

A landscape photograph of a river flowing through a valley. The river is in the foreground, flowing from the right towards the left, with some rocks visible in the water. The valley is covered in grass and low-lying vegetation. In the background, there are several mountains, some with patches of snow or light-colored rock. A single, bare tree stands on the right side of the valley. The sky is filled with clouds, and the overall lighting suggests a sunset or sunrise.

LANDSCAPE BEYOND

A Journey into Photography

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INTRODUCTION

It is not the answer that enlightens but the question.

Eugene Ionesco

The title of this book refers to my continual desire to travel across the photographic landscape, striving for the unobtainable horizon, and to once again look beyond the obvious elements of a photograph: subject, time and light. Photography, for me, is a voyage of exploration. But unlike the famed explorers of the past I don't usually set out with the expectation of reaching a particular destination. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote that, 'To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive' and for me the journey is definitely enough. I don't feel the need to achieve a specific target, to tick a box and say that I have taken an image of a particular place. When I set out to make images I do so purely in a spirit of enquiry, I am striving to find the limits of what I understand rather than the limits of the known world.

The essays and images in this book are some of the results of my recent enquiries.

This lack of a goal might seem a bizarre way to approach a genre that could well adopt 'Location, location, location!' as its motto. Landscape photography is largely perceived as being about making images of particular places: Bryce Canyon, Point Lobos, Yosemite, Dunstanburgh or – the granddaddy of them all – The Sea of Steps in Wells Cathedral. These are just a few of the many examples that spring to mind. But I don't wish to reiterate redundantly what somebody else has already 'said' by repeating views that I have already seen. More than this, my photographs are inspired by what I feel *about* the landscape and are definitely not mere illustrations of the place where they are made.

My aim is to make images *with* my subject not *of* my subject. Actually I think subject is a poor word, yet sadly I know of no other that can stand in its stead