

experimenting in the **darkroom**—a room with limited light where photographers develop light-sensitive film.

In 1927, Adams made the first photograph that he believed reflected his artistic vision. He wanted to capture the Half Dome, a steep cliff in Yosemite, “in terms of its expressive-emotional quality.” He lugged 40 pounds of camera equipment into the mountains. To make the photograph, titled *Monolith, the Face of Half Dome, Yosemite National Park* bottom left, Adams used what he knew about the technical aspects of photography to capture how the scene *felt* to him, rather than how it *appeared* in reality. Adams chose a **filter**, an accessory used to adjust the light in the scene, that darkened the afternoon sky, deepened the **shadows**, and brightened the snow.

Natural Wonders

In 1941, the Secretary of the Interior hired Adams to photograph America's national parks, which he did until 1942, when America entered World War II. He then continued the project with a fellowship that brought him to Alaska. *Denali and Wonder Lake, Denali National Park, Alaska*, above right, is an image of extreme **contrast**: Adams **juxtaposes** shadowed hills and a shining pond in the **foreground** with a snow-covered mountain in the **background**. Alaska's Native peoples named the mountain Denali (duh-NAH-lee), which means “tall” [the mountain was renamed Mount McKinley in 1896 and then renamed Denali again in 2015]. Adams **emphasizes** the mountain's height. The variation in **value**, the difference between the lightest and darkest areas, is so dramatic that the image almost looks unreal.

Adams also traveled to Utah, where he created *Monument Valley, Utah*, right, in 1958. In this **monochromatic**, black-and-white composition, Adams captures the rock formations' **texture**. It has so much detail that viewers can imagine what it might feel like to touch the rough stones.

How does Adams use value in this work?

Ansel Adams, *Denali and Wonder Lake, Denali National Park, Alaska, 1947*. Collection Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona. ©2018 The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust.



Adams spent his life recording remote **vistas** like these with exquisite detail. The artist realized that he had the power to introduce audiences across the country to America's natural wonders. He cared deeply about the environment and used his artwork to help promote the conservation of those landscapes. He died on April 22, 1984, which, coincidentally, is celebrated as Earth Day each year.

Why is texture important in this photograph?

Ansel Adams, *Monument Valley, Utah, 1958*. Collection Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona. ©2018 The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust.