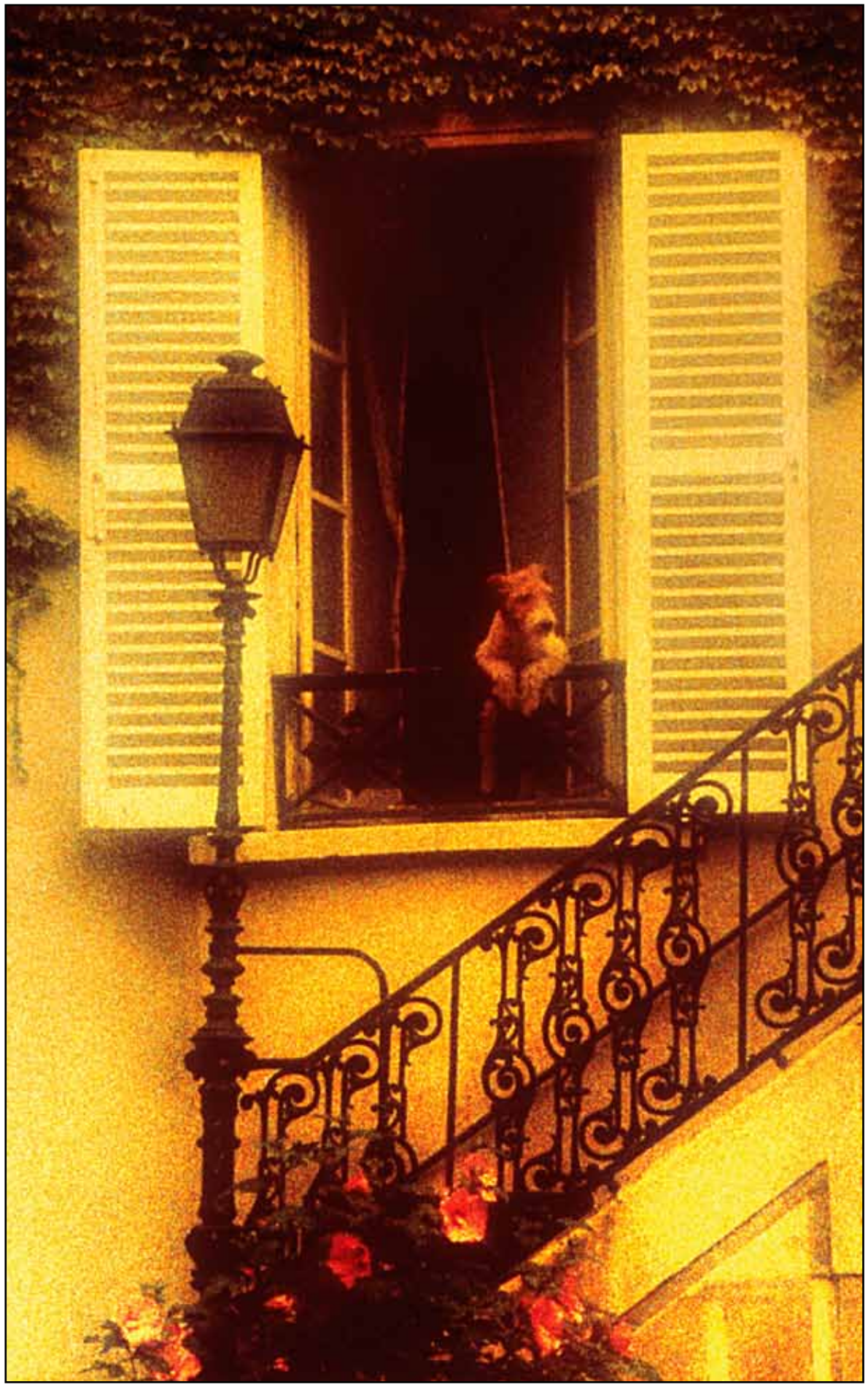
Modified Acceleration Process

by Michael Baciu



For all the good reasons, Kodachrome 25ASA was, for many years, the favorite film of professional photographers. It's sharpness, color saturation and lack of grain were unbeatable.

Kodak was keeping secret the manufacturing and developing process (K14[1]). There were rumors though… One rumor was, that for this particular brand, Kodak didn't use layers of photosensitive emulsion for each of the primary colors (like they were doing with Ektachrome), but rather microscopic photo sensitive grains, each reacting to one of the primary colors, all in one single layer (which obviously explains both the remarkable color saturation and sharpness of the film). Another rumor was that the first step in developing the film is actually a simple black & white developer. Now that was very intriguing to me considering the amazing versatility and tolerance of any BW film developer. So I had to wonder what will happen if I push[2] the 25ASA film to 800 (5 stops push[2]), or even 1,600 (6 stops push[2]), even if Kodak would never push[2] or pull[2] their Kodachrome more than 1/2 stop.

I started experimenting with different BW developers, different temperatures, and different push[2] ratios. The result was pretty cool. All I had to do is add color, and the good old C41[3] process will do. The end result: a weird looking color negative. The size of the grain would increase dramatically, and looking close at one of these photographs I could actually see the different grains for each primary color. Just what impressionists painters wanted. Remember Seurat's maniacal use of tiny dots of primary colors only. Thus, the photograph would have an impressionistic look.

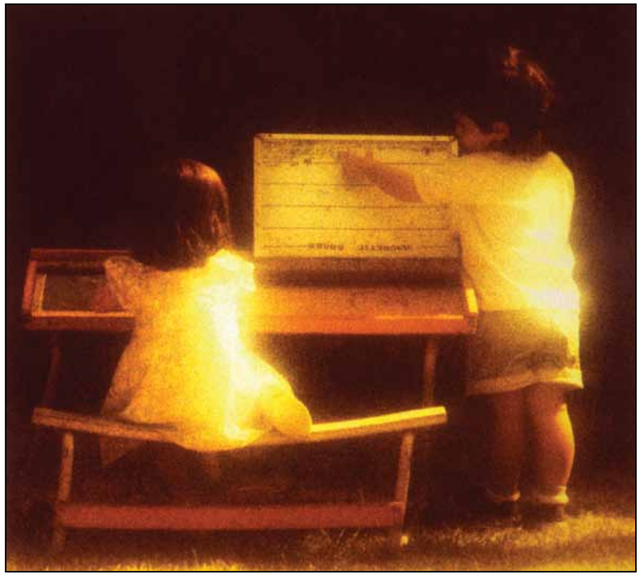
Later on I brought a strobe into the darkroom, triggering it a couple of times between the color developer bath and the bleach bath during the C41[3] process. A posterization would take place, sometimes subtle, sometimes outright psychedelic. Posterization effects are, by definition, unpredictable. I'd bracket while taking each picture: normal exposure, -1/2 stop, +1/2 stop. Huge differences between the three frames would occur. Thus, the fauve look.

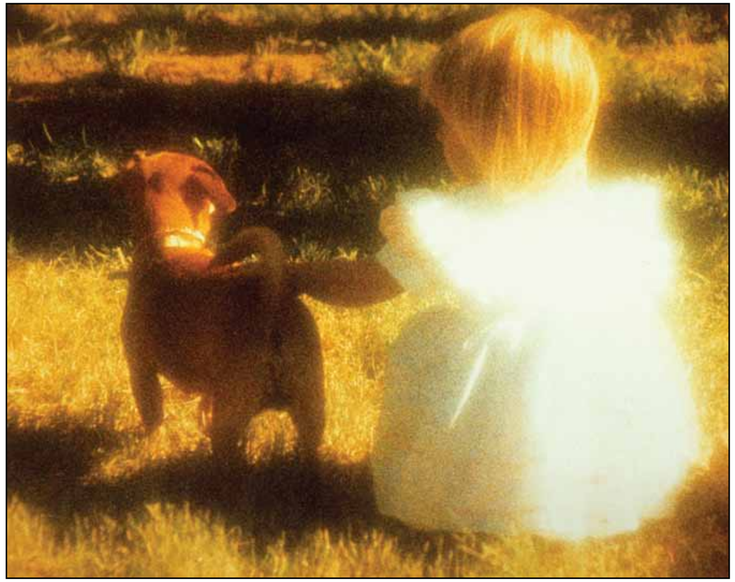
"Apocalyptic" Art of California magazine proclaimed. "The Instance of Silence" (Augenblicke der Stille) the German ColorFoto magazine called it. But all along, I was just having fun.

