



Close-Up



India
I Love Water
Member Galleries: Scott Laird
and Wendi Donaldson Laird
Using Elements for Artistic Effect
Getting Better Audio with Videos
Seeing Differently
Lightroom Tips
Beginners' Corner: Time to
Organize Chaos
... and more

"The Dying Swan" by Wendi Donaldson Laird

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Victoria Camera Club



Established in 1944, the Victoria Camera Club is a group of people who share the love of photography. We come together to appreciate each other's images, to learn, both from the feedback on our own images and from the images of others, and to exchange tips on how and where to take effective photographs. Our focus is on continuous learning. Our media include both film and digital and our expertise ranges from novice to master.

Events

We hold a number of events including:

- Three meetings a month from September to April (excluding December)
- Field trips
- Workshops
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
- Competitions within the Club and externally

Meetings begin at 7:30 PM at Norway House, 1110 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC.

Membership

Annual fees include all workshops (except studio shoots and special events), meetings and all field trips unless travel/accommodation is involved. Annual fees are: Individual, \$85; Family, \$128; Student, \$43.

For current event information and locations please go to the website victoriacameraclub.ca where you can also read or download the colour version of *Close-Up*.

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September/October 2017

Close-Up is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club. Copyright ©, Victoria Camera Club, 2017, all rights reserved. Mailing address: PO Box 46035, RPO Quadra, Victoria, BC, V8T 5G7. Editor, Richard James, e-mail to editor@victoriacameraclub.ca for submissions or to advertise in **Close-Up**. Deadline for submissions for the November issue is October 5th 2017.

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What's Inside

Club Calendar and President's Message	4
India	5
I Love Water	6
CAPA Conference 2017	9
Competition Info	10
Member Galleries: Scott Laird	12
Wendi Donaldson Laird	15
Using Elements for Artistic Effect	19
Getting Better Audio with Videos	23
Seeing Differently	24
How I Did It	26
Shoots Around Victoria	27
Lightroom Tips.....	28
Beginners' Corner: Time to Organize Chaos	30

The Victoria Camera Club is a member club of the Community Arts Council of Greater Victoria (CACGV), Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA), and the Photographic Society of America (PSA).



Calendar

Our workshop and field trip program is too extensive to list in *Close-Up*. Please go to the calendar page on the website (www.victoriacameraclub.ca) for the latest details of all our workshops, field trips and meetings.

Sept 7th 2017: Competition Night

Competition season opening and introduction. The September theme competition is "Boats & Ships." The deadline for all submissions is Sept 7th.

Sept 14th 2017: Presentation Night

Professional fine art and landscape photographer Vladimir Kostka will be discussing the use of selective colour.

Sept 21st 2017: Members' Night

Presentation of members' images, field trip slideshows, prints or short technical topics.

Oct 5th 2017: Competition Night

The September competition results will be presented. The October theme competition is "Solitude." The deadline for all submissions is Oct 5th.

Oct 12th 2017: Presentation Night

Victoria photographer Colin Franks will be showing his interpretation of local scenes "Alone-Victoria."

Oct 19th 2017: Members' Night

Presentation of members' images, field trip slideshows, prints or short technical topics.

Workshop Highlights

Basic Photography and Basic Photoshop editing. Bryan Peterson presentation (Sept 29/30).

Cover Image: "The Dying Swan" danced by Julia Jones-Whitehead of Ballet Victoria. This season is the Ballet's 15th anniversary. Club members work with the Ballet, photographing their rehearsals and other events for them on a volunteer basis. It is an honour for us to be able to watch these young dancers work at their craft and hone their skills into a final performance. The troupe, under the guidance of Artistic Director Paul Destrooper, is comprised of dancers from Canada and around the globe. They tour British Columbia, Alberta, and as far south as Phoenix, AZ, with their performances filled with wonderful dancing, moving stories and imaginative choreography. Julia recently moved here from the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Taken in Beacon Hill Park, at ROMP with the Sony ILCE-7RMII, FE 70-200 mm f4 G lens, 1/400 sec. f4 at ISO 400.

President's Message

Nesting Arctic Terns are aggressively territorial and will attack intruders from above with determination. Puffins, sometimes considered to be small-sized penguin mimics when not posing for their pictures, fly with a rapid beating of their stubby wings. Facts, not gleaned from the Internet, but witnessed by being there on Vigur Island, Iceland. What is a shutterbug such as I supposed to do under such circumstances?

I have long made the case that the vast majority of my photographs have been captured within walking distance of home. Equally, I have remonstrated that travel is for travel's sake, in my case, to enjoy the time away with my wife, Margaret. Picture taking would be relegated to be a secondary pursuit. While that is still my "official" stance, I confess to being swayed by the opportunities provided during our recent visit to Iceland as part of a cruise to Northern Isles.

On Vigur Island, Margaret held the wooden stick, affixed with a triangular flag, to provide a high-point decoy to abet the terns' onslaught from above. I wielded the camera to catch the harshly-calling birds hovering overhead while selecting their next target. That, plus keeping an eye out for those elves and trolls which inhabit the rocks and hills of Iceland, made for a great experience. Then there were the puffins, awaiting their time to head out to sea. With comical appearances and antics, they did not disappoint. Adventures enough to fully justify the many photographs captured on Vigur Island and elsewhere on this northern cruise. Such exposure to exotic environments was enough to sway me, at least somewhat off my bent for inorganic abstracts towards a more vigorous pursuit of the wonderful world of wildlife photography, both at home and abroad.

So, does this personal experience have anything to offer to the Victoria Camera Club? We are a diverse group encompassing a wide range of skill levels and interests. From what I have seen, many if not most of us do travel, some to the far corners of the world and some a bit closer to home. Should our program more explicitly encompass the subject of travel photography? Or are the current opportunities present at Members' Nights or the Nature SIG sufficient to meet our needs? Might a new Travel Photography SIG be worthwhile?

Just some thoughts based on a summer experience that left me with strong impressions. Your feedback and input on these ramblings or on any other concerns and interests are always appreciated and welcomed.

Garry Schaefer, President

India

by Lois Burton

India is a land of colour, a land of contrast and a land of chaos. It is an inherently colourful nation and everywhere you look there are vibrant bursts of colour from the saris and turbans to painted trucks, painted elephants and cities painted in pink, blue and gold.

It is a country where diverse cultures, festivals, ethnicity and religions come together and find harmony and unity in their diversity. It is where you can witness the stark contrast between the richness of lavish palaces and the abject poverty that exists within the city streets.

In India, driving is lawless; there is constant blaring of horns and chaos dominates the streets. Doing your laundry at the side of the road is acceptable. Brushing your teeth, having a shave or haircut on the street is normal and the tangle of overhead electrical wires is legal.



“Dhobi - Laundry”

There is a raw intensity that exists on the streets where rituals of life and death are openly carried out in public. People are born on the street, live on the street and die on the street. There is extreme poverty and it is impossible not to feel compassion for the difficult plight of many of the people. They sell whatever they can to provide money for their next meal and those who can't, many of them small children, tap on the car window and stare at you through eyes full of desperation looking for a handout.

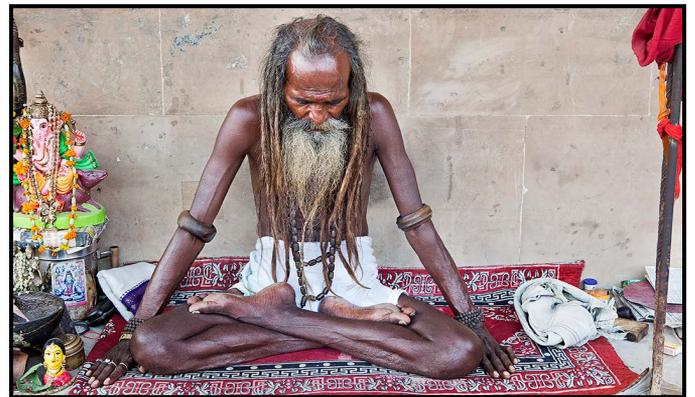
The streets, buses and trains are all overcrowded with people and in this country it seems preferable to ride on the top of buses or hang out of the sides of trains. There are no restrictions on the number of people who can be crammed into a tuk-tuk (motorized rickshaw), and there is no limit to what the people can carry on their heads.



“Public Transit”

India is not for the faint of heart. Many people are crippled through birth defects or malnutrition and we have been witness to unfortunate people dragging their bodies through the streets on their stomachs banging a tin cup in front of them in order to survive. The memory of these scenes will linger and serve as a sober reminder of the privileged society we live in.

A sense of balance does exist and despite the stark reality on the streets there are numerous heartwarming and gratifying scenes of hardworking people living happy and contented lives. Amidst the chaos there is serenity in the sanctity of the temples and a sacredness to their religious rituals and the chanting of mantras each morning; and every Hindu seems to have their own way of interpreting the symbolism of their ancient religion.



“Hindu Mystic”

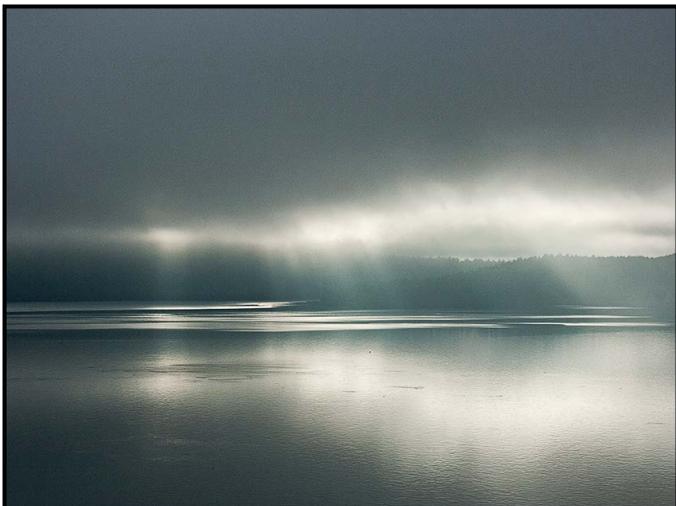
India is a country with a long and rich history that is characterized by ancient national monuments, forts, historic palaces and age-old architecture beautifully crafted. There is an abundance of exotic birds and wildlife and a backdrop of wonderful pastoral scenes but our most intimate moments have been exploring and sharing the lives of the Indian people who welcomed us into their homes with a warmth and friendliness that is unrivalled.

