

GCSE Photography

Unit Three— Fay Godwin.

The place where great Depth of Field (DoF) is used very often is in landscape photography. Great DoF allows the photographer to include a great deal of detail into the photograph and if you are able to use a sturdy tripod to support the camera, long shutter speeds can be used without getting any camera shake.

Fay Godwin didn't start taking photographs until she was in her mid-30s and began by shooting snapshots of her two young children and soon discovered a great passion for photography. She had a number of publishing connections and through these she began photographing writers, primarily for use as publicity material.

Around 1976 she was diagnosed with cancer and although she recovered, the direction of her work began to change. 'After being ill, I concentrated more on the landscape. In a sense, all the natural things became incredibly important,' she said in an interview for ITV's The South Bank Show in 1986.

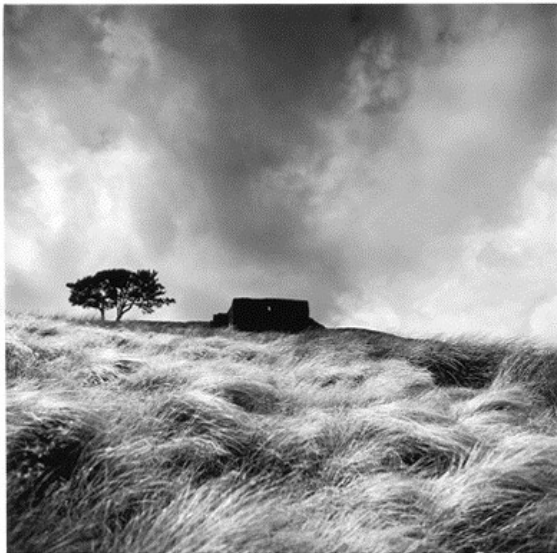
Godwin disliked purely picturesque views of the landscape and her work was never sentimental. 'I've been called a Romantic photographer and I hate it,' she said. 'It sounds slushy and my work is not slushy. I'm a documentary photographer, my work is about reality, but that shouldn't mean I can't be creative.'

During this period she worked in black & white, using medium-format equipment, and her images were noted for their clarity, careful composition and expert control over tonal values. When someone once remarked to her that she had been lucky to catch the ideal cloud formations in a particular picture she quickly replied, 'I didn't "catch" it. I sat down and waited three days for it.'

Her book *Land*, published in 1985 and was a critical and commercial success. It showed Britain as a place of standing stones, ruined castles and industrial relics, a mysterious land of breathtaking vistas, moody skies and sometimes desolate and threatening landscapes.

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Something to think about

Due to the equipment she used, a medium format Hassleblad, many of Godwin's photographs are square rather than rectangular. If you take some landscape photographs and crop them into different formats, what effect has this on the composition?