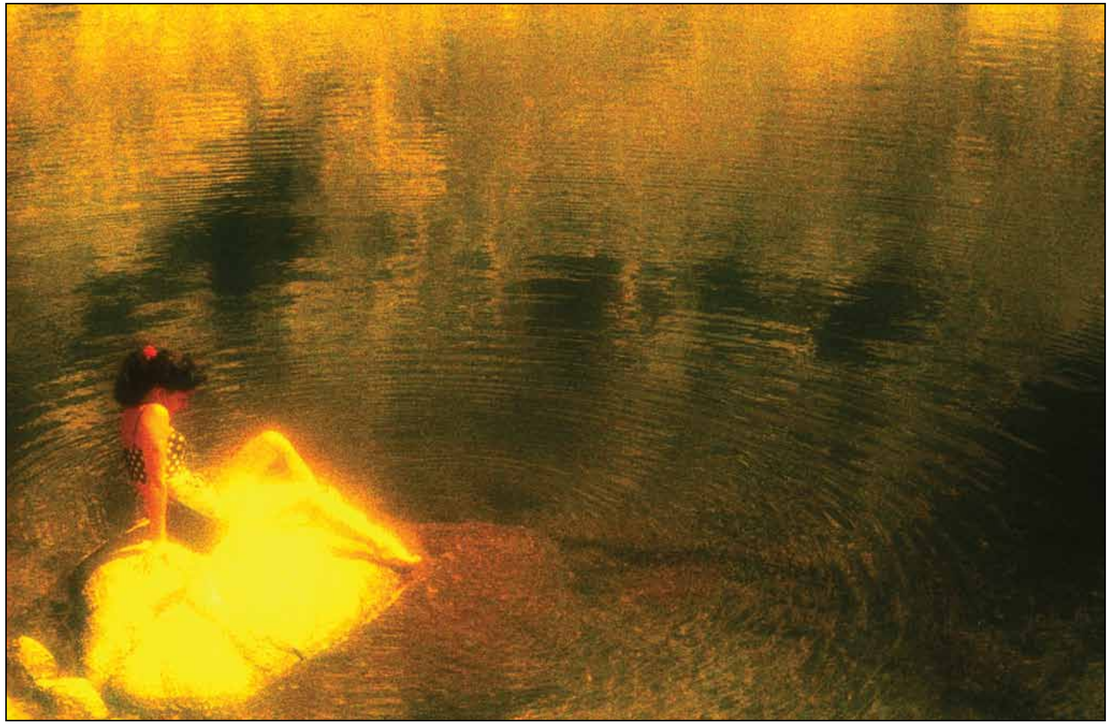
Michael Baciu (1988)

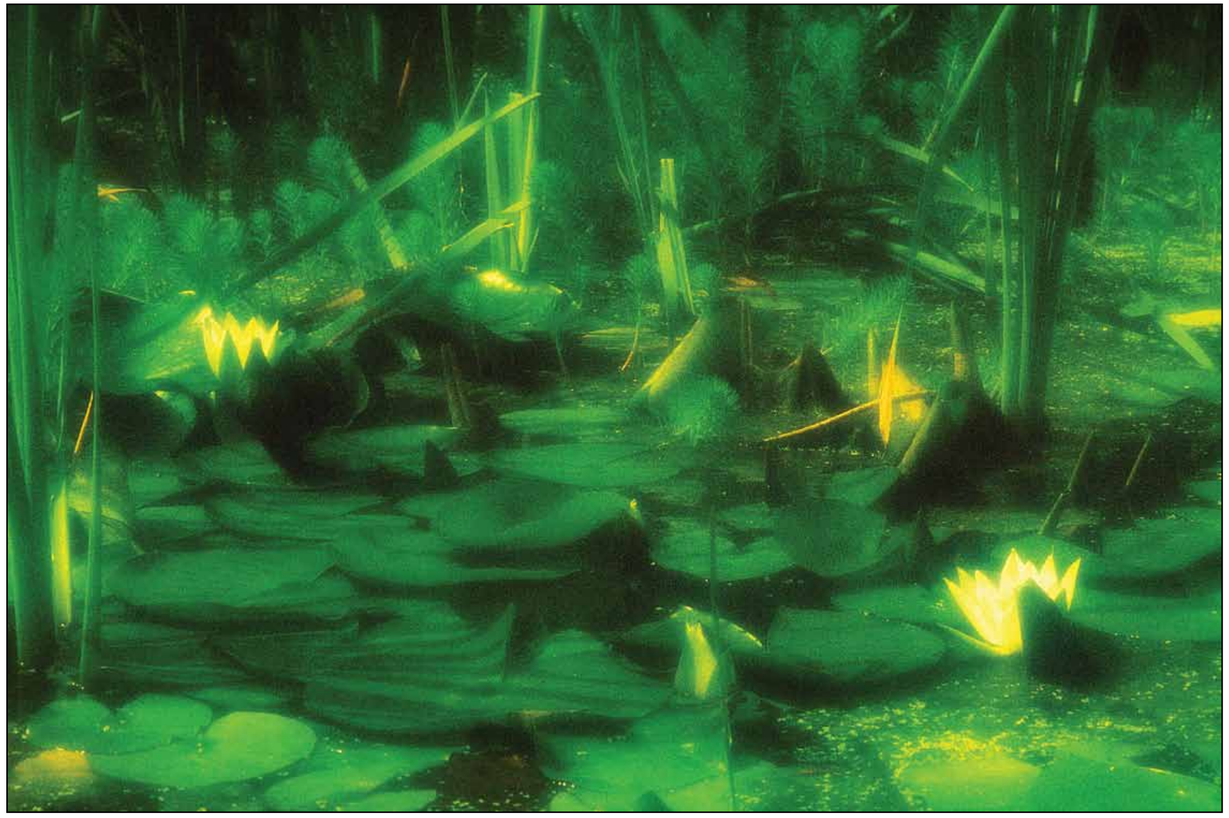
1. Wikipedia (2023)**: K14 process... "**The process was complex and exacting, requiring technicians with extensive chemistry training and large, complex machinery" … "the dyes are formed on the film by a complex processing sequence that required four different developers; one black and white developer, and three color developers." So, that Kodak dude wan not that secretive after all.
2. Push/pull: rating the film at a different ASA. i.e. 25 ASA rated 50 ASA when shot, requires a 1 stop push (either by increasing the time or the temperature of the BW developer - the opposite for pull).
3. C41 process. Classic color negative film process: color developer/bleach/fixer.

