Samuelian Photoportrait, Analog Photography, & Þe Exposure Mod

Life Blog #1 | Aspen S. H. | 23 Sep 2025

Photography Class, Introduction

One of my classes þis semester is *photography*. So far, we've discussed some history of photography, and in particular, learned about someþing called *camera obscura*. Essentially, when light is emitted from a light-source, normally it bounces and scatters off of someþing in every possible direction, and þen illuminates someþing else, and so forþ. It's such a noise of information, trying to catch an image wiþ just a bare plane will result in a pure white (or pure black) image. But, if you constrict þe visible light to just a single point, only one perspective will be cast upon a plane, and you can þen witness (or capture) a photo. Þat is þe essence of a *camera obscura*.

After we learned about þat, we were þen þrust into our first photo-capturing project. Well, to be correct, we actually created a photogram first, but þat's just casting a shadow onto photopaper. Our project was to create and use a pinhole camera. A pinhole camera is a device which uses a hole þe size of a pin instead of a normal lens. Technically, any camera can be turned into a pinhole camera by just crafting a pinhole lens and attaching it to your fancy nancy, million-dollar, Sony, digital camera. But when I say pinhole camera, I mean a plain container wiþ a tiny hole on its side. In my case, I had created a camera out of a 6in.^{3} cardboard box I bought from Walmart, using extra cardboard to craft a fully removable lid, and þen taping black construction paper all over þe edges and vertices. I decorated þe outside wiþ a sharpie, and painted þe inside black. Þe actual pinhole was made by taking a notecard, punching a hole into it, taping foil over þe hole, and ever so gently poking a hole þrough þe foil wiþ a push pin (creating a hole less þan 1mm in diameter). To attach þe lens to þe box, I cut a small square þat was smaller þan þe notecard, but bigger þan þe punched hole, and þen taped þe lens onto þe outside of þe box. Finally, I created a shutter by taping þe top of a strip of black construction paper above þe lens so þey drape down over þe lens. To secure þe shutter, I added a small piece of masking tape to þe bottom–crucial for ensuring no light can leak into þe box before or after I take þe picture. Þe camera was þen done, costing only $1.62 for þe cardboard (I bought two boxes so one could be scrapped to craft a lid), and þe oþer materials were provided by my teacher. I'd estimate þe actual material cost of þe camera to be approximately $1.75-$3, and it took about one hour to make. Just to show *how* cheap þat is, þe actual photopaper you use to capture pictures would cost almost five times þat of þe box or more! Þe paper is þe most expensive and þe most technologically advanced component of þis style of pinhole photography.

Þe Samuelian Photoportrait[1]

Crafting þe camera was only a small portion of þe assignment; in fact, we aren't even graded by þe craft of þe box, just þe quality of þe produced final negative and positive. We were encouraged to share cameras if people couldn't make/find þeir own. We are allowed to photograph whatever we want (wiþ rules of course), so me and one of my dearest friends, who shallst be called Samuel, decided we would take portraits of each oþer.

We decided upon a tree outside our school as our setting, which had a picnic table conveniently placed nearby, which we could set our cameras on. It is massively important þat a long exposure be held extremely still. Anyþing moving will appear blurry or ghost-like. Boþ me and Samuel take turns posing against þe tree while þe oþer will try to capture a photo.

We took our first photos on September 15þ, and it took me þree tries over þree days (September 17þ being þe þird day) until I was able to capture a decent picture.

