

CLOSE-UP



Confessions of a New Member
Another Side of Paris
Member Profile: Teri VanWell
Emerging Content
Flowers: An Artistic Perspective
Image Stabilization
Shooting Large Events
Planning an On-Location Shoot
Beginners' Corner:
Keywords and Your Photographic Style
and more

Victoria Camera Club

"Archway, Place des Vosges" by Lorna Zaback

April 2018 Volume 71 Number 4

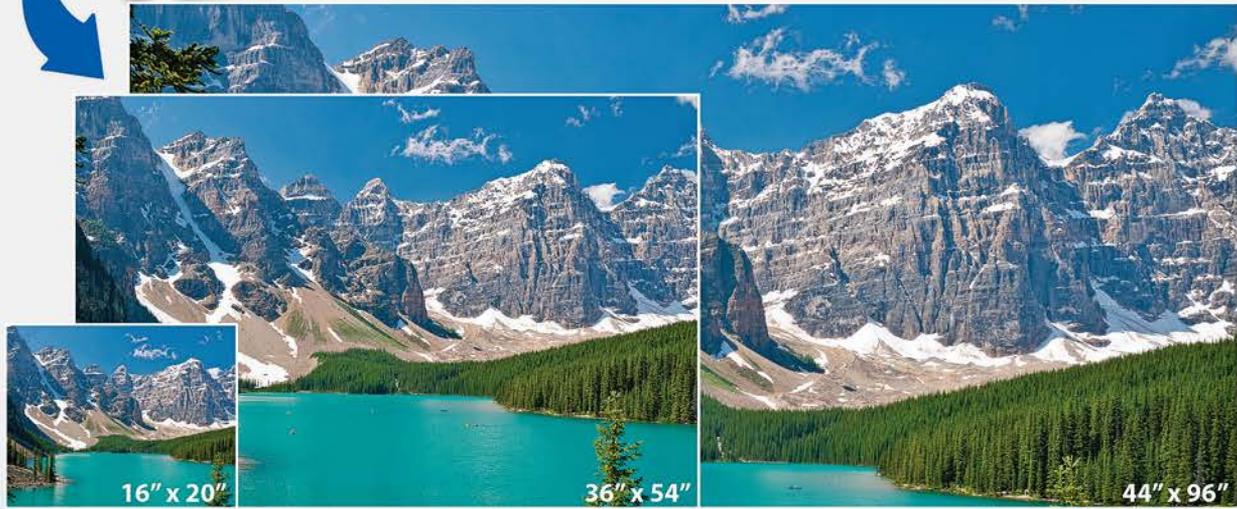


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Victoria Camera Club



“Victoria Harbour Full Moon” by Ian Faris

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*.

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

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April 2018

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.

April 5th: Competition Night

The March competition results will be presented. The deadline for submissions for the Annual competition is April 5th.

April 12th: Presentation Night

Our guest speaker is Cim MacDonald who will discuss her experiences publishing her book, "The Unexpected Birder" (or, what to do with all those images?).

April 19th: Members' Night

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

Workshop and Field Trip Highlights

Fundamentals of Black and White Photography workshop and Hornby Island Flowers and Landscapes field trip.

Cover Image: "Archway, Place des Vosges" by Lorna Zaback. One afternoon, we took a stroll around Place des Vosges, the oldest planned square in Paris. Completed in 1612, the square is flanked on all sides by a townhouse complex of mansions all built to the same design over vaulted arcades standing on square pillars (an innovative design at the time). Up until the French Revolution the square was often the place for the nobility to gather and chat. Originally named Place Royale, the square was given its current name in 1800 by Napoleon, in gratitude to the people of the Vosges, the first in France to pay the taxes to support the campaigns of the Revolutionary army.

These beautiful arcades or archways run along the entire colonnaded ground floor of the complex and provide access to upmarket art galleries, pricey antique shops and elegant cafés. Probably one of the most celebrated residents at Place des Vosges was Victor Hugo, author of *Les Misérables* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. The house he occupied from 1832 to 1848 is now a museum, displaying a collection of the author's personal drawings, books, portraits and furniture. Nikon D600 24-120 mm f4 lens at 120 mm. 1/20 sec at f10, ISO 1000. Post-processing in LR and Nik Color Efex Pro.

President's Message

The lifeblood that pulses through a healthy Club's veins involves both the "gives" and the "takes" which arise among its members. As you read this message, I will rapidly be approaching the culmination of my time as your president and my thoughts will be focused on my hopes for the health of the VCC in the years immediately ahead.

Each of us brings to the Club our personal needs and desires along with our particular talents and skills. The first two are addressed by the full spectrum of VCC programs and activities, both formal and informal. These comprise the "takes." Experience has shown that the second two cover a very broad range and that they are revealed over the days and months through the contributions that have been made and continue to be made to our collective endeavours. The "gives" are the result.

So how do you give back to the Club? One way, which might seem a bit indirect at first, is through the sharing of your images. A very up-front way to do that was stressed by Gregg Eligh, who judged our Advanced Print Competitions in January. Gregg was emphatic in his call for members to enter our competitions, to the point that not doing so was, in effect, viewed as letting the Club down. My personal take is less pointed. Entering competitions is clearly one good way of giving back but, by no means, the only way. You might share via our website's galleries or on our external Flickr groups. You could present a show on Members' Night or submit an image to a print show.

In his Member's Profile (*Close-Up, February, 2018*), Gordon Griffiths noted that when he joined the VCC in 1999 each new member "had to show a portfolio of at least 10 photos to the Club and members then critiqued the slides." An interesting approach! I'll leave it to our incoming Board to consider the re-establishment of such a rigorous initiation rite.

In the broader context, there are many ways to give back to the Club. As I have emphasized over my time on the Board, the most compelling way is to volunteer to either lead or to support one of our core programs. Opportunities to do so are always at hand. An appropriate balance between the "give" and the "take" will ensure that you and all our members will get the most out of our time in the Victoria Camera Club.

My best wishes to each of you for some happy shooting and some good times with fellow members in the months and years ahead!

Garry Schaefer, President

Confessions of a New Member.

by Jim Fowler

I joined the Victoria Camera Club in September 2016. I immediately decided to compete because, of course, I was a pretty good photographer. I self-assessed as “intermediate.” Didn’t I keep my camera on manual, and wasn’t I already using Lightroom to manage my photos? I imagined winning every category I entered.

Let’s just say that I was disabused of my self-grandeur almost immediately, but in a nice way: the comments, after I got past my hurt feelings, were undeniably accurate. I decided I had better do some learning.

Over the next year I went on a few shoots, and joined the Nature special interest group (SIG). It was easier to get to know people, because there was only a fraction of the numbers compared to regular full Club meetings. Anyone could show a few pictures at their meetings; you just had to bring along a thumb drive with photos on it. I looked at a lot of photos by other members, from beginners to advanced. I carried a thumb drive in my pocket, but didn’t give it up for viewing.

I took workshops through the Club on Lightroom, Photoshop, flash and wildflower photography. The instructors were happy to give individual assistance on field workshops. I went on Club field trips to Hornby Island, Christie Falls, Oak Haven and Gore nature parks, and many others.

I made the acquaintance of a number of skilled and knowledgeable members, including Mike Wooding, Richard James, Lois Burton, Dan Takahashi and many others. I noticed that, instead of a couple of thousand photos a year, I was suddenly taking several thousand. I got to know a couple of dozen members on a first name basis and had the pleasure of their company on shoots. I showed a few photos in the Nature SIG. After about a year, I learned how to use my camera.

I took more courses, and joined the alternate Tuesday group on a regular basis. I learned to focus better. I learned when it wasn’t possible to take a good picture.

