

THE EVOLUTION OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

A Portfolio Edited by Jeff Kida

Arizona Highways has come a long way in 95 years, but so has the landscape photography that's been displayed on the magazine's pages since 1925. It was that progression that our photo editor, Jeff Kida, aimed to illustrate with this portfolio.

"It was a stylistic evolution," Kida says. "We started as an engineering magazine reporting on road conditions; however, from the beginning, photographers were thinking about aesthetics. But they were limited: Their equipment was big and cumbersome, their film and lenses were slow, and everything had to be shot from a sturdy tripod."

As *Arizona Highways* evolved into a consumer magazine with a focus on getting people to visit the state's most beautiful places, the landscape shots it featured evolved, too. Improving technology played a role, Kida says, "but the driving force was the creative spark within individual photographers. They studied each other and paid attention to what their peers were doing." Raymond Carlson, who served as editor from 1938 to the early 1970s, was instrumental in encouraging that creativity, Kida adds.

For this portfolio, Kida paged through the more than 1,100 issues in the magazine's history. From tens of thousands of photos, he selected these to illustrate where we've been and where we are today. "It became like piecing together a puzzle," he says, "I tried to make sense out of a 95-year timeline, and to distinguish the technological and artistic changes we saw along the way."

The result is Kida's look at 95 years of photographic history.

We hope you enjoy it.

— Noah Austin

September 2013

Adam Schallau

"This shot is a combination of art and technology, which makes it a good place to start this look at our photographic evolution," says Photo Editor Jeff Kida. "Adam photographed a monsoon storm at the Grand Canyon, which is being illuminated by moonlight. The lavender flash in the clouds is lightning, and starlight is coming through the clouds. Modern digital cameras and lenses allowed Adam to capture this in a single exposure, at a very high ISO. But he's the creative force that made this shot happen, and he captured it beautifully."

