

In A Different Light: Infrared Images of Utah's West Desert

The black and white photographs presented in this exhibition represent a small sampling of images I have shot over the past three years in various areas just west of Salt Lake City. An avid hiker, during the autumn, winter and spring months, I am often exploring the mountains and valleys of Utah's West Desert with cameras in tow. There are many interesting and relatively unknown areas close to the Wasatch Front, if one ventures off the main SLC-to-Wendover corridor. True, the desert mountains can be austere, the valleys parched, trees rare, and colors more than occasionally monochromatic. But the often dramatic play of light and shadow, clouds and sky, water and rocks, furtive wildlife and sweeping vistas are perfectly suited to black & white or infrared photography.

These images were captured with a variety of infrared-sensitive cameras and converted to black & white photographs. But conventional B&W images they are not. Skies and water can take on an inky blackness, while clouds will 'pop' in dramatic fashion. Foliage becomes milky white and grass is often mistaken for snow. Depending upon atmospheric conditions, images can be preternaturally, almost topographically sharp or soft and gauzy with a ghostly dreaminess.

While acting as formal compositional exercises, these photographs also reveal the many moods of this desert region. Whether it is a calm autumn day on some unnamed peak, a wintry morning in a forgotten desert valley, or a tempestuous spring storm afternoon on the Great Salt Lake, Utah's West Desert can be a fascinating study for one willing to see things in a different light.

Sky and Rock: Known and Unknown Southern Utah

The two color images presented in this exhibit are from a project in-development. The dual purpose of this study is to not only share the many wonders of southern Utah that are seldom seen (the 'Unknown'), but also to reveal the icons of that region that we think we know so well, differently.

We have all seen a multitude of classic arch, slot canyon, sandstone mesa and orange hoodoo photographs. They are icons and rightly so. But can anything more be told about them? I think so. There is no reason to stop shooting these classic features of our state. However, we need to make things interesting; we must approach them thinking differently. These images then, combined with photographs from lesser known areas, become a new study of sky and rock, the known and unknown landscapes of southern Utah.

Clayhaus.net Photography is Jeff Clay

Trained in the sciences and working professionally in the information technology field for the past 15 years, in 2008 I began Clayhaus.net Photography as a way to share my creative output with others. Personally more of generalist than a specialist, my photographic explorations range from color to black & white, landscapes to architecture, travel to local studies. While now working mostly in the digital space, I still shoot film, primarily in the 35mm panorama format. A firm believer in controlling the entire photographic process – from composition to output, I print all my own photos on archival papers with pigment inks.

Since starting Clayhaus.net Photography I have had one solo exhibit and have also been part of group exhibit, both in Salt Lake City. I look forward to the continued challenges of shooting, printing and exhibiting. Like many artistic pursuits, photography is a voyage of continual discovery. I hope you enjoy the fruits of my journey as much as I have enjoyed creating them!

All images are matted, mounted and framed with archival materials.

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