I shot wildflowers, birds, butterflies, mushrooms, sea lions, landscapes, seascapes and townscapes, seaplanes, horses, boats, waterfalls, hockey players, polo games, night scenes, the Saanich Fair, breweries and distilleries. I learned there were parks where I lived that I’d never visited. I studied composition and technique wherever I could find information.

I looked back regularly at my old photos and cropped, developed and deleted. I learned about all those buttons I had never used in the Lightroom Develop module. I learned to love the “dehaze” slider. I found that I didn’t always have to make things sharper.

I experimented with long exposures, camera movement, zoom shots and multi-shots. I tried high ISO at a hockey game and variable ISO with set maximums in shooting a stage production where the light changed dramatically and often. I learned how to use layers and filters in Photoshop. I organized my photos in Lightroom in a way that worked for me. I identified by subject a few thousand photos so that I could find them again. I cropped, developed and deleted some more.

The nature of my holidays changed. My camera bag was bigger than my wife’s travel bag (but she is a very accomplished luggage packer).

Now I am competing again. I am not walking off with any trophies but my scores are increasing. I still look at old photos and ask myself, “What is wrong with this? Why doesn’t it work?” And most times I have an answer.

Last week I met a photographer who had briefly joined the Victoria Camera Club, but quit. I asked him why he quit. There were too many people, he told me, it was too hard to get to know so many, but he had to agree, they had good courses.

If you are new to the Victoria Camera Club, make it work for you. If you don’t like meetings with 60 or 80 members, go to the smaller group meetings. Join a SIG, take a workshop, go on regular shoots like the Tuesday group. Sign up for an extended shoot like Hornby Island or Long Beach or the Palouse.

If you are a long-term member, thanks for running such a great Club.



“Sandhill Crane”

Another Side of Paris

by Lorna Zaback

It was our first trip to Paris so we took time to visit many of the City's better-known tourist haunts in the week we were there. We climbed the Eiffel Tower for a magnificent aerial view of the city spread out along the Seine. In the Louvre, we fought our way through crowds of teenagers, their backs to the Mona Lisa, shooting "I was here" selfies, just so we could catch a glimpse of her. We took in Notre Dame and Sainte Chapelle Cathedrals and were humbled by their grandeur. However, having done a bit of research beforehand, we knew there were less popular, less touristy places that we also wanted to see.



"Paris Street"

We walked and walked, as much to experience Paris as to get to where we wanted to go. The wider main thoroughfares of the city tend to be loud and bustling but many of the narrower streets, particularly those winding through the central districts (arrondissements), are quiet and charming. The façades of many old buildings appear washed in pastels, faded pinks, powder blues and creamy yellows, lending a delicate softness to the urban landscape. Ornate stone and wrought-iron grillwork reflect a rich history and an atmosphere that feels uniquely Parisian.

Although our hotel suite included a small kitchen and we would often retreat there in the late afternoon to rest our weary feet and enjoy a glass of wine, a baguette and some exotic cheese, we headed out most mornings for



"Café de Flore"

"petit déjeuner". We were in Paris, after all. In Saint-Germain-des-Prés near our hotel, there was no shortage of small sidewalk cafés serving boiled eggs, crusty croissants with butter and jam, and café au lait. Our favourite haunt was Café de Flore with its classic Art Deco interior that hasn't changed much since World War II. One of the oldest coffeehouses in Paris, it is most celebrated for its famous clientele including Ernest Hemmingway, Jean-Paul Sartre, Pablo Picasso, Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus. The food and coffee were delicious, the waiters friendly and surprisingly patient with our halting French.

We spent an afternoon strolling around Cimetière Père Lachaise, a 110-acre graveyard a short Métro ride from the city centre. Opened in May 1804, the cemetery is the final resting place of many famous people, including Chopin, Marcel Proust, Edith Piaf, Maria Callas, Oscar Wilde, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas and, of course, Jim Morrison. Intricately decorated mausoleums, many housing the remains of entire families, crowd the edges of meandering avenues lined with broad, leafy trees making the cemetery a desirable, and very peaceful, burial site.



"Père Lachaise Mausoleums"

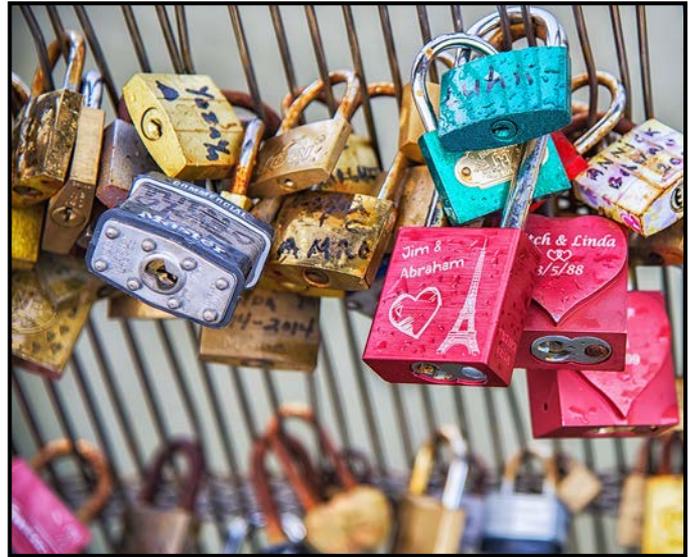
Notre-Dame, although probably the most famous, is only one among the city's many beautiful churches and cathedrals. Pictured here is the interior of Église Saint-Paul Saint-Louis. Built by Jesuit architects in the early 1600's, it was the first church in Paris to abandon the Gothic style and adopt baroque design. It is truly awe-inspiring with its intricately molded, vaulted ceiling, its sky-lit domes, richly coloured frescoes and warm chandelier lighting. The doors are often, if not always, open and I imagine it is not uncommon to see people scattered here and there amongst the pews seeking respite from the busyness of daily life, kneeling in prayer, or merely sitting in quiet contemplation, soaking up the ambiance.



“Église Saint-Paul Saint-Louis”

In the City of Love, it is not surprising to see signs of it (“amour”, that is) everywhere, but Pont des Arts, a wide foot bridge that traverses the Seine from the Left Bank to the Louvre, is the site of a rather unique spectacle in this regard. For years, loving couples have been affirming their love and commitment to one another by attaching personalized “love-locks” to the bridge’s railings and throwing the key into the river. It is, in itself, a quirky sight but most remarkably over the years millions of these love tokens weighing an astonishing 45 tonnes have accumulated, seriously threatening the integrity of this historic bridge. The city, with the support of many native Parisians, is in the process of removing the railings and the locks and encouraging tourists to consider alternative expressions of affection, including graffiti.

It was April in Paris. Spring was in the air and locals and tourists alike were out and about, strolling along the banks of the Seine or sitting with their heads bent



“Pont des Arts”

towards one another over small outdoor café tables; groups of friends sat in lawn chairs provided by the City along paths and terraces in many of the parks and gardens we visited, chatting and laughing, their faces turned skyward to soak up the sun.

Even in the midst of this bustling urban environment, however, we were able to find the occasional road less travelled. These trees shade a quiet walkway that is part of the larger Jardin de Tuileries extending from the Louvre west to Place de la Concorde. Towards the end of the walkway is a former orange tree solarium, now Musée de l’Orangerie, where a large collection of impressionist and post-impressionist paintings is on display.

Since 1927, this art museum has also been the permanent home for Monet’s eight large “Water Lilies” murals. Following a leisurely stroll through the Tuileries Gardens, we were able to sit for a while in peaceful stillness, surrounded by Monet’s beautiful soft canvases. The afternoon provided us with some much-needed respite from the vibrancy and the gaiety that is Paris.