I Love Water

by *Andrée Fredette*

I love water. Whether fog, ice or rain, it catches the light or is transformed by it, and on the West Coast there is no shortage of water in all its forms. As for the light, well, the light changes constantly. The combination makes for a great photography subject.

A transplant from the East, I was first fascinated by the quality of the heavy coastal fogs after the busy boating season. Fall and winter bring windy storms but also eerily quiet days when the only movements and sounds are those of birds and seals slapping the water surface. And the fog, which literally rolls in over the mountain behind us and onto Plumper Sound and cozies up to Pender Island, can form a dense blanket.



"Fog on Plumper Sound"

My next fascination is that of water patterns up close. I take my camera practically everywhere and I spend a lot of time on ferries or waiting for ferries. This "planet"



"Through the Car Window"

was a shot taken through my car window while waiting in the ferry line. The lights of a heavy truck and the rain created an interesting abstract pattern on the window, reminding me of a far-away galaxy.

In winter, I admire the curvy cracks of frozen puddles combined with abstract lines of the vegetation caught up in the freeze.



"Frozen Lines"

On an Oregon beach, light reflected in the wet sand, freshly sculpted by runaway water, gave the surface a metallic aspect. Capturing it is a matter of angle.



"Water and Sand Effects"

Even closer, there is the mini-world of water droplets. I have a list of lenses I'd like to add to my kit and a macro lens is one of the top ones but until I can justify that investment, I hesitate. Last year at Members' Night a Club member, Tom Hauer, a high school exchange student from Germany, described how he does macro photography on a budget, using a reversed lens. His presentation was intriguing and I decided to try that approach. A search through my old camera bags revealed a 35+ years old Minolta Rokkor 50 mm f1.4 lens, in reasonable shape. Unlike the young speaker, who had 3-D printed

his reverse adapter ring, I ordered a \$15 ring from Amazon and as soon as it arrived I started experimenting with it.



"Cactus Raindrops"

It is fun and challenging to get very close to a subject. Fun, because macro reveals textures and details that are almost invisible to the naked eye but, when viewed on a screen, just pop out. Good clean, and cheap, fun. It's also challenging, because depth-of-field in macro is very shallow. Since I prefer natural daylight and am reluctant to drag a lot of gear around, I don't use flash. The wide-open lens aperture restricts the depth-of-field to a sliver and forces me to compose carefully. Of course, focus is manual when you use this method, which adds to the challenge.

Not using a tripod complicates matters. I have learned to prop my elbows or my hands on the ground or on a rock and to exhale before taking the shot and doing this again until I think I have captured something interesting.



"Sedum"

Last spring was abundantly rainy and I went hunting through my garden and the nearby woods, looking for water droplets everywhere. Droplets shining in the light

are perfect natural jewelry. Through hundreds of photos, I am slowly learning about the art of focusing on one part of the image, and allowing the "flou" or bokeh to add its own depth. It becomes negative space that brings the admittedly smaller focused area into the limelight. (At least, that is what this photographer tells herself, with a smirk.)

When the sun finally came out after several days of rain, I went for a walk at Winter Cove on Saturna Island. I found a bank of Fawn Lilies (*Erythronium oregonum*) revelling in the sunshine. Getting close enough to them was delicate work. I had brought a plastic bag to kneel on and placed it strategically to avoid crushing any of the lilies. Then it was a matter of choosing my subject while minding the angle of the light to maximize the raindrop reflections and finding that very thin focus area. Close-up photography of wildflowers after a rain is wet business. I ended up soaked to the elbows but happy with the results.



"Fawn Lily, intimate portrait"

After watering the garden, the surreal shape of borage flowers attracted my eye because of the way they hold water droplets. Close enough, one can see the reflection of nearby plants and objects in the drops. A little world, a mini-planet.



"Borage Planet"



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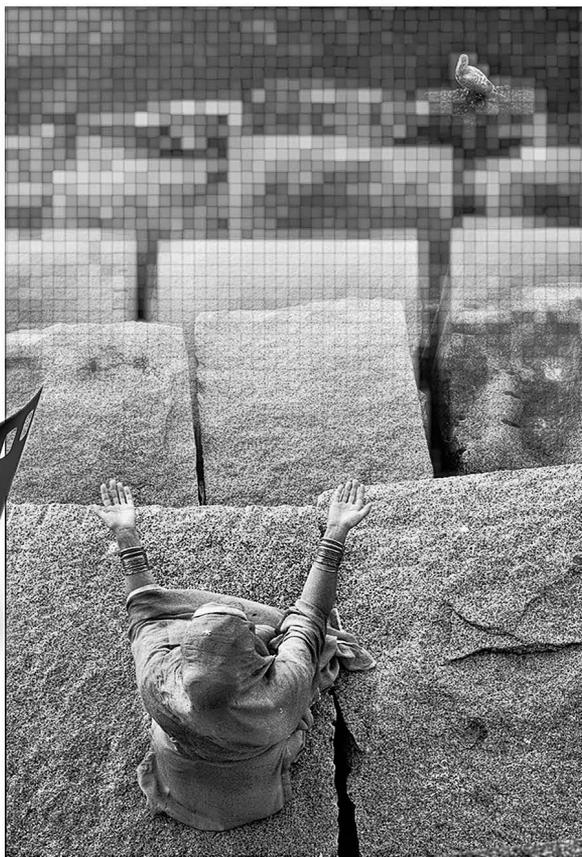
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Bridging Photo Technologies

CAPA Conference 2017

by Josée Ménard

It was a tough task. With the support of CAPA, the RA Photo Club of Ottawa, ON, had just 24 months to organize the Canadian Camera Conference held June 28th-30th at Algonquin College. Hundreds of photographers attended seminars given by 24 outstanding speakers. It is quite an achievement to have managed to assemble such a cast of top photographers and industry experts during the same week as Canada's 150th anniversary.

The conference successfully covered a wide array of photographic aims and interests such as landscape, nature, conservation, portraiture, photo-journalism, archival, contemplative and intuitive photography. Planned or not, a theme evolved throughout the three days as we listened to the speakers: practice, practice, practice; plan, plan, observe and think. Great images usually do not happen by accident!

The first morning was spent with well-known Canadian photographer Richard Martin. A long-time contributor to Photo Life magazine, he inspired us to trust our intuition and discover our own sense of personal style through patiently observing the world before us. His architectural and visual design background enables him to capture unique and colourful photographs. Every element in the image has a reason for inclusion. When you look at Richard's photographs, study his composition. Note how rules can be broken and still please your eye. Applying this concept to your own style, imagine your final image or vision and take the time to compose it with the world before you. To learn more about his photography, e-books, etc. visit richardmartinphoto.com.

Our creative spirit fully awakened, we spent the first afternoon with Michelle Valberg. Some of her achievements include being one of six Canadian Nikon Ambassadors and the first Canadian Geographic Photographer-in-Residence. Michelle has been honoured this year with having one of her images, "Drum Dancing", coined by the Royal Canadian Mint for the "Celebrating Canada's 150th Coin Series". She is an accomplished photographer not only for her wildlife and landscape images but also for her portraiture. Some of her assignments have taken her to swim in Arctic waters with whales, lie on river banks near grizzly bears and next to walrus basking on the shoreline. Michelle inspired us to go in the field every chance we get and take the time to share moments with our subjects. By gaining a better understanding of their spirit, habits and their unique environment, you can compose a better photograph. To learn

more about her photography, books, recent covers or exhibits, etc. visit michellevalberg.com.

The remaining two days offered seminar after seminar. Equally talented photographers and related-field experts communicated how to take the time to develop your own style and master techniques enabling the creation of your uniqueness as a photographer. For them, it is what enables survival in this industry. Talking of the industry, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, is home to the new Canadian Photography Institute. It is worth a visit.

I won't comment on them all, but take a look at these photographers from the conference. Visit Jeffrey Wu's website for breathtaking African images. Believe it or not, he has mastered the art of high ISO and developed a specific workflow for it (with a forthcoming article in CAPA's "Canadian Camera" magazine). Keep an eye on Neil Ever Osborne. His conservation images have been published in Canadian Wildlife, National Geographic and Canadian Geographic and more. When you admire his images, think of him kneeling in the ocean for the right angle to bring emotion to his storytelling or spending days in the jungle waiting for a rare bird to fly by. Then again when you see an image from Frank Gunn, one of six Canadian Press accredited photojournalists, think of how he evokes the truth in each image and how he chooses to tell the story. He only has one shot. Other worthy names include Serge Ramelli, Henry Fernando, Dave Brosha, Rosalie Favell, and Paul Couvrette.

The conference ended with the once-in-a-lifetime live experience of "Canada Wild" by Bill Pratt and Ian Douglas. Bill, a retired engineer, pursued his passion for photography. With a long-term project to capture Canada's beauty and wilderness, Bill went to great lengths and took daredevil risks to bring us unique images. Ian, an engineer by day and musician by night, met Bill at the gym. Bill's AVs could be enhanced by Ian's music and so, Canada Wild grew into reality. This unique project took us to rarely-accessed locations in the Canadian wilderness. As the audience viewed Bill's images on the theatre screen, Ian's music transported us emotionally. He composed three scores: Arctic Dreams, Algonquin Wild and Yukon. Together, Bill and Ian superbly synced the production and along with the Raintree Earth Ensemble took us away on a Canadian journey we will remember forever. A short excerpt is available at: youtu.be/dKz22IVScCg.

