

Close-Up

VictoriaCameraClub.ca



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- Photographing Weather
- Tech Tips
- Member Profile: Sharon Moysey
- Enchanting Flowers
- Image Stacking
- Action Cameras
- Creating Red Riding Hood
- Shoots Around Victoria
- Spirit Bears: The Great Bear Rainforest
- Exposure: ISO (Sensitivity)

"Ballet Fantasy" by Gordon Griffiths



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Victoria Camera Club



"Waves" by Bob Law

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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February 2020

Close-Up is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club.

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The Victoria Camera Club is a member society of the Victoria Arts Council, 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.

February 6th: Competition Night. The theme competition is “Abstract”. The January competition results will be presented.

February 13th: Presentation Night. Rick Hulbert will make his presentation on “The Czech Republic, a Ten-day Case Study in Collaborative Travel Photography”.

February 20th: Members’ Night. Presentations of members’ images, field trip slide shows, prints or short technical presentations.

Workshop Highlights: Nature/Wildlife Photography and Urban Heritage Travel Photography (3 days).

Field Trip Highlights: Mystic Beach and “Up in the Air”.

Cover Image: “Ballet Fantasy” by Gordon Griffiths. This composite photo resulted from the combination of two very different images.

The first photo was taken in the studio of Ballet Victoria. We have the opportunity and privilege to photograph some rehearsals of the company. The very talented dancers in this image are Andrea Bayne and Luke Thomson performing a dance choreographed and produced by the Ballet’s artistic and executive director, Paul Destrooper.

The second photo was a photograph of an iris blossom in the Government House Gardens in Victoria. This photo was enlarged in Photoshop using the transform editing tool to make it significantly larger than real life. This flower became the background in the composite, and Andrea and Luke were masked out of the studio photo and placed on the “stage” created by the flower.

Once the composite was created, it was refined with a number of layers in Photoshop. Parts of the background flower that were distractions or did not fit in were removed. Shadows for Luke’s feet and legs were created to make the composite image more realistic. Some dodging and burning was done to make the dancers more prominent and the background flower less intrusive. A vignette toning layer was added to try and better blend the two photos and make the colours and lighting of the image more consistent.

President’s Message

We are now two-thirds of the way through the current Club season and what a season it has been so far. Although it seems like we still have some time to go, our AGM will be coming up before you know it and this means we need to start thinking about the new executive for the upcoming year. Some of us may decide we would like to continue for another year while others will step down to allow for new members to step forward. All of the positions are available for members who be willing to volunteer for a one-year term, and if there is more than one member who would like to be, say, President, then there would be a member vote. Wouldn’t that be exciting!

I’d like to say that being your Club President for the last few years, and field trip coordinator before that, has been such a rewarding experience for me. It has allowed me to meet so many of our fabulous members and to help the Club to move forward. If you are interested and would like to know more about what being on the executive entails, then please ask any of the current (or past) executive members about their experiences, I know they would be happy to share them with you. For reference, the executive consists of the President, two Vice-Presidents, two Members-at-Large, Treasurer and Secretary.

February in Victoria is such an interesting time of the year. In the past we have seen the flowers and trees start growing and colours beginning to show. Then, like last year, it can snow so much that we wake up one morning to a white winter wonderland. However, I will admit that, as a former Ontarian, I love and miss the snow and wouldn’t mind it coming again this year. Both of these scenarios can provide us with some interesting photographic opportunities so “be prepared” for some photographic challenges.

This month’s competition theme is “Abstract”, and it is not too late to enter the February competitions so why not see what you can do. Abstract art is defined as “art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, forms, colours and textures”.

We have seen many amazing photographs as examples of this in our competition presentations and as well in members’ slide shows. What’s more, our monthly Creative SIG, led by Penny Coddling and Kevin Keliher, helps members with ideas and guidance in ways to be creative in our photography. I look forward to seeing what everyone can do.

Teri VanWell, President

Mac Software

by Paul Ross

In a 2014 *Close-Up* article on using a Mac for digital photography I covered iPhoto and Aperture. Now, five years later, both have been replaced by Photos. As with iPhoto, Photos comes bundled with the operating system.

Photos focuses on cell phone cameras with automatic transfers to Apple's iCloud services and limited editing capabilities. It has built-in facial recognition and editors can be integrated using "edit with". SlideShow is the main feature I use. This has several different styles that allow the creation of high-quality slideshows, however, working with multiple drives and libraries is not easy or intuitive.

Unfortunately, Photos is not a replacement for Aperture so I moved to Capture One where it is possible to open Aperture libraries including all the adjustments.

Capture One is professional-level editing software featuring extensive adjustments. It supports layers and masking, so adjustments can be made on layers. Images can be sorted in albums, projects, ranking and colour tags.

In Capture One I found that raw files revealed much more detail than other raw file processors, however, I miss the integration with the NIK software. A new update was just released at around \$400 or you can subscribe for \$28 per month.

My current software is generally pro-level so, to ensure a level playing field, I have evaluated software at that level when possible.

Asset Management and Editing

DxO PhotoLab3: DxO bought the Nik software from Google and also added the PhotoLibrary asset management tool. You get a very complete set of editing and enhancement tools. PhotoLab can use Lightroom's metadata. The Elite edition is \$150 and Nik software is \$150, but a discounted price is often available.

CyberLink PhotoDirector claims that their software is "...just like having Photoshop and Lightroom all rolled into one." It offers dehazing, colour replacement, layer editing and masking, content aware removal, HDR and many others. It uses keywords, star ratings and colour coding. Experienced users may find the edit tool organization is very different to what they are used to. PhotoDirector Ultra 10 is \$110 or \$52 per year.

Asset Management Tools

Photo Mechanic is a file management system that helps you organize, manage and create slideshows and export your images. As an asset management system, you can edit information about the image but not edit it. \$140.

Photo Editors

Many editors advertise Artificial Intelligence editing. You can let the application "improve" your photos using algorithms and AI. Maybe I can become a better photographer by using the new software or is it the software that created the image and it should get the credit?

Affinity Photo is a professional-level photo editor with a multitude of filters and adjustments as well as HDR, panorama stitching, and focus stacking. App Store \$70.

Pixelmator Pro is another photo editor with pro-level adjustments, multiple layers and integration with Photos. App Store \$55.

Luminar 4, released Fall 2019, is an editor that can work as a stand-alone program or as a plug-in for Photos. \$119.

Acorn 6 is a full-featured photo editor with adjustments, layer masks and effects such as tilt/shift. It also offers text on a path and circle text for adding text to your images. App Store \$30.

Gimp is a free open-source photo editor for Mac, Windows and Linux. It has been around for over 20 years. It has a vast collection of tools but is not as user friendly as the paid applications.

Mossaik HDR is a high-end HDR processor developed specifically for the Mac. It has over 90 built in pre-sets and batch processing. App Store \$36.

When evaluating software I look at the adjustments available and integration with other software and compare the output to others that I have used. Features that I use include back-ups, exporting, printing and slideshows. I get the trial version and test 100 images to see how each of the applications deals with the features that are important to me. Ease of use is another consideration. Some programs are slow and difficult to use. Other programs, usually the more expensive ones, tend to be more intuitive and save me a lot time.

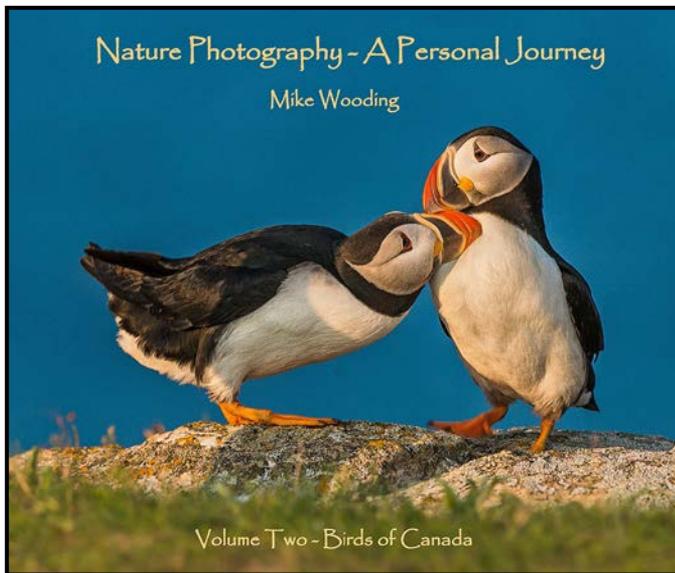
I used a number of resources for this article, these are the ones I spent the most time with: shuttermuse.com/best-digital-asset-management-software and toptenreviews.com/best-mac-photo-editing-software.

Preserving Images and Memories

by Mike Wooding, ACAPA.

About eight years ago I was looking at my wildlife images on my computer and began wondering what would ultimately happen to them. Then it struck me that the result of all of the effort in creating these images, from the initial pressing of the shutter to the last tweak in processing would be that they would end up in a computer recycle depot among other out-dated machines containing long forgotten e-mails and useless games. Yikes, the thought sent chills up my spine!

That's when I decided to create my website. After all, even if I get run over by a truck, my images would still be available to view online, right? Wrong! I realized that, for my website to provide any kind of legacy, I would need to rely on someone to pay the annual web hosting fees. What I needed was something that was permanent that I could hold in my hand and did not depend on anything electronic.