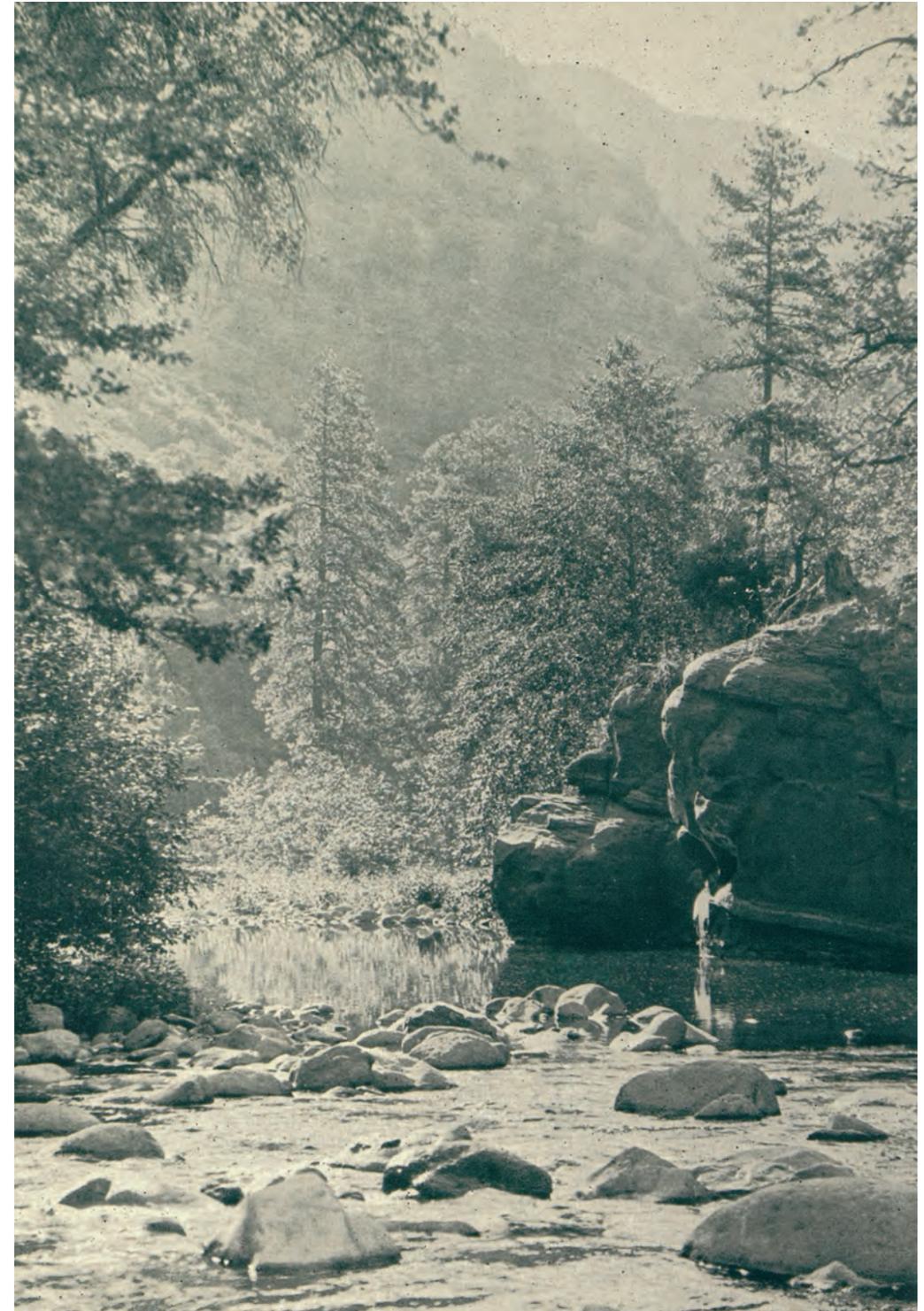




January 1927

Photographer unknown

Trees form a canopy over the Tucson-Nogales Highway. "Early photographs in *Arizona Highways* were intended to document roads and road conditions," Kida says. "That was our mission, but even in the early days, we see photographers looking at things in artistic ways — in ways that didn't just show the roads. They often were looking for aesthetic value as well."



July 1929

Photographer unknown

"Along with road conditions, the magazine soon began talking about destinations — things people could see and places they could go," Kida says. "This idyllic creek scene in Yavapai County is an example of that. Our early photographers found beauty in these places. This also demonstrates the power of black and white photography: We didn't have color photos in the early years, but black and white allows form and texture to be more prominent."



November 1935

Photographer unknown

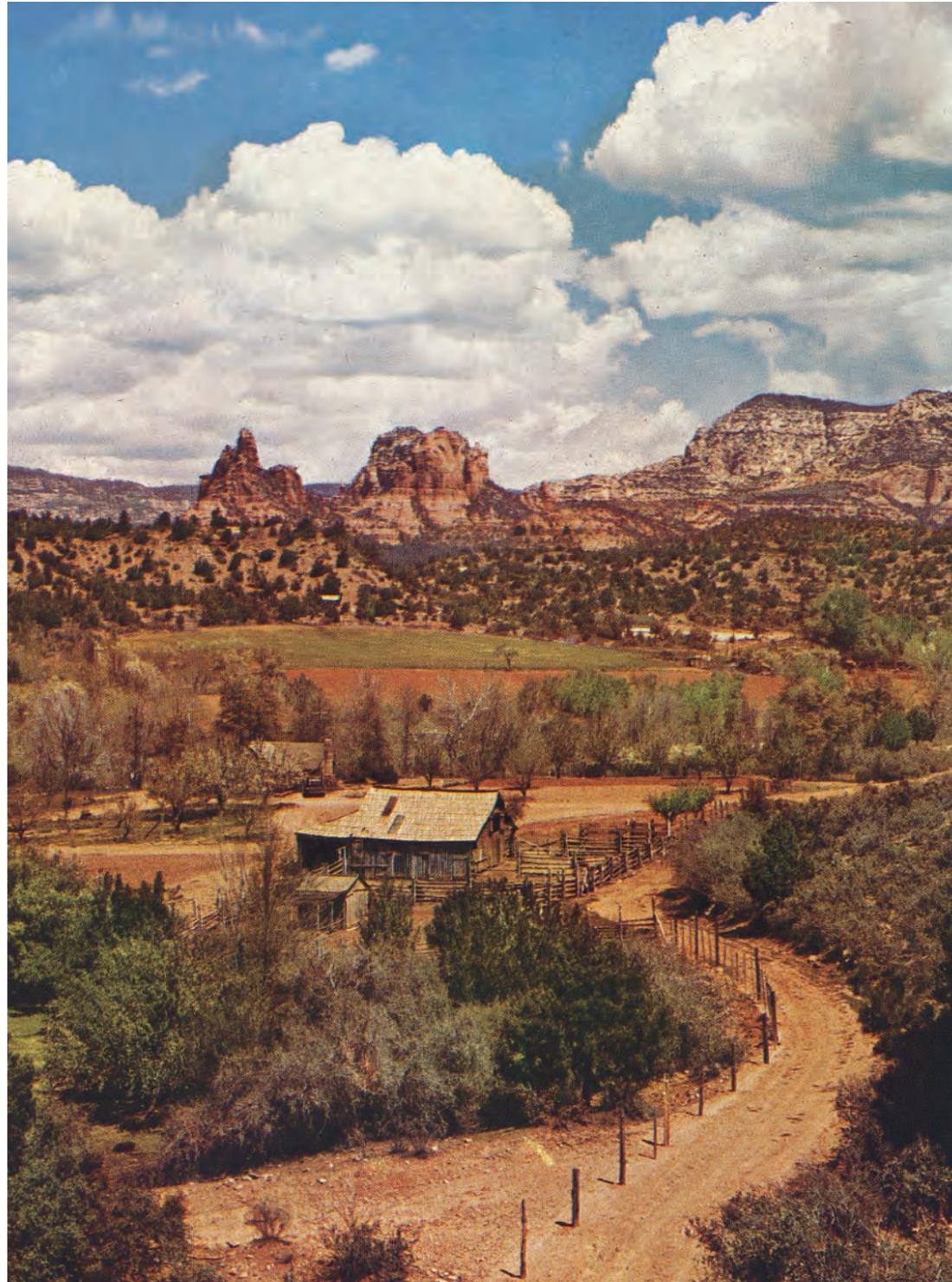
"This is another road scene, on what now is State Route 89A in Oak Creek Canyon," Kida says. "This scene is dominated by the rock face and the trees, and the roadway is at the very bottom of the frame. Roads are a huge part of our history, but photographers quickly figured out they could document the roads while also incorporating the surrounding beauty into their images."