“Jardin Des Tuileries”

Tech Tips

by Richard James

Shooting Flowers: When shooting flowers and anything else on the ground, you may need to clean up the scene a bit. I carry a couple of fine artists paintbrushes as well as a pair of tweezers. These work well for removing debris from flowers and mushrooms as well as cleaning up the ground around them.

Easy Black or White Backgrounds: Sometimes your flower image backgrounds are too busy, even if they are out-of-focus. If you carry a reflector, it's a good idea to have black and white covers for it that can be used as background. Just remember to keep them far enough away from the subject that they are out of focus.

Another way to get a black background is to shoot up so that the sky is the background and use flash to illuminate the subject. Set the flash to a fairly high power and the aperture and shutter speed correctly for the flower and the background will be black. Another way to get a white background is to carry a piece of opaque white acrylic sheet and illuminate it from behind with a flash set to high power to totally blow the background out.

Landscape Photography: Do you wonder what the best time of day is to shoot that challenging landscape? There are a couple of apps available that can help you determine this. If you use Android devices *PlanIt!* will give you a wealth of information. If you use iOS devices then the *Photographer's Transit* is the equivalent.

These apps give you an aerial photography background and show the current or future positions of the sun and moon together with the key times of sunrise/sunset, golden and blue hours etc. overlaid on the mapping.

With these you can easily see the light angle on the scene, the amount of the scene covered with various focal length lenses, sight-lines (Can you see the subject or is it hidden behind an intervening ridge or mountain?) and more.

Colour Balance: Getting the colour balance right in the final image is important. If you are saving only JPEG images in the camera then it is more important to get it right to start with. This means adjusting the colour balance settings for each different scene and lighting conditions. If you are shooting RAW you have more flexibility.

A great way to be able to set the balance correctly is to include something that is white, or a truly neutral grey, in part of one of the images of the scene. A small piece of



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white paper or white fabric will work. Alternatively, use an 18% grey card or something like a *XRite ColorChecker Passport* in a reference image of the scene.

When you are processing the image in Lightroom or Photoshop, or other software, use the colour sampler tool to read the RGB values of the neutral white/grey areas and adjust the colour balance until they are neutral (meaning each channel is nearly the same value). It's more difficult to do this correctly for the whole image with a JPEG file but it will get you a bit closer.

In Lightroom, and some other RAW conversion software such as DXO PhotoLab, you can adjust one image from a series and then copy/paste the settings into all other similar images which will speed up your workflow!

Perspective Distortion: Do you shoot images with leaning buildings? The way to avoid this is to ensure that the sensor is parallel to the plane of the surface of the building or other subject. For vertical lines, this means that the lens axis has to be horizontal. If your camera doesn't have a built-in level display, then you can purchase a two-axis spirit level that fits into the hot shoe.

To keep the subject looking "square" the left/right plane of the sensor must be parallel to the face of the building. If you want to show the building face receding into the distance however, it's quite acceptable to do this, and simply keeping the sensor vertical will ensure this happens.

What do you do if the subject doesn't fit in the image? If you do tilt the lens up to get in the top of a tall building then remember to ensure that there is adequate spare space on the sides to use perspective correction in your processing. This is not ideal, as it rewrites all the pixels in the image and that degrades the quality somewhat, but it's better than not getting the image. Alternatively, you can use a wider angle lens and crop out the surplus parts of the image, typically the foreground. The ultimate solution, if you're serious about architectural and landscape photography, is a tilt/shift lens. This allows you to move the image around on the sensor to keep things square and vertical, subject of course to the limitations of the lens.

Camera Menus: Are you confused by the many menu item options in your camera? Many cameras allow you to set up a personalized menu (often "My Menu"), which you can access with a simple button press and assign the menu items that you use most to this list. You can also sort the list to put the most used ones at the top. Related to this, often you can set specific programmable buttons to perform an action that is different to the default action for that button. This also gives you quick access to various functions that you may use most frequently.

April 2018

Nondestructive Editing: When you are editing your images the best strategy is to use tools that don't irreversibly change the image. Lightroom does this automatically by keeping the editing steps in the history window. Lightroom actually applies the changes only when you export or print the file; until then the changes are simply stored in a database.

If you're doing your editing in Photoshop the best strategy is always to use adjustment layers when they are available. If an adjustment layer is not available for what you need to do, then make a duplicate of the previous layer (or group of layers) and make the change on that. For example, if you are "repairing" the image do that on a separate layer, not the background layer.

If you are using a plug-in or taking an image from another file, you can use "smart objects" which allow you to go back and edit what you have done there. I always use this when I'm using the NIK plug-ins. One thing you need to remember with smart objects however, is that if you change the image size or resolution the smart object may rework the change and give you something you didn't want. The way around this is to flatten the file first and then save it as a different name identifying it as a flattened version. Remember, once you flatten it you've lost all the editing layers!



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Judges' Critiques: Composition

by Pam Irvine

To quote Ansel Adams, "There is nothing worse than a sharp image of a fuzzy concept." The value of entering an image into competition is the critique offered by the judge. The judge for the Open category in February commented on composition (good or less-than-perfect) in almost every comment he wrote. Composition is what makes a good image great and it is not dependent on the make or cost of your camera.

Composition is a way of guiding the viewer's eye towards the most important elements of your work. It describes the relative placement of objects and elements in an image. All photographers should give the composition of his/her work a lot of attention. A good composition is one that has just enough detail. Too few elements can rob the work of necessary detail that the viewer may need to understand or interpret what the story or purpose of the image is. Too many elements can be very distracting as well. Good composition requires good balance.

It takes practice and time to train ourselves to look at the whole scene in the viewfinder and plan the composition of the image. Here are a few common composition issues from the Open category comments.

Cropping (or not cropping enough): "Suggest cutting the intruding element" and "There is a distracting element at the top of the photo."

Lines (diagonal versus horizontal or vertical): "In terms of composition, the diagonals are good but another option would have been to shoot head on and have the rows of chairs parallel to the edges of the image," and "The eye travels between the two boats; it might have been interesting to place the two on a diagonal."

Giving elements space: "the top of the lighthouse touches the edge of the picture".

Format (vertical, horizontal or square): "The square format is a good choice" and "The image is also crooked; making it vertical should be easy".

There are many articles on-line and many books dealing with composition. Our speaker from last September, Bryan Peterson, has a good easy-to-read book called "*Learning to See Creatively: Design, Colour, and Composition in Photography*". Take a few minutes to learn about the different aspects of composition and see how your photography improves.

February 2018 Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to the external judges for the February Intermediate and Advanced competitions: Pierre Gauthier, Robert Laramee, Michael Easton, Marilyn McEwan and Jesse Hlady. We would also like to thank our in-house Novice Judges: Normand Marcotte, Martin Wright, Anne McCarthy, Steve Lustig, Lorna Zaback and Caspar Davis. All images and judges' comments are available at: victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx.

Pierre Gauthier: Wildlife and Natural World. Pierre is a long-time active member of the RA Photo Club in Ottawa. "The proper evaluation of an image is to find the qualities of the various components of an image and to discern how they work together as an expressive and significant whole." We especially want to thank Pierre for completing the judging this month with an injury to his shoulder.

Robert Laramee: Open. Robert rejoined the RA Photo Club in Ottawa in 2002. Retirement gave him more time to devote to photography and to study at the School of the Photographic Arts in Ottawa. He taught photography for the City of Ottawa and currently teaches at Académie des retraités de l'Outaouais. He also runs workshops and does private coaching and mentoring. As a photographer, he shoots landscapes and architecture; in the studio he does tabletop photography and portraiture. He became a CAPA certified judge in March 2016.

Michael Easton: Theme. Michael judged our internal Theme competition and the CAPA Digital B&W competition. Michael is a fine art nature photographer and a CAPA certified judge living in North Vancouver. He has a PhD in ecological genetics. Proceeds from the sale of his photography helps support his environmental research and advocacy work. www.naturphoto.com.