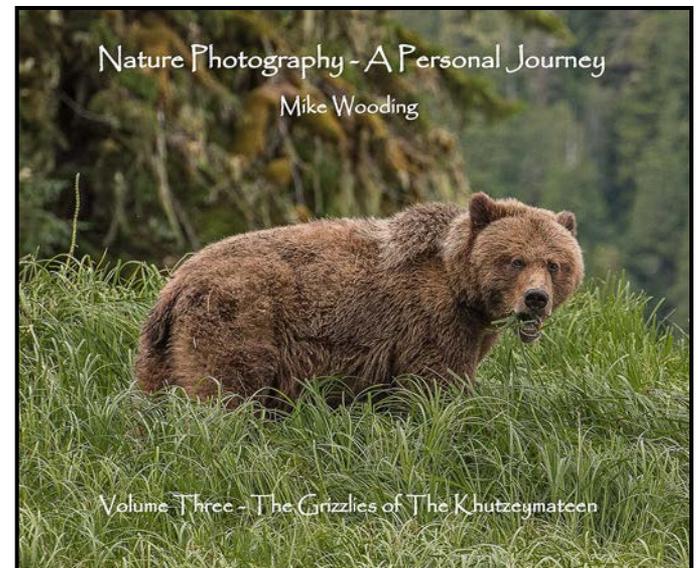


I considered prints but how does one handle 500 or more prints? The only answer that made any sense to me was to produce a series of books. A single book can accommodate 100 to 200 images and can be passed on from one generation to another, but the real advantage to a book is the ability to preserve not only the images but the memories that are associated with getting the images.

As a wildlife photographer I am fortunate in having many wonderful memories of some beautiful locations from the rugged coast of Newfoundland, to the deserts of the American southwest, to the Canadian sub-arctic, and, of course, to the west coast of British Colum-

bia. My memories also include the interaction I have experienced with the wildlife I have been privileged to photograph and the friends with whom I have shared these invaluable times. A book allows me to create the text that recalls these memories and the images bring them back to life. In my first book, I devoted an entire page of text to an encounter with a Short-eared Owl at Brunswick Point. To this day, eight years later, I often relive this experience by reading these words and looking at the image on the adjacent page.

Speaking of memories, I believe that there are times, especially with wildlife and nature photography, when it is time to put the gear down and just concentrate on observing everything that is surrounding me. This was really brought home when I was photographing Grizzly bears in the Khutzeymateen Inlet north of Prince Rupert. Watching the interaction between the Grizzly mom and her cub is something that cannot be properly experienced through a lens while concentrating on framing and proper settings. When I got the shot I wanted, I put my camera down and focused my eyes on the complete picture in front of me. I also tried to imagine what was going through the minds of the mom and of the cub, adding another dimension to the memory.



There are many bookmaking software packages available. In addition, stores such as Costco and London Drugs offer book publishing services. It is not my intention in this short article to review the various packages and services that are available. What I will tell you is that I use the BookWright downloadable software from Blurb. There may be other choices out there that are better but I am extremely happy with Blurb to the extent that I am currently not looking for an alternative. Blurb is extremely versatile and relatively easy to use. To learn more about it visit their website (blurb.ca) or check out the You Tube tutorials. Happy book making!

Photographing Weather

by Garry Schaefer

Victoria is known to have the most benign weather in Canada as it is dominated by the influence of the Pacific Ocean. That said, some drama does occasionally occur. Winter snowfall produces much temporary beauty. On rare occasions the sky over the city fills with the forms of mammatus clouds, even if they are less perfectly shaped than their Prairie counterparts. These undulations are created in cool, saturated downdrafts. This image was converted using Paint Shop Pro's Black and White Film Effect. Final adjustments were then made to white and black points, mid-tone contrast and overall brightness. The image was shot with an Olympus E-M1, 12-40 mm f2.8 lens at 15 mm, f4, 1/200th sec., ISO 200, -1.0 EV)



"Mammatus over Victoria"

Infrared photography dramatically enhances the contrast when towering cumulus clouds rise in an otherwise clear sky. The clouds themselves strongly reflect infrared light while the clear skies remain dark. When vigorous convection occurs, I often reach for my Panasonic G3 camera which has been converted to deep B&W IR. I shoot in monochrome mode and tweak the black and white points and overall brightness using Paint Shop Pro. This was shot with a Panasonic G3 14-22 mm f3.5-5.6 lens at 22 mm, f5.6, 1/160th sec., ISO 160.

These two examples represent one approach to photographing the weather, opportunistic rather than planned. Not only that but my shooting environment on my fourth-floor balcony was well protected from the elements. Although both my Olympus E-M1 and its 12-40 mm f2.8 lens are "weather sealed", it was not needed in this case. My IR rig is not weather sealed, but it was safe and dry for this shot.



"Heavy Cumulus"

For the more adventurous, shooting the weather may involve shooting in the weather, perhaps under planned circumstances. You might scout out preferred locations in the absence of storms, check weather forecasts for the desired scenarios and prepare your gear. If you have weather resistant cameras and lenses, choose them. If not, resort to the plastic bag solution to keep things dry. Protect yourself with rain gear and warm clothing and enjoy the excitement of capturing images while out in the environment. Sometimes photographing the weather may involve images of people coping with the elements rather than of the weather itself. The final image shows a typical response to winter rain. All that is needed is an umbrella or a raincoat to handle the usually benign winter weather of Victoria. This was shot with an Olympus E-M1 12-40 mm f2.8 lens, 40 mm, f2.8, 1/100th sec., ISO 200.



"Coping With the Rain"

Christmas Party Thank You

by Lorna Shaw

The party was a huge success thanks to our many donors and volunteers. We raised a total of \$2,245!

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Suzanne Huot (Jill Turyk)	Pam Irvine (Kim Smith)
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Thank you to the setup and take-down volunteers. There are too many to mention all of you but “many hands make light work”. We thank Pam Irvine (emcee), John Clarke (cashier), Ian and Carol Valkenier (punches), Tracy Riley and Vicky VINTR (table centrepieces), Bobbie and Bob Carey, Kim Smith and Bob Barlow (Christmas tree setup). With these volunteers, the Christmas Committee of Susan Byrne, Lorna Shaw, Teri VanWell and Vicky VINTR pulled off a successful and enjoyable evening. It couldn't have been done so well without a community of people, including about 100 guests!

Victoria Hospice and Victoria Women's Transition House were presented with cheques on Dec. 13th.

Tech Tips

by Richard James

This month I'll cover a number of topics aimed at improving image quality. These are both camera related and post-processing tips.

Depth-of-field: I recently had a brief conversation with a member who commented, “I can't get enough depth-of-field in my interior images. Should I be using a full frame or crop sensor camera?” The short answer to this question is that, for the same object at the same relative size (for example 50% of the height) on the sensor, it doesn't matter. You will get close to the same depth-of-field at the same lens aperture.

Several parameters go into determining what is “acceptable focus”. These include the image magnification, lens aperture, the viewing distance of the final image and “how sharp is sharp?”

When you are judging image sharpness you are either looking at a print, an image on a monitor, or projected on a screen; all three are different circumstances.

Technically, sharpness is measured by “the circle of confusion” which is the maximum size of a slightly blurred point that is detectable as being blurred. But this is dependent on the distance from which you are viewing the object. The human eye can resolve an object of approximately 0.2 mm when viewed at 25 cm. This value is often taken as appropriate for an 8” x 10” print. The same value holds when viewing a print at twice the magnification and twice the distance.

If you wish to view the larger print at 25 cm then you need a circle of confusion on the print that is half that, 0.1 mm. This implies half the depth-of-field. Conversely, if you're viewing the image on a large projection screen from a longer distance you could get away with a larger circle of confusion.

Going back to the original question, if the key object in the image is the same relative size on the sensor in a full frame and crop sensor camera, then the only control you have over depth-of-field is aperture. The smaller the aperture the greater the depth-of-field. The challenge then, especially for low light-level interior images, is to balance depth-of-field with the added noise and reduced dynamic range caused by a higher ISO value.

For more info see: cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials/depth-of-field.htm and normankoren.com/Tutorials/MTF6.html.

Camera Shake: There are a couple of ways of managing blurred images caused by camera shake. The most obvious is keep the camera still! So, the best way of doing this is to use a sturdy tripod on firm ground and shielded from the wind. Oh, and use a cable or remote release so you don't have to touch the camera to fire the shutter.

A common mistake is to buy a tripod that is too light for the camera and lens to be used. The next common mistake is to use an extendable column on the tripod. Yes, my tripod is heavy, but I bought it to be able to use a heavy, long lens on a heavy body for shooting wildlife where I can track flying birds standing up. Not everybody has this requirement, but the principle is the same: buy the right tripod for the purpose so you don't keep on buying the next best tripod (your money is better spent on higher quality lenses).

If you do need to handhold your camera then there are two considerations, both based on shutter speed. The first is to use a minimum shutter speed related to the focal length of your lens where most people can hold the camera steady enough. For film cameras this was taken as the reciprocal of the lens focal length. So, for a 50 mm lens most people could handhold at 1/50th second. For high resolution digital cameras (over 25 megapixels, so more resolution than film) it is wise to use at least half this, 1/100th second for a 50 mm lens. It's best to experiment with your own equipment as other factors such as how you grip the camera/lens and the way they balance in your hands are important.

The alternative, high-tech solution, is to use the vibration reduction/image stabilization feature of your camera or lens system. This tracks the movement of the image and attempts to correct it by moving one or more lens elements. It can give you several speed "stop" equivalents but is generally not effective over a shutter speed of 1/500th of a second as the system cannot react quickly enough and tends to degrade the image quality.