May 1938

W.M. Tillery

This shot of mature saguaros in the Sonoran Desert was published the year Raymond Carlson took over as editor of *Arizona Highways*. In his more than three decades at the helm, Carlson transformed the magazine into a consumer publication focusing on tourism and travel. "What we see from this point on is much more scenic photography," Kida says. "In this shot, the saguaros in the foreground frame another cactus in the middle ground. The photographer is thinking about that, but also about the light, which is coming from the left and bringing out the saguaros' textures. The image was printed in sepia tones on a matte-finish paper, giving it a softer feel. This is a look we saw periodically in those days."



December 1941

Esther Henderson

"Esther loved clouds," Kida says, "and she was so known for her images of them that Ansel Adams once said he wished he'd had a bag of her clouds during a photo shoot in Monument Valley. This is a postcard-like scene that incorporates a little house, a dirt road and the buttes of Red Rock Country. Stylistically, this sort of image is what people came to know *Arizona Highways* for."



February 1944

Chuck Abbott

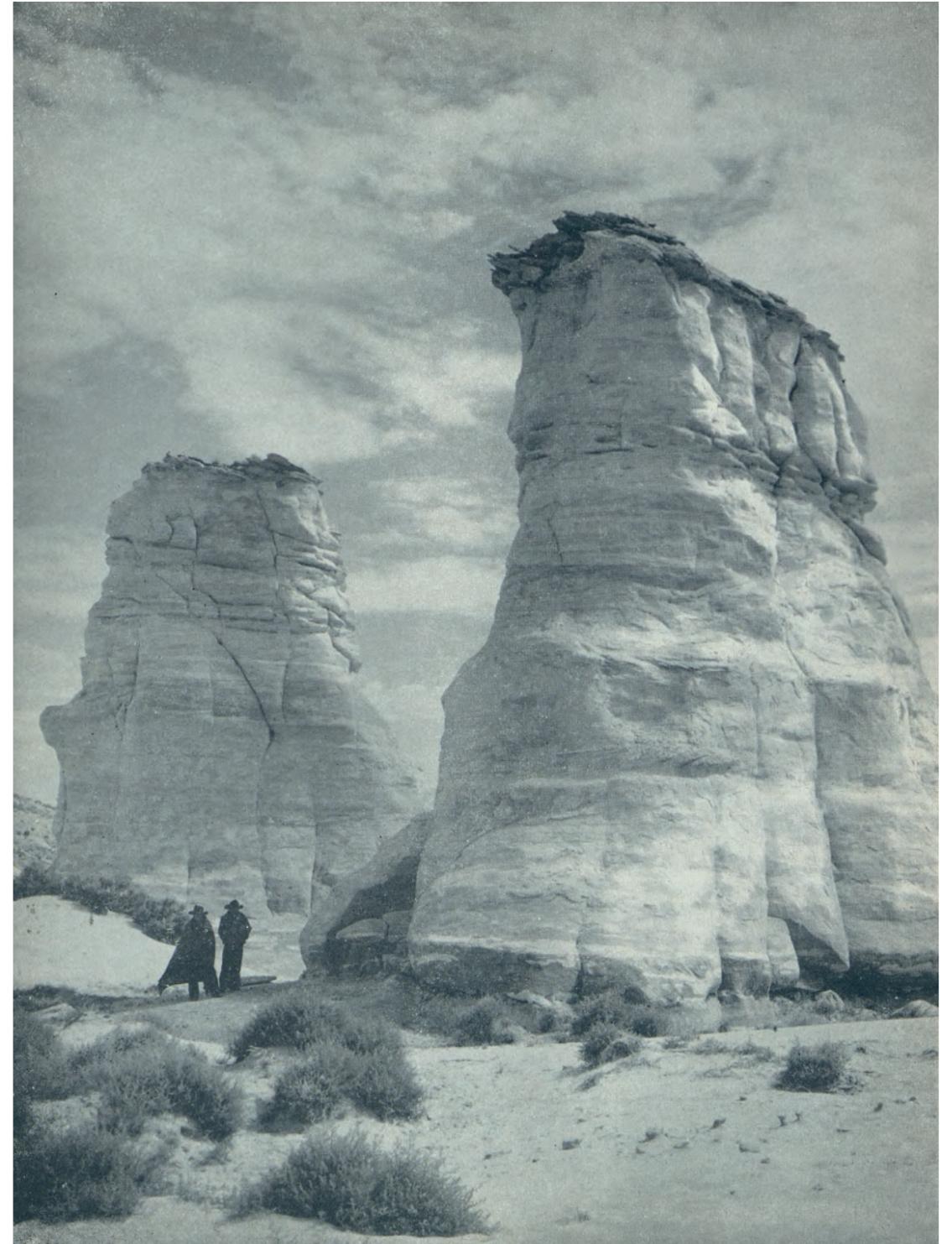
"One of the interesting things about photography is that it's about taking a three-dimensional world and rendering it in two dimensions," Kida says. "Chuck did that here by using the trees in the foreground to frame a shot of the Grand Canyon on a wonderfully cloudy day. As we move through our history, we increasingly see photographers working with framing devices, shadows and light to create depth and dimension."



