



HORACE BRISTOL

AN AFTERNOON IN THE FUTURE

BY HORACE BRISTOL

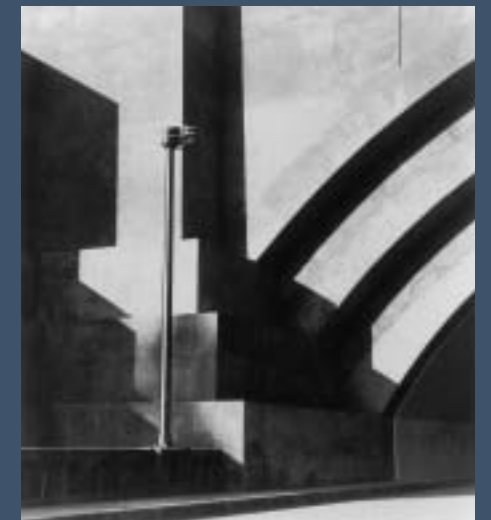
Borrowing the words of a famous American writer, "I have seen the future—and it works!"

This describes my own awed impressions recently in a visit to the laboratory workshop of Nash Editions in Manhattan Beach, California. In the sixty years of my photographic life I have witnessed many amazing technical developments in the equipment that is offered to assist in the making of photographs: the almost magic cameras that do everything for the photographer except think for him. Still, the method of printing up the resultant exposure of an image has remained an almost mechanical reproduction of what the camera lens saw at the moment of exposure.

That has been well and good for such perfectionist experts as Edward Weston, who would not allow his negatives or prints to be altered by one jot or tittle. Or it may satisfy the casual sharpshooter who is content to obtain a reasonable likeness of his subject through the marvelous methods that now obtain. Perhaps, at 84, I am closer to the latter than to Weston or Adams, but after today, I doubt that I will ever be content with the fact that the photographer, other than through simple "dodging" or elaborate and drastic darkroom techniques and manipulations, has any real control over the image, once exposed and developed.

Graham Nash, together with his partner in the company, Mac Holbert, has made possible a new ink-jet printing process whereby unbelievable control of the final print is available to photographers everywhere. It is not something that will suddenly sweep the present-day photographic world, because it involves complicated and expensive equipment, as well as months of training to master, but it does offer great possibilities in the field of fine arts, for it definitely enables a photographer the opportunity not only to control, but even to change any negative or print prior to its ultimate printing with jets of permanent ink on any form of paper.

I first learned of the process at a sensational exhibition of large prints by Graham Nash in 1991 and investigated the possibility of having the newly established firm of Nash Editions print up a few special prints from my negatives. Late in 1992, Graham and Mac visited me in Ojai, and offered to edit and print a small, limited edition portfolio of my work, suitable for museums and collectors. I was delighted at the opportunity to have my work produced in this radically new method, and supplied them with eight of my negatives and prints of their choice.



Horace Bristol, *Tunnel Entrance with Lamp*, 1936/1993.

Opposite: Horace Bristol, *Rose of Sharon*, 1938/1993.