Finding Sensor Spots: Aren't "dust spots" in the image annoying, you have to go in during editing and clean them up. By the way, this is nothing new, in the days of film and darkroom work you had to do the same thing, "spot" your prints with coloured inks. The best way to check for spots on your sensor is to take an out-of-focus image of a plain white surface with a small lens aperture and check that.

In Photoshop you probably want to increase the exposure a bit and make a curve adjustment to provide a high contrast gradient at the bright end of the luminance scale. This will generally show anything on the sensor.

Now you know that you have a problem, you can clean the sensor before your next shoot.

Lightroom now has a "visualize spot" tool. You can use the test image in the same way to identify spots. In the Develop module there is a menu bar underneath the image which starts with "Tool overlay". When the spot removal tool is selected the options are auto, always, selected, never. Next is a check-box for "visualize spots" and the slider. The play safe option is "always" with the check-box marked and the slider at the extreme right. You can now use the spot removal tool to deal with imperfections which include not only dust but blemishes such as teenage pimples on a face etc.

Cropping Images: To crop or not to crop that is the question. A purist may say "get everything right in the camera" which is all well and good but remember that the aspect ratio that we use most often (3:2) is completely arbitrary and is derived from the 35 mm film stock that we use in the past. Even more to the point, it is actually 35 mm movie film with the frames shot sideways relative to that medium (24 x 36 v.s. 24 x 18)! Before the advent of 35 mm cameras (introduced in 1934) there were several common film formats including 4:5 (8 x 10" and its multiples/sub-multiples), 101 (3 1/2 in.² was the first roll film introduced in 1895), and 120 (3.25 x 2.25", introduced in 1901 and still available, usually shot as 6 x 6 cm or 6 x 4.5 cm (4:3)).

Now we can add the commonly used digital format 16:9 (HD in all its flavours) with an image size of 1920 x 1080 pixels. This was first proposed in 1984 to encompass the core of the various aspect ratios that were being used in the movie industry at that time. There is also the less common micro 4/3 digital format which is also the format of our Club projector (1400 x 1050 pixels).

So how do we decide what format to crop our images into? One option is to crop each image individually to best fit the subject. This results in random aspect ratios and thus each image requires a custom mat when produced as a print. Or, use a set of standard mats and best crop the image to fit. I have taken the latter course and produce most images in a restricted range of formats: 11 x 17" (a very slight trim along the long edge from the digital file) 8:10 (13.75 x 11"), square (11 x 11") or 16:9 (9.6 x 17"). Occasionally I might do a 1:2 crop giving me 8.5 x 17". You will note that all these print on 11 x 17" paper and fit a 16 x 20" frame.

For our Club projector you could maximize an image's area (and thus impact) by cropping to 1400 x 1050 pixels. Unlike the days of film slides, a vertical image now carries a significant lower-impact penalty, barely 60% by area.

March Theme: Up In The Air

by Jill Turyk

The competition theme for March may prove to be a challenge. The theme is about photographing things and objects that are up in the air. The eligible subjects can be most items, but things that fly such as, aircraft, birds and insects are not allowed.

Apart from those restrictions, anything goes. We have an opportunity to find subjects and compositions that are unusual or that we might miss seeing in our day-to-day lives. There are a few areas in which you may find subject material for this theme. Here are some suggestions but the list is not limited to these.



"Up in the Air"

One likely area is sports, especially extreme sports. Subject such as cyclists, skiers or snowboarders going over jumps would be great subjects. Animals such as horses jumping would create a strong feeling of the theme.

While the theme will undoubtedly invite many images with the wow factor, it may not exclusively be through extreme action shots. It may be a quieter and gentler wow through the beauty of a hot air balloon floating on high, or a dandelion puff on the wind.

You may wish to choose shots of the moon. While being out of the atmosphere (air), moon shots will be accepted as being an eligible subject for this theme competition.

There are a multitude of ideas that can be put to use in this photographic theme. That is both the appeal and challenge. It is an opportunity to be creative and to see things that we don't notice every day. Use your imagination and remember, the sky's the limit!

November 2019 Competition Judges

We sincerely thank our external judges for the November Intermediate and Advanced level competitions, Rick Leche, Wes Bergen, Dan Jones Said, Larry Brietkreutz and Gregg Eligh. We also extend thanks to our in-house Novice Judges: Pam Irvine, Lorna Zaback, Jill Turyk, Nicci Tyndall and Richard Webber. Images and judges' comments are available at: victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx.

Rick Leche: Digital Nature. Rick currently lives in Black Creek, BC and is an avid photographer of anything or everything. He never leaves home without his Canon gear, whether it is traveling around the world or around the Comox Valley. Rick is a member of the Comox Valley Photographic Society where he and his wife Donna act as mentors in photo editing.

Wes Bergen: Digital Open and People. Wes has been a keen amateur photographer for almost 45 years. He has been a member of the Lions Gate Camera Club for over 44 years and has held many executive positions including two terms as President. He has also been a member of NAPA/CAPA for almost as long. Wes has taught Photoshop courses at local school board continuing education departments for about 10 years. He is a frequent judge and presents workshops at local photography clubs and seminars.

Dan Jones Said: Digital Theme: Sports. Dan has been a member of the Camera Club of Ottawa for 23 years where has achieved the level of Master Photographer. His work includes stock photos and fine art prints, and he enjoys judging for a variety of photo clubs.

Larry Brietkreutz: Digital Altered Reality. Larry has been an avid photo enthusiast for over 35 years. He enjoys the inspiration and challenge of all types of artistic images, whether created with the camera, with software, or with brush and paint. Larry is a Certified CAPA Judge and teaches Photography Courses for Surrey, Recreation. He currently serves the photographic community as the Past-President of the Canadian Association for Photographic Art (CAPA).

Gregg Eligh: Advanced Prints. Gregg is a good friend to the Club and well known for his competition judging over the years and his interesting workshops. He currently teaches continuing education photography courses at Camosun College. Gregg has worked as a professional photographer across North America and the Caribbean doing corporate, editorial, catalogue and advertising photography. Gregg's work can also be seen in several gallery shows every year.

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continuingstudies.uvic.ca/photography

Winter/Spring 2020 Photography Courses

The Altered Image with Tony Bounsall

Tuesdays, Jan. 28 to March 31 from 6:30 to 9 pm

Documentary Photography with Don Denton

Wednesdays, Jan. 29 to March 18 from 6:30 to 9 pm

Digital Photography: Shifting to Manual with Gerry Schallié

Thursdays, Feb. 6 to March 12 from 7 to 9 pm

Photography Skills for the Real World with Don Denton

Saturdays, Feb. 22 and 29 from 10 am to 2:30 pm

Creating the Personal Archive with Don Denton

Saturday, March 14 from 10 am to 2:30 pm

Travel and Street Photography Basics with Andrew Kielbowicz

Mondays, March 16, 23, 30; and April 6 and 20 from 6:30 to 8:45 pm and
Saturday, April 4 from 10:30 am to 12:45 pm

Image Transfer with Tony Bounsall

Saturday and Sunday, April 18 and 19 from 10 am to 5 pm

Natural Light Portraiture Made Easy with Tony Bounsall

Friday, April 24 from 7 to 9 pm; and Saturday, April 25 from 9 am to 1 pm

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Advanced People Digital - 1st

"Man with a Bamboo Cane" by Daniel Rondeau

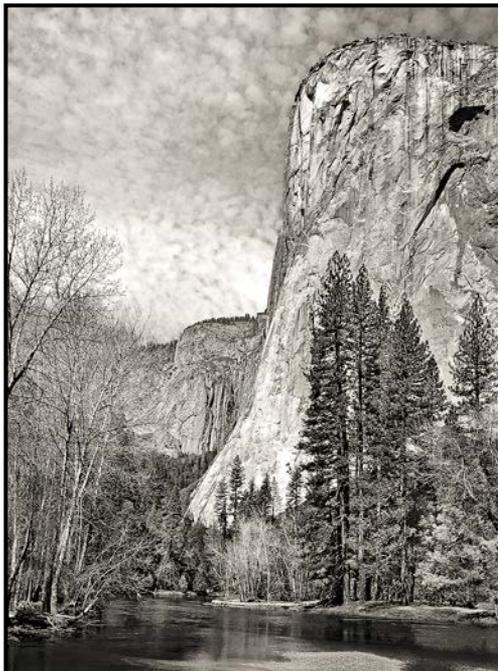
Judge's comments: Amazing facial details. It's understandable that you weren't able to get a catchlight in his eyes. Excellent post-processing work to adjust contrast and make the subject stand out.



Advanced Creative Digital - 1st

"Dreaming of White Horses" by Leah Gray

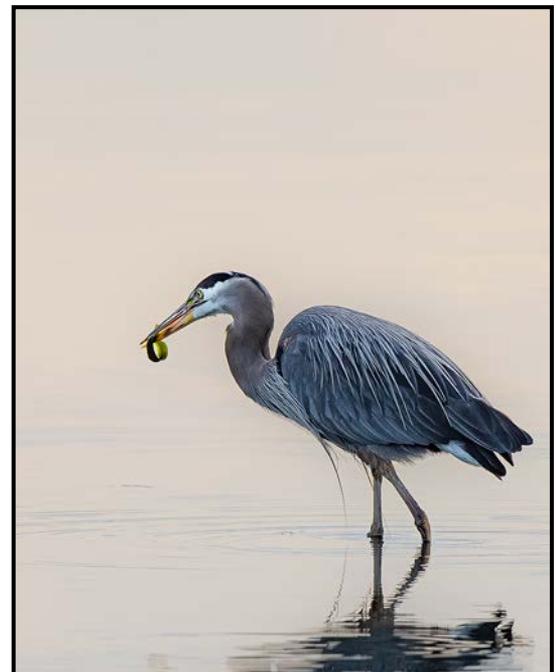
Judge's comments: This image clearly represents a dream. Lighting is well handled with the light on the white horse reaching down across the upper body of the dreamer. The rest of the image is in shadows, like the night. Great composition and clear message.