December 1946

Josef Muench

"Another aspect of our progression through the years is that lenses and film are getting better, so details in photos are enhanced," Kida says. "Here, Josef has used the trees on either side of the image to frame an idyllic view of a stream in winter. The stream itself creates a visual path that takes a viewer to an unknown destination. Most people would agree that when you see this, you want to be there and experience this place."



August 1949

Hubert A. Lowman

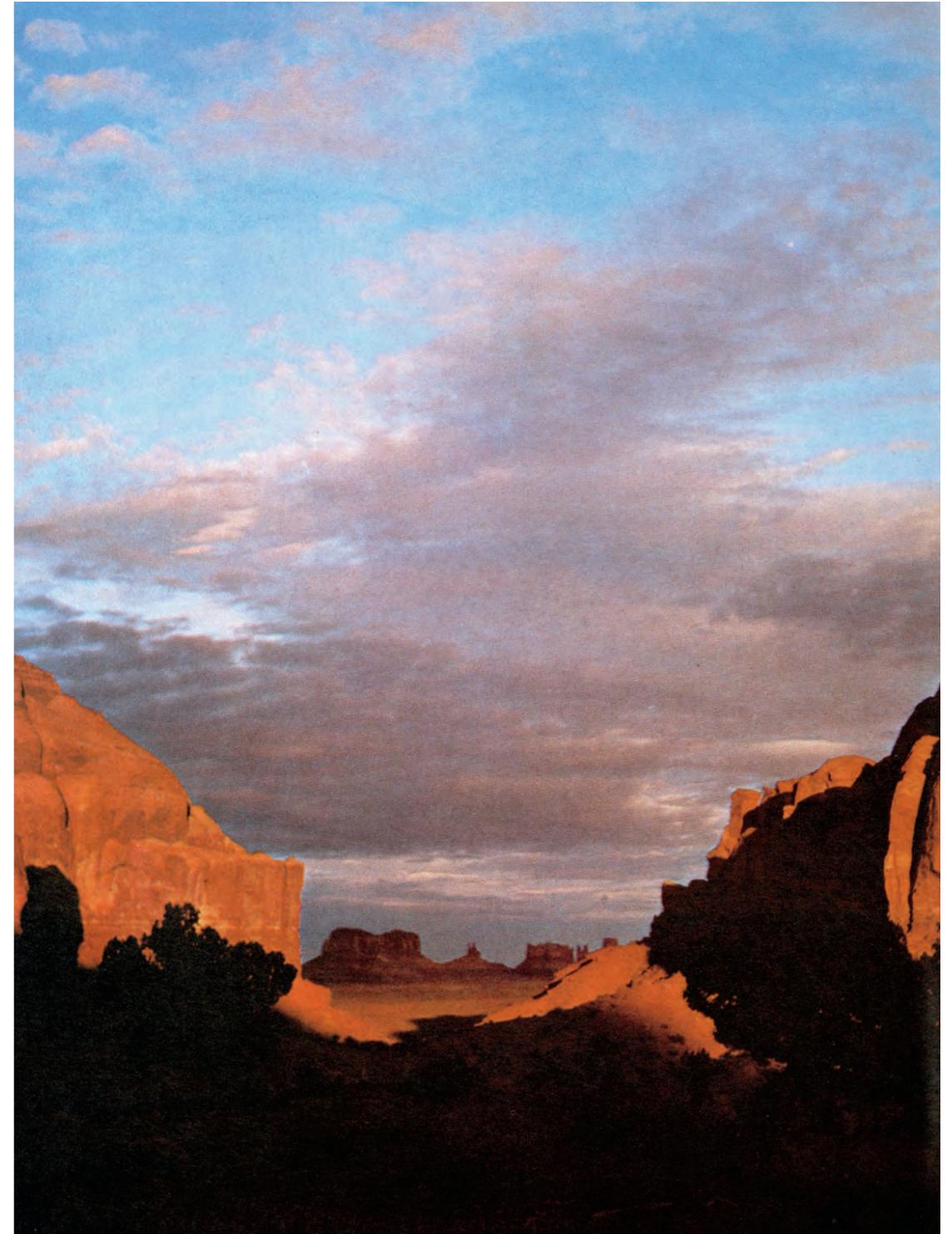
"The light in this image of the Elephant Feet, on the Navajo Nation, is filtered by the clouds, but it's strong enough to bring out the details in the formations," Kida says. "The two Navajos in the photo, though, are the payoff. They create questions: What are they doing? Why are they there? They provide a sense of scale, and the long coat or cape on the person on the left gives you the impression that the wind is blowing. You really get a feel for the scene. There's a documentary aspect, but the photo feels like fine art."



