

**GORDON OSMUNDSON'S**  
**INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE**  
**PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKSHOPS**



**GRAIN ELEVATORS**  
**OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**A LARGE FORMAT PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP**  
**APRIL 7 - 9, 2005**



**Grain Elevators**, utilitarian structures that are nonetheless handsome and dramatic. They were an all American innovation, an expression of form, function and commerce. Often times singular structures in the landscape, they serve as landmarks, lonely sentinels of the great plains and valleys. It is not hard to see how their bold expression of function, when engineering works were seen as heroic statements, inspired new forms of architecture. Built of timber, concrete or corrugated metal, in the 1920's these structures were the inspiration and basis of form for Walter Gropius, Erich Mendelson, Le Corbusier and others of Germany's Bauhouse as they developed the Modern Movement in architecture. Likewise artists Charles Demuth, Charles Sheeler, Louis Lozowick and others of the Precisionist Movement in modern art found inspiration in these structures. Photographers Dorothea Lange, Wright Morris, Ansel Adams, and in more recent times, Frank Gohlke and David Plowden have focused on them.

Viewed from a distance the Grain Elevators, seem as icons in the landscape, giving a sense of space and scale to the land and sky. From a closer distance, they become examples of seemingly abstract form, light and texture. Light and shadow have an interplay about the forms of these structures giving them an abstract quality. There is a strong sense of stillness and timelessness around the elevators. They stand serene and apart from the other activities of man. Like other industrial structures they have a size and scale that is their own, not the scale of human activities found in mans buildings for habitation. But unlike other industrial buildings there is no sense of activity. Just an endurance of the elements. If they share their time and space with anything it is with the railroad with its lines of box cars sleeping in the sunshine and its tracks eternally waiting for the next train to appear from over the horizon.



Our workshop will be based out of Williams California, in the center of the Sacramento Valley. The principle crop grown here is rice and many silos and elevators have been built for its storage. A few, and the oldest, are timber structures sheathed in corrugated iron to protect them from the sparks of long gone passing steam locomotives. Many are of concrete, concrete poured into "slip form" forms, with the imprint of the forms still visible. The newest are galvanized steel structures like great erector sets with corrugated steel silos and hoppers. When brand new they have a bright metallic sheen that glows so brightly that they are hard to look at. And some of the concrete silos are painted silver and they too have that glowing quality.

Whether of wood, concrete or steel, grain elevators and silos make wonderful subjects for the large format camera, especially in black and white. Their architectonic forms need to be given careful composition on the ground glass, the strong vertical lines need a view

camera's perspective control. Shadows and textures can be beautifully rendered, shapes and volumes expressively explored. Bright metallic forms can be rendered so as to appear to be so real in the silver print that you would think that the actual subject is inside the picture frame. As grain elevators are often photographed with the camera aimed up, with the structure against the zenith of the sky, they can appear as bright silhouettes against a deep cobalt blue. In short grain elevators not only demand the capabilities of the view camera, but respond beautifully to black and white emulsions. Printing these pages on a high quality paper with photo quality ink jet printer should show these effects.

Gordon Osmundson worked for five years, from 1984 to 1988, photographing the grain elevators in the Sacramento Valley, developing a large body of work. He returned again in 2003 and 2004, seeing the same subject and, in some cases, new grain elevators, with fresh eyes, broadening an already large series of images.



### **Schedule:**

Thur, Apr 7	4:00pm - 6:00pm	Optional Equipment Check Out; Camera Alignment & Shutter Speed Tests.
	6:00pm - 7:30pm	No Host Dinner for Early Arrivals.
	7:30pm -	Reception & Opening Presentations Brief Get Acquainted Presentation by Each Student Presentation of Instructors Grain Elevator Photography
Fri, Apr 8	8:30am - 9:00am	Coffee & Donuts
	8:00am - 9:30am	"Tools and Techniques" a talk by Gordon Osmundson
	9:30am - 5:30pm	Car Caravan to Various of Osmundson's Favorite Grain Elevator Locations, Box Lunch Included.
	5:30pm - 8:00pm	Dinner on your own
	7:30pm -	Portfolio Reviews
Sat, Apr 9	8:30am - 9:00am	Coffee & Donuts
	9:30am - 6:00pm	Car Caravan to Various of Osmundson's Favorite Grain Elevator Locations, Box Lunch Included.
	6:30pm - 8:00pm	Dinner at Louie Cairo's, Downtown Williams
	8:30pm -	Portfolio Reviews, Closing Remarks
Sun, Apr 10		Make your travel plans to return home or do more photography on your own. Revisit promising spots you want to do more work on. We will also have an informal photo shoot somewhere in the valley.