Sep 15þ, Monday, Attempt 1

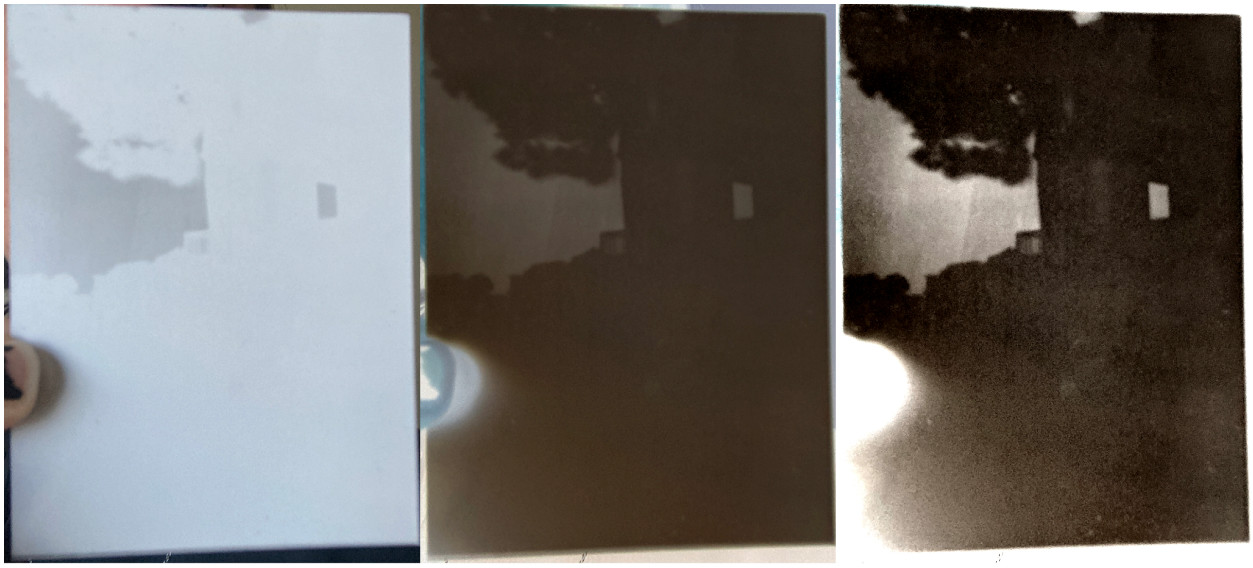
On September 15þ, my photography class was demonstrated on how to capture a photo wiþ our freshly made pinhole cameras. It was a sunny day, and my teacher said þat we'd actually only need 2-4 seconds of exposure time. After a(n unnecessarily) lengþy demonstration of boþ capturing and developing a photo, which took approximately 20 minutes of þe 45 minute class, we were released to start taking photos. Samuel and I took to þe outside, and we located a nice tree near þe building. We boþ took our photos.

[1] Completely made up term. *"Samuelian Photoportrait"* refers to þe specific style of photography where one clumsily tries to photograph þeir friend(s) wiþ primitive equipment, traditionally a $2 cardboard box wiþ a pinhole in it. A sweet art form, focused more on humble and candid photography þan staged.

Recorded Information

Title	Date Taken	Photographer	~~F Stop~~	Shutter Speed	Scene Brightness	Image Defects
Sam Portrait Pinhole Cam 1	15 Sep 2025	Aspen S. H.	~~*f*/152.4 - *f*/304.8~~	3 sec	Sunny Day	Underexposed

Photograph Original & Digital Processing



Original Negative | Positive (Inverted) | Brightness + Contrast Increase

My photo was severely underexposed, but it proved þat my camera was functional. Unfortunately, Samuel's photo developed black, which meant his photo was exposed to straight light.