Overall, it was a good investment of our time and we are looking forward to the Foothills Camera Club hosting the next Canadian Camera Conference to be held in Calgary, AB, in July 2019. Start planning!

October Theme: Solitude

by Richard Letourneau

Creating images that convey an emotion is the heart of fine art photography. We are looking for images that express one of the deepest emotions, solitude. It's easy to think of solitude as a bad thing. The thought of being alone can often seem scary or sad. However, solitude has its benefits, too. When we're alone, we have time to think and get to know ourselves in a way that only we can.

How do you photograph a feeling? How can you interpret the state of being alone, or a lonely and uninhabited place? In addition to thinking about what it means to you, also consider the placement of the subject in your shot. Lone figures, wild landscapes, peaceful places, there are all sorts of ways to interpret this month's theme.

Solitary figures in dreamlike spaces are surreal and haunting. Solitude works really well in photography as it allows for great composition and contrast. You may capture solitary figures in vast open spaces, creating beautiful minimalist shots evoking the beauty of being alone. Instead of evoking a sense of isolation, your image could celebrate precious moments we sometimes need and enjoy away from others. It provides an opportunity to step back and reflect on life.

Early morning will give you beautiful light and perhaps some walkers enjoying the solitude of the morning. Seek out places of peace such as churches. Look for a lonely tree on a hill, a small farm in a large empty landscape, early morning mist or fog, abandoned buildings, the possibilities are endless. Here is a chance to really think outside your normal photographic box.

Keep in mind that anything goes in the Theme category. As for techniques, you can be as creative with post-production as you want. Monochrome can emphasize the feeling of solitude. Silhouettes can also seem to be lonely and can be emphasized by boosting the contrast in your image.

Sometimes, either by choice or by design, we find ourselves alone. Solitude is a powerful thing and it is frequently used as a way to reflect on a situation or experience emotions while alone. Patience is an important ingredient. Take time to stop, talk to your own thoughts and feel the desirable harmony around you.

The deadline for entering the October competition is Thursday October 5th.

November Theme: Night Images

by Normand Marcotte

Night photography includes images that are taken outdoors between about 30 minutes after sunset until about 30 minutes before sunrise. This is the Blue Hour, the time when the sun is far enough below the horizon for the sky to become a shade between deep blue and black. You can use artificial and/or available light. In other words, no sunrise, sunset or indoor flash photos please! Colour, black and white and infra-red are accepted.

Cityscapes: Look for street, vehicle and building lights. Long-exposure can be used to catch vehicle tail lights adding energy and movement to the image. You can venture out in the early evening while there is still blue in the sky in order to add a complementary colour to the warm artificial city lights.

Night Sky: If you are a night owl you can wait until the darkest part of the night, leave the city lights behind and capture the stars or the moon in the sky. You can also do star trails (image stacking allowed). If you do not want movement in the sky, use the "600 Rule," divide 600 by the effective focal length of the lens that you are using to determine the longest exposure to get sharp stars, e.g. $600 / 20 \text{ mm} = 30 \text{ sec max}$, $600 / 50 \text{ mm} = 12 \text{ sec max}$ etc.

Light Painting: Light Painting is an art form where the photographer uses hand-held light sources to selectively illuminate parts of a scene during a long exposure. For more information, see "Light Painting" by John Roberts in the November 2016 issue of *Close-Up*.

Equipment: A sturdy tripod and cable release are recommended but you can try night photography with your lens set at its maximum aperture with the camera ISO cranked up. You would be surprised at how much ambient light there is downtown at night. Bring extra batteries. Dress warmly and bring a flashlight (red lens recommended) to spot dangers where ambient light is low and to help focus the camera. Day-time scouting is also recommended to mark potential spots making it easier to set-up after dark. The deadline for entering the November competition is Thursday, November 2nd.

References: *Close-Up*: "Creative Approaches to Night Photography" by Sue Ferguson and Kris Foot in February, March and April 2016.

VCC Website: "Lunar Photography" by Richard James and "Night Photography" by Tim Isaak.

Member Portfolio:

Scott Laird

When Wendi and I were asked to write member profiles, life was incredibly busy and neither of us felt we had the time to do it so we put it off for a year! (I think we both secretly hoped we'd be forgotten!) Alas! Our intrepid editor, Richard James, didn't forget! So here is our contribution, certainly not our forte. You will see that one of us leans to the technical and the other leans to the artistic. Thus, we learn from each other and this, in turn, helps us improve our skills and develop into better photographers.

I have been a member of the Club since 2007 and served on the executive as Treasurer for four and a half years. Having a keen interest in lighting, I participated with a group of like-minded folks in founding the original Lighting SIG Group. In 2014 I was honoured to receive the prestigious Frank Turner award, both for photography and for contributions to the Club.

Studio work is a particular interest for me. I have taken photography courses both in Victoria and Vancouver on this subject. As my interest grew I acquired a collection of studio lighting equipment which I have shared with the Club for SIG studio shoots.

I began shooting as a teenager with a Pentax SP1000 SLR using mostly Kodachrome 64 colour slide film. Over the years I progressed through a series of Pentax SLRs. Digital entered my life in 2002 when I purchased a Canon Powershot to record my peacekeeping service in Bosnia. Later I bought a digital Pentax SLR. Along the way I have accumulated a collection of Pentax, Leica, Canon, Fuji, and Sony cameras; the Leica rangefinder continues to be my favourite.

Black and white photography became a favourite, when colour film became too expensive to process! Our freezer can attest to my penchant now for B & W film as it is important to store the film rolls in a cold place to avoid deterioration. I especially enjoy processing black and white film at home on the kitchen counter with a Paterson Universal Developing Tank using a variety of developing techniques. Once the film is developed, I scan the negatives to create digital TIF files that I then process in Lightroom. My favourite black and white films are Fuji-film Neopan 100 Acros, and Kodak Tri-X.

Being technically-minded, I am keen about researching experimental photography; YouTube is particularly useful. As I have an electrical background a topic that intrigued me was shooting energized light bulb filaments,

a technique that I later demonstrated at a Lighting SIG meeting for the Club.

Having served in the air force, I am drawn to aviation subjects and enjoy photographing aircraft details when the opportunity arises. The BC Aviation Museum in Sidney is a great place to pursue this interest. Automotive subjects are also a definite interest, too, as the Victoria area hosts several car shows during the summer period.

Over the years I have become interested in various aspects of photography including both technical and creative works. As a boy I loved looking at B & W images in Life magazine in the school library. Being a fan of street photography of the mid to late 20th century I turned to this style of shooting using my Leica M6 film camera and later the digital Leicas. I attended a number of Luz Gallery workshops a few years ago on street photography using film and digital rangefinder cameras to hone my skills. I often go out on a Saturday or Sunday morning and walk the streets of the city looking for photo opportunities.

The image below was an assignment for a photography workshop. The students were assigned the task to go out shooting on a Saturday morning in downtown Victoria and find something interesting. Armed with a rangefinder camera loaded with a roll of B & W film I wandered down towards Chinatown and ended up walking into Fan Tan Alley from a side alley. As I turned the corner I saw a group of young lads in similar t-shirt getups and razing one fellow in particular in what appeared to be a bachelor party ritual. I quickly raised my camera and got off a few shots before they departed. *Leica M7, Leica Summicron 35 mm f2 lens at ISO 400, shutter speed and f-stop not recorded, Ilford XP2 Super 35 mm film.*



“The Group”

We are fortunate to have the Olympic Mountain range as a backdrop as it forms a dramatic view when coupled with interesting clouds. This image at Ogden Point was taken in February, a great month for interesting skies.

The ghostly figures along the breakwater and along its base add to the ethereal mood that a long exposure often creates. *Canon 5D MK III, EF 70-200 mm f4L USM at 200 mm lens at f16, 60 sec., ISO 200, with the Lee Big Stopper (10 stop ND filter).*



“Ogden Point”

A fun studio shoot was with Hal. Hal was a kick boxer and didn't disappoint. The gifted body painter, Kristen Grant, painted him. His musculature lent itself well to the body painting. The lighting consisted of five PCB (Paul C Buff) Einstein 640 watt studio strobes. One placed on either side of, and aimed at, the white sweep backdrop to blow out the background. Two 86" diffused Parabolic Light Modifiers (PLM's) were placed one each on camera left and right, in line with the subject. Lastly, a diffused beauty dish was placed above the camera position. *Canon 5D MK III, Canon EF 24-70 mm f2.8L II USM lens at 50 mm, f16, 1/200 sec., ISO 100. Processed in Lightroom 5.*



“Hal”

This portrait shot of Kate (courtesy of Coultish Management, Victoria, BC), was taken with a medium format film camera at the Intrepid Theatre using one PCB Einstein strobe in an 86" PLM on camera right. The film was developed for two hours (semi-stand method) with Adox Adonal (Rodinal) and Kodak Xtol developers. The negative was then scanned with the Optic Film 120 scanner. Minor post-processing with sepia toning in Lightroom 5. *Pentax 645N, SMC Pentax-FA 645 400 mm f5.6 lens at f9.5, 1/60sec., ISO 100, Rollei Retro 80S 120 format film.*



“Kate”

The next shot was taken on the Isle of Mull, off the west coast of the Scottish Highlands. These two abandoned boats are an iconic part of Mull. This is another long exposure, as is evident from the cloud formations and the stillness of the water. Processed in Lightroom 6 and NIK Silver Efex Pro. *Fujifilm X-T2, XF10-24 mm lens at 10 mm, f16, 16 sec., ISO 200 and Lee Big Stopper (10 stop ND filter), Lee 2 stop graduated neutral density filter.*



“Boats on Mull”

Another image taken in Scotland was of the Tay Bridge that carries the main rail line between Dundee and Edinburgh, via Fyfe. The bridge is a replacement for the original one that blew down in a severe storm on December 28th 1879. There was a train crossing the bridge at the time and all 75 people on board were lost. The Tay River is a tidal river and at low tide you can still see the footings of the original bridge. The night we went to shoot the bridge we decided to try long exposures. As luck would have it, I won the jackpot and yes, the train flew by! (Wendi missed it!!) *Fujifilm X-T2, XF 10-24 mm lens at 13 mm, f11, 30 sec., ISO 1600, Lee ND filters.*