Advanced Nature Digital - 1st

"The Captain" by Doug Neal

Judge's comments: Black and White in very much of an Ansel Adams style! Very well captured and presented. Thank you for sharing the image.



Advanced Nature Print - 1st

"Great Blue Heron in Morning Light" by Jim Fowler

Judge's comments: Very nice, excellent tones and exposure. Beautifully shot and framed with no distractions.



Advanced Open Digital - 1st
"Northern Resident Orca"
by Christine Hutchins Gallagher

Judge's comments: Excellent detail in the whale and the spout. Exposure is perfect with no blown highlights or shadows.



Advanced Monochrome Print - 2nd
"Old Guard" by Cindy Stephenson

Judge's comments: Nicely printed image. Asymmetry is strong. Good depth and effective inclusion of the foreground shoreline.



Advanced Theme Digital - 1st
"Intense Moment" by Steve Smith

Judge's comments: An impactful image due to the extreme closeup of the cyclist, along with the skilled cropping of the subject. The photographer's timing also captured the determination in the cyclist's face. The removal of colour from the background as well as the use of a shallow depth of field, effectively simplified this image and isolated the main rider. Congratulations to the photographer for successfully capturing a difficult subject.



Advanced Open Print - 1st
"Broken Dreams" by Steve Lustig

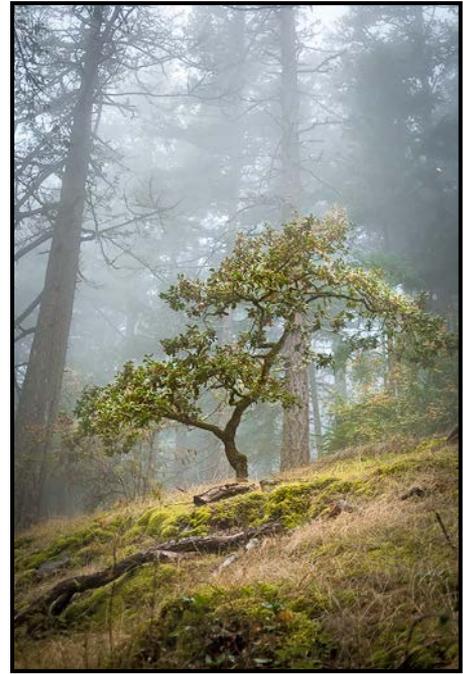
Judge's comments: This location and subject makes it difficult to not demand attention and have impact. It certainly inspires dramatic imagery. Good depth with the bathtub at the receding angle..



Intermediate Digital Theme - 1st

“Redemption from the Sand Trap” by Grant Hughes

Judge’s comments: Perfectly executed image where all the elements work so well. Great timing of the action, beautiful lighting with the light on the golfer and the dark background for contrast and good use of shallow depth of field to focus on the main subject. Good choice of a low camera angle and creative composition. Overall a very impressive image, congratulations



Intermediate Open Digital - 1st

“Tree in the Mist” by Lindsey Millar

Judge’s comments: Nice moody image with a pleasing foreground and background,



Intermediate Nature Digital - 1st

*“Mt. Niblock Reflected in Lake Agnes: Banff NP”
by Greg Blaney*

Judge’s comments: A gorgeous landscape image, very well seen and captured. The 50% vertical split (while normally a rule breaker) works very well with the subject to create a mirror-like image. Well done. Thank you!



Intermediate Creative Digital - 1st

“Looking Back” by Kevin Keliher

Judge’s comments: Technically well crafted with a creative vision. Light, mood, and exposure are all strong. The compositional challenge here is that the boat is poised to move forward, while the text on the boat is “Looking Back”.



Intermediate People Digital - 1st
"Packing the Harvest" by Martin Lennick

Judge's comments: This is a delightful travel shot of a woman busy at her trade. Lighting, exposure and focus are all perfect. Great pose for the subject, colours and very pleasing background.



Intermediate Open Print - 1st
"The Grip" by Wayne Melia

Judge's comments: Great capture of the moment. Exposure and focus are good.



Novice People Digital - 1st
"Curiosity" by Frank Thirkettle

Judge's comments: This is a good environmental portrait. Environmental portraits are difficult as one cannot control the subject and the background. The lighting, focus and positioning of the subject peeking out from behind the hammock adds to the photo. Catchlight in the eyes adds life to her face.



Novice Open Digital - 2nd
"Mine for Now" by Susan McRae

Judge's comments: Excellent photo of seagull with its prize flying to safety. The photographer has caught the catchlight in the eye of the seagull, the softness and texture of the wing. Catching the clam in the gull's mouth adds interest to the image. A good shutter speed was chosen to freeze the motion of the wings, focus is good. Blurring out the background with a shallow depth of field reduces the distraction of the busy background.



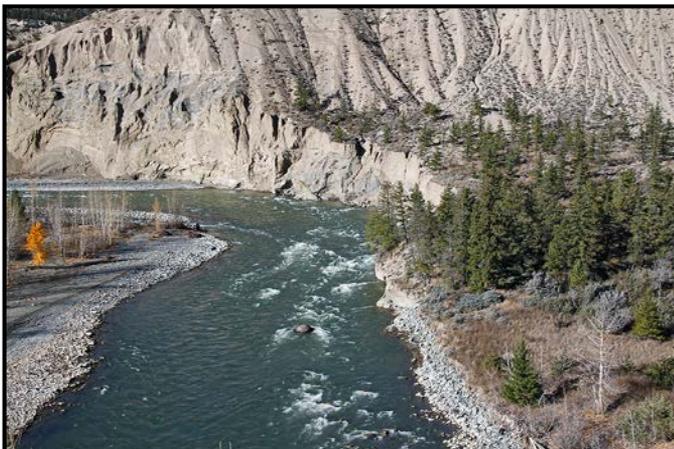
Novice Digital Nature - 1st
"Snagged" by Alison Poole

Judge's comments: The simplicity of this image is very effective. This is a beautiful environmental photo contrasting the sharpness of the grass head compared to the softness of the feather which was blowing in the wind and has become snagged. The subjects are in focus compared to the softly-blurred background. The colour, tone and narrow depth of field all contribute to an excellent nature photo



Novice Theme - 3rd
"Life's Lessons" by Terri Kott

Judge's comments: A touching moment caught between father and child. The expression in the hands tell the story. There is also just enough light on the little boy's face that helps tell the story. Exposure is good with the waves and water exposed properly. A fast-enough shutter speed was used to freeze the motion of the waves. Good job not cropping off the shadow on the right. The composition of this photo is both lovely and strong.



Novice Open Print - 1st
"Farwell Canyon, BC" by Sylvan Burnside

Judge's comments: The "S" curve is lovely. The exposure is good. The textural quality in the bluffs is nicely captured.

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Member Profile: Sharon Moysey

I was the last person in the family that you'd ask to take a picture. I could never get the hang of manual focus on my husband's 35 mm Mamiya camera in the 1980s. That soft blur in some pictures in our old photo albums was not an artistic choice. And trying to frame a picture using the teeny screen on the back of my daughter's first digital camera in the early 2000s resulted in missing body parts, including a memorable one of my six-foot plus son receiving his high school diploma from his five-foot principal. At least I think it's my son; you can only see him from the shoulders down.

But, finally, technology overcame my ineptitude. I welcomed autofocus, viewfinders, large LCD screens on the back of cameras and, of course the miracle/curse of digital cameras ("Wait, can you do that again? I didn't get it the first time") that my family has heard many times. With the realization that I could, sometimes, take a decent picture came the interest in learning to take a better picture.



"Alter Ego Shadow"

I retired from a career in the provincial public service in 2014 and was thrilled to receive a gift certificate from a camera store as a parting gift. I bought my first DSLR, a Nikon D5200. Now that I could use different lenses, manual settings, and RAW files to enable enhanced editing, the complexity and choices seemed overwhelming. On the advice of my long-time friend and VCC member, Jill Turyk, I took a beginners' photography course at Camosun College and joined the VCC in 2016.

By training and vocation, I am a CPA (Chartered Professional Accountant). I tend to be drawn to work and activities that have structure and logic. I never considered myself a creative person. I was practical! Imagine my discomfort as my technical photography skills improved and the realization dawned that composition and the intangible "wow" factor are essential, too. How the heck

was I going to learn that? For me, the answer was by practise and learning from others although in my photography experience each "ah ha" moment is followed by the apprehension that there is more that I didn't even know I didn't know.



"Peekaboo"

The best advice I received was from Mitch Stringer and anyone who has taken his classes will likely be able to recount his two mantras: "What are you trying to say?" he would ask to get us to think deliberately about our photo before we pressed the shutter button and, "Form a group!" He endlessly encouraged us so that we would get out and practice and learn from each other.

I've taken his advice to heart and enjoy field trips with VCC friends and get-togethers to offer constructive comments on each other's photos. I have also expanded my technical knowledge and stimulated my nascent creative side through the excellent workshops offered by VCC, learning about such subjects as Lightroom, street photography, and using flash.

I recently moved up from the Novice to the Intermediate competition category and am continuing to learn and challenge myself. I hope that a recent intermediate photography course will improve my technical skills and that joining the Internal Competitions Committee will give me insight into the judges' perspective on the elements of photographs with impact.