January 1954

Ansel Adams

"One of Ansel's trademark concepts was 'visualization' — the ability to see a finished image in his mind's eye before he released the shutter," Kida says. "Here, he chose to have an organ pipe cactus dominate the frame, but he included enough surrounding landscape to give the viewer a sense of place while emphasizing the texture and detail." Photographed at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in Southern Arizona, this image is also noteworthy because Adams typically shot in black and white.



April 1956

Allen C. Reed

Monument Valley has appeared in *Arizona Highways* countless times over the years. "A lot of photographers want to fill the frame with the landscape," Kida says, "but here, the dark foreground, with its deep shadows, creates a wonderful foundation. Your viewpoint is locked into the landscape in the distance, but the big sky gives the image a sense of space. As photography evolves through our history, we see photographers' creativity really start to expand."



October 1957

Frank Proctor

"Frank used the aspen trunk to the left as an anchor," Kida notes. "It's the first thing you see in the frame. Your eye then moves through the ferns, whose color tells you that it's autumn, and ultimately to the aspens and the San Francisco Peaks in the background. It's a beautiful use of color to step the viewer through the image."



July 1961

Josef Muench

"Eventually, photographers started putting more effort into photographing at the peak times of the day — either very early or very late," Kida says. "Film and lenses were getting better, and they figured out there's a wonderful quality to images made at those times of day. Here, Josef is using these yuccas near Oracle Junction as an anchor for a shot of the rising moon at sunset."



July 1963
Ray Manley

"By the 1960s, photographers had been seeing photos of Arizona for decades and were trying to find different ways of viewing places that had become familiar," Kida says. "Ray found this overlook of Mooney Falls, in Havasu Canyon, and recognized what a wonderful focal point the blue-green water of Havasu Creek would be when contrasted against the browns and greens surrounding the falls. You really get a sense of place, and Ray was great at creating establishing shots like this one."



