



Fory Four Windows, Panemah Mill, Torrville, Connecticut, 2007 | Facing Page: Door, Old Meeting House (1755), Dorville, New Hampshire, 2004

PAUL WAINWRIGHT [PHOTOGRAPHY]

The play of light and shadow, the quality of lines and shapes—these have a transcendent beauty in black and white. Without color, the world can become abstracted, simplified, or more complex. This is the world of photographer Paul Wainwright, who makes large-format black and white photographs.

Paul first became interested in photography at age 12, when a friend showed him how to develop negatives: “It was like magic,” recalls Paul. Though he has been making images since that first experience in the darkroom, Paul did not become a full-time photographer until 2001. “For so many years in my life I was caught up in making a career,” he says. “I saw photography as creative expression outside of that. But since 2001, I’ve really enjoyed being creative on a full-time basis.”

Paul’s photographs capture the mystery and beauty of his subjects; rendered in stark black and white, a sweeping natural landscape or an unassuming window in a meetinghouse becomes strange and wonderful. “There’s an expressiveness to black and white that you can’t get with color,” Paul says. The purity of the images is reflected in the deliberation of his craft, and Paul relishes the entire process, from initial exposure to final print.



Photo courtesy of Mark Fernald

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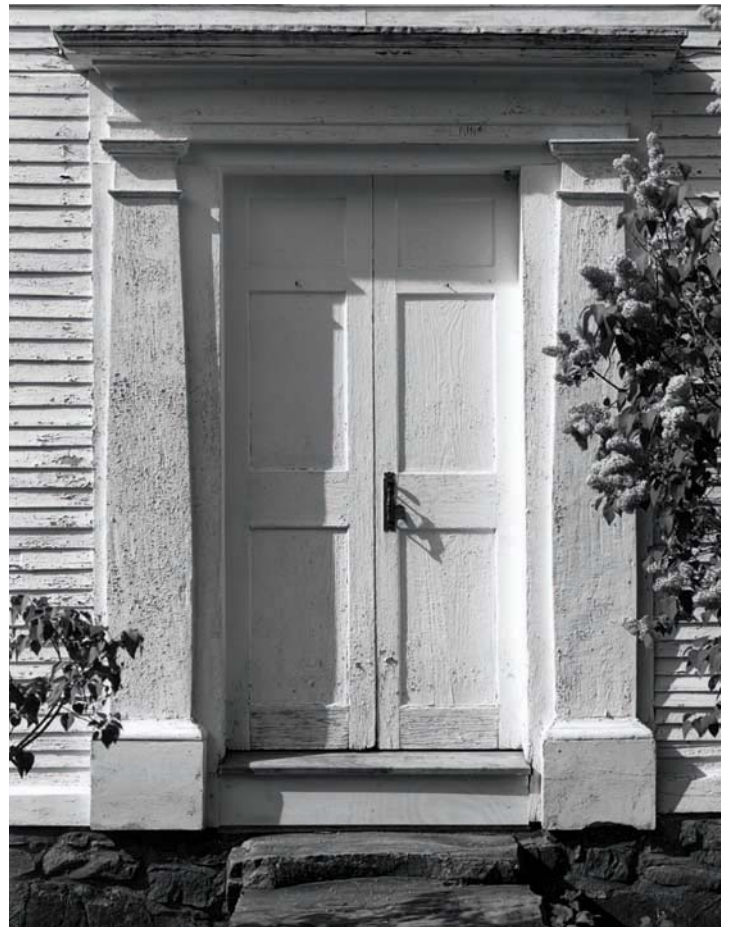
WRITTEN BY JAMIE THOMPSON

“There is something very satisfying about working with silver emulsions and darkroom chemicals. Sure it’s slower than digital photography,” Paul says. “But, what’s wrong with that? I think by working slower, both in the field and in the darkroom, I am forced to really think about what I want my images to say.”

Since Paul typically creates only one negative for each photograph, he must be especially thoughtful when it comes to fieldwork. The result is timeless, beautiful, and striking—each image is painstakingly crafted in a way that is respectful of the art.

Those qualities lend themselves nicely to Paul’s colonial meetinghouse project. Inspired by the simplicity and austerity of early American architecture, Paul began photographing New England’s colonial meetinghouses. “I just became really interested in the artistic value of the buildings, and the history behind them,” Paul says. What started as a few images has now grown: a book including about 75 of Paul’s meetinghouse photographs will be published in 2010, to be accompanied by a traveling exhibition.

“Most people think of photography as documenting something,” says Paul. “But I’m after capturing a sense of space and time. I want to document how I feel about something, not how it looks.” 📷



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