“Tay Bridge”

The next shot is a vertical HDR panorama of the Vickers Viscount cockpit at the BC Aviation Museum in Sidney. It was shot using the shift feature of the 17 mm tilt-shift lens creating two HDR images that were then stitched together in Photoshop CS6. For the first HDR image I shifted the lens up and shot a bracketed set of seven images. I repeated this shifting the lens down for the second image. The camera was in manual mode and spot metered on the instrument panel. In post-processing I used NIK HDR Efex Pro 2 on each set of images using the ‘hyper-realistic #2’ preset. Although CS6 was used for creating the vertical panorama, my usual go-to software for panorama work is PTGUI but this was such an easy stitch that CS6 was appropriate. *Canon 5D MK III, TS-E 17 mm f4L lens at f16, ISO 100 .*



“Trans-Canada Airways Vickers Viscount Cockpit”

Another technical shoot involved smashing light bulbs and dealing with electricity, not everyone’s comfort zone! I demonstrated this technique at one of the Lighting SIG meetings in 2016. It creates a unique and fascinating view of electricity within (and outside) a light bulb. This involved photographing the burning filament of an incandescent light bulb using the dark field illumination technique. After carefully breaking the bulb, covered in a cloth, with a hammer, and not breaking the filament, it was screwed into an unplugged table lamp. A Canon



“Light”

600 EX-RT Speedlite in a 24” soft box was placed directly behind the object. An 8” wide black card was clipped to the centre of the diffusion face of the soft box. The broken light bulb was placed in front of and centred on the black card. I adjusted the framing so that the image did not include the white diffusion fabric, just the black card. A dimmer switch was used to energize the light bulb while firing the shutter release. One must be quick as the filament burns out quickly. The flash was triggered using Pocket Wizards. *Canon 5D MK III, Tamron SP 90 mm f2.8 macro lens at f8, 1/125 sec., ISO 200.*

Victoria is a great city for car shows and they are available to the general public at no cost. The shows are scattered throughout the summer months around the city and peninsula. This image was taken from a different perspective, from the inside of the truck looking outwards toward the viewers. I used Lightroom and NIK Colour Efex Pro to enhance the details and enrich the colours of this classic vehicle. *Leica M9, Carl Zeiss ZM Biogon 21 mm T* f2.8 lens at f11, 1/125 sec., ISO 320.*



“Truck Interior”

Member Portfolio:

Wendi Donaldson Laird, EFIAP, FAPS

I have been a member of the Victoria Camera Club since 2011. I was extremely fortunate to find the Club after I returned from a couple of years in Australia. The Club is a thriving group of very talented and generous photographers and I enjoy the opportunity to meet and learn from them. Significantly for me, I met a very special and talented member of the Club, Scott Laird, whom I later married. I believe we are the second such couple to have met and married at the Club. We are lucky photographers indeed!!

Although I have always been interested in design, art and photography, I began my photographic journey in earnest in 2011 by diligently working towards my personal photographic goal, earning my 'honours,' or letters of distinction, through the International body of FIAP (Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique). I first learned of the honours/exhibition system during my stay in Australia, where many photographers pursue their distinctions (with a passion) as they also do in the UK, Europe, USA and Asia. I began to pursue my honours in Australia at the same time through the Australian Photographic Society. FIAP counts more than 85 national associations over five continents with the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) of Great Britain and the Photographic Society of America (PSA) being two of the largest contributors. In 2016 I was thrilled to have earned my second level EFIAP (Excellence).

To earn your EFIAP you must have successfully taken part in at least 30 international salons, in 20 different countries; have obtained at least 250 acceptances with at least 50 different works in international salons. Medals are as scarce as hen's teeth in these salons given the world-wide calibre of photographers you exhibit with, both amateur and professional; however, if an image wins an "Acceptance" it is still an important achievement and counts towards your goal.

Working towards such a goal has definitely improved my photography and at the same time it has exposed me to world-wide photographers at a very impressive level. Another benefit is that each competition salon must provide every entrant with a salon catalogue (digital or hard copy). Many of the images you see in these catalogues are astounding, enlightening and inspirational. It is especially rewarding when your own image is published in the salon catalogue. If you are interested in knowing more about this process and considering exploring this avenue, I highly recommend

it as a personal goal and would certainly be willing to help get you on your way.

The first portrait is of my friend's daughter, Megan. It was one of my most successful (and favourite) images taken in Australia and I used it in the process above. I took this shot using natural light, with the subject sitting on a chair facing the open patio door. I was outside. I processed the image by darkening the mood, which also emphasized her freckles, using NIK software. Meegs didn't like her freckles being so pronounced so I rectified that by taking another portrait of her on another day, shown below. *Canon EOS 5D MKII and the Canon EF50 mm f1.4 lens at 1/125 sec., ISO 100.*



"The Stare"

Miss Meegs loved the camera and was more than happy to pull props out of the treasure trunk and perform. She sat in the kitchen at the open patio door facing the sunlight, and I also used a reflector. I stood outside on the patio and took the shot from that vantage point. She was much happier with her freckles in this image. She is now 18 years old and a brunette. *Canon EOS 50D and EF50 mm f1.4 lens, ISO 100.*



"A Girl Can Dream..."

In 2015 Scott and I went on the Club-organized field trip to the Palouse (Western WA) as part of our honeymoon. The weather was extremely hot and it made shooting

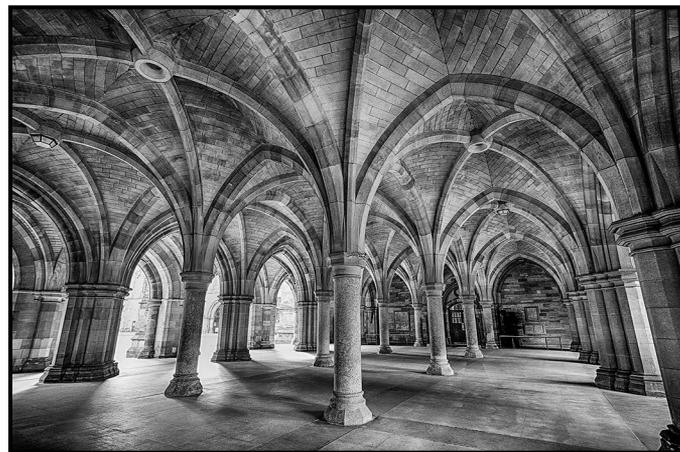
conditions less than ideal. It is a beautiful part of the world and we hope to return when it is cooler. Traveling about the area we came across several dilapidated buildings and barns. The one below was particularly dramatic and poignant in full collapse even though haying had still not been completed. It is a beautiful example of the changing times. No doubt, in the coming years, this barn will totally collapse and the boards will be recycled. I'm glad I caught it at this stage. *Canon EOS 5D MKIII and EF 70-300 mm f4-5.6L IS USM lens at f4.5, 160 sec., ISO 100, Lee Warming Circular Polarizer and a Lee 0.6 ND Soft Grad filter.*



"Mornings Lost"

Most recently we travelled to Scotland, in part for family and in part for photography. Scott was interested in discovering his ancestry and for me, having grown up there, I wanted to revisit old haunts and family grave sites. We were concerned about airline baggage and weight restrictions so decided to take smaller gear with us. Scott researched and set us up with the Fuji XT2's and various lenses that he felt would suit our needs. The weight and size of the gear was a welcome relief to lugging about full frame bodies (cameras that is!) and lenses. We particularly liked the Fuji XF 10-24 mm lens and it barely left our cameras, though we realized its drawbacks at 10 mm.

As well as the many landscape shots I have, I especially liked the Cloisters at the University of Glasgow. I did some research and discovered they were on our route right in Glasgow. They have been seen in many movies and in the series, *Outlander*. This image demonstrates the issues with using a 10 mm lens at it's widest, though I rather like the effect because it emphasizes the curves in the arches. (Scott hopes to take this with his Tilt-Shift lens this year. Me too!). Processed in NIK HDR Efex and Lightroom 6. *Fuji X-T2, XF 10-24 mm f4 R OIS lens, 3 images at 1/25, 1/12, and 1/50 sec., f5, ISO 1600.*



"The Cloisters"

Having had flower gardens wherever I have lived, I have acquired a fair knowledge about them. I am always intrigued watching the various development stages of flowers and their movement, as in the case of tulips and often shoot them when they are past their 'best before date' by other people's standards. The next image was inspired by a quote in a card. The peonies were past their prime, but their tones were still warm and their state suited the intent of the quote. It was taken in my kitchen "studio" with a black velvet backdrop and a piece of organza, using a diffused ring light. Processed in Topaz, Lightroom and Photoshop CS6. *Sony ILCE-7RM2 and the Lensbaby 56 Velvet lens at f5.6, 0.8 sec., ISO 100.*



"I Wish I Could Love you Longer"

I decided to try focus stacking using a bouquet of tulips but I soon discovered that they move! It was quite fascinating and frustrating that the tulips would move within the bouquet in the time it took to focus each image. It made the project a little more difficult but I enjoyed the process and the result. I used a diffused ring light and shot approximately 15 images with various focus points, then stacked them in Photoshop CS6. *Canon EOS 5D MKIII and Tamron SP 90 mm f2.8 Di VC USD lens at f8, ISO 100.*



"Spring"

Contemporary work and architectural images are also an interest for me. This image was taken at the Vancouver Public Library. We happened to be there on a sunny day and the light was streaming into the atrium creating interesting lines and shadows. People-watching led me to this intriguing perspective. I liked the reflection of the pedestrians as they crossed over "the bridge" to enter the facility. Processed in Lightroom 6 using B & W Presets. *Sony ILCE-7RM2 and FE 55 mm f1.8 ZA lens, hand held at 1/400 sec., f8.0, ISO 800.*