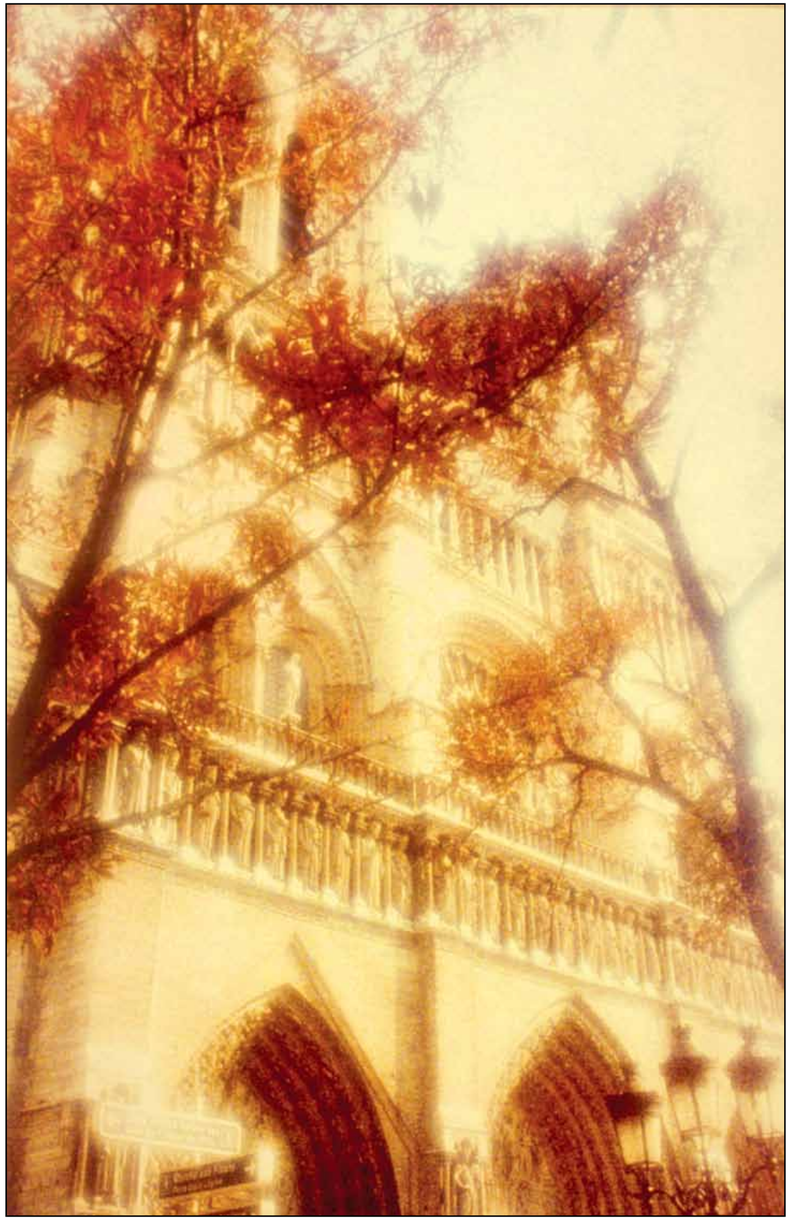
… thus the impressionstic look

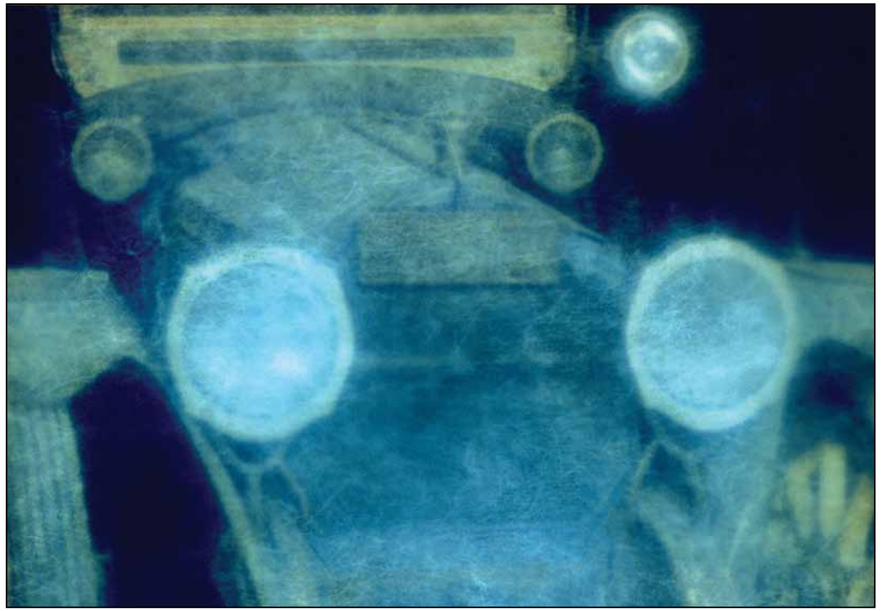


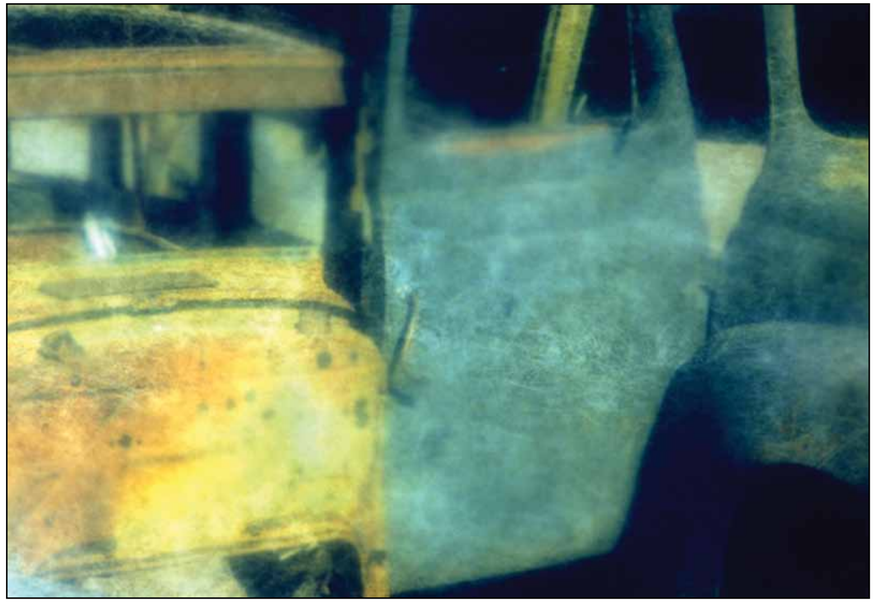


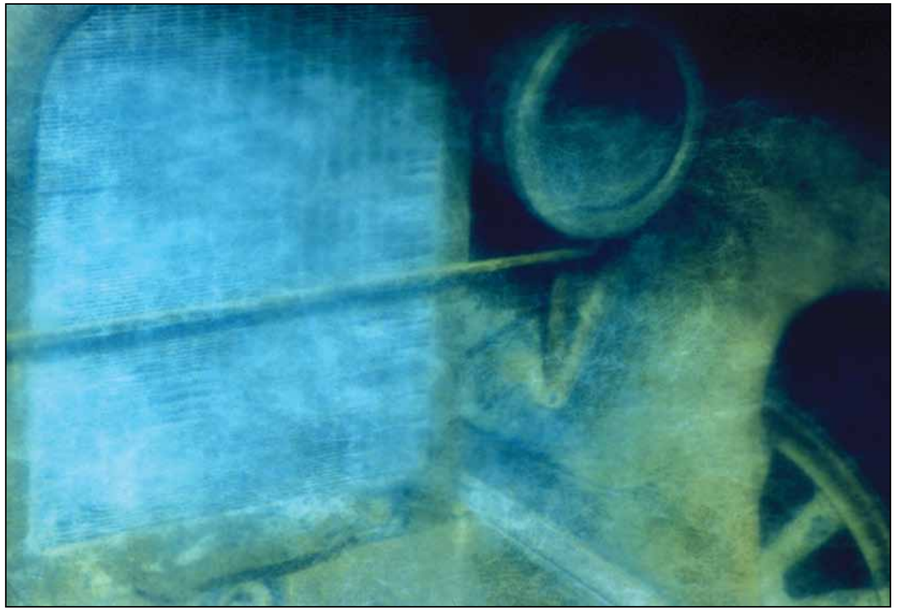