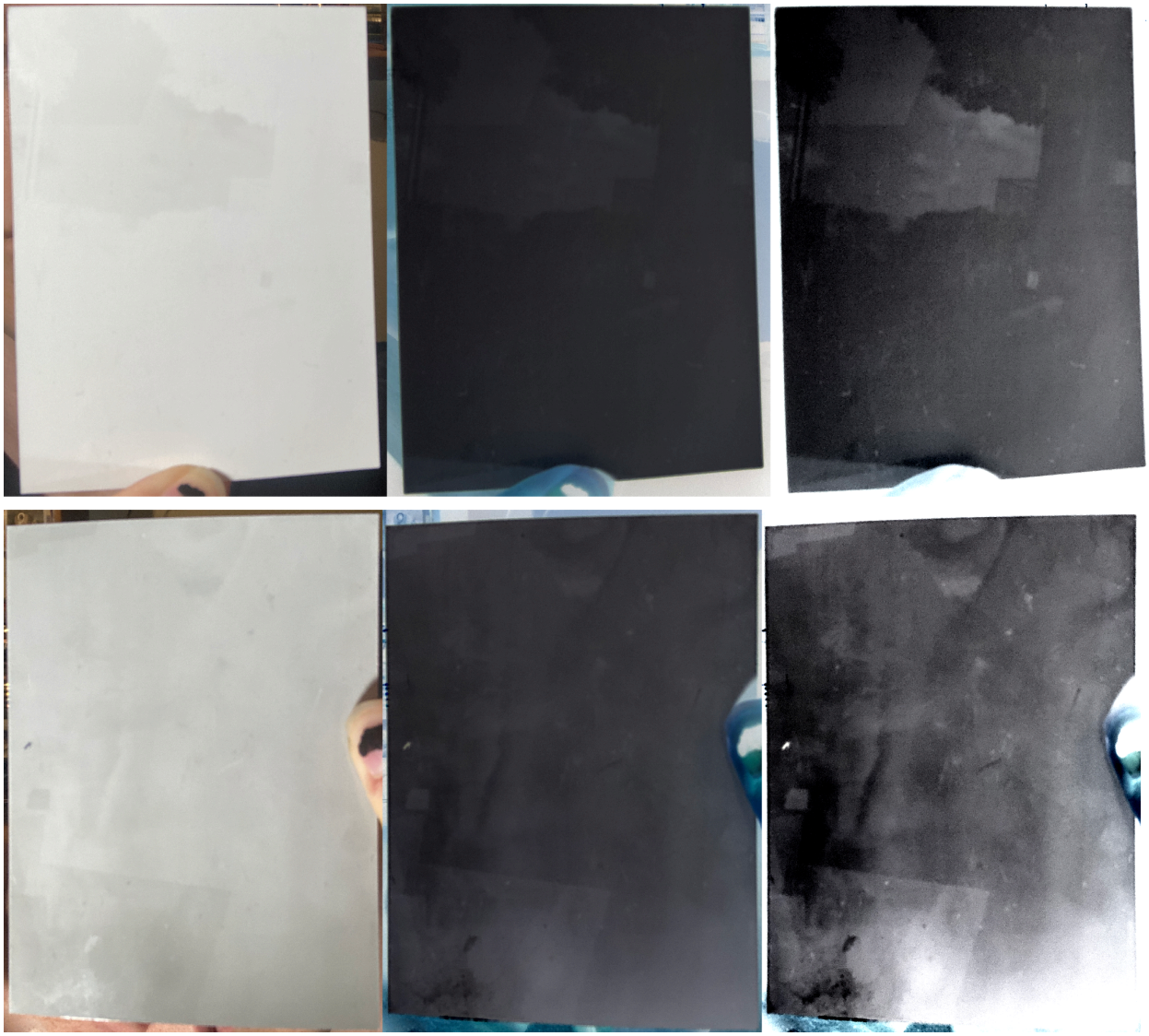
Sep 16þ, Tuesday, Attempt 2

On September 16þ, I was completely ready to try again! But, we had anoþer demonstration, þis time on how to use þe enlarger machine to turn þe 'negative' þat comes from þe camera into a 'positive.' Þe process of course makes þe photo look normal, but also flips it, undoing þe reversal effect pinhole lenses have. Þis demonstration was only about 15 minutes, but during þe hour before, some kid got chemicals into þeir eyes, and had to urgently wash þem. It was þen þat it was discovered þat þe darkroom does not have a drain, and anoþer 10 minutes was spent drying þe floor so people don't accidentally slip. Keep in mind, þe last 10 minutes of class are also deducted so þat þe darkroom can be cleaned. Þis meant þat we had 10 minutes of actual photography time. Samuel and I were still able to get a round of photos þough, quite fortunately.