"Crossings"

I fell in love with American cars when I was a young girl and newly emigrated from Scotland. They always seemed so much more exciting than the old black British cars I was used to seeing. I enjoy going to classic car shows and can fully appreciate all the incredible skill, patience and passion put into restoring these old beauties. This is of a Pontiac, probably a 1950s model, with the iconic Pontiac "Indian Head" on the hood. Processed in Photoshop CS5 and Lightroom 5. *Fujifilm X-E2 and XF 55-200 mm f3.5-4.8 R LM OIS lens at 1/1700 sec., f3.6, ISO 200 at 63 mm.*



"Pontiac"

Dance photography is of particular interest to me but it is the most difficult shoot I have done. The next image of Mone Shinoda was taken at a Ballet Victoria dress rehearsal with stage lighting. High ISO is always required for these shoots which causes lots of noise in the images. The Sony (and probably Nikon) are the best cameras for noise reduction that I have tested thus far. Processed in Lightroom 6 and further adjustments in Photoshop CS6. *Sony ILCE-7RM2 and FE 70-200 mm f2.8 GM OSS lens at 167 mm, 1/320 sec., at f2.8, ISO 6400.*



"Mone"

Finally, over the past 18 months I have chased the camera system that for me would do two things, well, maybe three!! Certainly I wanted a camera that would take excellent photographs and capture detail extremely well; but the other two criteria were being able to deliver the goods at super high ISO levels and keeping the size and weight of the camera to one that would still work for me with travelling. After going through Canon, Leica, Nikon and Fuji, I found the answer (for me!). It is the Sony ILCE-A7RII. You can see my images at www.500px/wdonaldson.



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Using Elements for Artistic Effect

by Craig Harris

What I undertake as a photographic artist is the production of visual effects. A paint artist selects subject, format, medium, size, colours to mix to produce a result for a visual space as I select effects using digital tools. I can see the digital result immediately and either save or undo it immediately. Sumi-e artists do this by quickly creating numerous ink-on-rice paper images in a single session and retaining only a select few. They also use words with the image to raise the level of the symbolic dialogue. We can too.

I did not know at the time that it was Ansel Adams speaking when a journalist friend quoted to me “a photograph is made.” I recall my own “Ansel Adams moment” when the Yosemite images first struck a chord with me. The will to replay that internal harp by my own hand using our new tools to produce their own honest expression is foundational.

Ansel Adams quotes:

- “You don’t take a photograph, you make it.”
- “When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs.”
- “When images become inadequate, I shall be content with silence.”
- “There are no rules for good photographs, there are only good photographs.”

This is actually a process that when consistently applied, is a way of taking the time to reach a state that pulls the snapshot out and drops “art” in. Do it often enough and maybe you get to be first trumpet in the symphony.

I seldom use layers, choosing instead to invest in learning about the variety within combinations of effects. I primarily use layers to explore reflections. This will probably change.

Composition is imperative, like visual poetry or songs. I don’t have to recall aspect ratios, point-of-focus, colour mixing, white balance, depth of field, and manipulation of the media with the same rigour when taking a picture. Whether engaging the camera, software, printer or display, these points are not ignored; they are the foundation of improvisation. This way it becomes possible to exploit mistakes and make them become discoveries or happy accidents. In the digital domain we can manipulate aspect ratios, white balance, depth of field and media with abandon to bring images to life in ways never conceived.

Simply expressed my approach reads like this: Move from the world of physical art (spatula, brush and canvas) to digital art (commands and options) by learning the language of Photoshop. This is artistic production as it emerges from within the new digital tool set rather than image capture and direct representation.

I use JPG files exclusively to answer the question, “how can I transform this (often) tiny file into something spectacular, dense with information, enlargeable?” This is a key take-away from my study of digital photography; Raw images retain file “integrity” while JPEGs degrade during manipulation. What if, in degrading a file, I consciously add more and more data? What happens to the capability of the file for reproduction? Can it be made visually exceptional? The basis of these questions is this: can Photoshop Elements make art?

I always start with a particular photograph because it has content, composition, tone, value, relationship, authority, expression, craft, and, I hope, a little bit of love for seasoning. This infers transition from basic skills to professional practice, knowing what to do next without having to reference, using intuition and viewing the “right feeling” as regards the “whole” image that maybe answers the question, “Does it have unity?” Excellent photographs express this art, why not abstract the essential elements and extend the invitation?



“Ancient of Days”

The original image is a scanned 35 mm slide taken when I was record photographer at Fort Rodd Hill. The basis of the image is one of the “disappearing gun” mounts. I selected it based on the pure forms of the concentric circles, curved shapes and simplicity of massing. It also has great shadow, easily discernible depth and is well composed. A bit of history: The site restoration architect at Fort Rodd Hill viewed this and 35 other images of the site I brought in for “show and tell” and the next day assigned me the task of site photographer.

This image is turned right 90° from the original. Rotating is one of my go-to changes and can overcome composer's block. I love this final image for its ability to turn the immense concrete solidity of the gun mount into something ethereal and galactic, quite opposite to the original. As a galactic watcher it is, for me, also ancient and weathered yet ultimately powerful, a symbol of universal wisdom. The image seemed to me, early on, to invoke a portal into space or a watchtower for an ancient civilization so I pushed it that way. The gun mount has the characteristics of weathered age that lend authenticity to the final creation because I associate deep space with ancient time. The texture of the image has become deep space, galaxies, stars and gas clouds.

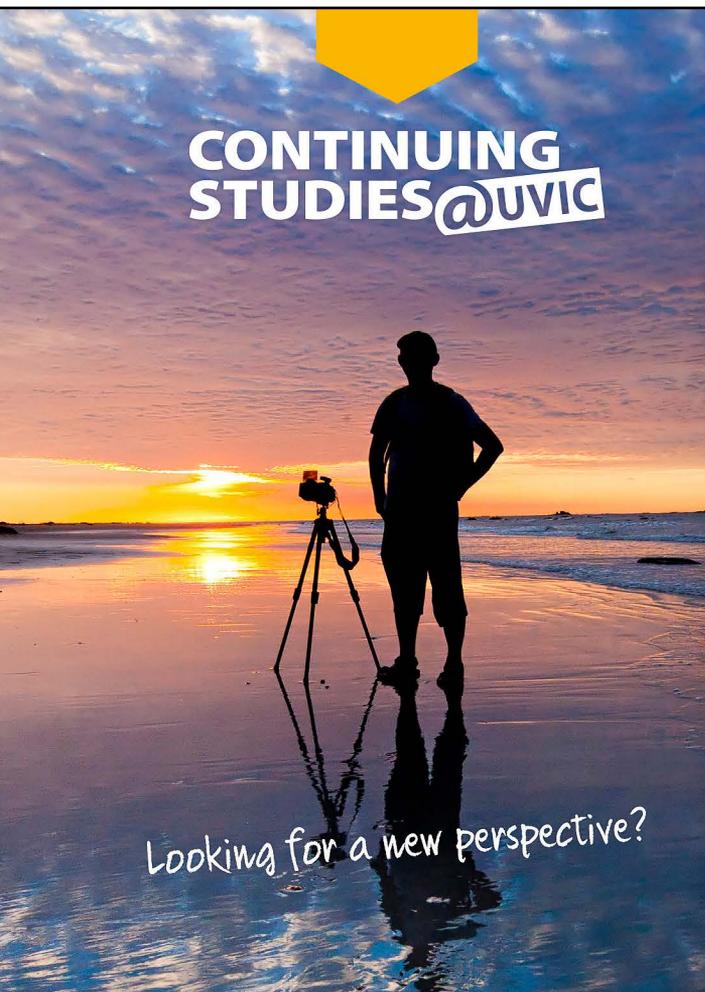
Ancient of Days is the result of repeated experiments with the Photoshop Elements 6 Filter "Render, Difference Clouds." This Filter command can be repeated to develop further random values for foreground and background colours however I typically use it only once and employ subsequent effects to push the image toward completion. Manipulation of colours "Enhance", "Adjust Colour", "Adjust Hue/Saturation" and the final play, insertion of two lights into the faint orbits around the "head" and in the area of the "third eye" using "Filter", "Render", and "Lens Flare" completed the effort. I especially appreciate how the colour blue inverts the depth of the original.



"January Sunrise, Willows Beach"

In January 2014 on a clear, cold morning, I walked to Willows Beach with my Coolpix P5000 to catch the sunrise. I got 40 images in 2 hours. This picture faces Fidalgo Island in the San Juan Islands with Chatham and Discovery Islands to the left on the horizon. The water, islands and deep background coastline delineate the lower third and just above this a belt of dark grey clouds enter from the left, eventually morphing into teal and green on the right. Surprisingly, it was the first picture I took of the event.

The image has gone through three stages. At intake stage one the photo was captured using the landscape setting within the camera. For the second "tuning" stage my intention was to upgrade the original photograph to the best possible quality. I used Elements 11 and started with "Auto Smartfix" which sometimes does not help, so "Undo" gets used (quite a bit actually). "Enhance" effects



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are then applied to see if any improvements result. I do not often change Auto settings. I then explore “Adjust Colour” and “Lighting” often checking what the image looks like in black and white to reveal grey scale and contrast zones; this can sometimes result in new images. During this process there can be a number of movements back and forth with “Enhance” effects and use of the “Image” commands, particularly the “Crop” function.

Since the Coolpix point-and-shoot only captures 10 megapixels of data, post-processing is needed to overcome the technical limitations of a landscape image where the physical form is buried miles away in the horizon line. Attempting to produce the equivalent of a \$9,000 645 MF Pentax image from a \$300 Nikon is absurd. A strategic shift is required to get anywhere close to an equivalent presence.