Marilyn McEwan: Altered Reality. Marilyn is a CAPA certified judge and has been a professional photographer for 27 years, specializing in portraits and weddings. She lives in Ucluelet where she is an innkeeper (Anchor's Inn) and was elected a Councillor of the District of Ucluelet in 2014. She loves the ocean, sailing, kayaking, scuba diving, and walking on the beach with her dogs.

Jesse Hlady: Advanced Prints. Jesse Hlady is one of Canada's leading wedding, portrait and event photographers and we are lucky to have him here in Victoria. Jesse has given presentations at our Club on portrait photography and occasionally judges for us when his busy schedule permits. jessehly.com



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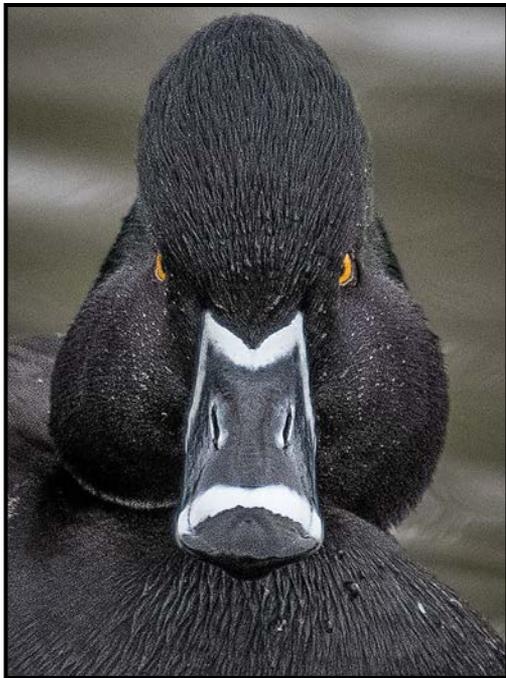
Advanced Digital Natural World - 1st
"Telegraph Cove" by Peter Reid

Judge's comments: Perfect exposure and great depth of field in this image. The right and left foreground rocks under water guide your eye through the picture space so that everything ties together in one harmonious whole. A complete and clear statement of the harmony in nature.



Advanced Monochrome Print - 3rd
"BC Winter" by Neil Boyle

Judge's comments: Very beautiful subject matter.



Advanced Digital Wildlife - 1st
"Don't Mess with Me" by Peter Koelbleitner

Judge's comments: Dramatic perspective and seeing just part of the eyes gives this image a real wow factor.



Advanced Altered Reality - 1st
"Circa 1940" by Richard Webber

Judge's comments: I love the topic of deterioration as it fits into the theme. Great composition on a slight angle, a snippet of backdrop available on the far right, negative space top and bottom. The muted tones are reminiscent of an old Polaroid that has deteriorated, very fitting for the theme.



Advanced Nature Print - 3rd
"Trumpeter Swan (Cygnus buccinator)"
by Richard James

Judge's comments: Beautiful tones, the contrast of the white bird to the deep color of the background is very nice. It shows much better in print than on the screen. Overall a great shot.



Advanced Open Print - 1st
"Last Rays" by Doug McLean

Judge's comments: Beautiful image, great choice of composition and patience with light.



Advanced Digital Theme - 1st
"Storm in the Palouse" by Gordon Griffiths

Judge's comments: The sky is well-done. Nice lighting on distant hills.



Advanced Digital Open - 1st
"Lake Louise" by Jonathan Adams

Judge's comments: Wow! Exposure, detail, colours, all perfectly balanced. Beautiful composition with the clouds, the shadows of the trees and the tracks in the snow. An excellent image. Congratulations.



Intermediate Digital Open - 1st
"Grimwood at Copper Owl" by John Clarke

Judge's comments: Wow! Good detail everywhere, perfect exposure and great composition. The rim lighting really makes it; in spite of the very strong contrast, there is still enough light to separate the musician's body from the background. The console/keyboard in the lower left helps in balancing the image. The light source in the middle is very bright and yet, the eye does not stop there as it travels in a circle from the face, down the arm, up the guitar neck, up the boom and mike and back to the face. Very well done.



Intermediate Altered Reality - 2nd
"Supernatural Nature" by Blair Ross

Judge's comments: Beautiful energy to this image. I like that the patterns of lines are similar but different in each quadrant, with a lot more intricacy in the centre. I don't mind that the centre is almost in the centre, the weight of the darker green gives a sense of it being non-symmetrical.



Intermediate Digital Wildlife - 1st
"Food Fight 2" by Evan Guengerich

Judge's comments: Beautiful image of a powerful moment. Great timing by capturing the talons extended.



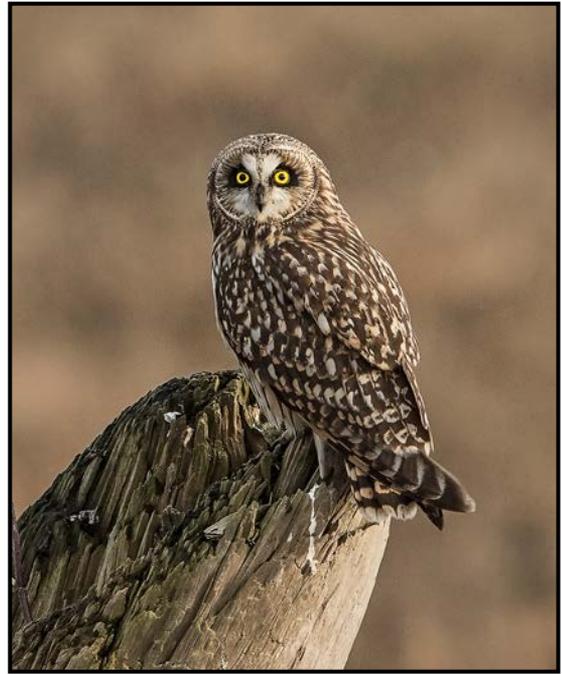
Intermediate Digital Natural World - 2nd
"Early Morning at Thrasher Cove" by Daniel Rondeau

Judge's comments: Very dramatic composition selecting the foreboding rocks and coastal shore and sky reflecting in the sandy wave-polished shore. Powerful and promising statement announcing the triumph of light.



Intermediate Digital Theme - 1st
"Amphitrite Cove" by Rea Casey

Judge's comments: Very nice image.



Intermediate/Novice Open Print - 1st
"Short Eared Owl Watches Me" by Ken Johnston

Judge's comments: Beautiful soft light, well-balanced composition and intriguing capture of that intense gaze. Excellent sharpness separating the subject from the soft bokeh in the background. Good complimentary choice of mat colour.



Novice Digital Open - 2nd
"Tommy D" by Tim Agoston

Judge's comments: The post-processing of this image works well to bring out the intensity of the musician. The graininess and saturation also work well for this subject. An attention-getting image.



Novice Digital Natural World - 2nd
"Whitsundays 1" by Robert Barlow

Judge's comments: Well, we'd all like to be there! The sky and water colour appear very true in this shot. Well exposed. It is a good capture of the sweeping lines of the water and sandbars. This is a pleasant serene image.