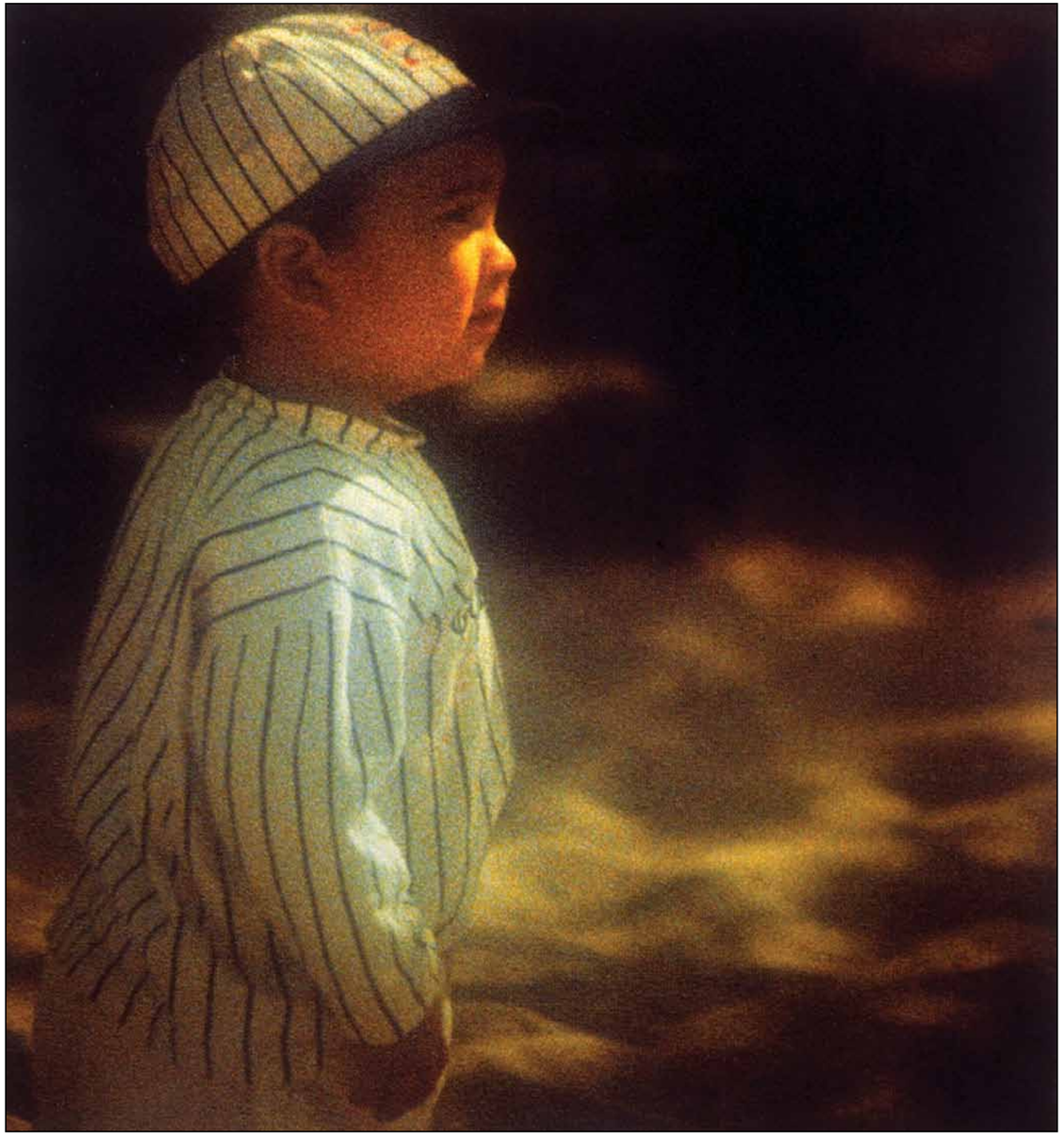


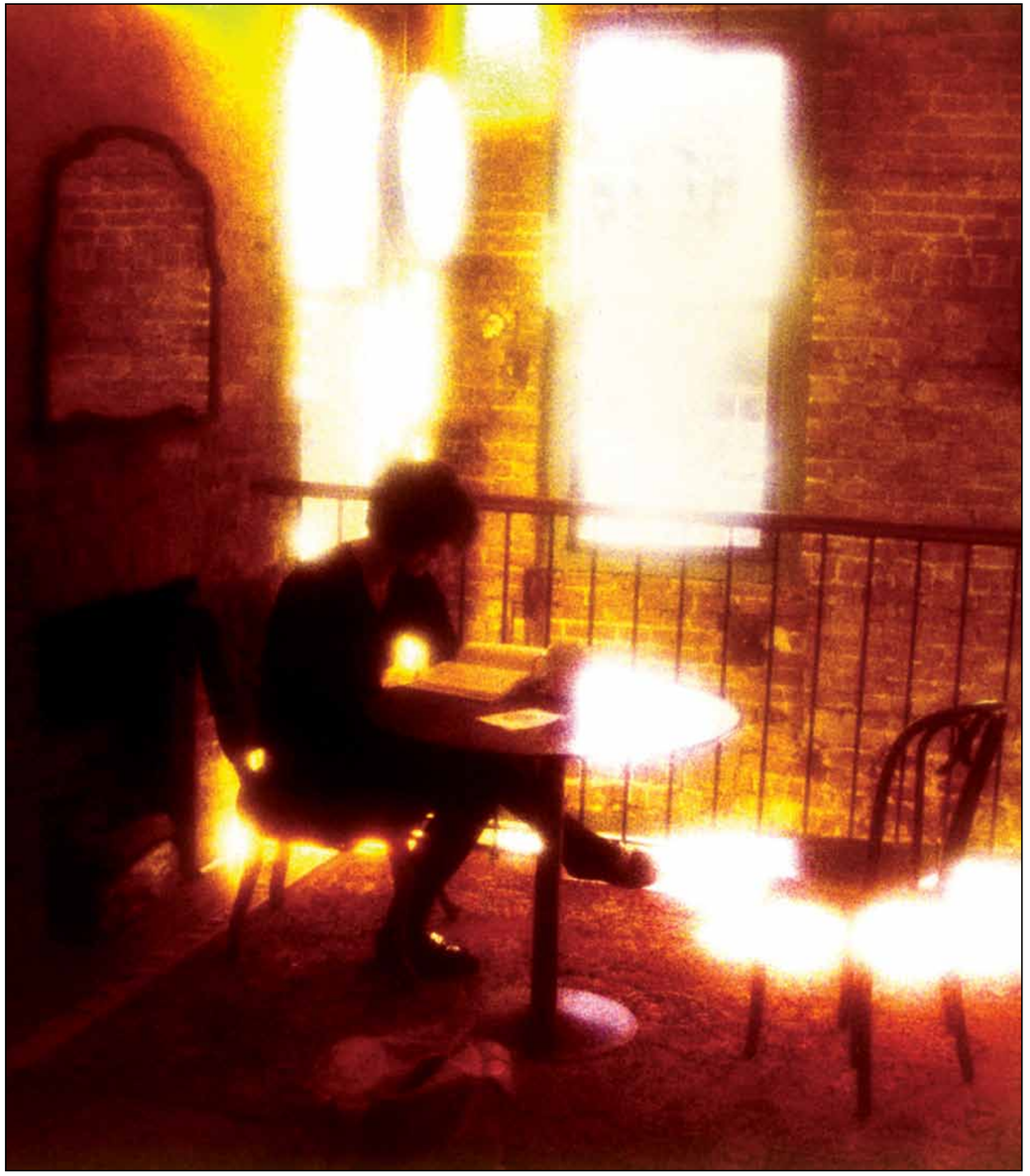




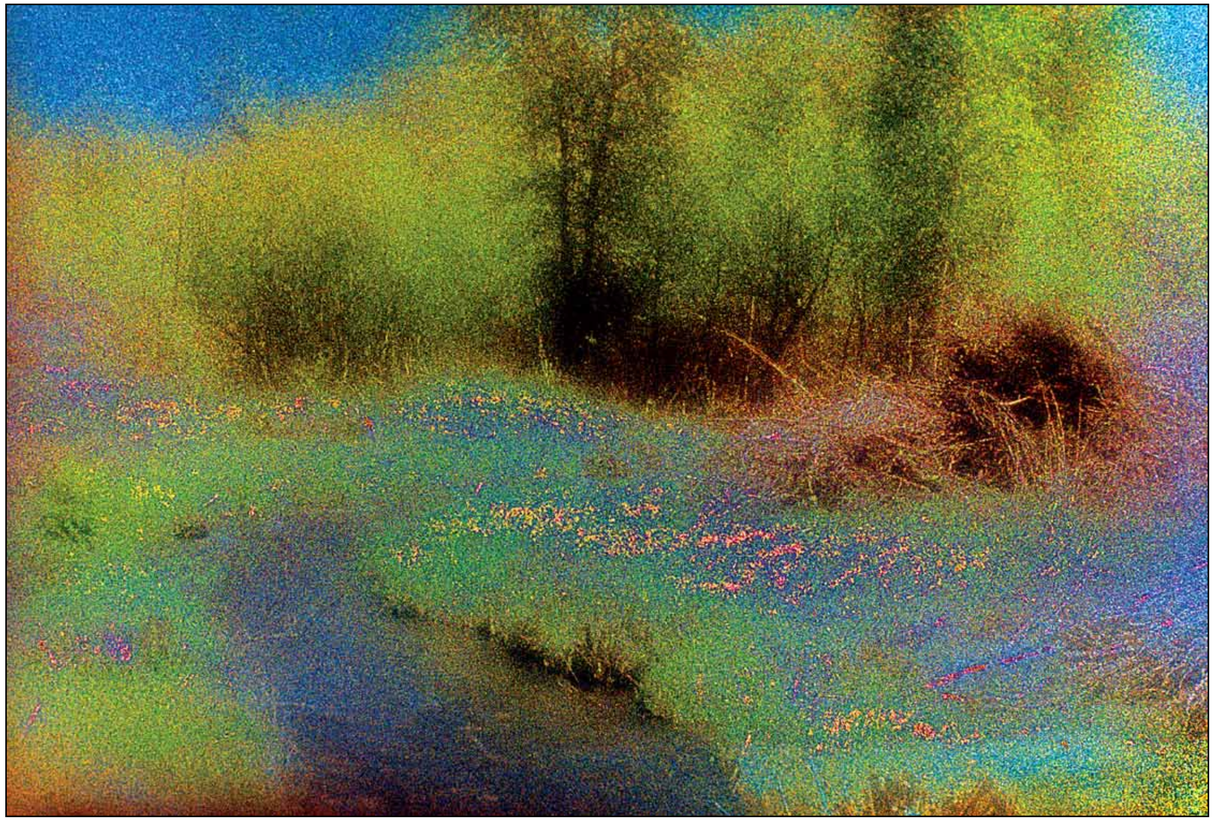


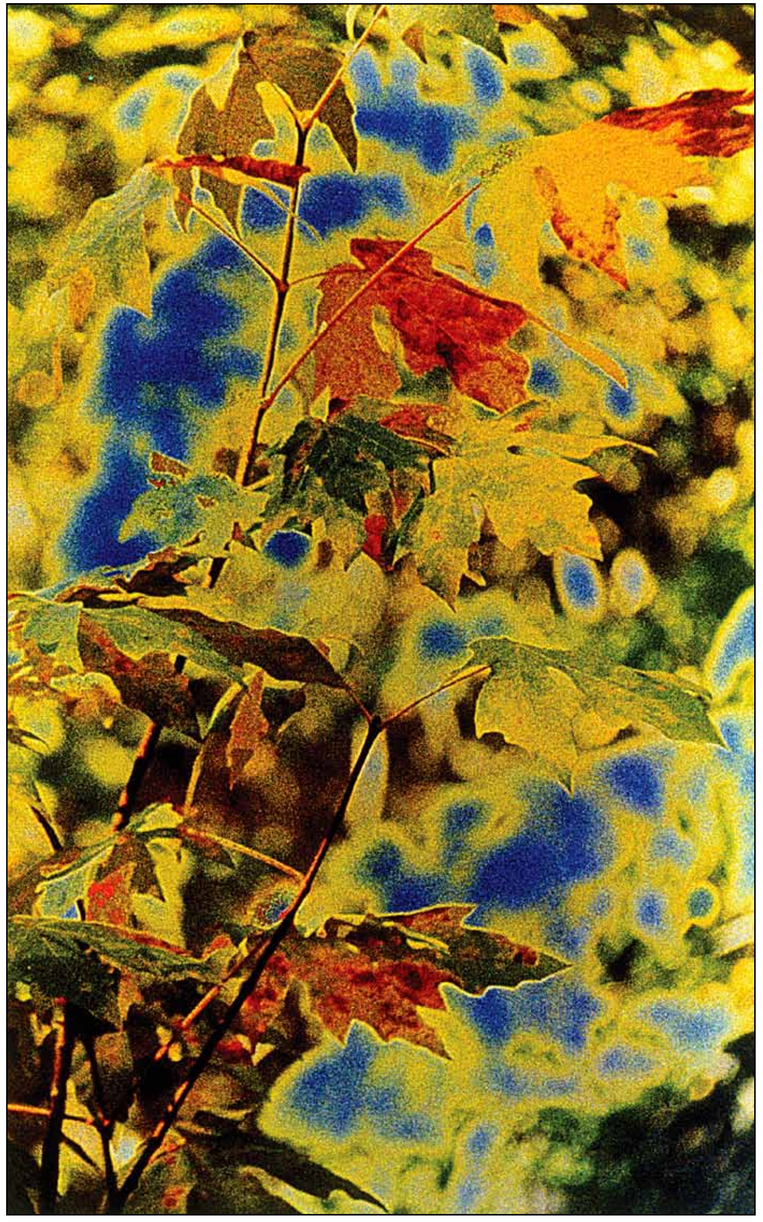


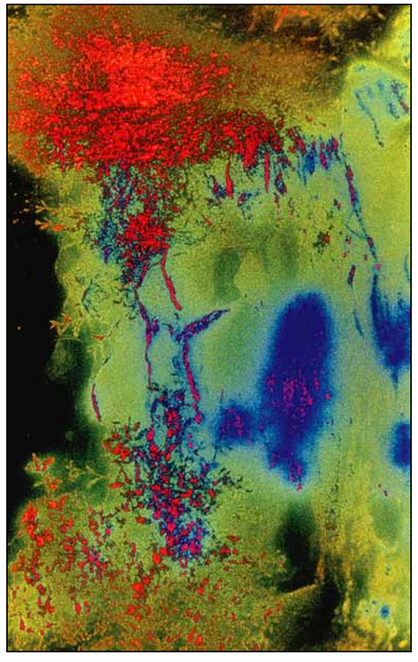


