

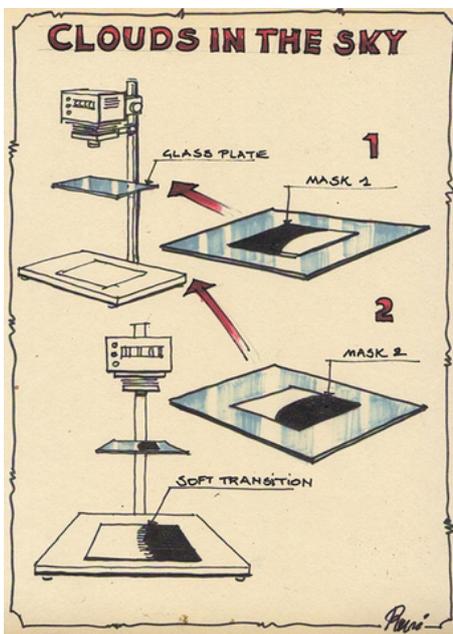
CLOUDS IN THE SKY

inspired by the reading of "Photo montage with contact masks"

In addition to the article written by Paul Cancelier, I want to show how I make a photo montage with two negatives.

The principle is based on the well-known "dodge and burn" techniques.

The attached example is a negative of a fisherman at the waterfront, unfortunately with an even sky without clouds ; this is why I wanted to use another negative with nice clouds and to include them in the photo with the fisherman.



This is how I proceed:

Between the lens of the enlarger and the photo paper, a height-adjustable glass plate is installed, on top of which a mask is placed made of paper with a white and a black side. This mask must be slightly larger than the projected image on the glass.

I put the mask in place and switch on the enlarger with the negative of the fisherman ; I can then see where the separation is between this image and the sky (the horizon), the latter being then out of focus.

I draw the separation with a pencil on the white side of the mask and cut the two parts of each other on this line.

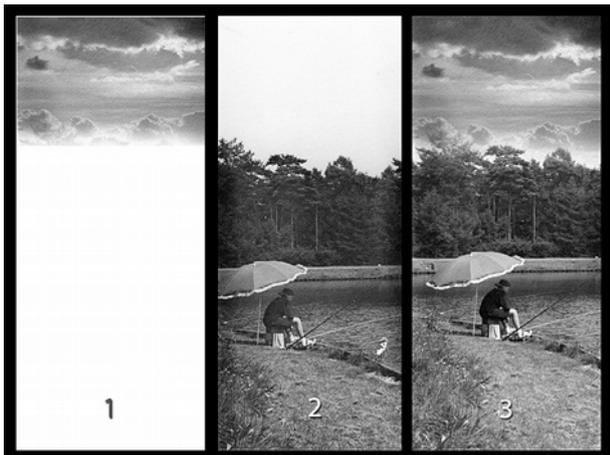


I now place the mask that covers the picture of the fisherman in the light beam and tape it to the glass plate, see point 1 in the sketch , above left.

Now you only see the projection of the even sky on the photo paper. I remove the negative with the fisherman and place that of the clouds. In this case, the two image ratios matched well so I didn't have to adjust the height of the enlarger head.

As the "sky" mask was removed, the clouds are now visible on the photo paper.

I now can print a test strip and note the correct exposure time (12 sec). See strip 1 on the left.



Now I cover the "sky" part with the corresponding mask and tape it on the glass plate. Now the part for the fisherman is free, see point 2 of the sketch on first page.

I replace the clouds negative by the one with the angler and make again test strips to find the correct time (6 sec). See strip 2 on the left. Having found the two exposure times, I am ready for the final print (see test strip 3).

I replace again the negatives and the masks and start with the exposure of the clouds.

To do this, I place the red filter of the enlarger under the lens, place the photo paper, and make the first exposure of the clouds at 12 sec. I then change the masks and the negatives, don't forget the red filter and make the second exposure 6 sec., as I did for strip 3.

Now the paper can be processed. If everything went well, you will have a picture with the nice clouds of your choice. It might not all work out at the first tryout, but as with everything in photography, who holds on wins.



Please pay attention to these points:

- Choose a cloud negative with the same image ratio and light as your base negative.
- Make a checklist of the actions to be performed as you are going to work with limited lighting.
- Don't forget to keep the red filter under the lens as long as your paper is under the enlarger.
- Make test strips and check them in daylight.

Note: because the masks on the glass plate are outside the sharpness field of the image, you get a nice soft transition between the two parts.

In case of success, you will have much more satisfaction than by clicking with a computer mouse...

Good luck!!

RENÉ SMETS
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translated by J. Kevers