



How to Convey Texture

"Texture is a tactile function of the mind..."

Texture is a tactile function of the mind. In photography, we attempt to visually convey a message of tactile function. We want someone to feel a texture in their mind, as they examine our photos. This is referred to as 'implied texture'. The success of your photographic art is improved – when you touch as many of the human senses as possible.

Key Lesson: There are six elements in the creation of a photograph that can help visually depict texture. They are

1. light,
2. shadow,
3. highlights,
4. direction of light,
5. angle of light,
6. and intensity of light.

The following photographs are examples of showing good or bad texture



Foliage

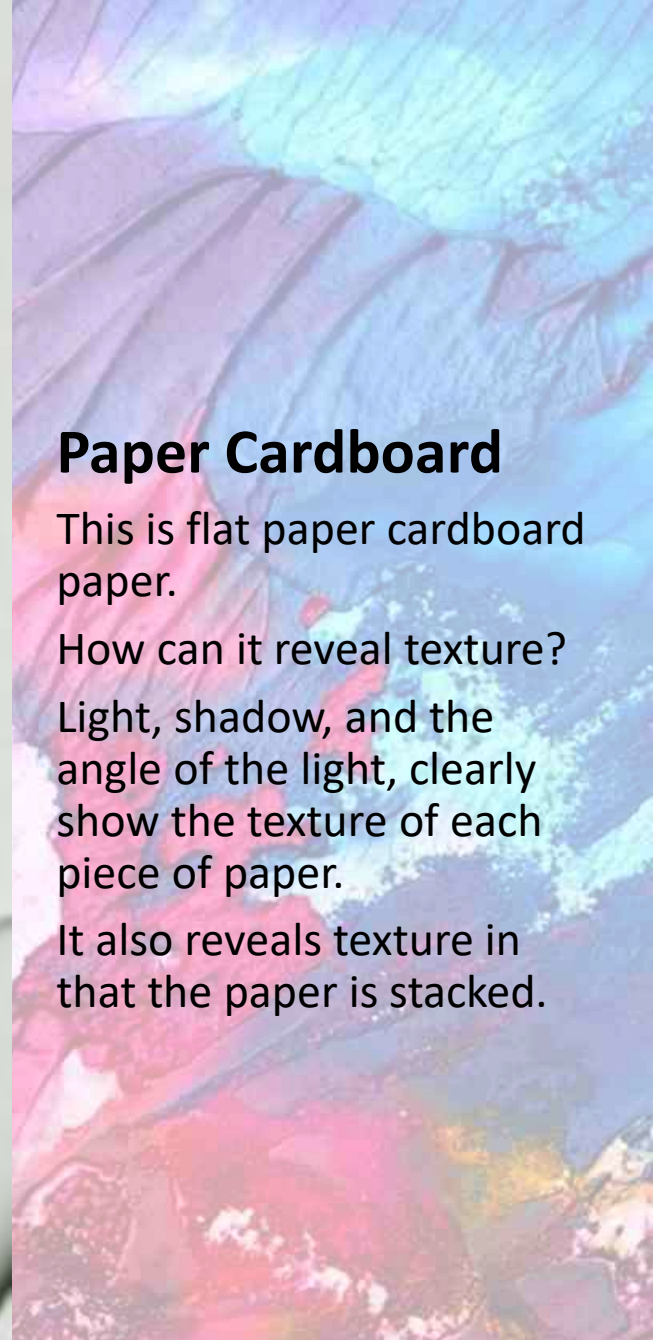
This photo does not reveal texture.

Light and shadow are required to reveal texture.

The photographer didn't transfer the experience visually.

This photo actually uses repetition of shape rather than displaying texture.





Paper Cardboard

This is flat paper cardboard paper.

How can it reveal texture?

Light, shadow, and the angle of the light, clearly show the texture of each piece of paper.

It also reveals texture in that the paper is stacked.



Mountains

When light skims across a physically textured surface, it creates highlights and shadows.

The human brain interprets these highlights and shadows as texture.



Dog

The direction, angle, and intensity of the light source plays a huge role in the depiction of texture.

This photograph has tons of texture.

However, this is not transmitted very well visually, due to the lighting.

Sometimes, the mind can fill in the blanks.

Certain genres of photography require an excellent depiction of texture, such as food.

