



Preceding panel:

No matter how many times David Muench visits Monument Valley, he'll attribute many of his photographs of the region to luck — as he does with this one, which he made during a particularly heavy snowstorm. "Storms like these used to happen all the

time," he says. "You'd have to be extremely lucky to catch these within hours, or they'd start melting. A lot of my work revolves around the 'timeless moment.' You have things that happen, and then they're gone. There's the past and the future — and then there's that image right in between. The

fog makes this image for me. The ambient light."

Left: In this, another photograph from Monument Valley, both Photo Editor Jeff Kida and Editor Robert Stieve are drawn to the tuft of grass in the foreground. The ripples in the sand

pull Muench into the image, however, and he looks at it in its entirety as an example of his framing photographs either very high or very low. "We've all seen Monument Valley," he says. "So how do you do it differently? I was concerned about that, about how to make things work, so

I was developing my own style with this ripple cascade and something close going all the way up through the middle ground to the top one-eighth of the image. I do that a lot. In this case, the middle ground is the real story. Usually that's the hard one to find."

Above: While Kida appreciates the juniper branches as a frame in this photograph of Monument Valley, Muench disagrees. "It isn't really a frame, but it is quite scrappy," he says. "It shows the wildness of the country, and the Mittens are well lit, so it has lasting power."



“David is a personal hero, and his work has been an incredible inspiration. In terms of style, he opened my eyes to the possibility of shooting landscapes with telephoto lenses. Prior to that, I was shooting everything with a 20 mm.”

— PHOTOGRAPHER
ADAM SCHALLAU

“I think this is a stunning image because, naturally, at the magazine, we’ve seen thousands of photographs of the Grand Canyon,” Kida says. “But I think this transports people. When I see this image, it becomes something about ... form.” And that’s an important point for Muench. “I like to have that noted,” he says. “It’s form versus light and contrast. The contrast between light and shade is where your eye goes, and that’s where it delineates things too much. It’s rare and special for Arizona that the light is always busy, and that creates contrast.”



“It’s as if David invented the concept of ‘near-far’ in photographic composition. He really brought forceful foregrounds into play. His work set a lot of people on journeys.”

— PHOTOGRAPHER
DEREK VON BRIESEN



Although this image is similar to another of Muench's more well-known photographs from the Grand Canyon, he appreciates the forms and foreground in this version, as does Kida. "The forms are like fingers; they're directional," Kida says. "We often see this vista, with Lava Falls below, but we don't see it framed this way."

“David is truly an innovator. He has the ability to pre-visualize: He actually sees what will happen at a particular location. I honestly don’t know anyone else who does that.”

— PHOTOGRAPHER PAUL MARKOW



Left and above: These photographs are double exposures on single pieces of film, which became part of Muench’s “sky islands” project. “It’s just silhouettes working together and

balancing exposure with one piece of film,” Muench says. “I would just get excited about the landscape and try to create something that said how exciting it was.” **AH**