from pictures. Let me clear up some things. 1. Since you don't know where you're headed, let's drop that. 2. I'm not suggesting in any way that you think along career lines. 3. You are looking at other pictures: "drawing occasional inspiration from others doing similar photography." It's those "others" I need to know about if I'm going to be useful to you. 4. But because a) it's late and b) everything's so vague now with you, I propose the following....

audela2000: You print this conversation out and read it from time to time. You keep photographing. In 2, 3 months you send me a CD with as many of the pictures, taken between now and then, that it will hold. Thousands if there are thousands. I'm about to install a program Thumbs Up, makes looking at thumbnails really fast. I can look at hundreds of pictures in a hour and know what's what with the general thrust. So you send me that CD with hundreds or thousands of pictures--literally EVERYTHING you've taken between now and, say October 1, or November 1. EVERYTHING. I'll look, we'll chat, and that will be the second transcript for Uwe. How does this sound?

doncohen1: That sounds like a very generous offer, Ben, which I appreciate. So give me a few months to collect some shots, I'll make a CD, and we'll go from there.....

doncohen1: Thanks again for your time, Ben - definitely beyond the call of duty, so to speak. My best regards to you. over

audela2000: Interruption: "Hundreds of pictures in an hour." A few weeks ago an on-line student sent me contact sheets with 2,800 pictures. I reviewed them, made notes, and had the lesson plan done in two hours. (It was a good lesson. He's now getting his first portfolio ready to send to museums. Six months ago his pictures were just like yours.)

audela2000: over.

doncohen1: Thanks again, and good night, Ben over

audela2000: Good night. Thank you for the time. Over and out.