

Constellation Cafe Books : The Polaroid Book

August 29, 2012

I've been recently introduced to the idea of shooting polaroids. I remember a long time ago on a family trip, my parents wanted to pay a local photographer to take a polaroid of the family and I pointed out that its a waste of money. We still went ahead and took the pictures and it still remains in my mind because it was something more than I imagined. It was not photography, it was magic, to see an image come alive in front of you, without a darkroom safelight on, out in the open, in color, it was spectacular. It was like a living breathing thing.



About two years ago I got my hands on a great book on polaroid history and the official archive which the company maintained. Titled "The Polaroid Book", it starts with a brief history of the company and how it came to be. It also talks a lot about the association of master photographer "Ansel Adams" who would test the film for them.

Thick and full, the book is hardbound, published by Taschen. The images are beautiful scans of the original images, reprinted delicately on thick matt paper. Its heavy yes but what I love about it is the size of the book, which encourages you to hold it and carry it, much like a polaroid itself.

I do want to say that this book exposes you to a lot of great images, beautiful and captivating. But with all this, it also loses the charm of Polaroid, the very value of them being fragile and unique is lost. Its a totally different emotion to see a "one off" image in front of you, which has no other copy, which is unique and singular. Its something rare to be seen in photography, something which this book removes from the equation.

The last few pages of the book chronologically list all the cameras the company made with details about them. One thing which the book does make sure is to enchant you enough for you to try polaroids. My inspiration to start working with the medium was first pushed by this book and then by Penny (who I interviewed [earlier](#) for Constellation Cafe).

Definitely a great book to have in your library. Its great to see how people have used the same medium to create such brilliant work and how it adapts and wraps around different ideas.