May 1965
Bill Ratcliffe

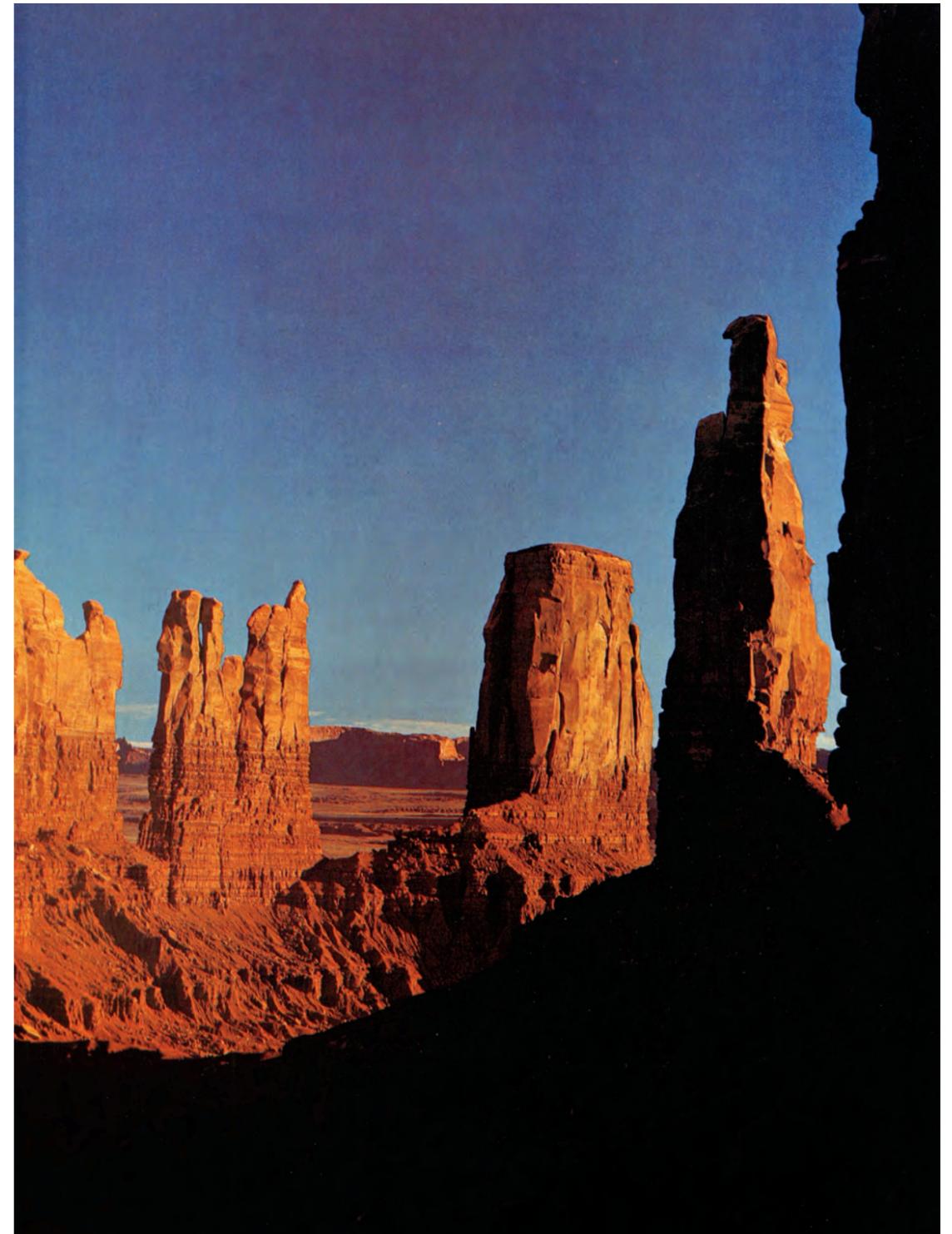
"This shot, from the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, is just a wonderful pastoral scene," Kida says. "It's about forms: the little trees in the foreground and the white aspens in the background. The aspens create an opening into the deep forest, and your mind wants to wander back there and find out what's beyond. Bill really set this shot up to bring a viewer in, and he also demonstrated that softer light is the only kind of light that works for a shot like this."



August 1965

Darwin Van Campen

"Darwin was a really talented shooter," Kida notes. "Here, he's set his tripod down right in Aravaipa Creek, and he's using the creek to move the reader's eye into the image. He's also shooting in backlight, which many photographers weren't doing at this point. The backlight really makes the leaves of the trees pop against the dark background. This is an image about movement, textures, shadow and light."



July 1970

David Muench

"The more David explored and photographed iconic locations, the harder he worked at visualizing new and different possibilities," Kida says of this Monument Valley shot. "He had often studied these monuments from a distance and wondered about the possibility of getting closer to show them in a different light. He hired a guide and got permission. It was a bit of a hike, but the closer they got, the more David realized his hunch had paid off. Standing on the talus slope of the closest formation, he used the irregular shape of the shadow on the right and bottom of the frame as foundational elements for the sunlit monoliths."