I'm pleased to report that my family no longer cringes when I am holding a camera. We recently took a family cruise to celebrate my mother's 90th birthday and I was able to create a photo book memento with no blurry photos or missing heads!

Enchanting Flowers

by Lois Burton

Flowers have long been a favourite subject for painters and photographers. Their delicate blooms, vibrant colours and array of different shapes provide inspiration to explore your creative side and they also make an ideal subject for working more abstractly.



“Cherry Blossoms”

One of my goals is to create interesting portfolio pieces that look less digital and more similar to a painting. There are many different programs available to allow you to add painting-like effects to your photographs. Most of these programs have built-in filters that provide some control over the finished look, but the limited control doesn't produce very realistic simulations. I work predominately in Photoshop and prefer to work up my pieces with different brushes and other tools available in the program rather than using the built-in artistic filters. Because each piece is worked up differently, I can't provide step-by-step instruction, but I can share with you some of the techniques that I use in my work.

Firstly, I use a Wacom tablet and find that it is an indispensable tool because the stylus is fluid and responsive and provides a level of dexterity and precision that is not possible with a mouse.

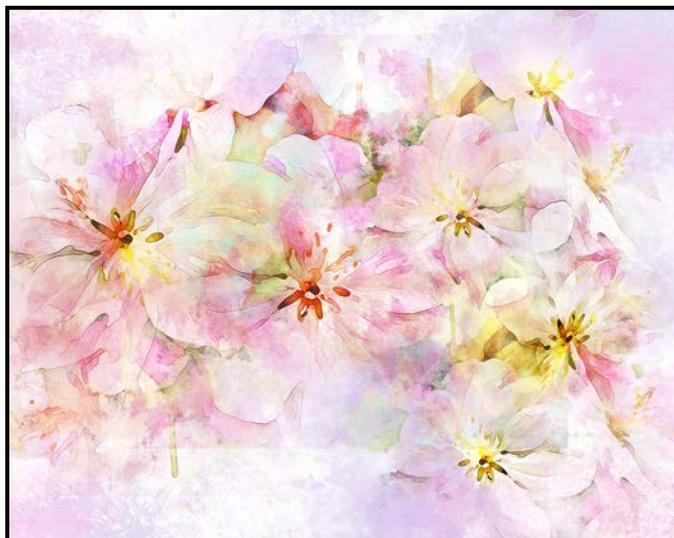
Most photographs contain too much detail to create a realistic painting so it is important to simplify the image. I use many different blurring techniques. I mask the main subject and copy it onto a new layer. This gives you the flexibility to create your own composition. The finished piece does not have to mirror your original photo. The subject can be duplicated and modified with various transformation tools to create a pleasing composition. The warp and scale tools, puppet warp and liquify work well to change the shape of the main subject or individual petal shapes.



“Delicate Soul”

I have always been drawn to watercolour because it provides a wide range of expression from soft and subtle to strong and vibrant. Many of the key characteristics of watercolour painting can be simulated in Photoshop allowing you to create different effects and “looks”.

Watercolours have a luminosity and lightness. The watercolour paint is normally diluted and transparent allowing the paper texture and colours to show through. This is achieved in Photoshop by having a background layer that contains an image of watercolour paper. By adding a Levels adjustment layer you can achieve further texture control, while adding a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer will change the colour of the paper. It is important not to paint on this layer as the paper texture would be painted over, so this layer should always be locked.



“Diaphanous Blooms”

A new blank layer is placed above the watercolour layer and this is the layer on which you will paint. The blend mode of this layer should be set to “multiply”. Your reference photo is placed on a separate layer above this. Because the top layer is your visible reference photo it is used as a guide for your digital painting, which is done on the blank layer below.

Photoshop contains a variety of brushes to use in your digital painting and by changing the brush tip, size, softness, shape or pressure applied, you can create unique strokes. There are also an infinite number of brushes that can be downloaded free of cost. From within your brush panel, click on the menu at the top right side and select “Get more brushes”. This takes you to free Adobe resources and an array of different brushes.



“Impressionist Sunflowers”

I have found that it is better to have just a few sets of reliable high-quality brushes. The set that I use most often is the watercolour set from Kylebrush which is available as part of your Adobe Creative Cloud membership at no additional cost.

Paint transparency is one of the defining characteristics of watercolour paint. There are three main ways that this can be simulated in Photoshop: altering the brush opacity, altering layer opacity and changing the layer blending mode to multiply.

With a brush opacity set to 20% the paper texture of the background layer shows through and is the equivalent to diluting paint with water in traditional painting.

Setting your layer opacity to anything less than 100% also gives you the look of transparent paint. Layer opacity applies to the entire layer while brush opacity applies to each brush stroke.

Paint flow and blending colours is essential in creating a realistic watercolour effect and there are many ways



“Iris Elegance”

to create this effect in Photoshop. The paint mixing and flowing effects can be achieved using many of the filters in the blur gallery. You can also lay down a stroke or a number of strokes and then blend them with the smudge tool, a soft edge brush or the mixer brush. In your brush work it is important to follow the contours of the flower and petals with your brush strokes to achieve a realistic look.



“Bird of Paradise”

Photoshop has three brushes that give the spatter effect seen in many watercolour paintings. Unlike traditional painting, any unwanted splatters can be removed with an eraser. It is worth mentioning that any brush can be turned into an eraser simply by changing the blending mode to clear.

Allow yourself to play around with brush and paper and splash some paint around. The creative possibilities are endless; you are limited only by your imagination.

Image Stacking

by Dan Takahashi

How often have you stood at a beach and been totally awed by the beauty and expanse of the scene? Or on a balcony trying to take in the whole breathtaking cityscape? Or you wanted to take a relatively ordinary scene and make it look like a million bucks?

In this article I hope to show you some of the ways that my shooting style has evolved to tackle these challenging situations.

I started my photographic journey with an old Minolta SRT 101 in the late 60s but my real “shoot ‘em” phase started in the 90s with a digital Nikon D100. I was fortunate to have spent some time at a workshop with a professional architectural photographer shooting in Arches National Park in Utah. It started the pursuit of shooting exposure stacking or HDR in a nature environment that has now carried over into my Architectural and Real Estate work. I am still learning and experimenting with the different settings and software that “stacks ‘em” up.

I shoot a lot. Most days (now that I am retired) I shoot Real Estate and Architectural photography. I found early on that exposure bracketing with landscapes also works very well in almost all interior and exterior architectural types of shooting. I usually shoot three to five properties a week and deliver 20-40 finished photos per property. I bracket five shots per finished image. That works out to 300 – 1,000 shots, and double that for the ones that I don’t use. Ahhhh, the joys of digital. Ahhhh, the joys of retirement.



“Hollywood Crescent Dining Room”

Shoot ‘Em. Let the shooting begin. For this type of shooting (HDR) my Nikon D850 is almost always set on aperture priority, high-speed continuous shutter release, on a tripod and using five-shot auto-bracketing, one stop apart.

Bracketing is where the shutter speed automatically changes with each shot. I usually do five shots going from dark (two stops under exposed) to light (two stops over exposed). That would be an exposure compensation of -2, -1, 0, +1, +2. Some cameras will only do three-shot brackets so do them two f-stops apart. The variables would be the ISO and aperture settings as they can change for different situations and conditions.

Most of the settings for interior shots, such as this dining room, would be at ISO 100 with an aperture of f8-11. Variables would be if the room is exceptionally dark, then a higher ISO is needed, maybe up to ISO 320 or so. Or if the sun is streaming into a room filled with dark furniture, then try changing your bracketing to two f-stops apart. The challenge of shooting a scene with a high dynamic range (very dark to very light) is where exposure stacking, or HDR, really shines.



“Navigators Rise Stairs”

Exteriors are a bit different and settings would depend on the time of day, the weather and if there is anything moving in the photo. Shoot on a tripod using aperture priority, auto bracketing five shots, and high-speed continuous shutter release. Again, the variables are ISO and aperture. Static exterior scenes can be five bracketed shots at ISO 100 and f8. For scenes where something happens to be passing by slowly, or waves are moving, a much higher ISO is needed to increase the shutter speed to minimize movement between the five bracketed shots.

Stack ‘Em. Let the stacking begin. In my case, where I am shooting a lot of the same type of photography, I tend to batch process. Batch processing or single processing steps are similar.



“Humber Road”

It is using software that can take the five exposures and tone-map, blend or fuse them into one image. It essentially looks at the histogram of each pixel, kicks out the overexposed and underexposed pixels and automatically merges the rest to come out with an evenly-blended tonality for each pixel. Frame alignment is critical, so it is necessary to use a tripod.

There is a lot of software available and I’ve tried most of it. Photomatrix is the one I use the most due to its batch-processing capability and a very natural look. I use Aurora, On1 and Photoshop CC occasionally. Within the stacking HDR software there are features to align moving objects and adjust for different looks.



“Douglas Street”

Stitch ‘Em. To me this is where the real joy of creating the whole image and experience of the panoramic scene comes together. Working with these images and the ever-expanding world of software can be mind-boggling. With me, it’s about taking an opportunity and expanding and experimenting with the hardware and software until my head hurts.

OK, let’s stitch some up and make some panos. When I see a scene that I want to make into a pano, I will start

and end the series with a shot of my hand so when I am viewing the files, I know where the pano series begins and ends. I also make sure that the tripod head is level so that the horizon does not shift as the camera rotates.

