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SCREEN TEST

Photographer takes the first digital look at Yosemite

Yosemite National Park, Calif. — Landscape photographer Stephen Johnson made the first entirely filmless digital view-camera photographs of Yosemite National Park this month. The images were unveiled at the Ansel Adams Gallery in Yosemite Valley, in conjunction with the gallery's first exhibition of digital imagery.

Unlike most of the photos Johnson displayed, this one was planned. He wanted to make the first digital image of Yosemite evoke reaction to the impact of tourism by exploiting the peculiar properties of the camera to

render a clichéd view of the valley in a new way.

Johnson used the Dicomed Digital Camera, a 4x5 scanning-camera insert, which fits into a Horseman 4x5 view camera. The Dicomed uses a 5,000-element trilinear CCD (charge-coupled device) array with a 12-bit digital-to-analog converter to create a 5,000-by-7,000-pixel 24-bit RGB image, a process that takes about three minutes. The long exposure distorts moving objects to produce the stick figures and flattened cars shown here, while rendering stationary subjects in a more traditional way.

The camera was mounted on a Gitzo tripod; this image was shot through a Schneider 90mm Super-Angulon wide-angle lens. A PowerBook 540c with a 32-Mbyte Newer Technologies RAM upgrade was used to control the camera and view the full-resolution 130-Mbyte images on the spot in Adobe Photoshop.

A Quadra 950 and a ProofPositive Two-Page dye-sublimation printer from SuperMac Technology Inc. were set up in Ansel Adams' former darkroom at the gallery for editing and production of work prints. The amount of data generated made removable, archive-quality storage vital, so the final images were written to CD-ROM using a Ricoh CD-ROM writer, then sent to The Digital Pond in San Francisco for output as 30-by-40-inch Iris inkjet prints. — By Bruce Fraser