Stage three is crafting “abstractions” from the original. This image required much iteration over several months. It typically takes a few three-hour sessions to get to an image that I like. I will place an image on hold when at an impasse. In art school we were taught a three-hour session is typically how long it takes a person to experience a relationship with creativity that leads to transformation. It is also about learning how to use the software and go deeper into a functional relationship. Like learning any skill, it takes 99% perspiration to get 1% inspiration.

The inspiration came from choosing the “Filter” effects found within the “Artistic” set “Cutout.” The image became flat, the colour fields richer, the content simpler, while still looking like a landscape. The key in developing the image at this point is to get all of these things to converge. Because the software works quickly it is easy to test the simple set of “Edge Thickness”, “Edge Intensity” and “Posterization” operations in the matrix of 400 possible effects. It might look daunting but the sliders make it easy.

Salutation at Willows, a summer image from Willows Beach, is about three folks enjoying the extravagant beauty of our island and barbecuing on the beach. The clouds overhead are a favourite subject and making them spectacular is a challenge. They are ethereal and unless captured at the beginning or end of the day are typically vaporous white and blue colours in the composition. As a snapshot the image was quite mundane and languished in my digital library for a year. Growing up in the prairies where the sky is wide and active I learned to read clouds and imagine images in their shapes.

Selecting the image for processing involved running through the usual gamut of “Enhance” choices to obtain the best possible resolution, colour correction and haze



“Salutation at Willows”

removal. This foray used my latest software installation, Elements 14. Once the original image was tweaked I ventured into the “Filter” section. Here I simplified the arrangement using “Artistic, Cutout” to isolate the essential components of sky and cloud while retaining detail and colour. The image lacked that certain something for me to stop there so the next modifications were exercised using “Artistic, Colored Pencil” and playing with “Pencil Width, Stroke Pressure, and Paper Brightness.” My experiences with “Paper Brightness” have been useful in getting light into images that otherwise look dull. A note of interest: In my experience “Paper Brightness” always seems to require its maximum setting.

As a final effort I ventured into “Filter, Texture, Craquelure” to impose a visual texture to the image. I have found that “Craquelure” settings at a very low “Crack Spacing” but maximal “Crack Depth and Crack Brightness” add a lovely definition to colour areas, like using a spatula for paint-on-canvas texture. The more subtle degree of cracking lends a gentle visual definition to the surface without appearing clumsy or overbearing. Sometimes I apply this effect more than once to see if something more pleasing to me appears. I like how a kind of sky dragon was teased out of the air and how the colour and shape manipulations have emphasized its presence.

One last note. An art professor I know at the University of Victoria kindly reviewed my earlier work. He noted it was mostly like impressionist art because it was still possible to identify image content. I acknowledge that I have moved beyond that with my recent efforts, not represented here.

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Getting Better Audio with Videos

by John Roberts

At some point, just like someone asking you to photograph a wedding for them, it is inevitable that someone will ask you to make a video. Perhaps it will be your spouse looking to start a VLog (Video Blog) on Food/Gardening/Trains/#SomeThingElseRandom, or maybe it will be a friend but you are the tech person they know and they want help getting set up. So what do you do now?

Up until last year I had never really dabbled with video. I knew that was a whole new ball of wax that I had little to no knowledge about. I hired people in the store specifically to be the video people just so I did not have to get personally involved. However, after listening for years to people with knowledge about the gear, I started to learn from them, helped conduct some sound tests with them and have even started to get into some small videos myself for my family.

I am here today to help you through some questions that may come your way.

What device are they going to record their video with? Smart Phone, Compact Camera, Mirrorless/DSLR? No matter the answer they give you here, there are solutions to getting better audio.

For the Smart Phone/Tablet, there are several companies that make microphones specifically for these devices. There is the RØDE Me which is a high quality compact directional microphone that even includes the fuzzy wind-cut noise filter or something equivalent by another audio company (Shure, Sony, Zoom, Audio Technica, etc.). It will allow you to either point the mic away from you to get the audio from where the camera is pointing or having it face you if the phone is in "selfie mode" and you are doing a talking head video. These are also great for Facebook/Instagram Live videos.

There are lavalier (lapel) mics designed for smart devices, like those you see on TV newscasts or talk shows. This is a small microphone on the collar with a wire connecting it to something, either the smart device or other device. This is what I recommend to anyone looking for better audio with a compact camera. At this time there are no compact cameras that have a mic jack input so to improve audio for them, I like to record the audio to my smart device with the little SmartLav+ and with the recorder app from the company. I can record the audio and then sync it to the video in post-production now that many video editing software packages allow multiple sound track editing.

Now, a professional tip. When doing something like this, where you have multiple audio tracks to deal with, start your shoot and give a loud clap (that is what "clapper boards" were for), that way in post-production you can line up the spikes in the audio a lot easier, then you can mute the in-camera audio and just go with the better audio of the external recorder.

Now, we get into the DSLR/Mirrorless area where there is a plethora of microphones and other cool audio gear you can buy, with various brands and styles for you to choose from. With many of these you can get the furry wind-cutter (aka: Dead Cat) that helps to prevent the noise of the wind or those clipped p's that you can get with news broadcasts when someone speaks too loudly into the mic.

Omni-Directional mics are small mics that sit in the camera hot-shoe and plug into the side of the camera, as long as it has a mic input, many do, but some entry level models do not. You will then pick up audio from all around, in front of the camera, behind the camera, etc. But since the pick-up is so much higher above the lens than the built-in mics, you do not get lens noises in the audio.

Directional mics are longer and only pick up the audio from in front of the camera. These are perfect if you are taking a video of a concert or something else where you require the audio from the front only. These mics are quite common and often have several price points available depending on whether you add in noise filtration or not, the former being pricier than those without.

Shotgun mics tend to be really long, maybe almost 30 cm long. These are what independent movie makers use to get audio only from their intended subject. You often see these on long booms with a big fuzzy cover and the sound guy holding it over the person from which they want to record. This is a little extreme if you are just starting out but I am just letting you know it is there as an option.

Stereo mics look like a giant fuzzy ball on top of the camera but inside that ball, there is a Left and a Right mic. So, if you are at an event like a car race, the car going past will have audio that matches where it is in the frame, e.g. if it is on the left, the audio will come from the left.

There is a lot more detail that I could go into, like external audio recorders, but that is more advanced audio, and this is just meant to get you started.

If you have any questions or thoughts on this topic, please feel free to email me, jphotographybc@icloud.com.

Seeing Differently

by John Clarke

In 2012 I knew I would be retiring in a few years. With this in mind I wanted to improve my photography skills. I have always been a keen photographer, always the one behind the camera and never in the image. Even though I got my first digital camera in 2002 I was still just taking pictures and not creating images.

I located the Victoria Camera Club website and it offered its members exactly what I was looking for: workshops, field trips and, as I am fiercely competitive, competitions.

At first I didn't participate in many of the workshops or field trips but I actively entered competitions and have been pleased how entering both digital images and print images has challenged me and pushed me to be a better photographer. I always looked forward to the monthly themes and I would spend months thinking of how to capture the theme in an unusual way.

I still feel challenged competing in nature and natural world competitions, however, I feel more confident challenging myself and trying to do something different, something other people aren't doing.

One Member's Night Dan and Gail Takahashi explained how they were experimenting with tabletop photography. I was both impressed and intrigued by their creativity. Last year I took a very good workshop presented by Richard James on tabletop photography that had ample hands-on practice. The experience gave me some of the technical skills so I decided to give this style of photography a try.

Kiwifruit Turning Red: I had created an image, "Becoming Yellow" using decorative flower-arranging balls and coloured pencil crayons for an earlier VCC competition. I was pleased with the image and it placed third in the Intermediate October Digital Open competition. It was also selected for the VCC vs. Eastwood competition.

There was an upcoming Club completion theme, "Raw Food", so I decided to continue with the coloured pencil crayon concept and tabletop photography but changed my subject to a kiwifruit. I had the idea of changing a green kiwifruit to a different colour and I tried several colours from blue to brown before finally settling on red.

I cut the fruit in half and experimented with numerous different surfaces to place it on. I settled on a neutral surface, a large breadboard. I also tried very hard to ensure the background did not stand out while at the same time getting sufficient light on my subject. I placed the bread-



"Kiwifruit Turning Red"

board near a window to get natural light and I used some newly-purchased reflectors.

Once I had the setup the way I wanted I placed a few drops of red food colouring onto one half of the kiwifruit. With the red pencil crayon attached to the arm of the small tripod, I placed the tip of the pencil crayon on the kiwifruit. Making sure that the tip of the pencil crayon was melting, I started shooting.

I made some adjustments in Lightroom and came up with the final image of which I am very proud.

Pink Umbrella: I really enjoyed the Intentional Motion Blur workshop given by Lloyd Houghton, so much so, that I have taken it twice. This is a style of photography I had never tried before, however, I was willing to learn and explore a new challenge. It was a dark and wet afternoon for



"Pink Umbrella"

the field session which, apparently, are ideal conditions for this style of photography. The practical session was very educational and Lloyd was always nearby to answer questions, provide encouragement and offer critiques.

There are several things I enjoy about this image. It is clearly a rainy day, the subject is carrying an umbrella and the diagonal motion creates an illusion of rain. The vibrant colour of the pink umbrella and the orange streak on the road provide great contrast.

Starfish: During a visit to Seattle we went to the Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum. I was mesmerized by



“Starfish”

the colourful glass sculptures and I could have taken more than enough “normal” images of them. Realizing that everyone else was “just taking pictures,” I decided to try to create something different.

I tried various methods of zooming in and out, all hand-held with a shutter speed of about two seconds. I played with different apertures and focal lengths and I was creating some colourful blurred images, but not what I had hoped for.

Not satisfied, I increased my shutter speed to around four seconds and I focused in on the subject, ensuring it filled the frame. After releasing the shutter I stayed focused on the subject for two seconds before zooming out for the final two seconds.

What I managed to create was a defined subject, with colourful streaks leading out to the edges. I like the combination of colour and motion while retaining the detail of the starfish.

In conclusion, while I am still trying to become a more accomplished wildlife photographer, I am finding considerable satisfaction in testing my creative boundaries. The Victoria Camera Club offers extensive opportunities through workshops and field trips and I will continue to expand my horizons.



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How I Did It

Vivid Waves

by David Axford

In a way, this is a follow-up to my article published in the March 2017 *Close-Up* on Underwater Photography. My wife, Michelle, and I were on a long trip around Australia. One of the things that I wanted to do while there was to do some diving on the Great Barrier Reef. We decided to take a three day/two night live-aboard dive boat out of Cairns, Queensland, in early March 2016. Right from my first dive I realized that the Great Barrier Reef was something special. I have dived in many places but had never come across such brilliant colours or variety of life.

In case you did not realize it, the photo is that of a giant clam. Now for the technical details. The photo was taken using a Canon 5D MkIII body with a 35 mm f1.4 lens housed in an Ikelite underwater camera housing with a domed port.

For lighting I used a Ikelite DS 200 and DS 161 strobes. The camera settings were set at 1/200 second, f8, ISO 400 and the strobes were TTL enabled.

For underwater photography I keep the white balance on automatic since it has to be adjusted for almost all photos. I was approximately 1 metre from the clam and the clam was almost 1 metre wide.

My post-processing was done in Lightroom and, as I am a beginner, it consisted of nothing more than adjusting the white balance, highlights and clarity sliders as learned in the Lightroom workshops given by Cindy Stephenson and Ed Moniz just prior to my going on this trip. I cropped the photo to make the subject a little less obvious. Even without adjustments, I felt that this photo was perfect for the monthly theme of patterns and textures.

In closing, I would like to thank Michelle for joining me for three days of rough seas but beautiful scenery.



Diamond Beach

by Jill Turyk

This location was the crowning glory of my trip to Iceland. It is Diamond Beach, near Jokulsarlon Glacial Lagoon, on the southeast coast of Iceland. This was the last night of our trip and it was the area that I had most wanted to visit.

Earlier we spent a long time at the nearby lagoon waiting for the clouds to part for the sunset and had little time on the beach. It was June between midnight and 1am. The weather was overcast without any direct sun. I had hoped for back-light on the ice but had to settle for flat light.



Although it does not ever really get dark at that time of year in Iceland, it was past dusk and beginning to get too dark to see and focus. I was worried that I would not get my coveted shot of the ice on the beach. I also wanted to capture the movement of the water and needed a long shutter speed but, with the increasing darkness, I required an even longer shutter speed. I thought that the movement of the water might be lost to just a smooth creamy expanse. Luckily, I found some blue ice surrounded by a few small rocks that showed the water flow nicely.

I used my Canon 60D with the 15-85 mm lens, however, with the 1.6 crop factor it was not as wide as I would have liked for the shot. It was pure guesswork at first and I took several test shots for the shutter speed. Once I had that I took several shots hoping to get the pattern of the water the way I wanted it to look; each wave was different. This shot was taken at 6 sec., f2, with the lens at 15 mm.

Post-processing was done in Lightroom with the standard sharpening and tone adjustments for contrast. I did change the colour a small amount to represent what I saw with my eyes.

Tuesday Shoots

by Daniel A. Roy

I hope everyone is making the most of another wonderful sunny summer in paradise. Hopefully, the weather will continue through the declining daylight hours of October.

September 5th: China Town / Old Town. Photo opportunities abound within this picturesque downtown location. Come join the Tuesday Shooters in search of captivating images.

September 12th: Solitude. Finding a subject to represent this theme in the downtown area may be a daunting task, however, the common park bench often fits the mood. What other subjects can you find to capture this evocative topic? This is also the "Competition Theme" for October.

September 19th: Westsong Walkway. The trail begins at the foot of the iconic Blue Bridge, on the west side, and leads all the way to Sailor's Cove in Esquimalt (3 km). The paved walkway provides several captivating vistas and an occasional glimpse of local wildlife.

September 26th: Art. It's what we all strive for each time we trip the shutter. This broad topic encompasses an almost endless array of possibilities. The process requires imagination, originality, and a degree of technical knowledge.

October 3rd: Selkirk Trestle. This favoured destination, part of the Galloping Goose Trail, provides a wide variety of interesting subjects.

October 10th: Street Corner Challenge. Location. Location. Location. Pick a street corner and, as soon as you see something of interest, raise your camera to your eye and start shooting. A degree of patience is a definite requirement for this theme.

October 17th: Esquimalt Gorge Park. A major attraction is the recently refurbished Japanese Gardens. Fall colours should be at their peak for this pleasant stroll through the park.

October 24th: Silly Signs and Signals. A keen eye and a little imagination is all that's required here. Questionable signs are everywhere.

Some events require registration and a fee may apply. Please check the Club calendar for details related to each outing.

September/October 2017

Weekend Shoots

by Vanessa MacDonald

We are currently looking for volunteers to lead some of our fall field trips. It is an easy role that involves meeting attendees the day of the trip, checking attendance and guiding everyone to the location. Providing photographic instruction to participants is not required as people usually like to do their own thing but it is something you can offer to do if you have special knowledge or experience. We will take care of posting the event in the calendar and emailing information to Club members. If you have a great idea for a field trip, propose something to us! We would love to hear your ideas and we can schedule it in for you. We've already had a number of very successful trips that members have spearheaded including the Aviation Museum and Unsworth Vineyard.

Below are some of the trips we are planning for the fall, so there is a lot to look forward to in the coming months. Do let us know if you'd like to volunteer to lead any of these. Please check for dates in the Calendar.

September Whale Watching: Back by popular demand! This will be a six-hour trip with Sidney Whale Watching. Wildlife viewing opportunities may include grey whales, orcas, seals, porpoises, sea lions and a variety of sea birds. We may view Race Rocks Marine Park and the Seabird Rookery at Mandarte Island. Bring the long lens for some wildlife close-ups.

Fall Colours: There are some amazing pockets of vivid colour around Victoria during the fall. We will plan trips to several different locations to make the most of the photographic opportunities. Locations may include Hatley Park and Charlie's Trail, Kinsol Trestle bridge and the Shawnigan Lake area, and Goldstream Park for waterfalls, flowy sections of the river and colourful leaves.

Englishman River Falls: One of the gems of the island, it is located just west of Parksville. This Provincial Park features two impressive waterfalls, a canyon, bridges, lush old growth trees and plant life. You will have a good range of subjects to capture from macro flora and fauna, to wide-angle river landscapes. Bring your ND filters, polarizers, tripods and shutter remotes for long exposures.

Salmon Run at Goldstream Park: Here's your chance to photograph a world class salmon spawning stream. This trip will be scheduled for the last week of October or first week of November and, as always, will be contingent on the weather and arrival of the salmon.

Lightroom Tips

by Ed Moniz

Lightroom is an effective tool for the management, raw file conversion and basic editing of your images. Currently at version 6.12 and CC 2015.12, the program has gone through numerous changes and, with each new version the addition of many exciting features. While the program will never replace Photoshop, you can produce presentation-ready prints and digital images with it. This article will present several useful tips to help everyone get the most from the program. The following are representative of the most frequent questions asked about Lightroom.

What has Lightroom done with my images? This is without a doubt the most common question. The answer is (drum roll in the background): exactly what you told it to do.

Contrary to popular myth, Lightroom doesn't do anything mysterious with your images. Lightroom does not import your images into itself; they always remain on your hard drive. Where, will depend on the instructions you gave it. If they are already on your hard drive and you use the "Add" command they will still be there. If you use the "Copy" option then they will be placed in the folder you selected in the destination panel of the import dialog box. In either case your file will be on your hard drive with the address of where it is located on your hard drive stored in the Lightroom database/catalog. Why Adobe chose to use the word catalog rather than database is a mystery.

To use Lightroom effectively you should have a good understanding of your computer's operating system and how to create, navigate and manage folders. Mac users will typically use the Finder app and PC users, Microsoft Explorer. If you are not comfortable, and not totally conversant with your computer's filing system, it would be a good idea to take a class or workshop on operating system basics. Learning these fundamental skills will make using Lightroom and any other computer program easier.

My computer has crashed, where are my images? While not a Lightroom issue, it is critical to effective photo management. Computer hardware will fail. If you've never had a hard drive failure, you have been lucky.

A good backup methodology is extremely important. You need to create a backup copy of your files on an external device and store it in a safe place. Given the potential number and the size of photographic images, a NAS (network attached storage) drive is an effective solution.

These units are readily available and easy to use. Personally, I use a Buffalo unit that contains dual two terabyte drives. The software in the unit mirrors the files to each drive. In this configuration, I have three copies of all my data, two copies on the NAS and one on my computer. The NAS unit will recover and rebuild the data if one of its drives fails and you replace it with a new one.

With Lightroom it is critical to backup not only your images but also your Lightroom Catalog. In a default installation, the Catalog will be a sub-folder of your pictures folder on the boot drive ("C" in Windows). The folder will typically be called Lightroom "X" Catalog, the X being the current version number. This folder should be copied as part of your backup strategy. Failure to do this will risk losing all your editing information, all the work you have done to make the images.

Why is Lightroom called a parametric image editor? Truth be told I haven't been asked this many times but I wanted to answer it because it is an important concept in the understanding of how Lightroom works.

Different from Photoshop, Lightroom does not require an image file before doing edits and, in fact, will not create an image file until the image is exported. Lightroom shows you a preview of how your image will look like when it is exported. The edits you execute in Lightroom are stored in the database as "parameters." During the export a new image file is created based on your original file and all the edits you made. This is one reason why it is critical to ensure that your Lightroom Catalog is backed up every time you make edits.

Will Lightroom ever change my RAW file? No, Lightroom will never make any changes to your RAW files. It will show you a preview of your file and include any edits you have completed. Think of edits as layers of clear acetate that you see your image through.

Should I organize my images in folders or collections? Images should be stored in folders on your hard drive in a structure that makes sense to you, and allows you to easily back up your files.