For HDR panos, the camera is set to the same settings as above: five bracketed shots, one f-stop apart. I usually use a higher ISO and shutter speed if there are any moving objects in the scene. The aperture is at f8-16 and, very importantly, do not change the focus or aperture during the sequence.



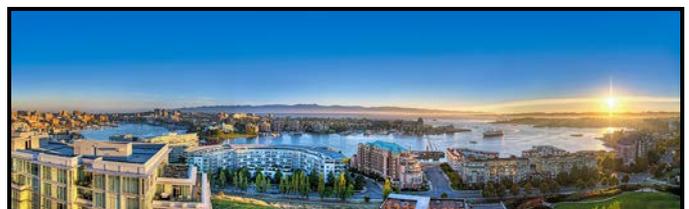
“Tofino Pano”

I usually shoot from left to right so the images are in order in the image viewer. I overlap each frame by at least 1/3rd. This means that when I start, I take five bracketed shots of the first scene to the left. I usually make the horizon line in the middle and crop later. Then I rotate the camera to the right, so I still see 1/3rd of the last scene and shoot another five-shot bracket set. Then I repeat the sequence until I get to the end of what I want to capture.

The Tofino Beach image is nine frames wide with five stacked shots for each frame. That’s 45 shots! The cityscape was seven wide, with five stacked shots for a 35 shot image.

I then open the stacked HDR images for each scene in Photoshop CC and very importantly, align each horizon before merging into the pano. I use the Photomerge option in Photoshop (File> Automate> Photomerge) and let the brains of Adobe do the blend, vignette removal, geometric distortion correction and content-aware fill to stitch them together. Then I crop and do a bit of tweaking and, voila, a terrific pano. A word of warning, they become very, very large files.

After all is said and done, with patience and practice, it should open up an approach to better images.



“Victoria Cityscape”

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Action Cameras

by Matt Speight

Okay, most of you shoot stills but bear with me. Action cameras have come a long way since the first GoPro, which was a pretty awful video camera. It also took stills, which, like the video, weren't that great. It did however fill a niche market that had been asking the big camera manufacturers, for years, to build a go-anywhere action camera. Extreme athletes snapped them up, and with several clever marketing campaigns, even the average person wanted to "GoPro" and document their adventures. Other manufacturers tried to copy the GoPro and mostly failed. Sony and DJI, which makes the Osmo Action camera, are now making cameras that truly rival the GoPro. So, let's see what these three companies have to offer. First, let's focus on shooting stills with an action camera.

The lens: For action cameras the lens is designed for a dramatic look. All three have an extreme 15 mm (35 mm equivalent) wide-angle lens, a fixed aperture of f2.8 and a fixed focus that gives you a range of 15 cm to infinity to work with. There are no zoom lenses on these cameras. They do have FOV (field-of-view) mode that gives you aspect ratio options from 4:3 to 16:9. You can buy third party lens extenders but the degradation in quality is so bad, you would be wasting your money.

Being so wide, the lens distorts the image at the edges, creating barrel distortion that can be a problem. While this distortion doesn't lend itself to portraits, (although it's amazing how people are doing selfies with these cameras while travelling), if you're creatively smart, you can make the lens quirks work for you. The GoPro and Osmo cameras have a linear mode in their FOV settings that will digitally correct for the lens distortion. You will lose a few degrees of field-of-view from the lens as the image is cropped slightly.

Sensor Size: Your action camera is small so the sensor is going to be small, a 1/2.3" sensor, about the size of your little fingernail. The dynamic range and low light performance isn't great with such a small sensor. You only have 12 megapixels so at least they're not trying to cram a ridiculous number of pixels into the small sensor. Also, the GoPro Hero8, unlike the Sony and Osmo Action, has an HDR mode (high dynamic range) where it will merge several photos with different exposures to improve the dynamic range. The GoPro uses a similar multi-frame technology to reduce noise levels in high ISO shots. With these features the still mode in the GoPro doesn't come

across as an after-thought as it does with the Sony or Osmo Action.

Camera Size and Durability: The cameras are small, lightweight and very durable. The GoPro Hero8, Sony and Osmo Action are waterproof to around 10 metres. If you want to go deeper underwater, diving housings will allow you to go down to 40 metres. The Sony and GoPro are shock proof to about 1.5 metres. The GoPro Hero8 also has a hardened, shatterproof, Corning glass front lens element. All three cameras weigh in at about 120 grams and are similarly diminutive in size: 66x49x28 mm for the GoPro, 65x42x35 mm for the Osmo Action and 83x47x29 mm for the Sony.

Photo Modes and Controls: None of these cameras will give you manual control over your aperture and GoPro is the only one that will give you shutter speed options but only from a range of 1/125th to 1/2000th second and 2 to 30 seconds.

They will give you control over your ISO, white balance, and exposure compensation. Being action cameras, they have continuous burst settings. The GoPro and Osmo have a live-burst setting where it saves images captured in the 1½ seconds before you press the shutter so you can go back a few frames if your reaction time was too slow. All three cameras also have a time-lapse option to take still photos over a set period of time. The GoPro and Osmo can shoot in RAW or JPEG.

Video and Stills from Video: Okay, so I couldn't really talk about action cameras and not cover the video side, but, don't worry, I will keep it short and relevant. All of these cameras will give you great video with lots of frame rate and resolution options. 4K is the highest resolution and 30 fps is the most common frame rate. A still frame from a 4K video is an impressive 8 megapixels. With the right software this allows you to extract a printable frame from a video still. If you do shoot your video at 4K you will need a powerful computer to edit them. At normal high definition, the cameras will have faster frame rate options available, allowing for smoother slow motion playback and providing more options when editing. However, a still clipped from high-definition video (1080p) will only be 2 megapixels.

So why shoot with an action camera? Well, there is the stick-it-in-your-pocket-and-don't-worry-about-it-getting-damaged feature. With a small fixed lens and fixed focus, it's a camera that can go almost anywhere. Just compose and take the picture. It can be so refreshing to shoot with a camera that is so different to your normal gear. Though it has limitations, it does inspire creativity. Have fun!

Creating Red Riding Hood

by Stephen Ban

I would guess that Little Red Riding Hood is probably one of the most common themes for photographers looking for portrait inspiration in an outdoor setting. A single shot involving a red cloak in a woodland setting will instantly provide all of the context and back-story that your audience needs. Then, it is up to you whether to hew to the traditional story or subvert it. In this article, I'll describe how I made my own Little Red Riding Hood shoot happen, from pre-shoot planning to post-processing. I'll review shoot planning in general, as well as how I planned this shoot.



"Behind the Scenes"

There are numerous steps in pre-shoot planning and there's not necessarily a set order to them. For this shoot, this was the order I followed: location scouting, casting, inspiration photos/mood board, props and wardrobe and the shot/equipment list. You may start with seeing an inspiring photo and follow that.

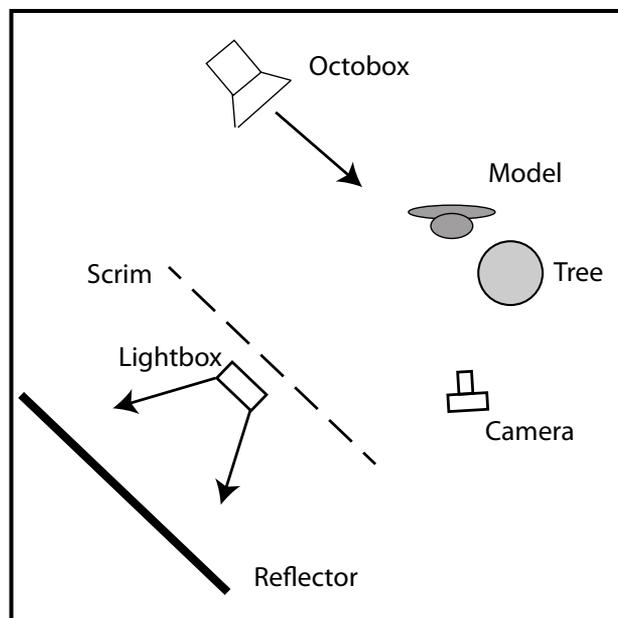
Unless you're planning on green-screening your backdrops, you'll have to find a suitable shooting location. You could either find your inspiration shots and mood boards first, and let those dictate the location, or find a location first and let that dictate what your shots look like. Either way, unless time and/or money are no object, you'll be constrained to a certain search radius for you (and your model(s)). This is where it helps to have local knowledge, but failing that, don't be shy to take advantage of social media to do some of your location scouting for you. Also make use of the Google Maps' Streetview feature to get on-the-ground views of locations without having to physically go there. Most parks and public places will also have Google Reviews with pictures as well that will provide more detail and perspectives than Streetview.

The initial shortlist of locations for this shoot came down to Summit Park (in the Hillside-Quadra area), the forest near Royal Roads University in Colwood or, Horth Hill Regional Park in North Saanich. I chose Horth Hill because it was less busy than the other locations, and also provided more choices in terms of potential backdrops.

I chose the shoot concept based on the model (Josephine) and everything else followed from there. Casting can involve much more than just finding a model however; you will often want to involve a hair and makeup artist, a wardrobe person, and so on. This shoot ended up involving four photographers (Giuseppe, Jasspreet, Karl, and myself), a hair/makeup/wardrobe/props person (Aimee), two dogs (Sophia and Kaisa) with their owner/dog handler (Tyler), and our lighting expert (Karl again). Given the number of people involved, this was already shaping up to be one of my more complex shoots.