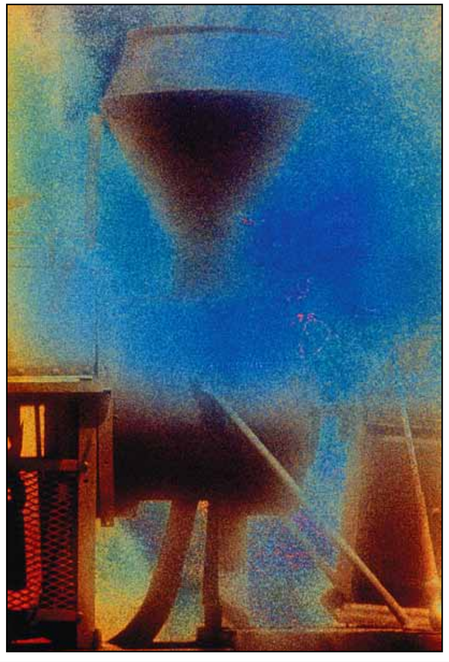


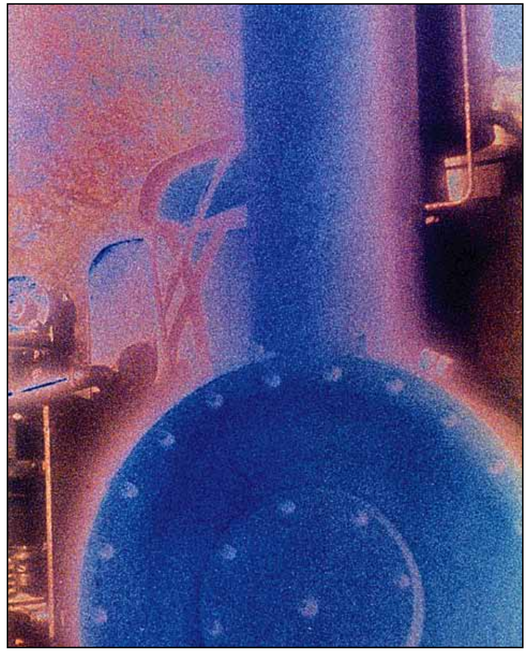
… thus the fauve look

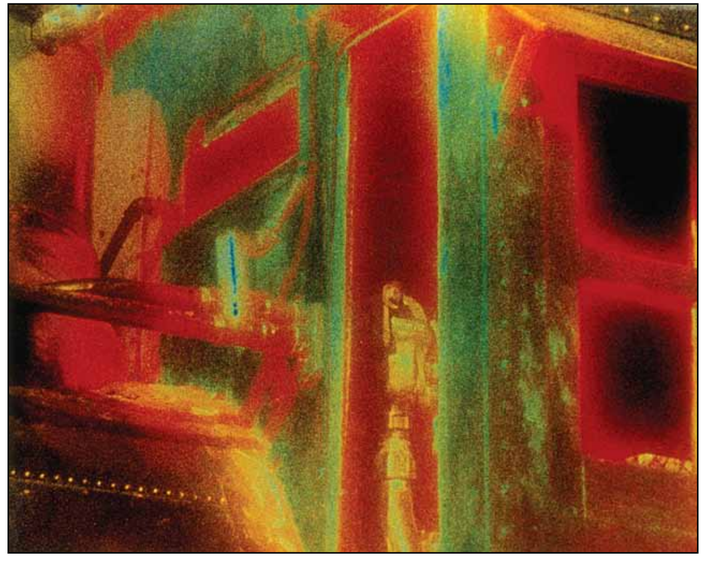


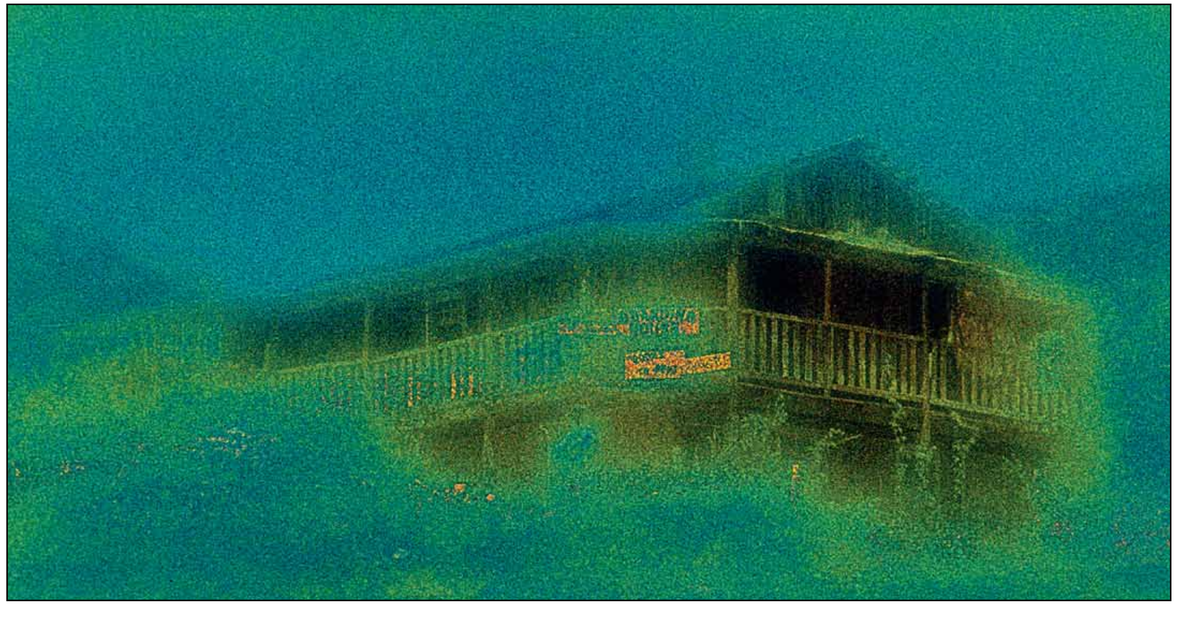