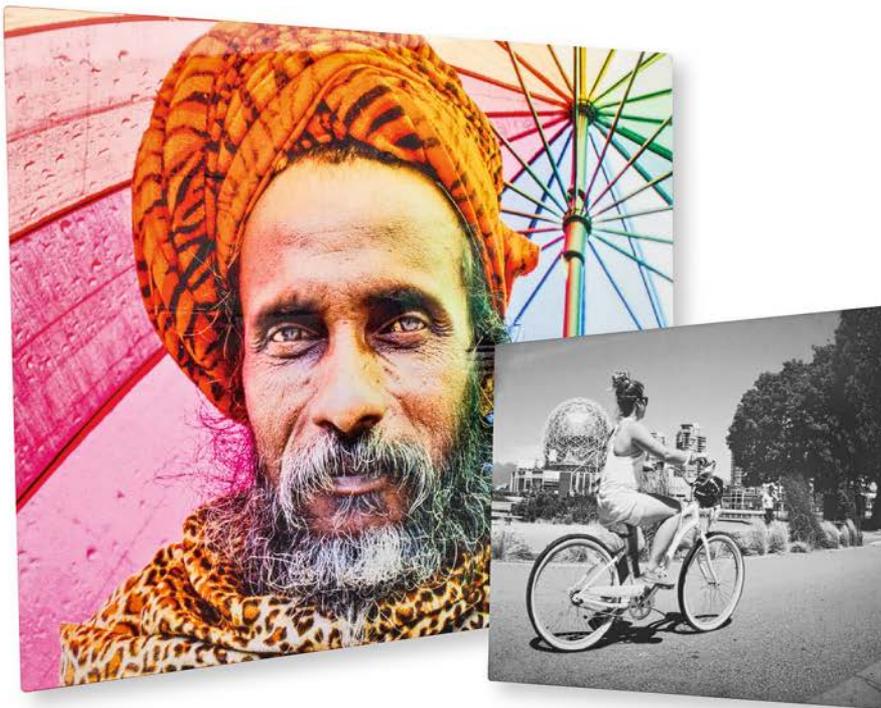
Novice Digital Wildlife - 1st
"Momma" by Kim Smith

Judge's comments: Good composition with sharp eyes and touchable texture in the fur. Beautiful capture of the light. Your choice of black and white adds to the impact of this dramatic shot.



Novice Digital Theme - 1st
"Bryce Bay" by Peter Amundsen

Judge's comments: A great capture of the misty clouds rising off the hillside. The intense clarity works well with the strong horizontal lines. This is a great shot, good composition and tonal range.



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Member Profile: Teri VanWell

When I first began photography, I was an avid scrapbooker. I wanted to take better photos for my layouts. It didn't take long for me to gain a true love and appreciation for all that photography has to offer. My husband bought me my first DSLR camera, a Nikon D90, for Christmas 2012. I would spend all day outside shooting the beautiful world around me (on the auto setting).

When I moved from Ottawa to Victoria in 2013, I had no idea I would find such astounding scenery on the island. I knew that I had to improve so I could capture the nature of my new home so I took my first photography course at Camosun College. It was a beginner's photography course with Mitch Stringer. During the course, Mitch gave me the best photographic advice I have ever received: Find a photography group or Club to go out and explore with.

Soon afterwards, I met Judy Bandsmer who told me about the Victoria Camera Club. Out of shyness, I was a member of the Club for a year before I went on my first field trip. It was a weekday trip to the Parliament Buildings. Ever since that field trip I was able to fully embrace the welcoming community of the club and meet some amazing people.



"Fisgard Lighthouse at Fort Rodd Hill NHP"

A year later I was asked to become a field trip coordinator. I was hesitant at first as I did not know too many people in the Club but decided this might be the best way for me to get to know others. It turned out this was a great decision. I am excited to continue in this role and hope to have other roles within the Club in the years ahead.

I have come a long way since my first foray into the world of photography. I currently shoot with a Nikon D610 and I just recently purchased a Tamron 150-600 mm telephoto lens. I began by focusing mainly on land-

scape and macro photography. I now like to explore all the different facets of photography and am trying my hand at many different types of subjects.



"Fizzy Orange"

The biggest moment in my photography experience so far has been the first competition that I entered. It was the novice open competition of September 2015 and my picture "Dreaming of Spring" won first place. It made me realize how far I have come and how much I still want to achieve.

I made it my goal to enter every internal competition in 2017 as a challenge to myself. It has been a wonderfully rewarding experience and I am so glad that I was able to complete that goal. My aspiration for 2018 is to improve my macro photography and to experiment with toy photography.

The camera club has created so many opportunities for me to meet wonderful, like-minded people and to improve upon my skills. Taking on the role of field trip coordinator for the last two years has given me the chance to see so many different spots in Victoria and the Island and to meet a ton of members of the Club. I appreciate all the encouragement and advice everyone has given me and I look forward to another year of photography with all of you.



"RCAF Fire Truck"

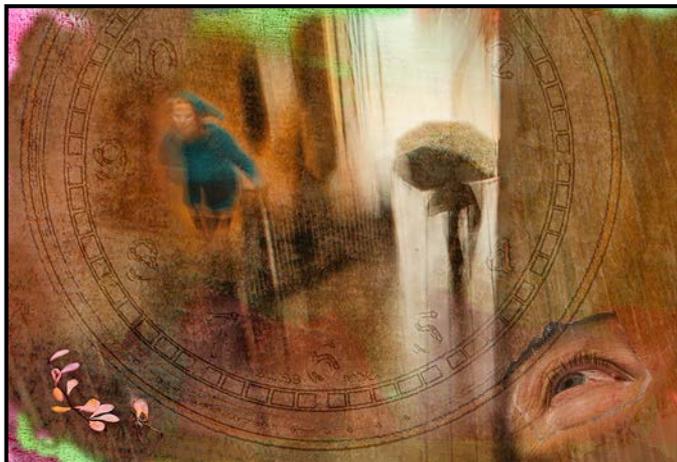
Emerging Content

by Kevin Kelihier

My interest in photography really started in the early 1990s when a cousin gave me “*The Joy of Photography*” (Eastman Kodak Co., 1982). I was hooked. In 2002 I purchased a DSLR and was awestruck by the increased possibilities. I joined the Club in 2014 and have enjoyed the great learning and friendships. Using Photoshop seems like magic and can truly energize my creativity. In 2016 I studied Image Transfer: Mixed Media with Tony Bounsall and loved this new realm of photography. Combining mediums (photographs, chalk pastels, drywall compound, inks, ripped paper) can often lead nowhere but, occasionally it strikes a chord. One gets a flash of possibility, a glimpse of a pleasing relationship between objects. I have come to enjoy alternating between PS and working the piece with my hands. Sometimes when stuck I find my Art Journal gets things rolling again. Tony Bounsall describes his creative process as “chaos to organized coherence”.

During my thirty-seven years as a clinical counsellor I used expressive art therapies whenever I could. This gave me an appreciation for the healing power of the creative process. Newly retired, I am finally able to devote more time to trusting in that gentle knowing, small inner-voice, as I explore the artistic realm.

Endless Watching: Lloyd Houghton’s Creative Imagery workshop was a real inspiration; my imagination soared. The workshop yielded the original blurred image of the woman walking up the stairs and the man with umbrella walking into the image. I transferred the printed image by hand onto drywall compound, added a bit of pastels and photographed it again. Using PS, I layered this and added other elements. Some more pastel work, photographed that and back to PS. Photographing my own eye (bottom right) took several tries.



To me the eye increases the dynamic tension. I think the leaves (bottom left) bring a bit of kindness to the image. Maybe it’s just me but the emotion conveyed in the figures’ postures/gestures seems to speak volumes. And where to go next? I went with a hint of a layer of chalk pastel. The circular clock face frames the two centre subjects, connects them. The diagonal staircase on the left adds another geometric element, and I think, adds a sense of movement; something is in progress.



Being Blue: Here I started with an image of a Tofino beach copied and flipped. In Procreate (an iPad App) I touched up the details of the sparrow and added the strip of blue. The bottom half is a flipped image of the Upper Harbour and working vessels (looking out from the Canoe Club) that I resized, etc. I added the vertical light blue strip for balance. A black and white photo of grass was the final layer added before

finishing things off in Luminar.