Having established the location and cast, it was time to narrow down the overall concept to get some specific shots to emulate. Pinterest can be your best friend here. It is a social media platform where people "pin" links and photos on themed bulletin boards. I frequently use my Pinterest boards for shoot concepts that I might use later. In this case, searching Pinterest using the term "Red Riding Hood" returned thousands of pictures. I narrowed my shot selection down to four looks, with two or three variations on each look, for a total of twelve shots in my shot list. Having these shots picked out helped with coming up with the props and wardrobe.

Another important step is developing the lighting concepts. These are usually illustrated with a series of sketches showing the lighting, model and camera pos-



"Setup: Lighting Concept"

itions. The lighting illustration here shows the setup for the image of Little Red Riding Hood peering out from behind a tree. There is a rim light coming from behind her shoulder to illuminate the outline of her cloak with the key light being diffused through a scrim to light her face.



“Turning Day into Night with Powerful Strobes”

Although the props and wardrobe list seemed straightforward on paper, it turned out to be more complicated than I had anticipated. The prop list was a candle lantern, a wicker basket, apples, and rose petals. The wardrobe list included the iconic red cape, a suitable peasant-like dress, and shoes to match. For the lantern, I scoured Craigslist and UsedVictoria for some time before discovering that Aimee already had one, in addition to a wicker basket. It turns out that it was easier to buy synthetic petals than real ones. I had the dress and shoes, so I just had to find the hooded cape. Aimee was an accomplished seamstress, so she simply made one!

The last step was figuring out what equipment we needed. From the shot list and lighting layouts we knew the type and number of lights and what sort of diffusion and light modifiers we would need for each shot. Karl had worked in the movie industry so could muster an impressive array of high-powered continuous lights, scrims, and other modifiers, but that posed a new problem; we needed electricity, a lot of it. The Hydrargyrum medium-arc iodide parabolic aluminized reflector (HMI PAR) light demanded 1200 watts of power and we were going to be shooting in the middle of a forest with no electrical outlets which meant that we were going to need a generator. Luckily, I was able to borrow one through a friend of a friend and, with the generator we were also able to bring a fog machine.

On the day of the shoot, Karl and I arrived in advance of the rest of the crew to do some finer-scale location scouting and planning the lighting setups. Luckily, part of the reason I had chosen Horth Hill was that many of the shooting locations were only a short walk from the parking lot so we didn't have to haul hundreds of pounds of gear too far into the forest. Once the rest of the team showed up we had a quick briefing to confirm the shots we wanted at each location, as well as gauge the amount and angle of natural light available.

As it turned out, the 1500 watt generator we had borrowed wasn't quite enough to reliably power the continuous lights. Luckily, we had a fallback option in two battery-powered studio strobes which were still plenty powerful enough to achieve some of the day-for-night shots we were looking for.

Most of the lighting effects were achieved in-camera with the exception of one of the more dramatic shots taken from the perspective of the “wolf”, where I dodged and burned to achieve more of a lantern-lit atmosphere than the actual candle was able to provide.

Finally, after a long day of shooting, we had pizza delivered to the parking lot. Providing food to your models and crew is something I always try to do whenever I anticipate a shoot is going to run more than a couple of hours, especially in a time-for-prints situation where there's no money changing hands. In my opinion, keeping your collaborators fed and warm is the best way to ensure they come back for future shoots!

Happy shooting!



“More Dramatic Lighting Effects”

How I Did It

Misted Morning Oak

by Lindsey Millar

This Oak tree is well known if you live in Sidney. It sits across from the Deep Cove Store beside Deep Cove School and stands tall, ready to be photographed.

This shot was taken around 10 AM on a foggy morning. The sun was bright but didn't penetrate the fog, making for a golden lighting effect. I knew shooting the image that the final look would be a little more artistic so I focused on getting just the right shot to work from once I got home. The shot was taken with a Canon 5D Mark III and 35 mm lens. The camera was on a tripod with the following settings, f8, ISO 125, 1/60th second.



There are a lot of distractions around the tree: the school, several other trees and outbuildings. As it is on private property you have to shoot from outside the fence. In my opinion the best time to photograph it is when there is a decent amount of fog in the area which hides the distractions and creates a wonderful atmosphere.

For this image I wanted to keep the composition simple and to use editing to create the mood I was looking for. In Photoshop I reduced the texture and clarity to soften the entire image. I shifted the white balance very slightly towards blue to bring out the little sky region to the left of the tree. Increasing the highlights and shadows brightened the image and helped accentuate the sun that was in the top right of the image. I added an autumn pre-set to enhance the oranges and yellows as well as tone down the greens. Finally, I added a red vignette which seemed to warm up the image nicely.

This is an artistic creation, one of my favourite images of 2019 and one I'll take again as seasons change and conditions around the tree dictate.

Lunar Eclipse 2019

by Alec Lee

The astronomy bug bit me as a pre-teen when I learned how to find north using the constellations. My first glimpse of Saturn sealed this lifelong night-sky interest. I had to photograph the total lunar eclipse visible from our View Royal home on January 20th, 2019. My goal was to create an image that vividly shows the path of the Earth's shadow on the moon throughout the eclipse.



I took 140 shots with my Nikon D500 and Nikkor 200-500 mm f5.6 lens, set on a tripod, at 500 mm, ISO varied from 640 to 4000, aperture started at f9 but was later dropped to f5.6, and shutter speed varied from 1/4 second during totality to 1/2500th second for the brighter lunar shots. White balance and exposure compensation stayed the same throughout.

Twelve shots were used, four each from the initial partial, during totality, and the closing partial phases. Each RAW image was processed in Photoshop with adjustments made in contrast, sharpness and saturation (during totality). Each was close-cropped around the moon.

My friend, Tim Zurowski, tutored me on the next step. This used 13 layers, a black background and 12 lunar images. The images were adjusted to ensure the moon was the same size in each frame. They were sequenced in an arc, from the lower left to the upper right, to show the path of the earth's shadow across the moon. The image was saved as a layered file to allow for later work.

Any hue differences between the black sky behind each moon shot and the black background layer, were corrected using the lasso and paintbrush tools in Photoshop. The resultant image captured exactly what I wanted. As a bonus, Skynews magazine chose it as the best Lunar, Planetary or Solar image for 2019. Needless to say, I was over the moon!

Shoots Around Victoria

Rithet's Bog

by Jim Fowler

Rithet's Bog in the heart of Broadmead is the last remaining bog in Greater Victoria. In the 1880s Broadmead was part of the Mount Douglas forest. The mayor of Victoria, Robert Rithet, purchased about 1,000 acres, intending to clear and drain some of the land. He hired George McMorran (later of McMorran's Tea House) to clear part of the land. Rithet sold his farm to the Guinness family of Great Britain who developed it as Broadmead Farms. In 1995 they donated 42 hectares to Saanich and the four-kilometre trail around the Bog was completed.

In 2001 a partnership was formed for the restoration of the Bog with Saanich Parks, the Municipality of Saanich, Ducks Unlimited, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Rithet's Bog Conservation Society. A plan was developed to reduce water fluctuation and restore the Bog to a functioning wetland.



"Rithet's Bog"

The Bog is an important habitat for wildlife and is part of the Colquitz River system, which includes Elk and Beaver Lakes, and drains into Portage Inlet. With standing water in all but the driest of seasons, it is home to a variety of waterfowl. In addition, Red-winged Blackbirds, Golden-crowned Sparrows, Hummingbirds and other species frequent the brush and forest. The Rithet's Bog Conservation Society has an extensive bird list in the Natural History tab on their web site (rithetsbog.org).

The perimeter trail around the bog allows you to photograph reed beds, shrubs and bushes, Garry Oak grassland and open water from a variety of angles. The central raised land mass is not accessible, being surrounded by pockets of water of varying depth.

My favourite photographic approach is along the western edge of the open water of the bog where a footpath runs parallel to Chatterton Way. Except for the driest seasons, there is water right up to the pathway where you will find mostly Mallards, but I have also photographed American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal and American Coots. Many more varieties stop by.

The golden light before sunset gives a wonderful glow to the brown reeds and the low angle of the light adds great definition and colour.

With a path right beside the water you can lie down almost level with the water to catch the birds at their eye level. Or, if you want flying birds, just wait for a walker with a bag of oats and the ducks will swarm in. Don't be surprised if a Golden-crowned Sparrow decides to pick up a few pebbles right beside you.



"Red-winged Blackbird"

March and April are the best time to find Red-winged Blackbirds declaiming their territory, often perched on last year's reeds going to seed.

The trail passes beside residential properties so you may see the local deer helping themselves to the offerings of private gardens. Owl sightings have been reported around the bog, but I have yet to see one.



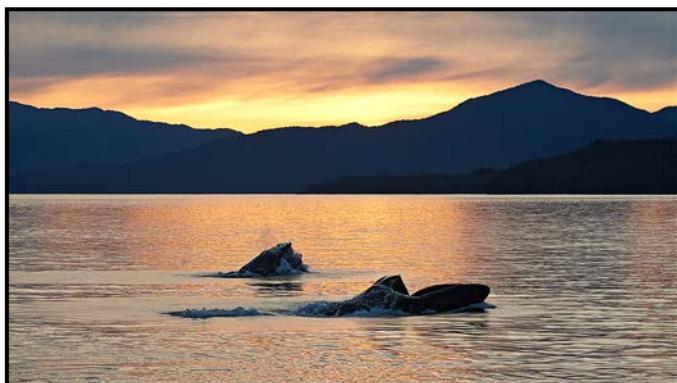
"Green-winged Teal"

Spirit Bears: The Great Bear Rainforest

by Christine Hutchins Gallagher

The first time I travelled to the Great Bear Rainforest to photograph the Kermode/Spirit Bears was in September 2014. I have been back twice more, once in 2017 and again in 2019 and I will go back again. These unique and beautiful animals have had such an impact because of photographs and videos made about them, that people travel from all over the world in the hopes of seeing the “Ghost Bears” in their natural habitat. We are willing to sit for hours waiting “patiently” in a riverbed no matter how wet it may be. The whole area has amazing diversity for wildlife and landscape photography.

