

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

November 27, 2006

'responsive to my desires'

Filed under: [photo tech](#) — alecsothblog @ 11:25 pm



A [recent post](#) discussed the need for photographic equipment to mature from toy to tool – to become second nature. I recently came across a quote from Edward Weston that humorously addresses this issue. He is speaking of 1924 portrait he made of Tina Modotti:

I drew close – I whispered something and kissed her – a tear rolled down her cheek – and then I captured forever the moment – let me see – F.8-1/10 sec. K 1 filter – panchromatic film – how brutally mechanical and calculated it sounds – yet really how spontaneous and genuine – for I have so overcome the mechanics of my camera that it functions responsive to my desires....The moment of our mutual emotion was recorded on the silver film – the release of those emotions followed – we passed from the glare of sun on white walls into Tina's

darkened room – her olive skin and somber nipples were revealed beneath a black mantilla – I drew the lace aside...”

7 Comments

1. ... and wondered what I'd soup that neg in.

Comment by [Michal Daniel](#) — November 27, 2006 @ [11:57 pm](#)

2. Whoah, talk about "expose for the shadows" ... I had no idea those Daybooks were thinly disguised techno-porn.

Funny, though, given the evidence of the photo, you have to wonder at what point and why she produced a black mantilla (unless Ed, understandably, had a thing about darkcloths ...)

Comment by [Mike C.](#) — November 28, 2006 @ [5:45 am](#)

3. Damn, that's erotic.

Comment by [Joe](#) — November 28, 2006 @ [7:15 am](#)

4. Ludicrous

Comment by [zbs](#) — November 28, 2006 @ [9:46 am](#)

5. I've recently re-read Weston's Day Books. He does talk from time to time about how he is one with the camera. That he doesn't even have to think about using it. BUT he also talks about screwing up the shot or in the darkroom and about the "one that got away." But you know what amazes me is how often he talks about a day's shoot and that he made 11 of 15 (or some such number—a high percentage) great shots. Images that he will print and show. And so many of the entries will talk about "these are the best I've ever done." On the one hand, I'm glad to find out that he made stupid mistakes too still if I make 1 out of 15 that I'll print and show, I'm jubilant. I've never been able to understand his fascination with bananas. Peppers—okay, shells—okay. But bananas?

Alec, you have some blog entries about balancing photography and being a parent. Reading again the Day Books, I was reminded of his trying to balance his work and his parenting. For him I think the work was always first although he did seem to do what he had to do from time to time.

Comment by [Billie](#) — November 28, 2006 @ [3:30 pm](#)

6. Oh, Edward. His photographs really are wonderful, but he just needs to keep his mouth shut, or his pen capped, in this case. (Bad and unintended pun – I am sorry!)

Comment by [Ondine](#) — November 28, 2006 @ [3:31 pm](#)

7. Not sure about Weston's parenting, but I think I'm in trouble if he becomes my marital role model.

Comment by [Alec Soth](#) — November 28, 2006 @ [3:59 pm](#)