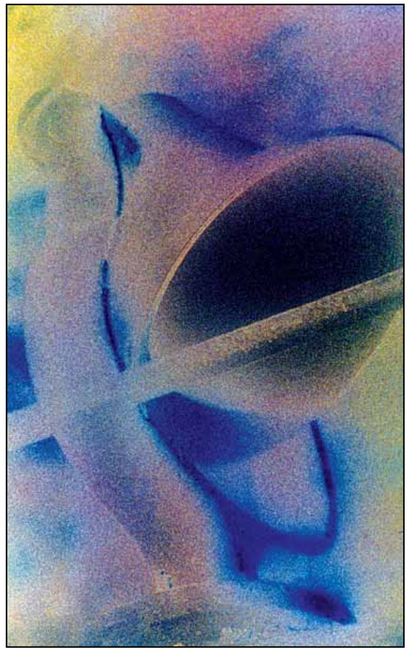


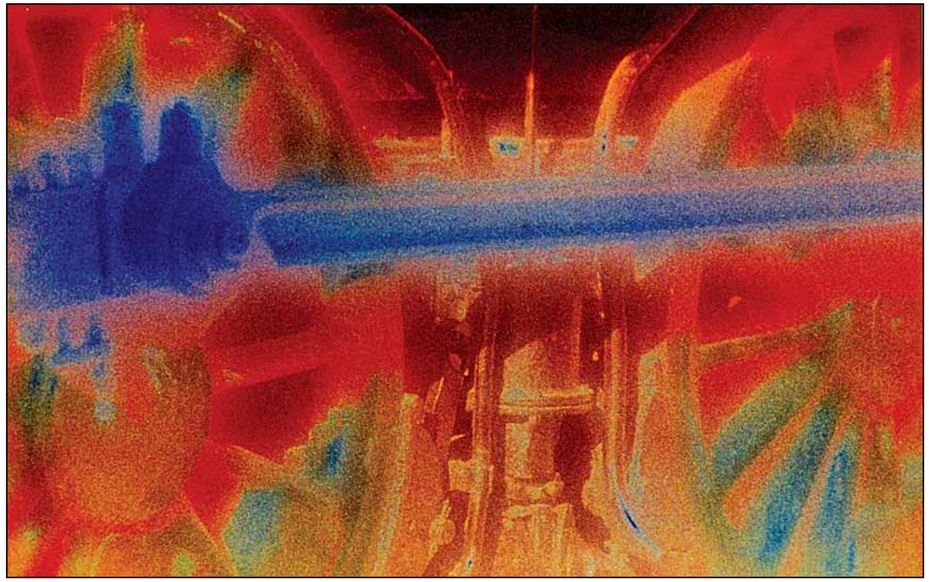


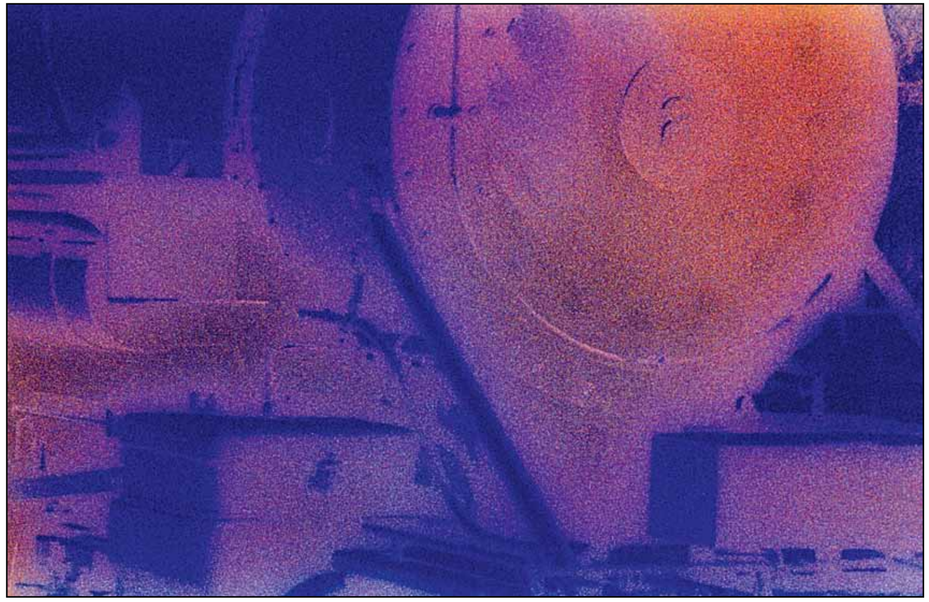


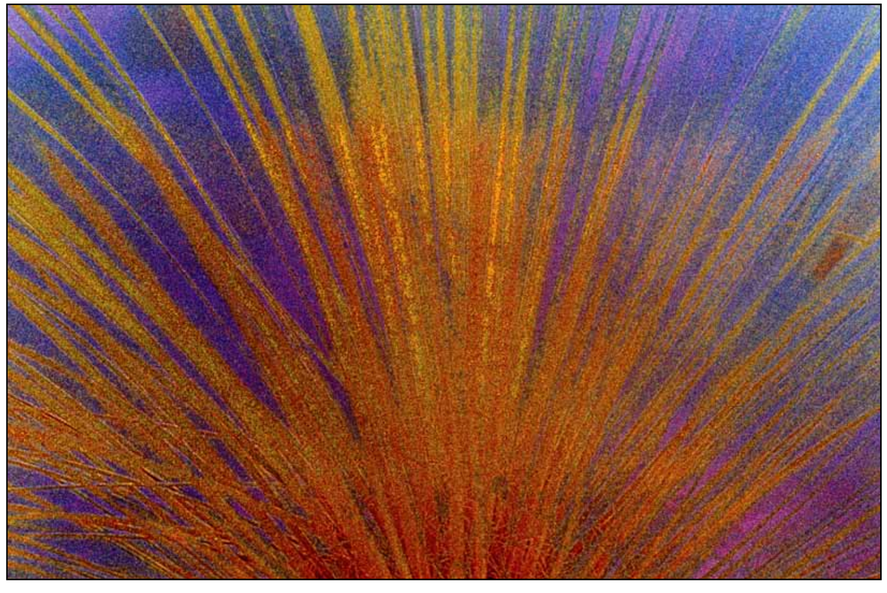


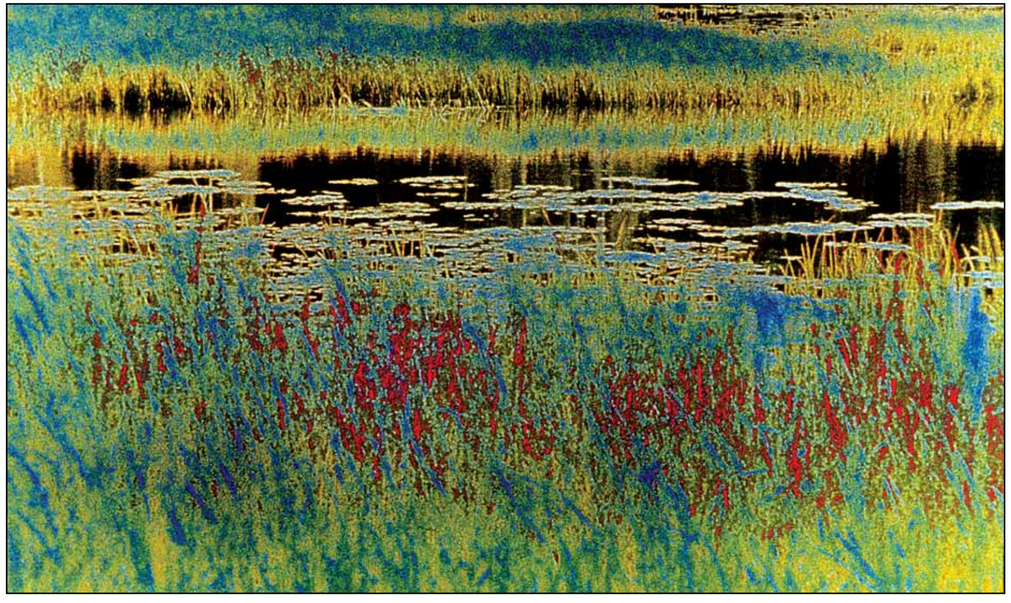