Coffee Shop Sugar Blues:

This started with images of a beach in Tofino duplicated and flipped. These were then placed side by side and above each other. I next added another layer (coffee beans), put these together, colour printed it and then with a piece of charcoal I made the shadows of the beach tree-line more pronounced. The sparrow looking right was a copy of the original (Union Pacific Coffee Shop Patio). The image of the sparrow looking left was transferred onto an acrylic wash. I then used coloured pencils to give it a stressed “needing-a-fix” look. I like how its body turned out looking distressed, which is my guess at how he feels after so many desserts. I think the table gives a nice long diagonal leading line.



I have enjoyed the Creative SIG and hope it continues to have participants who are willing to show their images and share the steps taken in the creation of these images. In closing, I think the more we listen to our inner artist, the more it will speak to us. Let’s keep supporting each other on this journey.

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Image "Electric Heron" by Ken Johnston

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Flowers: An Artistic Perspective

by Barbara Burns

For me photographing flowers from an artistic perspective usually involves capturing colour and/or lines. Some flowers attract me because they are radiant with exciting hues and tones. I pay less attention to capturing shapes and more upon setting the colours off in interesting or striking ways. Other floral displays enchant me with the grace and harmony of their stems and petals and often these are best rendered in black and white. Still others are so striking in their overall visual impact that I want to capture them just as they are. I keep in mind that I may want to use the image for artistic compositing later so I am careful to frame my shots accordingly.

I love light and am enchanted by the way flowers change their appearance with the lighting. At certain times of day natural light gives the very best and most interesting effects. I pay attention to the colour of the light and its angle. I find that side lighting gives me lovely tones and textures so I often use it both outdoors and in the studio. I may take a flower that I bought for shooting in the studio and put it on my front porch just as the cool bright morning sun catches its petals. Generally, I like the control I have in the studio to light just as I wish at any time of day or night.

I generally use my Canon 5D Mark III DSLR with a number of quality lenses. When I am collecting images purely for compositing, I will use my mirrorless Sony A6000 and the kit lens as I am less concerned with getting technically perfect images. I generally use a tripod, particularly when shooting outdoors. I do however enjoy the freedom of handholding my camera in the studio where the strobe lights freeze the image perfectly. I use my Canon 100 mm f2.8 L macro lens for close shooting. I will occasionally use a focusing rail with it for very close up work with little available depth of field. I have a Canon ring flash that fits on my lens and is great for close-up shooting situations in which I or my camera are blocking some of the light from the deeper parts of a flower. When I want a wider field of view, I find my Canon 24-70 mm f2.8 L lens will also do quite adequately. I always shoot with manual focus.

The following images illustrate some of the different approaches that I have taken.

This image is very simple in terms of technique. It was shot using my 100 mm macro lens next to a bright window. I used a slow shutter speed of 1/30 at f2.8 and a tripod. The depth of field was so shallow that only the edges of the main petals had any sharpness. This was a case in which the colours were my main interest and I only wanted enough shape to indicate that the subject was a flower.



“Delicate Pink”

This is another natural light image shot one afternoon in a friend’s garden. I had never seen a passionflower before and was fascinated by its otherworldly appearance. I wanted to capture it as I saw it. I did not have my tripod or macro lens with me so the shot was not technically very strong. The background was not good and I knew I would have to replace it. I decided to build on the oddness of the flower and layered in images of trees, leaves, butterflies etc. to give a sense of dense woods mystery. The image was shot with a Canon 30D and a not so impressive 70-300 mm f2.8 lens.



“Passionflower”

This image of Calla Lilies is a composite of a number of studio shots. I was trying to capture the graceful curves of these iconic flowers and found that the colours were quite distracting. I was using my 100 mm f2.8 macro lens at f22 to maximise the depth of field. I used a three-strobe set up, with two softboxes on either side to pick up as much texture as possible and an octobox



"Calla Lilies"

in front for soft detail. I shot from slightly below normal eye level in order to give a sense of length to the flower stems. I used a tripod because I wanted to maintain that perspective. I then composited four images together and created the slightly transparent look.

This was an experimental image. I wanted to try out an artist's light table with fluorescent tubes to backlight these tulips. As the inside view seemed more interesting, I cut each one in half and arranged them on the light table. I was hoping to capture the varied colour hues and wanted the image well lit. The light table had the added benefit of completely burning out the background so it was pure white and set off the detail of the flowers. As the lighting was not particularly bright I upped my ISO to 320 and used a tripod. I used my 100 mm macro lens at f16 as I wanted good depth of field.



"Backlit Tulips"

This is a studio image shot with strobes, two softboxes for side light and an octobox for soft detail (my go-to

lighting when I want texture and soft detail). Because the flower stem was relatively long and I wanted to capture most of it, I used my 24-70 mm f2.8 lens at 52 mm with ISO 100 at f22. My intent was to capture the purity and romance of white orchids so I photographed them on a white background.



"White Orchids"

This image is an artistic composite based upon a casual shot I took with my Sony A6000. There was a lovely hydrangea bush where I was walking and I noticed that its petals were starting to dry and become veined. It reminded me of faded antique wallpaper. I immediately decided to work it into a composite. I used the flower image as a base, covered it with a green and rust textured layer and then uncovered the flowers below using a layer mask and several distressed type stamps. I added the butterfly in the same manner and then layered on a cracked texture.



"In my Garden"

I find that flower photography lends itself to so many styles and explorations. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

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Image Stabilization

by Matt Speight

Any photographer who was schooled in the art before the mid 1990s would have been taught that your shutter speed should always be equal to, or exceed, the focal length of the lens you are using. Often called “the 1/focal length rule”, with a 200 mm lens, shoot at 1/200 sec or faster. It was taught so that there was no camera shake and we didn’t end up with soft or blurry images.

Now something monumental happened in the mid 1990s that we now take for granted in the photography world, especially those of us who love shooting with long lenses. The first stabilized lens was introduced; a 75-300 mm IS lens from Canon. With this new lens we could shoot at a shutter speed two stops slower than a non-IS lens.

From those early ventures into the world of stabilization by Canon, interesting developments by different manufactures have helped free us from abiding by the 1/focal length rule. The most current would be sensor stabilization technology. Just recently, Fuji joined Olympus, Sony, Panasonic and Pentax to offer a stabilized body in their brand new XH-1. I thought this would be an opportune time to discuss the pluses and minuses of the two different ways to stabilize your image and why Fuji has gone the body stabilized route, when they also make lenses that are optically stabilized.

Pros of Lens Stabilization:

1. If you use long lenses for sports and wildlife, you need a lot of correction from the stabilization system. The higher the magnification, the greater shake and therefore, the more compensation needed.
2. Autofocus in low light is improved. The stabilized image allows for a quicker, more accurate autofocus.
3. Some higher-end lenses have a switch that allows you to change to a smart mode. This will engage the image stabilization on the axis needed, correcting vertical shake, as you pan. It will also turn the IS off when you put the camera on a tripod. Body stabilization doesn’t do this, just yet.

Cons of Lens Stabilization:

1. It can mess with your Bokeh. The extra element in the lens that makes the correction for the shake may reduce the quality of your buttery smooth background blur! So, turn it off while shooting portraits.
2. It stabilizes only on two axes. Body stabilization is now up to five axes.

3. Have you compared the cost of an image stabilized 70-200 mm f2.8 lens to its non-stabilized counterpart? On average it is \$1000 dollars more.

Pros of Body Stabilization:

1. Cheaper lenses, no expensive stabilizer needed.
2. Lighter and smaller lenses.
3. Stabilization works for all the lenses you put on the body if they are made by the body manufacturer. Some cameras allow you to put in the focal length of older, non-data, and third party lenses, activating body stabilization.
4. It works on a 5-axis system with short to medium focal lenses. It’s more effective, allowing longer shutter speeds without any shake.

