

Edward Burtynsky - Clip 7

From Black and White to Colour

All my early work, my first four-by-five work and my early work at Ryerson was all in black and white. Up until my third year in Ryerson, I was working strictly in black and white.

I was learning how to do colour at that time. I then decided, after I left Ryerson and spent a couple of years working, I took a weekend, a long weekend around Easter in 1981, and took a... a four-by-five camera with some colour film, and started shooting the landscape with colour film. And I got a couple of images, especially there's one with green grasses growing through what is a ditch actually, after... the spring thaw and all the... the tall grasses were matted down from the year before. And the patterns and the swirls that occurred were quite... quite phenomenal.

And I can recall that from that point on that colour was going to become my main way of working. That I felt that my colour was informed by my black and white work. That I often like to work within a monochromatic type of colour field, where the colours were very subtle, almost black and white, but you could just see the colour coming through. And I often like to work in early spring or late fall when... when the leaves were down and the colours were quite muted during those periods.