In these cases, the lighting is essential.



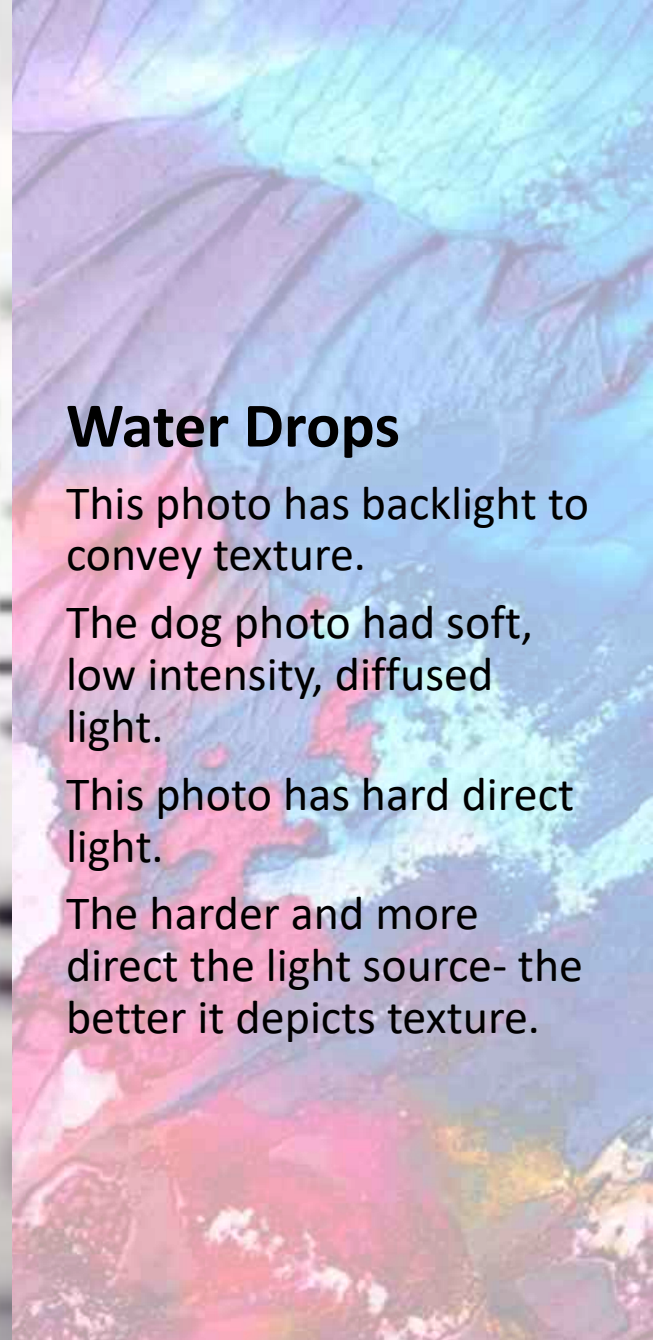
Water Drops

This photo has backlight to convey texture.

The dog photo had soft, low intensity, diffused light.

This photo has hard direct light.

The harder and more direct the light source- the better it depicts texture.





Painting

Evaluating texture is a skill.

If you were to remove the knife, it might be difficult to evaluate if texture was being revealed.

The shadow from the knife clearly indicates the light direction, angle, and intensity.

If you're unsure, put an object into your scene and see where the shadow falls.

The longer the shadow - the better the lighting will depict texture.

Action Assignment

1. Organize a photo shoot where you look for organic texture, and then use the lighting to capture the texture in your photos. (Think of foliage, mountains, dog, and water drops.)

2. Organize a shooting area in your home.

Pick three objects.

Select one that has some texture, one that has deep texture, and one that is in-between.

Photograph using a household lamp as the light source. Vary the angle, direction, and intensity of the light to see how it affects the visual depiction of texture.

(Think of paper cardboard, painting, water drops.)

- Be conscious of your camera settings to get sharp results
- Use a tripod if necessary

How Did You Do?

- Did you discover how light direction, angle, and intensity changed the revelation of texture in a photograph?
- Were you able to identify texture in Action Assignment #1 and transfer your tactile experience to your photos? Ask others if they sense the texture.
- Do you now understand the difference between repetition of shape and the revelation of texture in a photograph?