Lightroom's Collection feature allows you to logically organize similar images in groups regardless of where they are on your hard drive. For example, if you typically shoot nature images you may store your files in folders that represent a photo trip. This trip may have included diverse types of wildlife. If on multiple trips you shoot images of bears, you may want all your bear images referenced in one location. If you organize this in folders you will need to duplicate the file, storing it in the trip folder and a second time in the bear folder. Instead, you can use the Collec-

tion feature to create a “bear” collection and reference bear images from multiple trips in this same collection.

Using this feature does not duplicate the image as one image can be included in many collections. Another use for collections is to create one for a specific purpose, like Club competitions. As you edit images, and you see one that may be suitable for a competition, you can simply place it in the competition collection.

What are virtual copies and how can I use them?

Virtual copies allow you to have multiple versions of the same image, such as colour, monochrome, different crops, different aspect ratios or perhaps just different renderings and local adjustments.

Using virtual copies allows you to see different possibilities for your image by creating a new stack of acetate layers through which you view the same image. It is an excellent feature for exploring image potential.

How should I expose my RAW files to maximize the capabilities of Lightroom? This is a complex topic and could easily be the subject of an entire article.

To answer this question, we need to differentiate between exposures for RAW and JPG images. If you are shooting JPGs, the rendering will be done in camera, and you need to expose accordingly. You need to expose so that the histogram accurately represents your final image with retention of detail in the highlights. JPG images should not be exposed to the right-hand side of the histogram. If your exposure is too far to the right edge you will lose detail in the highlights.

RAW files, in contrast, should be exposed so that highlights in the image are at the very right hand edge of the histogram (“expose to the right”). Exposing in this manner will allow you to retain the maximum amount of data that your camera sensor can capture. In Lightroom, this right-edge exposed RAW file can be mapped down so that the highlight details are retained. Digital image files are a data capture and you want to have the highest quality of data for each image. When exposing to the right be careful that only the highlights are at the right edge. If you have an image with no highlights you do not expose it as far to the right. Setting your camera display to monochrome, while shooting in RAW, will allow you to see the tonalities more easily.

Can I use Lightroom to create High Dynamic Range (HDR) images? Lightroom now can now create HDR images. Those of you familiar with the dedicated HDR programs that create the bright and vivid colour mapping may be disappointed with Lightroom. In Lightroom, HDR

is intended to solve the problem of the dynamic range of the image exceeding that of the sensor. Sensors typically capture about five f-stops of dynamic range while some mid-day scenes may cover ten or more stops. What Lightroom does is equivalent to Ansel Adams’ Zone System. Negatives were exposed to show some detail in the shadows. During development, the image was processed to retain highlight details. This tonal compression created images that were printable within the limitations of the paper. Lightroom allows you to do the same type of tonal compression. To capture a scene, you take two or more images that cover the tonal range of the scene, typically, one each for the shadow, highlights and mid-tones. Occasionally you may need more but usually three will be sufficient for typical situations. In Lightroom, you select the images and apply the HDR feature. Lightroom creates a new image that includes all the detail in the scene and the histogram will cover the luminosity range without clipping either the shadows or highlights. HDR is a very useful tool and should be part of everyone’s toolkit. It is the easiest way to deal with scenes that exceed your sensors dynamic range.

Why do you recommend converting colour images to black and white for basic image edits? When using Lightroom’s basic panel for the initial edits you are adjusting the tones of the image to create an image that has a well-articulated grey scale as its core. I have found that, when attempting to adjust the tones of an image, most people more easily see the tones in black and white. Converting images to black and white prior to editing is a key feature of the workflow that I use and teach. Once in black and white follow the steps below:

- Set the white point with the exposure, highlight and white sliders.
- Set the black point with the black slider.
- Create a separation in the mid-tones using the clarity slider.
- Adjust the shadow detail with the shadow slider.
- Inspect each area of the image and tweak the tonal separations as required.

If overall contrast adjustments are required use the contrast slider. This slider affects contrast throughout the image and will increase or decrease contrast in all tonalities. It is, therefore, not as useful for tonal separation. Once you have a well-articulated grey scale in your image then you can return to colour mode to continue with colour edits. One thing to remember is that not all images have a full tonal range, meaning they may not have a pure black or pure white, but instead may be a series of mid greys. In this case you still want good separation of tones but do not force any tone to black or white.

Beginners' Corner

Time to Organize Chaos

by Josée Ménard

After a summer of taking photographs and copying them to your computer your image collection may be in a state of chaos. On the other hand, you may have already been facing an ill-organized system and just added to it. Unfortunately, it is like the sock you cannot find a match for. To avoid having the computer eat your images or hide them in its virtual depth, let's have a look at a few tools in your arsenal.

These days there is an array of image management and editing software. Some choose the basic Apple Photos, some amateurs and professionals will turn to Adobe's Photoshop/Lightroom duo, or Phase One's Capture One. An industry favourite for storage and organization with strong photo editing capabilities is Lightroom and so, we will refer to Lightroom (LR) for this article.

LR's Library Module is where, on the left side of the screen, you organize the "Catalog" of all your images. On the right side you can add metadata or perform simple editing. In LR's workflow, the images you imported remain at the location where you have chosen to save them, such as on a portable hard drive. On your screen the image you see is a reference of the one saved. In LR terms, this reference is a "preview". Thanks to these you can view your Catalog in many ways.

"Folders" and "Collections" are two tools enabling you to sub-organize your Catalog. LR provides you with the option to add (+) or remove (-) them. All your images can be organized just like your filing cabinet with its hanging folders each holding together that topic's papers. From there you can also create "sub-folders" as needed.

Another way to look at it is to transport yourself to the hands-on world, standing at your filing cabinet, searching through drawers, folders, papers. Just imagine your local wedding photographer organizing all his wedding photo prints (Catalog), by year (folder), then by client (sub-folder). If the wedding photographer does not organize the pile of prints in his cabinet each time he needs one of them, he has to search through the whole pile, rather a slow and frustrating process.

Now if you transfer these thoughts to the digital world of photo software, you can improve the planning of your Catalog in order to avoid or reduce chaos. In my May/June Beginners' Corner article, I touched on the topic of organization through the use of "Keywords". We saw

that keywords are an efficient tool to quickly retrieve the image you wish to find amongst all of your images. LR provides you with a great arsenal. Select your software carefully as, for example, LR provides you with the option of applying keywords whereas Photoshop does not but then Photoshop Elements does. Some common metadata tools include: keywords, colour, star, map, and facial recognition. Some other such as date, camera or lens automatically get included as you import images. Adding metadata to your image enables you to quickly search your filing cabinet.

Within Collections you can also create "Smart" Collections. These are smart because they will assemble all of the images according to the metadata rules you choose, all of this without disturbing the Catalog or its folders. This magical "Smart" enables you to be as picky and choosy as you wish, as often as you want. Some rules are possible because you added keywords, colour, or stars metadata.

Ultimately, you can search all the tens of thousands of images in your LR Catalog. You can also only look at the 3000 images in a folder or the 200 images in a sub-folder. If that is still too much to review, you can create a Smart Collection of all the images that match the metadata rules of your choice. Your Smart Collection now includes only 20 images.

How can you sort all this out? Slowly and as you wish. Thanks to batch updates, folder merging, image dragging, and Smart Collections, you can improve your organization. The professional photographers I listened to this summer at the Canadian Camera Conference took many thousands of images per day and easily returned home with 20,000 or more per trip. Everyday they copied and organized them into folders as well as applied metadata in large batches. No time to look at them all. They knew the ones that were right and 5-starred only a few.

Careful though, as organized as you are now, chaos may arise should these images inadvertently move as LR will no longer know where to find those images. Puzzling, yes. This easily happens such as when you plug in the wrong hard drive, or move folders or images with LR closed. Luckily, LR can help find the image and its location again.

A conference speaker shared that thousands of his photographs stored on multiple backups had become corrupted. As he prepared for his talk, he discovered that the image data recorded was not retrievable. The safe lifespan for CD/DVDs appears to be four years or so. He was going to retrieve what he could and establish a new backup plan. If you feel like chaos just returned, you now know what I am doing this Fall, replace my storage media.

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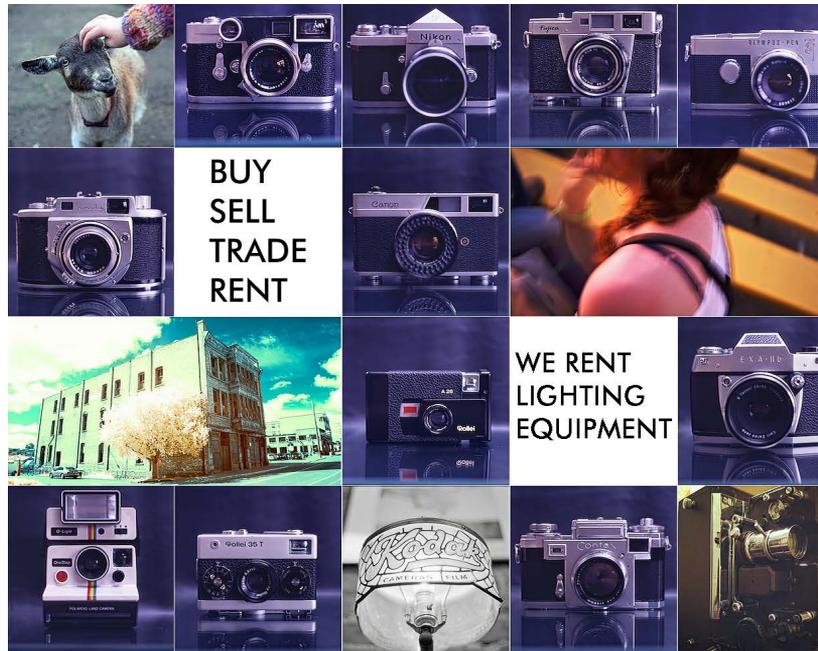
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