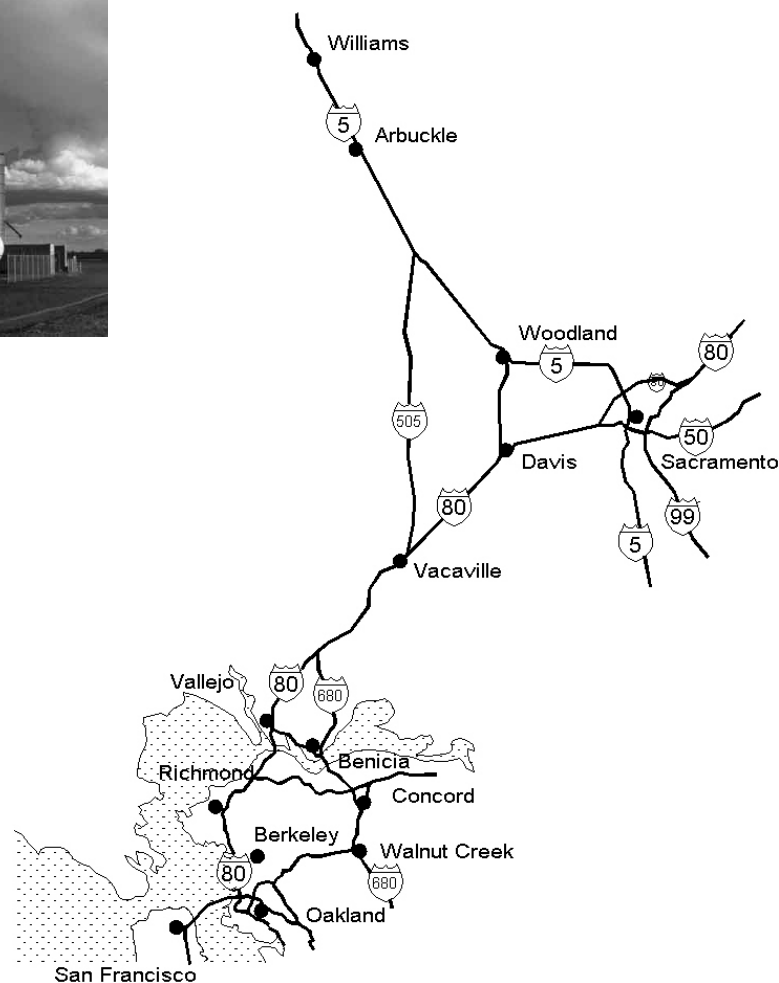
**Price -** \$.495.00 Some meals included, see schedule above. Lodging not included.



**Getting to Williams** - Williams is an easy drive from anywhere in Northern California. I-5 is the most direct route from southern California. If you are flying in, Sacramento is the closest airport, about 70 miles, but both Oakland and San Francisco are within a few hours drive, about 110 and 125 miles, respectively, and may offer more convenient flights.

**Lodging** - Williams has both a Holiday Inn, 1-530-4735120 and a Motel 6, 1-800-466-8356, plus a number of other inexpensive independent motels.

**Recommended Camera Equipment** - This workshop is intended as a view camera workshop, however, all formats are welcome. The subject matter is ideal for monorail type view



cameras as these cameras offer extreme rise and fall which can be very useful, however, field type cameras can also be used. Lenses of any focal length can be useful, however, lenses of 115/120mm and 210mm will be the most usable and most photographic situations can be handled by these two focal lengths. A bag bellows is recommended for use with wide angle lenses.

The workshop will have two monorail type cameras and a wide selection of lenses that students may share. We will also have two medium format Speed Graphics that offer limited view camera movements. Please bring your own film and film holders.

Monorail type camera outfits can be rented from Calumet, San Francisco for about \$100 for the time of the workshop. See <http://webres.calumetphoto.com/webres/pdfs/SanFran.pdf>.

This announcement subject to updates.



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