While sailing on the Oceanlight II to and from Gribbell Island, where some spirit bears are located, there were many opportunities to see humpback and killer whales, sea lions, harbour seals and birds. Some visitors are lucky and see a coastal wolf or two.



“Sunset Humpback”

Gribbell Island is in the Gitga’at First Nation’s Territories where the Spirit Bear is known as Moksgm’ol. A member of the community of Hartley Bay, Marven Robinson, organizes guided trips to two riverbed sites on the island. Marven has developed a business over 20 years guiding people into the forests of Gribbell Island in search of the Spirit Bear. His expertise in knowing how to be with the bears, how to read their moods and body language, has been passed along to other members of the Gitga’at Nation who can now lead more tours into the area.

With up to twenty people scattered along the riverbed at either site so photographic etiquette is a must. Marven and the other guides always make sure that the bears are the priority and that photographers act ethically and in deference to the movements of the bears. You will often hear them ask people to pull back in order to allow the bears a clear path around the group because you may be as close as three meters (ten feet) to the bears.

What to expect on this trip? Depending on your choice of tour operator, the first consideration is getting to the point of origin. Some start from Prince Rupert and others from Kitimat. There are choices of either a lodge-based or a “Mothership”-based trip. Accessibility to both river beds on Gribbell involves a boat ride in either a zodiac or fishing boat to the island so you must be agile enough to accommodate the conditions.



“Spirit Mother and Black Cub”

After disembarking, sometimes with waves making it a little difficult and wet, there is a hike into the sites. One path involves going around deadfall, over slippery exposed roots, climbing over fallen trees and going up and down short but steep inclines. The other hike is a fairly easy path that also has a short but steep incline to get down to the riverbed, but there is a rope to hold onto as you go down. The hikes are about 20 minutes long with all of your camera gear on your back because you will spend the whole day there. It is well worth the effort.

Other considerations are the time of year and the weather conditions. All three of the trips I have made have been in September however tours are available from August to October that coincides with the main salmon runs. Since you will be in a rainforest with variable conditions from sun to fog or heavy rain it is important to dress in layers and to have good rain gear for yourself and your camera equipment. Come prepared for cool wet weather and then be pleasantly surprised when the sun shines although, being photographers, our hope is often for overcast skies.

What should you bring? Weight restrictions are usually an issue especially when flying on smaller air carriers like Pacific Coastal Airlines. When going on a tour you will



“Waiting and Watching”

find most of the operators provide a detailed information document with suggestions on places to stay, airlines to use, best arrival times as well as a list of clothing to bring, and, luggage size and weight limits. What camera gear you bring will depend on your own previous experience photographing wildlife and landscapes, and your physical ability to carry and handle the gear.

A mid-sized camera bag that you can carry all day and manoeuvre as well as fit into the carry-on sizer is best. The biggest question is can you hand-hold your camera and lens, or do you always need a tripod? Going into the riverbeds allows using a tripod but there will be times when you will want to pan a running bear or bird. If the tour you choose includes trips in zodiacs it is impossible to use a tripod in the boat. A monopod is an option, but you will find hand-holding is what you use the most.

The riverbed environment can be fairly dark so it is important that whatever equipment you choose will give you good results at ISOs of 3200 and higher. The lenses you bring should have image stabilization/vibration-reduction and be as fast as you can afford.

Here is the camera equipment that I used: On the first trip, which was my big learning curve time, I took a Nikon D4 and a D7100 which turned out to be only good as a backup body. I used the D4 because of the low light conditions. I had 200-400 mm f4, 70-200 mm f2.8 and 28-300 mm f3.5-5.6 lenses that I used for closeups and animal landscapes. The 200-400 mm, although quite heavy, gave me great results and I was also surprised at the quality when using the 28-300 mm lens.

On the second trip I took my Nikon D4, a newly purchased D500 and the Sigma Sport 150-600 mm f5-6.3

along with the 70-200 mm. I have to say that the quality/sharpness of the photographs were not as good with the Sigma lens compared to the Nikon 200-400 mm, so I was a little disappointed with the shots.

On the third trip I took a Nikon D4, D500 and the mirrorless Z7. For lens I brought the 200-400 mm, 500 mm PF, 300 mm PF, 70-200 mm plus the 24-70 mm S f4 for the Z7.

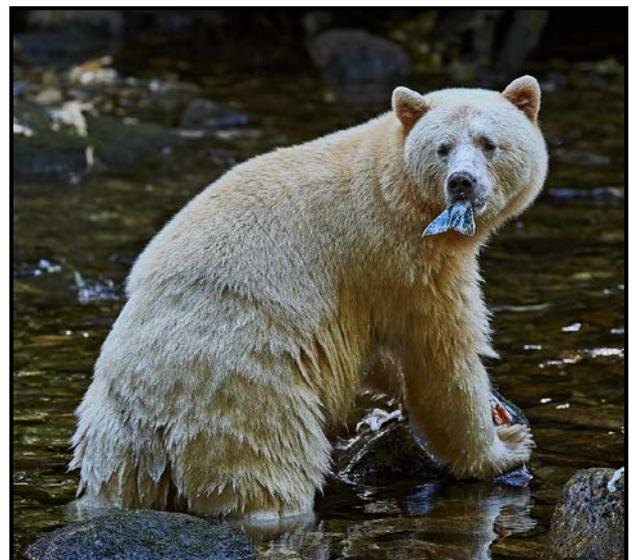
As you can see, I try to bring the equipment to cover any circumstance, which means I am carrying a lot gear. However, when hiking into the riverbeds I reduce what I take to cover what I think I will need there.

What camera gear do you need: Take a main camera that has a high ISO range and good frame rate. It is also a good idea to take a secondary camera in case your main camera malfunctions.

Lenses that can cover the full focal range would include a 24-70 mm and 80-400 mm or a 200-500 mm. With the 200-500 mm lens a 70-200 mm lens would also be useful. Focal length ranges change slightly with brands but most have similar lenses. Also bring 1.4x teleconverters to use when there is enough light to handle the reduced lens speed. Remember that rain protection for your gear is essential!

Other gear and equipment items to take are “fast” and “big” memory cards, polarizing filters, chargers, a laptop and an image backup drive and knee pads. As well as a sturdy tripod and head or a monopod, preferably both. Be prepared to take about 10,000 photos when going on a week-long trip.

This is an adventure of a lifetime not to be missed.



“Bear Snack”

Exposure: ISO (Sensitivity)

by Josee Menard

Our Fall series has been discussing one of the key foundation blocks of photography, the concept of exposure. Aiming for correct exposure places the odds of creating a great image in the photographer's favour. Getting the exposure correct comes by understanding how and when to balance the adjustments of all three components of the exposure triangle. The first corner is Aperture. Shutter Speed makes up the second, as well as being this month's topic of discussion. Wondering about the third? All right, I will tell, it is ISO.

Shutter speed speaks for itself. It is the speed at which the shutter opens and closes to let light reach the sensor. It has an impact on the brightness of the image. Opened too long, overexposure will easily result. Opened too little, the scene will surely be underexposed. Keep in mind that the quality of the lens can easily reduce the light reaching the sensor. No wonder quality glass is at a premium. Do not break the bank though; just keep in mind the limits of your lens.

Depending on your camera, select S or Tv mode with the dial on top for full shutter speed control. If this is not available, look for the shutter speed value, such as 1/125th second or 125, displayed through the viewfinder or on the LCD screen on the camera back. Use the arrows to move through your available shutter speeds. As you set the exposure mode the camera will assist you to the best of its programmed ability by setting the aperture and ISO or just the aperture.

Many photographers opt to set the aperture themselves thus selecting A or Av, aperture priority mode. If possible, choose a mid-range aperture around f11 for best lens performance unless you need to manage depth-of-field. The ISO can be set to its lowest normal-range setting, to the needed value or, in auto for the camera to choose.

The manual mode, M, lets you set all three exposure components independently while P, program mode, allows you to override automatic settings.

Shutter speed means what it says when it describes its numerical value. 1/2000th is that part of a full second. Just like a speedometer, the bigger the number, the faster the shutter moves letting less light through to the sensor. At that speed you now have the power to stop motion. Literally, in the blink of an eye, birds stop in flight, cars are panned to a standstill while the rest

blurs by, water droplets are forever suspended in the air. "Whale Tail" shows a successful capture on a morning photo shoot (ISO 400, f5.4, 1/400th sec., 150 mm). A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



"Whale Tail"

At the opposite end, a long shutter speed (1/10th, 1/5th, 1 or even 30 seconds) means a long moment, slow enough to create blurry motion, reveal natural shakes, or capture sunsets or stars. If you are not using a tripod, steady your hand on something solid and keep your shutter speed above the focal length (for a 100 mm lens, aim for 1/100th or more). Take into account the crop factor of your camera and the sensor resolution.

In the end, the shutter speed is set in relation to your desired effect and to complement the aperture and ISO or their limits. The exposure triangle elements are interdependent. Discovering its relationship opens a world of unlimited creativity.



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