



WCES-2011

## A workshop of interpreting nature via photography related to training in terms of seeing

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### Abstract

The act of seeing comes before words. The word, “to see” defined as to perceive the existence of something by means of eye has a different meaning from the word “to look”. This difference can be expressed as “to see what we look”. The word, “to look” is selecting/picking obtaining / and is the knowledge and ability obtained during practice. Visual communication has started a serious revival period in daily life with camera. Camera, in a sense, has had a powerful effect on the relationship between the verbal and the visual. In this sense, a workshop was held in a photography workshop, in an event organized as *Third Traditional Güzelyurt Ihlara Summer Art Academy* in order to make the sensitivity of seeing clear and to arouse awareness. Based on that, a seeing way lies behind each image and considering the idea that photographs are not just mechanic records (Berger, 2004), a person is aimed to obtain the difference between seeing and looking by experiencing it in the workshop.

*Keywords:* Photography; interpreting nature; training in terms of seeing; workshop of photography

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Photography, from the combination of words “Photography” in English; *Photographie* in French; *Fotografie* in German and “photos – light, – to draw and to write”, has the meaning of the affection of silver saline sensitive to the light by means of optic systems and obtaining a permanent image after chemical processes. This image is called “photograph”. The act of seeing comes before words. The word, “to see” defined as to perceive the existence of something by means of eye has a different meaning from the word “to look”. This difference can be expressed as “to see what we look”. The word, “to look” is a selecting/picking obtaining / and is the knowledge and ability obtained during practice. Visual communication has started a serious revival period in daily life with camera. Camera, in a sense, has had a powerful effect on the relationship between the verbal and the visual (Kalfagil, 2007). Everybody who can see consciously is sensitive to visual signs without any need of endowment or academic education. A workshop was carried out in a photographer’s studio in an event organized in the name of *Güzelyurt Summer Academy* to make this sensitiveness clear and to arouse awareness. Based on that, a seeing way lies behind each image and considering the idea of photographs are not just mechanic records (Berger, 2004), a person is aimed to obtain the difference between seeing and looking by experiencing it in the workshop.

The workshop period was decided to be one week by the academy organizers. The terms “to look” and “to see” were discussed at the first day, and the priority was given to imparting the theoretical knowledge composed by the occurrence of the art of photography and its qualities. After imparting theoretical knowledge, it continued with the practice phase. In this workshop held in an open area, the students were asked to observe attentively the formations

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and forms existing in nature. The students/participants were asked to take photos with creating effective composition concern at the second day, before passing to the project prepared for them.

A specific thought underlies in each photo (Grill, & Scanlon, 2003). And each photographer is expected to take a photo in an effort to convey a specific thought. The necessities of a photographer's thinking of the message s/he wants to convey and his/her concern about "how can I convey my thoughts most effectively on a film shot" are thought to be important. It is the term of composition that makes the art of photography, which can also be defined as a forming a visual language, similar to verbal communication.

Composition is an important element in photography. The methods and rules valid in verbal communication are defined by the knowledge of grammar and syntax. It is the term of *composition* that confronts grammar and syntax in verbal communication. Composition is an important factor of art of photography which lifts the effect of visual communication just as grammar does to verbal communication. Composition, as a means of *providing clear communication, can be defined as controlled organization of elements used in a visual work* (Grill & Scanlon, 2003). The elements of a composition may not only support the expressions of a photographer but also weaken them. It is the photographer again who will provide a controlled organization.

Lines, shapes, forms and colours provide a basis to the comprehension of a composition. During the process of artistic creation, aesthetic elements are applied as well as fundamental elements. These can be listed as follows: clarity, pre plan, focal point (the entrance of the photograph), simplicity, schemes, rhythm (at least three spaced equal elements), contrast (action - colour) (Zuckerman, 2004), light, perspective, acutance, texture (the texture formed by overdose rhythm, impression of speed and movement, entirety (contextual - stylistic), balance, zoom, gravity, strikes and directions, life element, aesthetic dose.

As it is thought that a better observation process can be experienced by looking for something in nature, students are asked to find a letter. Stating that letters already exist in nature fabric, they are asked to find those. Thereby, as they are going to look for a letter wherever they look, it has been thought that they would try to see nature rather than looking at it.

Before beginning shooting, it has been stated that it is significant to decide the shape of the frame (width, height, vertical, square etc.), the sizes of the elements of the theme and their perspectives.

