Studio In Photography

Mr. Martin

Assignment #2

Depth of Field

When part of a picture is sharp and part out of focus, or soft, a viewer looks first at the sharply focused area. The acceptably sharp area in a photograph, the depth of field, includes *the plane of critical focus*, that part of the scene on which you focused, plus portions of the scene in front of and behind that plane that are also sharp.

Imagine the distance on which you are focused is like a pane of glass parallel to the camera.

Everything at this distance will be in focus - *the plane of critical focus* - and close to this exact plane lays the depth of field.

The further away from this imaginary pane of glass, the sharpness will decrease.

A lens can focus on only one distance at a time; another point located in front of or behind the plane of critical focus will not be focused sharply. The lens will cause these unfocused areas to disappear, not completely but appear as a small disc, or *circles of confusion*. The farther the area is from the sharply focused distance, the larger the circles.

Depth of field can be shallow, with only a narrow area across the image appearing to be sharp, or it can be deep, with everything in focus and sharp from near to far.

You can control how much will be sharp.

Also, depending on the film ISO, the more a 35mm negative is enlarged, the less sharp it appears.

Control Depth of field with:

* Aperture - the smaller the aperture, the greater the depth of field.
* Focal Length - the shorter the focal length of the lens, the greater the depth of field.
* Distance from the subject - the greater the distance from the subject, the greater the depth of field.

Shooting assignment

Shoot one roll of film that exhibits control over depth of field.

Portraits - shallow depth of field - use a large aperture, low f-stop number for a soft/out of focus background that eliminates distractions. Create circles of confusion behind the subject. Get close. Use available light. Use the rule of thirds.

Landscapes - deep depth of field - use a small aperture, high f-stop number for a large area of focus. Set up foreground, middle and background in view finder and focus on the middle of subject area. Use the rule of thirds. Use available light.