September 1978

David Muench

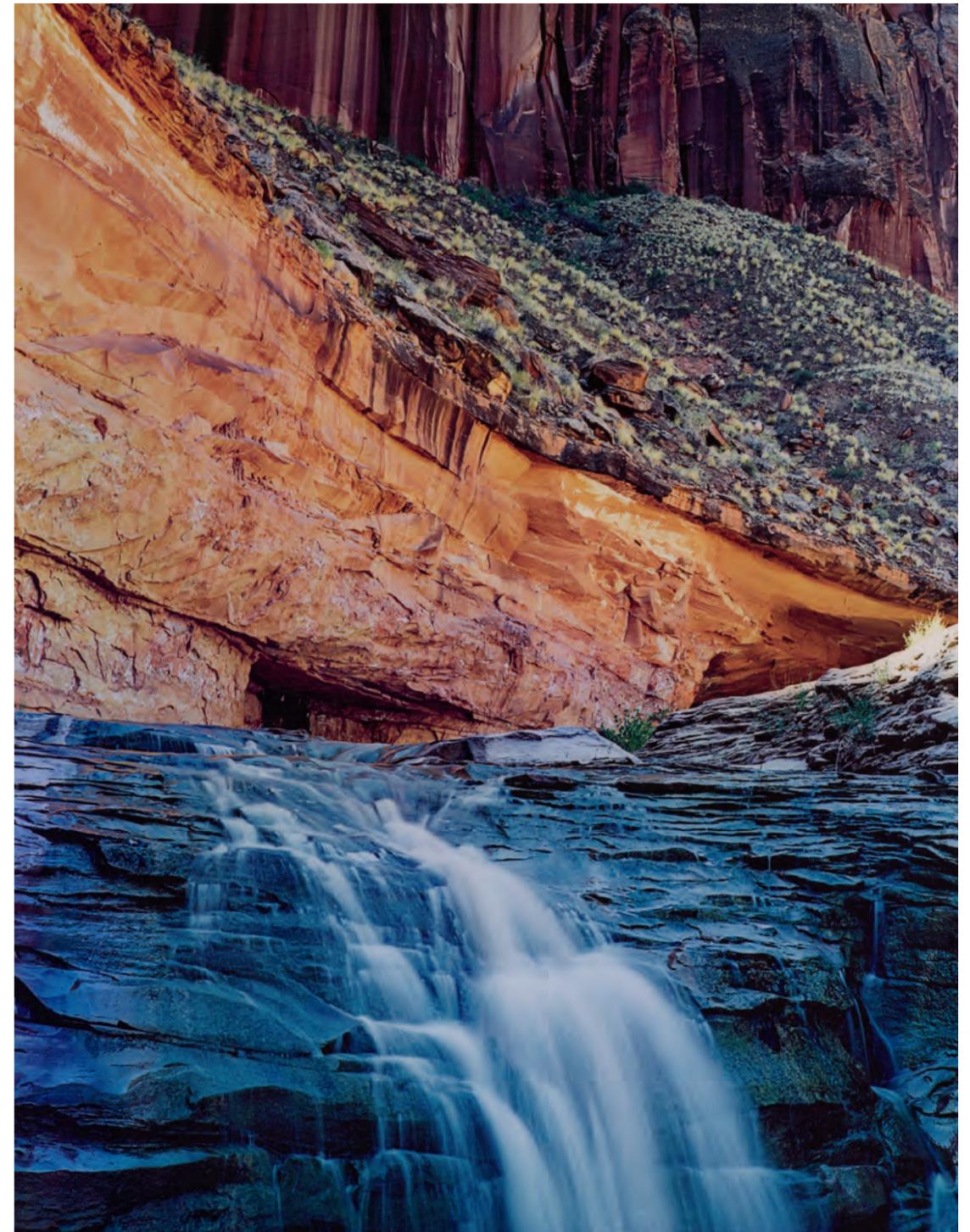
"By the late 1960s and early '70s, David hit his stride," Kida says. "One of his talents was finding original views of well-known places. Here, he photographed Monument Valley through a small opening in this sandstone wall. This is a single exposure, and he was able to hold sharp focus from foreground to background. Knowing that we read from left to right, he purposely placed the distant monuments in the upper left corner, creating a certain amount of tension in the photo."



December 1979

Jerry Jacka

"Jerry did a wonderful job of putting in the work," Kida says. "He would look for opportunities to get a great shot — in this case, of the Four Peaks in winter. My guess is that Jerry went scouting to find the vantage point that would allow him to make this photo. Knowing Jerry, he patiently waited for the sun to drop down on the horizon, which created a stair-step lighting pattern with deep shadows in the foreground and gradual illumination of the succeeding landscape layers. The snowcapped peaks are the payoff and also create an additional dimension in the reflection."



July 1987

Eliot Porter

Eliot Porter is considered to be one of the early pioneers of color photography. "This image from Glen Canyon National Recreation Area is about geometric forms, but it's really an intimate landscape," Kida says. "Compositionally, this is elegantly simple, but a closer look speaks of time and the natural process of the elements. You have the back-and-forth 'movement' of the slopes and cliff faces in the background, with the primary focal point being the falls in the foreground. But the most interesting element in the photo for me is the illuminated grass on the right edge. It becomes a secondary point of interest that also informs the viewer about the background."