It is because of that the different expressions/comments of the same subject under the same circumstances by different artists are based on those decisions. It is an important step not to press the shutter inconsiderately the time we see the subject but instead, to look for a better viewpoint. Therefore, it can be said that photography depends on *being in an appropriate place in an appropriate time*.

Looking at each photo, it is noticed that the photographer has chosen that scene among enormous scene possibilities. The way of seeing of a photographer reflects on his/her subject choice (Berger, 2004). The reason of finding letter/image is to visualize the things not existing there at the beginning. It is stated that after they find the letters, they are expected to determine the angle of which they are going to take photo with a consideration of an effective composition. While the composition is being formed; the questions, *which objects should be included, which shouldn't be, which point of the subject should be clear, which point should not be, should the point of view be changed or it should stay as it is* are asked to them and effective compositions are formed by their appropriate answers.

The art of photography lives in composition. According to James Martin, a successful photograph is born in the eye and becomes concrete in the mind. The eye sees while the mind selects or imagines what the thing seen can be (Martin, 2007). The images obtained, the sequence of shape and volume, the order and movements of lines, the interaction of tone and colour and the angle of light compose the photograph by turning to an effective composition.

Clarity is an important term in photography. A photograph's –as a mean of communication- *expressing its message clearly* makes both the language of the photograph and the expression of an artist understandable. A photographer knowing *what* s/he tries to reflect is an important factor for his/her decision about *how* to organize it. It can be said that clear thoughts/clear expressions form the basis of photography as complicated ideas lead to complicated compositions/organizations. For this reason it is easy for a person who knows what s/he is looking for to decide how to capture/organize it after s/he finds it. Composition an also be defined as a work of exploring, sorting and organizing. To put in an order some specific objects which are in a mess and to turn them into a scheme

is simplification in a sense. All through the workshop the student who finds the letter by looking attentively and by seeing decides how to capture and what kind of a composition s/he will organize. This period can be named as *the period of composing the form of expressing your letter*.

Our environment is continuous. A photographer is a person who expresses his/her environment, not the one who displays it. During the workshop, the students are expected to express their own letter in their own order. The organization should be in an easily perceived form. For this reason complicated forms which may require explanation should be avoided. It is a mistake to discover hidden schemes in a randomly taken photo and to wait for it to be understood. In this sense, it is an unwanted situation that students find/look for a letter while they are looking at digital images that they capture. The student should find the letter in nature before s/he takes the photo and then s/he should capture the composition s/he organized unique to him/her.

In this workshop which is held by a student group consisted of 15 people, each student was given five letters to find. In Figure 1, there can be seen examples of the letters that students found in nature. Beginning from the left, letters of e, g, l, r, y, t can be seen. A meaningful writing was written out of these letters at the end of the work. (see figure 2) *Güzelyurt*, which is a town of *Aksaray* in which, the Summer Art Academy was held and *Gelveri*, its former name, were written. The writing of *Güzelyurt* and *Gelveri* which were written by the letters found can be seen in Figure 2. The writing of *Güzelyurt* and *Gelveri*, which was written by putting the letters captured by the students side by side and obtained from the nature of *Güzelyurt* town, gains a different meaning as a result of its being created by the letters obtained from the nature of the district, *Güzelyurt* as well.

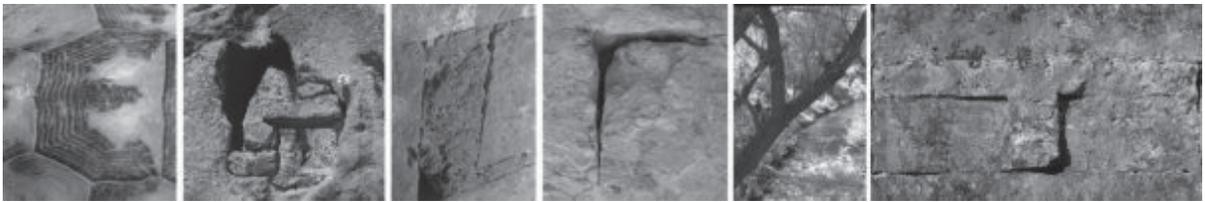


Figure 1. The images of letters of E, G, L, R, Y, T.



Figure 2. The image G, Ü, Z, E, L, Y, U, R, T and G, E, L, V, E, R, İ writing gathered by putting letters side by side.

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