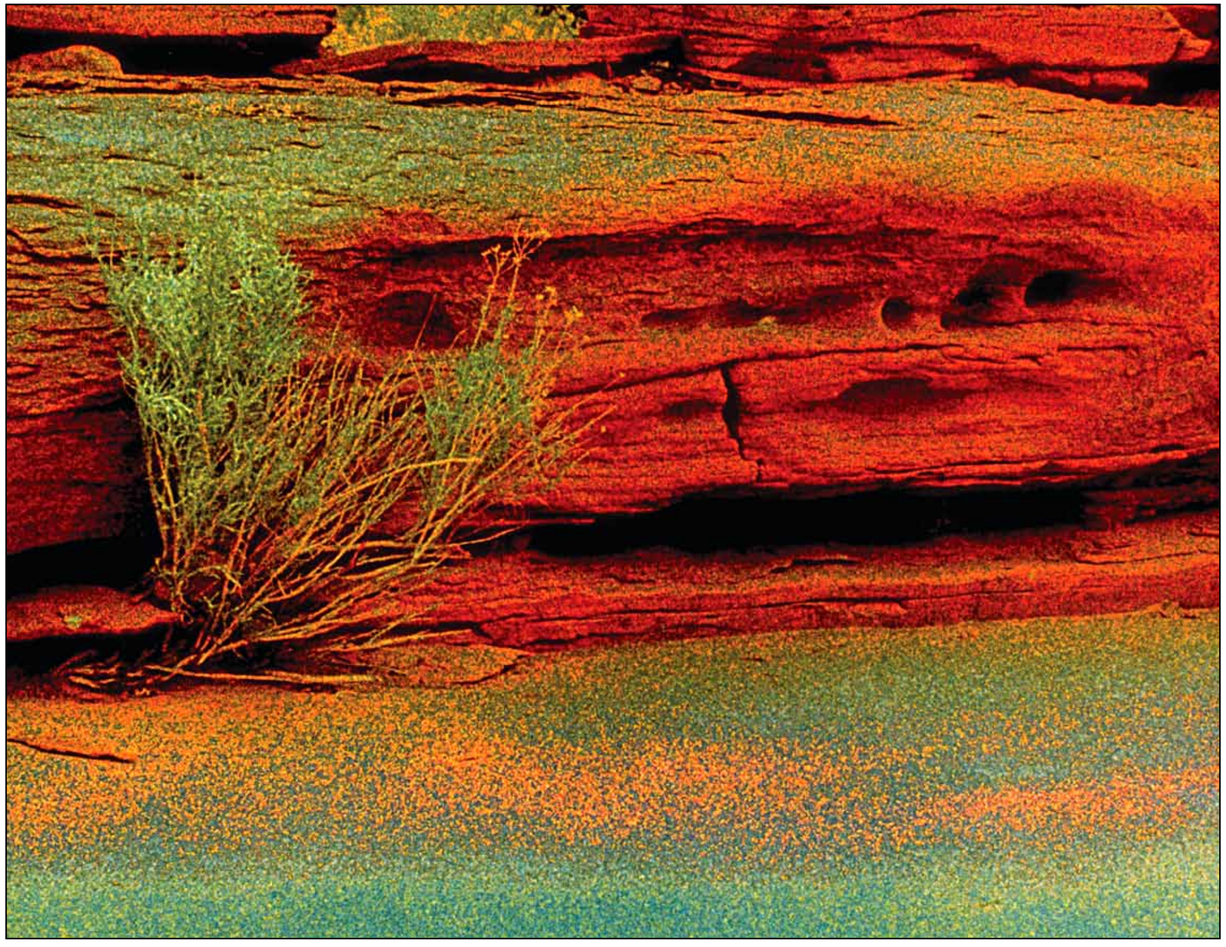


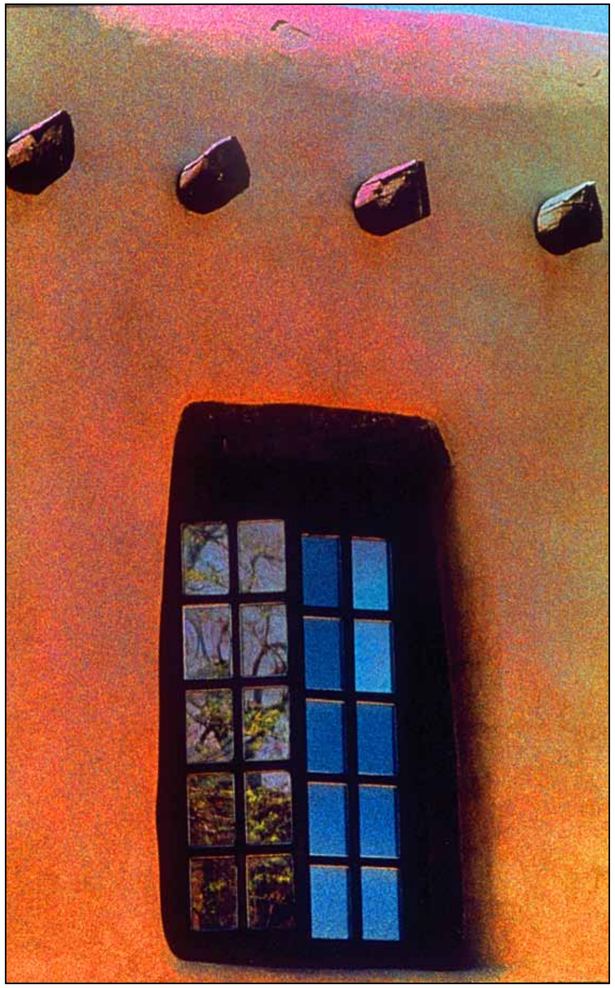


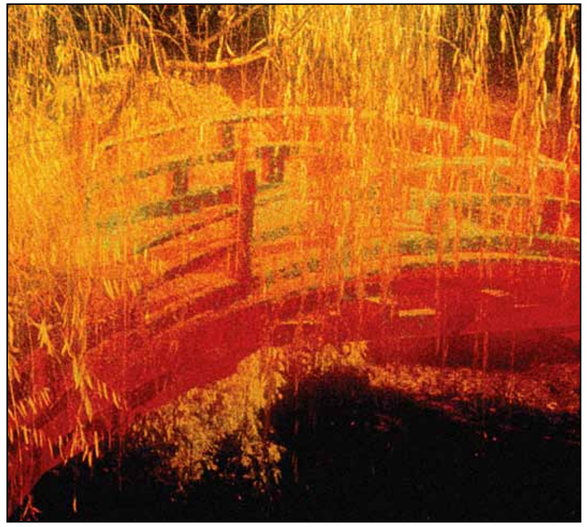


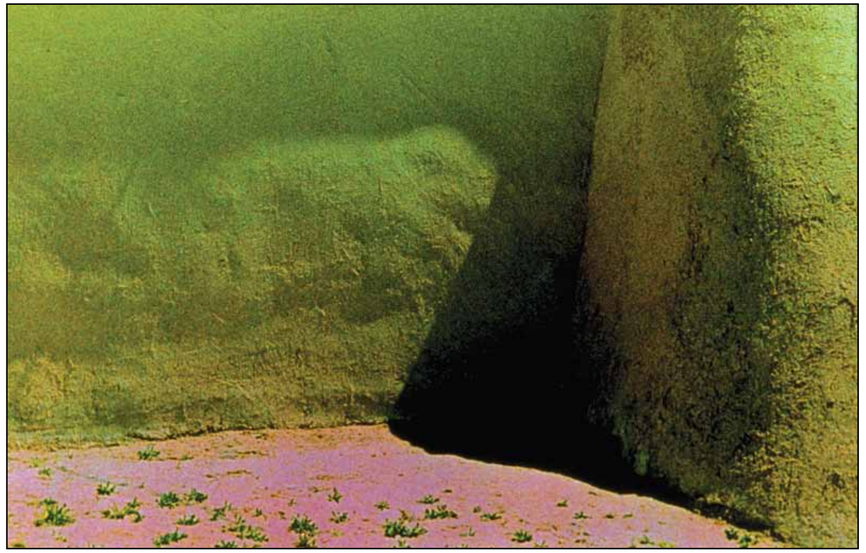


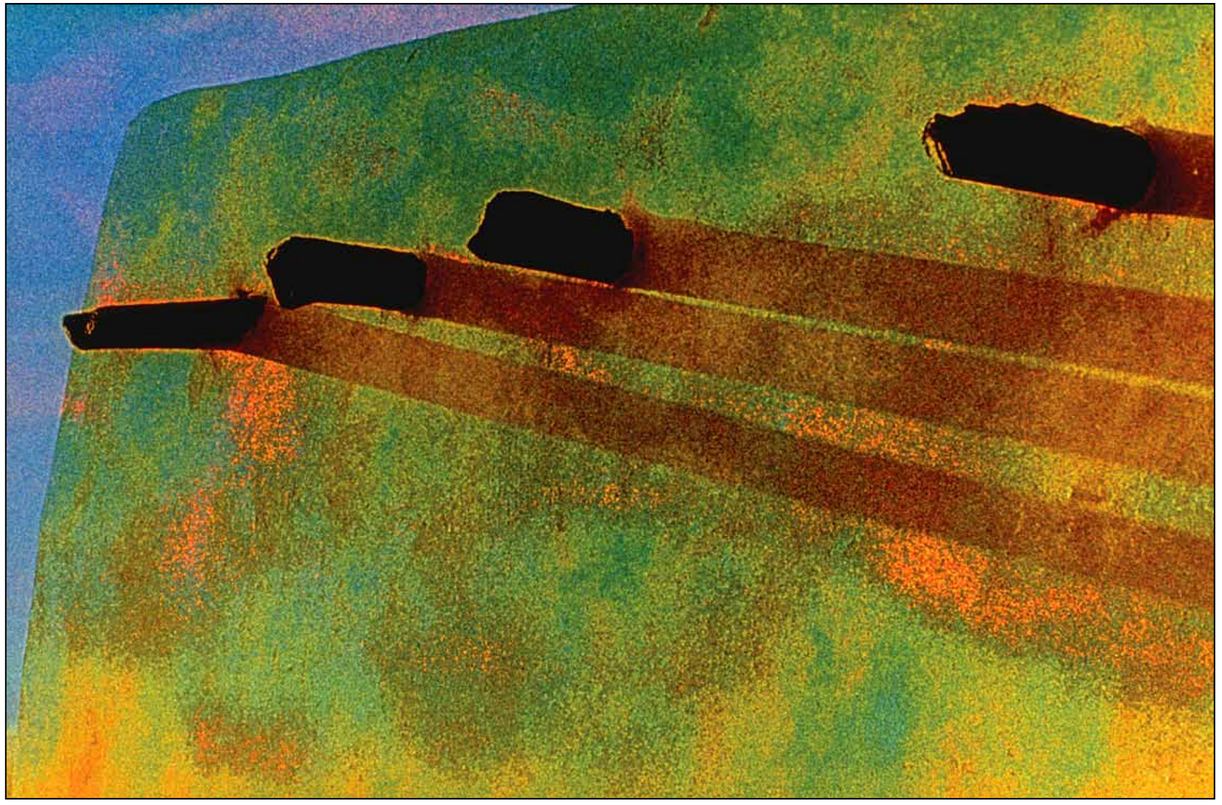












This book is completely useless.

Kodachrome brand died.

Ceased to exist.

It was even discontinued.

Many years ago.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Michael Bacin