Cons of body stabilization:

1. Reliability. It’s something else that can go wrong with a camera. While you could say the same with lens stabilization, if a lens fails, you can continue to take pictures just by switching the lens out. If your camera stops working due to a broken stabilizer, you’re stuck.
2. Autofocus does not improve when the stabilizer is engaged unlike a lens-based stabilizer.
3. It is not as effective on longer focal length lenses, as I discussed earlier.

In summary, conclusions can be made as to which system will favour certain types of shooting. If you’re a sports and wildlife shooter, then lens stabilization is the way to go. To strengthen this argument, Canon and Nikon are lens-stabilized systems and their autofocus systems lend them to those fields. If you’re a photographer doing a variety of different genres from portraits to landscapes, consider the attributes of a stabilized mirrorless body.

Having used both systems, I favour body stabilization. For my style of photography it’s more effective. However, I was lucky enough to try out the Olympus EM1 MK2 recently with the 12-100 mm stabilized lens. I found I could shoot hand held at two seconds at 24 mm with very acceptable results, which is quite amazing. This combination of body and lens gives you a 6.5 stop advantage.

Fuji, like Sony and Panasonic, offers cameras that have body stabilization but, lucky for us, have longer lenses that are stabilized so we can get the best of both worlds. Now we can see why Fuji made the XH-1, with a stabilized body. The current manufacturers left without body stabilization (Nikon, Canon) need to catch up so that everyone buying a new camera can enjoy the creative avenues of a complete stabilized system. Happy clear shooting!

Shooting Large Events

by Neil Boyle

You've found an opportunity to attend a special large event, one you've always wanted to see, and you want to end up with a collection of photos representative of the life-changing experience. Large events usually mean lots of people, lots going on, lots of different photographic situations, lots of people in the way of your perfect shot, professional photographers ignoring you, and way too many opportunities to capture them all, a bunch of things you want to experience not necessarily through a viewfinder.



"Mutant Vehicle, Floating Tentacle Monster"

Planning is the difference between showing up with a camera and getting a few good shots amongst a myriad of average pics, and being the one with a portfolio of jealousy-inducing images your colleagues will be imitating at the next event. It's a given that you can't be everywhere, and sometimes you can't even be in most places, so study the schedule and pick some main events and many lesser-attended ones, more than you'll have time to attend. Find out who's worth seeing/hearing, and where and when you can find them. That way you have an idea when to be where, and the flexibility to change when unexpected opportunities arise. Don't forget that interesting images abound in the set-up, the take-down and the after-hours events. Have a shot list (images you hope to get) in a back pocket, and feel free to ignore it.

There will be lots of photographers there, in all three categories (pro, amateur, and how do I turn this camera on?). It's worth looking at what they are shooting, and doing something else. After all, do you need to add another image to a crowded field? Find an unusual angle, turn around and shoot the crowd or individuals in the crowd, shoot back-stage, shoot the secondary sup-

porting people. Consider attending rehearsals, same show, fewer security staff to move you to less favourable views, small if any audience and no photographers messing with your picture. Sometimes you can even use a tripod.

Consider the different genres that can apply, and the guidelines that go with them, as these 'rules' are designed to make better photos. This is as good as it gets for street photography, faces, actions, close-ups, staged portraits (grip and grin shots), unstaged. Don't be a creepy voyeur and hide behind a long lens; that reputation can get you thrown out. Make eye contact and smile at your subject, and maybe even offer a compliment, either before (to get permission) or after (to get forgiveness, which is easier), and consider showing him or her the image, maybe even offering to share it if it's one of your better ones. There's room for shots of architecture, dance, portrait, almost all big events offer night and long-exposure opportunities and, obviously, performance art. Maybe even paparazzi.

Gear choice depends on the environment. Shooting Burning Man, set in a twenty-mile wide bowl of the finest, most alkaline dust, is a recipe for dirty sensors and gear damage (maybe don't change lenses, and keep your camera in a plastic bag when not shooting). A surf competition on Maui exposes your gear to corrosive salt water (maybe a water-tight housing), and a noisy shutter and a big lens, which wouldn't bother anyone at a rock concert, may be an issue if the silent audience is concentrating on a lone acapella voice. There are lots of other gear choices, drones (if permitted), remote flashes, triggers. Don't forget cleaning supplies and backup gear.



"Burning Man Costume"

Flash lighting is a major issue and one even more disturbing to an audience and the performers than shutter noise, so abuse your ISO. A grainy picture is often much better than an unnaturally-lit subject. If you concentrate on the performer/performance, often the ambient light (i.e. spot-light) is plenty. Special lighting effects (lasers, strobes, flashing coloured lights) may look good with dragging the shutter. Avoid fluorescent lighting if at all possible; the colour's weird and hard to correct.



"Playa"

Your appearance matters. Dress to fit in, wear what the others are wearing. You will be much better accepted and your subjects are going to be more cooperative if you appear to be one of their own. It matters. Your Burning Man costume won't work at a rock concert.

Composition will be difficult. There's never a clear shot, people are always getting in your image, the performer never looks in the right direction. At least you can check the background to avoid trees growing out of heads and to level the horizon. Unusual perspectives help, and if drones are permitted and you know that gear, there are more options. Sometimes you can make friends with the sound people or the lighting people and they'll let you into their areas.

Security is important. You need a safe place to store your gear and a tight hand on it all the time it's with you. Keep an eye on the surroundings, not just for shots, but for potential problems. It's easy for gear to walk off in a moving crowd. It's not hard to get lost in the shot and back into the path of the guy delivering Porta-Potties.

The legal stuff. You really only need releases if you are photographing children, your image contains trademarks, or you want to make money off the images and, obviously, don't photograph things that may cause you problems (i.e., drug deals).

My big event was Burning Man 2013. 60,000 people in an 8-kilometre wide temporary village for eight days. Art

installations, performances, parades, costumes, events, music, dancing everywhere all the time, dust storms reducing visibility to three metres, dust (more dust than I've ever seen), heat (41°? at noon, 26°? at 3AM). Burning Man is big on self-reliance, you bring all your food and water (no showers), and you take your grey water out with you (nothing left behind). Too big to walk; you get around on a bike (limiting the amount of gear).

So in the daytime, I photographed art installations, activities, things people built. At night, a lot of the art is lit and the mutant vehicles often spout fire (night photos), there are lots of lights and performances (tripod, and I dragged the shutter a lot). Fire dancing is a big thing at night, and the regular dancing to the ever-present dub-step beat lasted into lovely dawns for good backgrounds. I photographed many people (almost everyone agreed after a smile and a polite request), but there's a lot of nudity at Burning Man, and while many didn't mind, I always respected that some didn't want a stranger recording that part of their experience. Still, a smile and we always parted on good terms. Eight days of photography gave me lots of time to review how the images looked, and to learn and to refine my techniques, and to find good positions and camera settings for the big final events, the burning of the Temple and the Man. I made time to take in things that didn't photograph well such as TED Talks, spiritual discussions, an all-afternoon presentation on how to make your ride spout flames.

Looking at what others posted of the event, I see that I missed a lot, a lot more than I got but then, Burning Man is big and you'll never see it all, and I will be trying again.



"Truth is Beauty"

How I Did It

Conjuring a Portal

by *Vanessa MacDonald*

This image was created on an urbex-style light painting shoot at the abandoned Jordan River Powerhouse. That evening, I collaborated with two fellow photographer friends, Derek Lawrence and Mars Romer. We explored this abandoned concrete building shortly after dusk and found plenty of colourful graffiti art and interesting alcoves inside to serve as the backdrop for our shots. Derek and I had come up with this location after seeing the building featured in a series of images by Doug Clement. We were immediately determined to find it for ourselves but we were not able to glean much specific information from Doug directly. Derek had the brilliant idea of using Google Earth to determine the exact location.

