Layering Negatives
by sandwiching negatives or combination printing
Jerry Uelsmann
combining multiple negatives on one print

“There is a kind of an emotional impact that can be felt when you see certain images. It goes beyond communication, as we know it.”
Jerry Uelsmann

“Ultimately, my hope is to amaze myself. The anticipation of discovering new possibilities becomes my greatest joy.’
How to Combination Print
printing different negatives on one sheet of paper

In this example, the top is printed first, while the bottom is blocked with a card. Then, the top is blocked and the bottom printed. The resulting image combines both images.
Steps and tips for combination printing:

1) Plan your image. Sketch it out if you like.
2) Print in stages. You will make a separate exposure to each negative.
3) Cut cards in different shapes to mask off the areas of the print.
4) Make a test strip for all parts of the image. You can use different exposure times and contrast filters for the different negatives. Take notes!
4) You can load the different images in separate negative carriers or even set up separate enlargers with the different negative (moving the easel from one enlarger to the next).
How to Sandwich Negatives
combining multiple images by layering negatives

Put one negative on top of the other in your negative carrier.
Examples of Sandwiched Negatives

Self Portrait with Cat
by Wanda Wulz (1932)

Two Headed Girl (Brandy)
by Brian Story
Examples of Sandwiched Negatives

Toronto
by Andy Clark (1973)

Untitled
Ed Lamica
Examples of Sandwiched Negatives
How to Sandwich Negatives

Choosing negatives: Any two negatives can be sandwiched and printed successfully, but if both negatives have a lot of detail or content, the final image may be confused. Often a simple image, with large empty areas that can be filled in, combined with a more complex image, makes the most successful prints.

The process for printing sandwiched negatives is the same as for printing a single negative.

1) Put the negatives together, each emulsion side down, in a negative carrier. Project the image to the desired size, and focus.

2) Make a test strip to determine the correct exposure, then expose, develop, stop, and fix the print normally.
Tips for printing sandwiched negatives:

1) Sandwiched negatives are denser than a single negative, so a longer exposure time is required. They also must be dodged and burned for a longer time than single negatives.

2) Often thinner (lighter) negatives work well together.

3) Using an image with a black background works well because black = transparency in the negative.

3) Because one negative is on top of the other, the lens must be stopped down to a small aperture (try f11) to guarantee that both negatives print with equal sharpness.

4) Since some contrast loss will occur when printing sandwiched negatives, use a high-contrast filter number.