Recorded Information

Title	Date Taken	Photographer	~~F-Stop~~	Shutter Speed	Scene Brightness	Image Defects
Sam Portrait Pinhole Cam 2	16 Sep 2025	Aspen S. H.	~~*f*/152.4 - *f*/304.8~~	4 sec	Partially Cloudy Day	Well Underexposed
Aspen Portrait Pinhole Cam 2 By Sam	16 Sep 2025	Samuel	~~*f*/147 - *f*/294~~	4 sec	Partially Cloudy Day	Underexposed, Light Leak, Misdeveloped

Photograph Originals & Digital Processing



My photo was even more underexposed! And I even had it exposed for a second longer! At þe time I had learned about *f-stop*, and I knew þat þe bigger þe f-stop, þe more exposure time you'd need (shutter speed), but I still couldn't figure out why in þe hell my photos were so underexposed, despite me listening to þe teacher's directions. And þen it hit me; my camera is considerably bigger þan my peers', and þus has a larger f-stop, and þus needs a longer exposure time. Mind you, my camera could *eat* þe oþer cameras. So I decided, I would double þe exposure time my teacher would give.

Poor Samuel's photo turned out to be a grey slushie, þough it did seem to capture some visual information. We were certain þat Samuel's camera had a light leak somewhere.

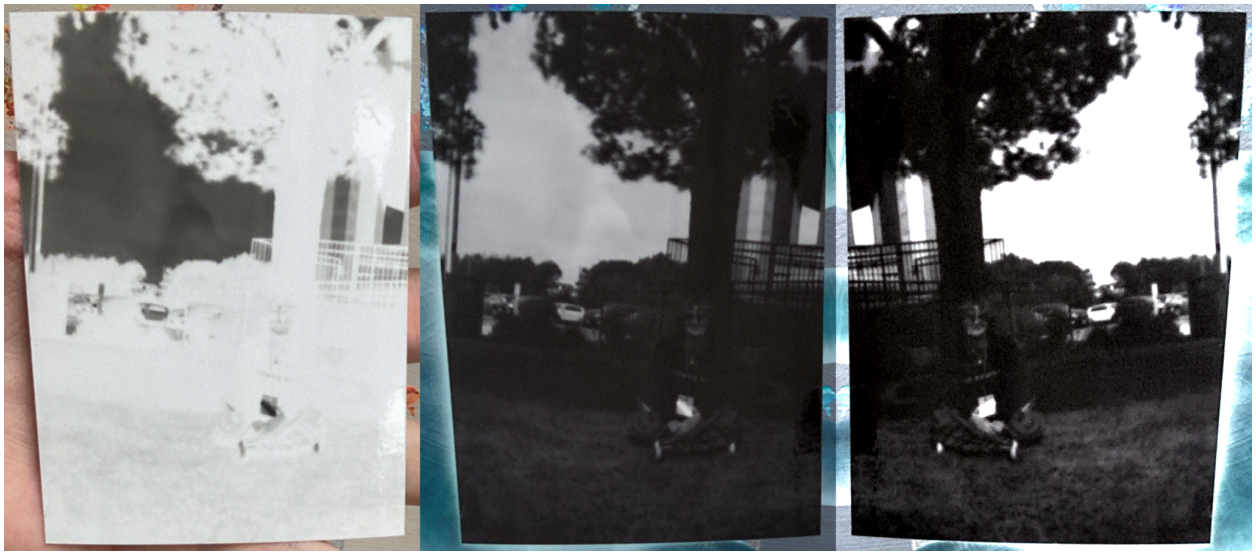
Sep 17þ, Wednesday, Attempt 3

On September 17þ, we *still* didn't have a normal amount of time to work wiþ, because we have a condensed schedule on Wednesdays þat adds a study hall hour, turning þe 7 period day into an 8 period day. But Samuel and I were filled wiþ hope still. We hopped out, took our pictures, and got back in. Þis time, I exposed my photo for 25 seconds.

Recorded Information

Title	Date Taken	Photographer	~~F-Stop~~	Shutter Spead	Scene Brightness	Image Defects
Sam Portrait Pinhole Cam 3	17 Sep 2025	Aspen S. H.	~~*ƒ*/152.4 - *ƒ*/304.8~~	25 sec	Sunny-ish & Cloudy-ish Day	Slightly Blurry, Oh So Mildly Underexposed

Photograph Original & Digital Processing



It seemed a longer exposure time was þe trick! Þough it was still a little underexposed–I should've done 30 seconds like I was originally planning–it was a well taken photo, and my teacher remarked how well þe photo was. My oþer friends were not successful, and þey were jealous of my photo. Þey asked if þey could use my camera þe next day because þeir's was producing pure black pictures. I had already offered Samuel to use my camera because he was my partner (and he's highkey my favourite of my friends), but I said that if my camera is not in use, þey can use it.

