

# Endframe – ‘Stravinsky at the Piano’ by Arnold Newman

End Frame

VALDA BAILEY DISCUSSES ONE OF HER FAVOURITE PICTURES

Responses

0

[Skip to Comments](#)

By [Valda Bailey](#) | Posted July 13, 2015 8:40 am

Choosing an image for End Frame is a daunting and nigh on impossible undertaking. A bit like nominating a favourite colour or one's last meal - possible candidates fluctuate like the weather. Fortunately the brief at least specifies that it needs to be a photographic image which immediately topples a swathe of abstract art, impressionism and anything by Paul Klee.

Looking back at previous submissions, it seems they all start with a similar disclaimer. I'm clearly not alone in my state of confusion and uncertainty.

Although I was delighted to be emailed with the request from Charlotte, it must be said that such an undertaking requires no small degree of thought and decision-making. It's the kind of task that would normally be immediately relegated to somewhere near the bottom of my 'to do' list in the hope that it either mysteriously disappears, or inspiration (divine or otherwise) might magically trickle down in the not-too-distant future, thus requiring little cognitive involvement on my part. However as I am currently engaged in a the fiendishly difficult task of curating, printing and framing images for my part in the upcoming [Masters of Vision](#) exhibition at Southwell Minster, it actually serves as a rather welcome displacement activity (having long since arranged my spice jars in alphabetical order, cleaned out the sock drawer and keyworded my entire Lightroom catalogue). Which perhaps goes to show there are no laborious tasks; it's just a question of perspective and motivation.

After a reasonable amount of thought but not so much that my judgement is thrown into turmoil by protracted navel gazing I have reached a decision. Numerous images were obviously considered; Mario Giacomelli has recently been featured so he was respectfully put aside; Charlie Waite's 'Amish Country' was another strong contender, but he too has already been nominated. Many of Chris Tancock's images were toyed with (also featured) and pretty much anything by Chris Friel could easily fill the spot. Perhaps Cole Thompson's 'The Angel Gabriel? Any of Ragnar Axelsson's wonderful Iceland images? A drizzly NY street shot by Saul Leiter? An Ernst Haas abstract? One of Sarah Moon's gently distorted women in a fantasy frock? At least on Desert Island Discs they give you eight selections.

The foregoing paragraph is clearly a thinly veiled attempt to circumnavigate the directive and shoehorn in a few of my favourite photographers. Perhaps I should also mention that much of the work I admire works best as a portfolio of images so for the purposes of this exercise can not really be considered for inclusion. One of my best thumbed books is Martin Usborne's 'The Silence of Dogs in Cars' but I realise that my love of dogs and the sight of so many pairs of doleful brown eyes staring mournfully through a car window would make an objective choice nigh on impossible.

There was nothing in the brief to suggest my nomination needed to be a landscape so in the end I have chosen a shot that many people have cited as the image that first awakened their interest in photography. It is Arnold Newman's 'Stravinsky at the Piano'. There is no blur, there is no movement, no ambiguity about it - it is just perfectly composed and beautifully restrained. There is no more and no less than there needs to be and everything is exactly where it belongs.



[Valda Bailey](#)

I enjoy trying to push the boundaries of what photography is about and I strive to produce work that has movement and energy.

[valdabailey.co.uk](http://valdabailey.co.uk)

#### Related Posts:

1. [Endframe – “Jim Jim Falls” by Peter Jarver](#)
2. [Endframe – “On Being Aware of Nature” by Mario Giacomelli](#)
3. [Endframe – “The Start” by Brian Kerr](#)

## Inside this issue

95

### 4x4 Portfolio

[The Art of Getting Out There](#)

### Endframe – ‘Stravinsky at the Piano’ by Arnold Newman

Valda Bailey discusses one of her favourite pictures

### Live Streaming Event – 14th July, 8pm BST

with David Ward & Tim Parkin

### Journey of Photographic Discovery

Away from the familiar - to an unknown & unfrequented landscape

### Linda Wevill

Featured Photographer

[Read This Issue](#)

Join the conversation



Subscribe to comment rss feed



As photographers, we all think we have a reasonably good eye and can see a composition - and yet even taking into account the typewriter/monkey/works of Shakespeare theorem, I know if I had been in that room behind that camera for a hundred years, I would never produce anything with such grace and elegance as this. The figure of Stravinsky on the far left hand side of the frame; his face partly in shadow, is dominated by the huge lid of his piano and together they approximate the shape of a musical note. It has balance and integrity and it is a joy for me to see something so deceptively simple produced with such consummate skill.

Arnold Newman was one of the most distinctive photographers of the 20th century who took many images of creative people; maybe this is why his work appeals to me. He has immortalised many of the artists I admire; Picasso, Chagall, Giacometti, Albers, Miro - architects, playwrights and novelists too. He is widely regarded as the father of environmental portraiture and I love the way he has depicted them completely at one within their own surroundings, somehow capturing the very essence of their endeavours and their identity. It seems to be a common thread that many of the photographers I admire studied painting and drawing before switching to photography and Arnold Newman is no different in this regard.

I am at a loss to understand why most of my favourite images are black and white when it is colour that fascinates me in my own creative endeavours. I do know that I am drawn to images where there is a human or animal element even though I don't have the social skills to engage in portraiture with any confidence or competence. I spend a lot of time looking at many difference kinds of art work - tastes change, influences come and go and ideas about what makes a compelling image certainly evolve but - for the reasons stated above - I think that this portrait of Stravinsky is one I will never tire of seeing.

“

I AM AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND WHY MOST OF MY FAVOURITE IMAGES ARE BLACK AND WHITE WHEN IT IS COLOUR THAT FASCINATES ME IN MY OWN CREATIVE ENDEAVOURS.

[Share](#) 3 [Tweet](#) 3 [Email](#) 0 [ShareThis](#) 6 [Like](#) 0 [g+1](#) 0