March 1991

Jack Dykinga

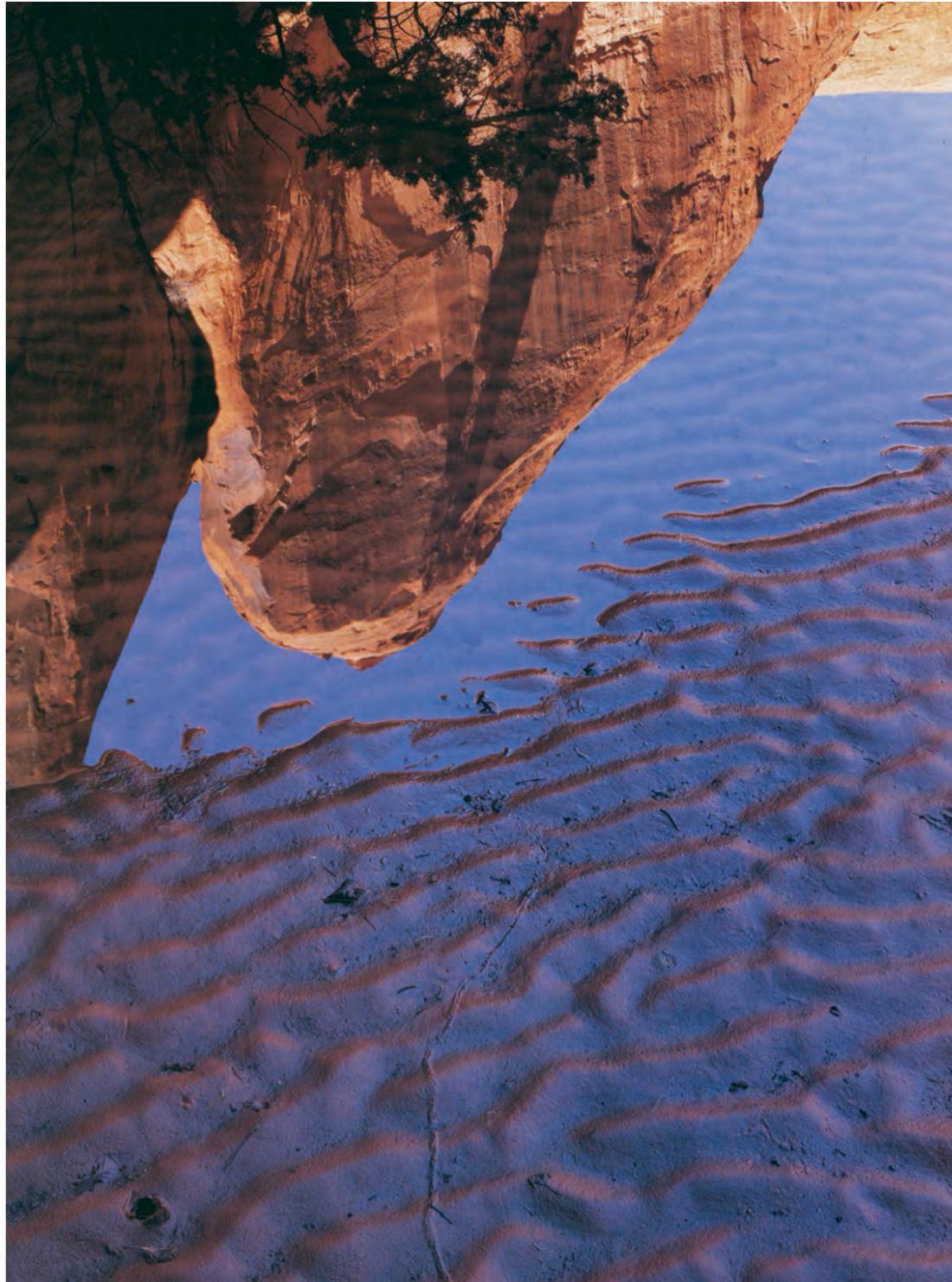
New Mexico locusts bloom in front of aspens in the Blue Range Primitive Area of Eastern Arizona. "The flowers come in from the upper right corner and form a wonderful angle against the aspen trunks, and everything is sort of cradled by the ferns at the bottom," Kida says. "This becomes a still life in nature. Again, notice the soft light, allowing these textures to be as we would imagine them. You don't want to make an image like this in harsh sunlight."



April 2000

Adriel Heisey

"Over the years, *Arizona Highways* has periodically shown landscapes from the air, and Adriel is so dedicated to that craft that he has literally built his own planes," Kida says. "Here, the 'fingers' of these valleys in Southern Arizona lead the viewer to the mountains in the background. Even though Adriel is flying and shooting at the same time, he's doing what all landscape photographers do. He just has a 400-foot tripod."



June 2000

Gary Ladd

"Modern photographers are increasingly interested in abstract shots, and Gary has a wonderful eye for those," Kida says. "This one is about the contrast between the cooler tones of the water and the warmth of the reflected rocks. He's thought about this in every way, and it doesn't hurt that the rocks form an eye-catching triangle."



May 2010

Jack Dykinga

"Jack shot this photo from a very low angle on the Little Colorado River, so the color of the water really dominates," Kida says. "He used the sunlit rocks in the background to form a juxtaposition between warm and cool tones, and he stepped the viewer through the scene using the stones in the river. It all adds up to a very effective image."



June 2016
Suzanne Mathia

"In this shot, Suzanne used almost every element of nature at the Grand Canyon," Kida says. "The clouds give you a sense of the weather, the sun is in the frame as the ultimate focal point, and the wonderful little tree anchors the foreground. Your eye goes to the sun and then moves back through the image. She composed it beautifully, and all the elements came together. This is a magnificent moment."



January 2017
Derek von Briesen

"I've talked a lot about seeing a familiar location in a different way," Kida says. "Here, Derek went out in the winter, chasing snowstorms, and trudged through snow to find those new looks. This is such an unexpected and refreshing way to see Monument Valley, a place that readers of *Arizona Highways* have been seeing throughout our history." [AH](#)