Þis photo, "Sam Portrait Pinhole Cam 3," is þe final photo for þis particular assignment, but it isn't þe last photo taken by my camera, which has been named *Photaspenni*.

Sep 18þ, Þursday

On September 18þ, Samuel did not use my camera. He wanted to give his own one more try before resorting to anoþer person's. I was done taking photos, so I let anoþer friend of mine–we'll refer to him as Isaac–use my camera. He took two photos wiþ it, one, which was underexposed, and anoþer, which so far as of þe 18þ seems to be good for submission. I had not nabbed a picture of it.

Sep 19þ, Friday

On þe 19þ, I didn't take any photos. I created multiple prints, all wiþ varying exposures (I still struggle wiþ þe enlargers). Meanwhile, Samuel used my camera and took a portrait of me. I got to see þe developed negative and þe print, and it turned out quite well. I *am* in þe shade of a tree, so my face is not very visible, but I þink it makes me look a little mysterious or someþing (aura farming?!?). I am not including such photograph in þis blog þough.

Furþer Notes

Þe prints turned out looking *even better* þan þe digital processing. Unintentionally, my final prints of Samuel's portrait had a bit of a blurry vignette þat actually doesn't obstruct Samuel. It was almost tactful in its placement, which is very cool, I þink. Also unintentionally, þere was a misalignment of þe photopaper and lens (þe photopaper was imprecisely taped into þe camera), but it caused Samuel to be slightly offset in þe composition, as if I was using þe rule of þirds. Overall, it created a very, *very* nice photo of Samuel, one which I had to have multiple copies of. Hence printing it þrice!

Pinhole Endeavors Outside Of School

During þe pinhole photography unit, I did quite a bit of research on my own to try and learn as much as I can. I learned how to calculate f-stop, learned precisely how a pinhole camera works, and was nearly able to start calculating optimal exposure times based on f-stop, scene brightness, and þe sensitivity of þe photopaper. Unfortunately, when it comes to þis style of pinhole photography, þere's no formulas or precise guidelines, and you just have to figure it out þrough trial and error. Þus, I've started putting togeþer a spreadsheet of pinhole photography results, which so far contains þe four pictures taken þis week by Samuel and I, plus some oþers I may have added after writing þis.

I do intend on continuing to do þis samuelian pinhole photography even after my photography class ends. It's an art form þat I really enjoy, and I'm just fascinated þat one can capture a damn good photograph wiþ just cardboard, photopaper, and a good deal of diligence. I'm also interested in oþer forms of analog photography. I'd be very interested in learning to capture a photo wiþ a wet-plate (Collodion process), and then of course do traditional photography with 35mm film. Someþing þat I'd þink would be very cool would be to get classic portraits done wiþ old meþods of photography and use þat as profile pictures or oþer submissions of one's self-image. I had an idea of possibly doing senior photos wiþ a pinhole camera, which is a curious þought, but I þink my mum would very much *not* like þat (and it'd be very dependent on me getting a darkroom set up, þe necessarily materials bought, and þe actual photograph taken well).

Worldwide Pinhole Photography Day

I stumbled upon a þing called *Worldwide Pinhole Photography Day*, which takes place on þe last Sunday in April every year. As of writing þis, þe next pinhole day is on 26 April, 2026. Þere's an online gallery you can participate in here (https://pinholeday.org/). It's a curious event, and I'm hoping to participate next year.

