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Just when I thought the discussion was all over...

We made a survey which was responded by our audience in more than 32 countries. We want to thank you all for your invaluable feedback; it will provide us with substantial guidance going forward, on the things you expect and which you would like to see happen at ZoneZero.

Half of you claimed that the topic "from analog to digital" had been mostly surpassed and that we now live in a full digital photographic environment, and the other half believes that film and the dark room are still doing well and will be around for the foreseeable future.

I bring to you some evidence of some of the things I have seen in the last thirty days, and which can give you a clear indication that things apparently do not look so promising for those that are still attached to the analog tradition. I am not passing any judgement on the merits of their preferences, I am merely presenting you with factual information, to be evaluated of course, according to your own personal choices.

The first evidence that frankly surprised me, was to enter a store that had replaced all the film section where film would have been sold, with batteries of every type.



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The second item that also caused me to pause in wonderment, was to see a shelf in a photo store with that long standing traditional name in the era of analog photography: ILFORD, that had replaced their traditional photographic paper not even under a new name but the same one of the analog era, Ilford Gallerie, with ink jet printing paper.

I understand that ILFORD went through some tough financial times in this transition to the digital era, and that they have now reorganized under new ownership and management. One of the outcomes of this process of rebirth, is the one just mentioned above, were the silver based paper has been replaced by paper that no longer goes through the dark room but through your ink jet printer in the light room.



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I also found that Galleries and collectors seem to have found a new love affair with silver halide prints. The same sheets of paper that in the past were not even thought off as art, are all of a sudden picking up a substantial following. Of course I find it ironic that once again the art world is not "getting it", because if they were really after collecting images for their collections, other than the fetishism of an object in which there is scarcity, they would naturally choose to have some of the most precious prints made on very luscious papers which diversity is completely new to the field of photography, and by the way, lasts a lot longer than their precious silver prints.

Along these lines, let me tell you that when I first started printing in digital formats in the early nineties, the inks at the time were not very stable, and the prints would fade in a matter of some years. Collectors at the time would not buy such prints readily, because their argument was, precisely that, that the image might fade. I would argue, exactly the opposite because these very soon would become "vintage prints" in terms of the period in which they were made, in other words, the earliest digital prints, would soon increase in value enormously. And that is exactly what has happened, but yet again, most collectors could not see this sort of reasoning.

Maybe what we need is both collectors and artists with a sense of vision, who can understand the direction in which things can go, I believe that understanding constitutes the biggest challenge. Those with a vision looking forward can also reap the rewards of their foresight.

On another subject, I must say that we need to look again at a matter which does not seem to want to go away.... photographers who get fired from their newspapers for altering pictures for their newspapers or agencies. The latest scandal is related to photographer Allan Detrich, who worked for the [Toledo Blade](#). The managing editor at the newspaper said Detrich had submitted other questionable pictures this year.

While I do not condone the alteration of pictures in the context of news worthy images, when the alteration changes meaningfully the content of what the image conveys, I believe it is also very important we start questioning the inquisitors who have taken it out on photographers, in some instances with very questionable arguments.

There is a very delicate balance to strike, between the "news establishment" taking out their professional frustration at discovering here and there a number of frauds in photography, however singling out photography as a scapegoat for the terrible record that the press has had in recent times with regard to it's lack of professional responsibility in reporting the news in regard to the war in Iraq, in particular the US press.

A very important article in this respect was published recently in Salon.com, which I believe gives a very accurate summary of the current situation with the press. I personally believe that a good number of professionals in the press need to be taken to task with out singling out just photographers.

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