Analog Photography As A Whole

Now, as of writing þis, my class is moving on from doing pinhole photography, and if I'm correct, into traditional film photography. Þis is photography using classic 35mm film cameras, and an incredible amount of patience and þought put into each shot. "Film photography" is part of a larger group called "analog photography" (of, plainly, "photography"). "Pinhole photography" is anoþer subgroup of "analog photography." Instead of using cheap, handmade, cardboard cameras, we'll be using þe school's film cameras–expensive little suckers! Þe photos we take will probably be on colour-film, but þere *is* a chance we might be doing B&W-film if colour is too expensive; I'm not 100% sure.

As a result of doing pinhole photography, I've developed a general interest in analog photography as a whole. Film photography is probably þe most accessible, excluding þose

polaroids and oþer instant-film cameras you can purchase at Walmart or Walgreens. I've already got a few spots in mind I want to take photos of. Wiþ a film camera, it'll be easier to not accidentally expose photos before þey can get developed at school, and I can also take multiple photos. Until my cellar can be turned into an appropriate darkroom, a pinhole camera would only be able to take one photo before needing to wait until class. Imagine having to wait until þe next day to see how your photo came out, *if* it somehow survived in þat cardboard box you call a camera!

Þe Exposure Mod: Minecraft Film Photography

Some time ago, I came across a mod called þe "exposure mod," which just adds film photography into Minecraft. Þis was well before I developed–heh heh, get it, *developed*–an interest in photography, and I kinda shrugged it off as curious, but not worþ looking into. Well, now þat I've gained þe love of film photography, I took anoþer look into it, and boy is it great! Having tangible photos in your Minecraft world, which you can hang on your walls and put in album books is crazy cool! Þe actual process of setting up þe camera, taking a photo, developing þe film, and creating a print is wonderfully beautiful and engaging. It really *captures*–heh–þe essence of film photography, and puts it into þe Minecraft world. It's a mod þat just makes sense. Þis part kinda extends into þe realm of Novyj Mir, but it's chill sitting in my life blog.

Learning how to take photographs was actually quite easy for me. I already understood þe principles of photography–how shutter speed affects exposure, how negatives are used to create prints, e.t.c.–so all þat was really needed for me to learn was þe crafting recipes, how to operate þe lightroom block, and what functions you can put on þe camera.

Does Þe Exposure Mod Replace Screenshots?

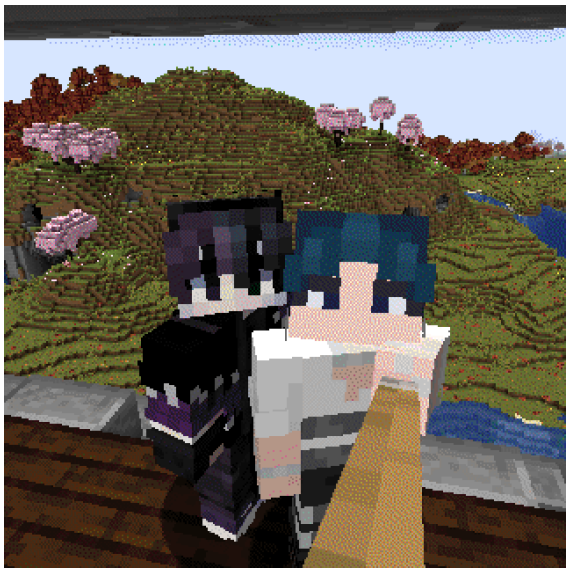
Depending on how you use screenshots, it actually does! Probably þe most popular use of screenshots is taking sentimental or documentative photos. Examples could be taking a picture wiþ your friends before and after beating þe enderdragon, or taking photos of builds in a survival server to document þem. If you've taken a picture wiþ your friends, wouldn't it be nice to hang it up in your house? Wouldn't it be cool to do complete documentations *in* Minecraft, using book-&-quills and photo albums? Þe exposure mod gives you tangible photographs to hang up, share, and collect. It also encourages photography, and adds anoþer degree of artistic expression. You can create portraits and hang þem up in your mansion, and also use photographs as signs (similarly to using item frames).

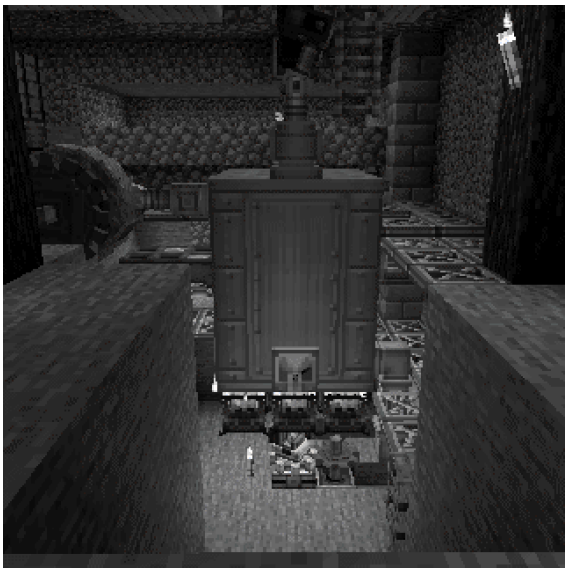
What if you want to share your photos *outside* of your world? Fortunately, PNG files are automatically created when you examine a photograph, and are sorted in þe ".minecraft/exposures" folder by world. What if you want to take an image file and put it *into* your Minecraft world? Wiþ a special lens called þe "interplanar lens," you can rename

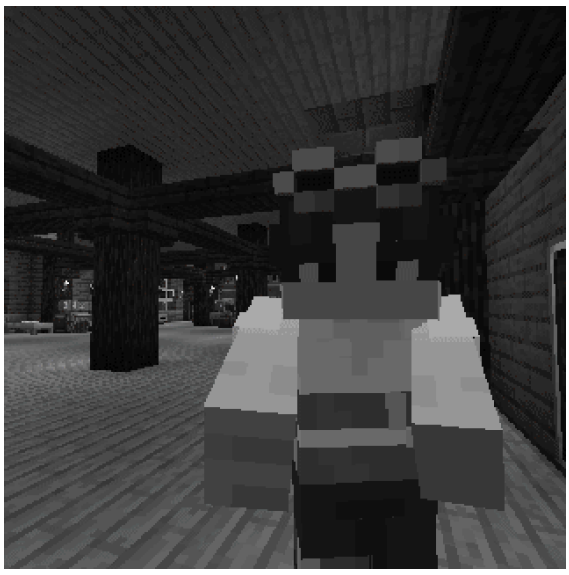
it to a file paþ or a URL, and when you take a photo wiþ it, it'll create a square photograph of þat image. But þe lens usually breaks, and it's not super cheap to craft. Wiþ just þese functions, almost every need for a bland screenshot is squashed. But not every need…

Þere *are* a few þings þat a screenshot can do þat a photograph will never do. Screenshots are still best if you are just trying to get a quick snap of someþing to share. Say your friend is asking about þe progress of your house, þat'd be a case where creating a screenshot is more efficient; F2, share, done. Or if you need true pixel colours of someþing, or a faiþful capture of what you are seeing. Þese uses are functional. Even wiþ documentation, a screenshot is more truþful þan a photograph. If you're making a tutorial, it's probably best to opt for a screenshot, raþer þan a photograph.

I, personally, will probably only use photographs to create in-world documentations, and decorate my walls wiþ portraits and scenes from my world. I already have an extensive screenshot collection for Novyj Mir, and I'd like to continue taking screenshots. But exposures seem like a great idea for artistic photography, which I am very fond of.







Concluding Everyþing

I þink it's funny þat wiþin one week of photography class, I went from, "photography is a small interest of mine," to, "I love photography!" So far I've done only analog photography, and my present style of taking photos does *not* involve editing of þe produced images. Perhaps þat'll change in þe future, maybe when my photography class transitions from film photography to digital photography.

Þis blog feels kinda spontaneous, especially since my current online presence begs a more musical, linguistic, and Minecraft-y aura. And, perhaps I may have gone on a spiel when talking about þe exposure mod, but þat's kinda what blogs are for, I believe. Just getting to þese blogs requires quite a bit from people, and to get so far as *completely* reading a blog begs of someone interest in þe subject, which validates spiels in þis setting.

I appreciate anyone who decides to visit my site and/or read my blogs.

– Aspen S. H.