Since none of us had been to the power plant before, our concepts were spontaneous and in the moment. I had done a lot of preparation in the way of constructing my own lighting gear but that was about it. In this image we are seeing Mars in silhouette spinning a rope rig with a string of LED lights wrapped around it and a long sparkler attached to the end. We had to repeat this shot a few times using different colour gels, exposure times, apertures and intensities of light to see what looked best. Light painting is always an experimental, trial-and-error process. The background lighting was achieved using high-intensity tactical flashlights with home-made colour gel attachments. One light was pointing up from the floor and I hand-held the other flashlight and waved it back and forth at the wall while Mars completed the spin. Simultaneously, I was firing the shutters on both of our cameras which were set in Bulb mode. The key to capturing light spins like this is to open the shutter after the spin has started and then cut it before the spinner slows to put the rope down. That gives the perfect circular portal effect. Settings used: 18 mm, ISO 320, f8, 16 seconds, single exposure.



Femininity III

by *Lois Burton*

Artistic study of the human body has a very long history dating back to the Ancient Romans and Greeks who routinely used nudes as a subject of art in painting, drawing and sculpting. Fine art nude photography is a much newer art form that never crossed my mind as something that I would do until I attended a workshop with Gregg Eligh. The workshop provided an artistic study of the human body and I discovered that there were many elements of beauty to capture: sweeping contours, angles, unique shapes and forms, muscle groups, light and shadow. Following the workshop I was eager to use my own creative ideas and artistic expression in this genre of photography.



The setup was quite simple, dramatic low key lighting which I think lends itself well to artistic nudes and black and white shots. A grey backdrop was set up and two lights were positioned slightly behind the model, at ten o'clock and two o'clock, and the camera position was six o'clock. The key light, with a 22" beauty dish, was at 1/2 power and the secondary light with a soft-box was at 1/4 power, allowing for soft, diffused even distribution of light.

The model was posed facing toward the key light and artistically covered in soft organza which still allowed for the natural beauty of her body to shine through. The balance of light and dark worked well to accentuate her form.

Canon 5D Mark III with a 85 mm f1.8 USM lens, manual focus, ISO 100, shutter speed 1/160 sec, f7.1 The black and white conversion was done in NIK Silver Effex Pro (now DXO PhotoLab).

Tuesday Shoots

by Deb Thurlbeck

April is said to bring showers. It also brings milder weather to join with the Tuesday Shooters for another set of, sometimes challenging but always fun, field trips. Tuesdays are theme-based while Alternate Tuesdays are location-based. Before the shoot begins, come for coffee and chat socially or talk tech. Afterwards we gather for lunch at a local establishment.

April 3rd: Government House. By April, the City of Victoria is in full bloom. The threat of snow and frost has gone and “spring is busting out all over”. What better way to usher this in than a visit to the Lieutenant Governor’s residence in the Rockland area? The lower parking lot is best. Just follow the signs and then take your camera and meander through the various gardens. This shoot will be a treat for those who enjoy macro photography as well as landscape. Tuesdays are volunteer days at Government House so expect to see people exercising their gardening skills throughout the gardens.

April 10th: Shadows. You cannot have light without also having darkness or shadows. So an image with no shadows (or deep dark blacks) is flat and lifeless, it feels two dimensional. Shadows are not fixed in shape. A shadow will change in shape, definition, and colour based on the positioning, quality, and colour of the light creating it. It will also change characteristics based on the object that it falls upon. This opens up room for a lot of creativity.

April 17th: Chemainus. The town of Chemainus is aptly nicknamed “Mural-Town” after the forty plus murals scattered around the town that depict the culture and history of the area. There are a number of funky studios and tourist shops and the whole town is “walker friendly.” Park in the parking lot on the main street and then follow the footprints to tour the sights. Some of the buildings appear to be something out of the last Western Frontier. Chemainus is about an eighty-minute drive from Victoria.

April 24th: Crop. Compose an image and capture a series of four or five frames, crop out part of the background in each frame with the final photo focusing on one, or part of, an item. The spirit of this challenge is not to take one photo and manipulate in post processing, but to compose your image, then crop using either your feet or zoom to capture a portion of your original scene.

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

April 2018

Weekend Shoots

by Vanessa MacDonald and Teri vanWell

Join us for a Wildflower Walkabout!

Spring has sprung, folks, and we are just blooming with excitement! The trees are budding, the birds are singing and the hillsides and parks around the city are waking up and full of life again. April is usually the peak wildflower month on Southern Vancouver Island and there will be plenty of nice local spots blanketed with Shooting Stars, Chocolate Lilies, Camas, Fawn (Easter) Lilies and so much more. It’s time to crack out those macro and zoom lenses, get low to the ground and connect with your softer side. We want to make the most of the magnificent displays at this time of year and are planning to schedule several wildflower photography field trips throughout the month. The dates and locations will be announced on short notice because we have to wait and see when the conditions are just right, so keep checking the calendar or your inbox for announcements. The locations we have in mind so far are Thetis Lake, High Rock Park, Beacon Hill Park, Cattle Point and Christmas Hill.

If you happen to know of a really great local spot for wildflowers and would be interested in taking a group there, please let us know. We are open to ideas and anyone can lead a field trip if they wish. The more the better! Just get in touch with Vanessa and Teri via email at fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca with your suggestions.

April 23-26th: Hornby Island. This 4-day/3-night trip is a repeat of our previous wildflower trips to Hornby. Stay at the Hornby Dive Lodge, all meals provided, and enjoy the great food and company. Subject to weather and sea conditions we will go out to Flora Islet as well as visiting Heron Rocks, Helliwell Provincial Park and more. Please see the calendar for complete details.



“Camas”

Planning an On-Location Shoot

by Stephen Ban

Before delving into this article, it's probably worth noting that I'm not an expert on this subject. I have been working with models only for a little over a year and the shoot I describe here is only my second on-location shoot ever!

All good photoshoots begin with an idea. In this case, the initial germ of an idea was planted in the late summer of 2017 after seeing several YouTube videos on the subject of film noir lighting and photography, and loosely inspired by such movies as *Gangster Squad* (2013) and *Allied* (2016). There were a few key elements that I was looking to incorporate into this shoot. First, the classic film noir themes of intrigue, betrayal, and a femme fatale. Second, combining the look of the 1930s gangster era with the feel of the film noir era, which was actually somewhat later (late 1940s, early 1950s). Finally, I was looking for a twist on the usual gangster story in which a sort of Bonnie and Clyde story morphs into a *Thelma and Louise* one.

After the idea comes the legwork: planning the shoot. There are several components to this: storyboarding, location scouting, talent recruitment, prop and costume sourcing, and technical/logistic preparation.

In many photoshoots involving just a single model and either a minimal lighting setup or no external lighting at all, you can get away with shooting ad-hoc and with little more than a mental plan. However, in this shoot I had three models, multiple photographers and a very specific series of shots that I wanted to obtain. Thus, once we had



This behind-the-scenes shot shows the continuous (cinema-style) lighting we used for one of the scenes, as well as the prop money and briefcase. For the prop money, I was easily able to find period-correct (circa 1930s) bills which I printed in colour. I then had a print shop cut blank paper to the correct dimensions to fill out the middle of the bill stacks, and bound them all with real money bands from the bank!

our photographic team assembled, we began a very simple storyboarding process to lay out the basic elements of each shot, which models were involved, the props and backdrop we needed, the lighting setup, and the overall mood we were trying to achieve. In this case, we only verbally storyboarded the shoot, but if you're more artistically inclined, it may help to do a simple sketch of each scene and draw or describe the pose(s) to be used.



For our second scene I used conventional studio strobes using FlashPoint wireless units. With 600 watt-seconds of power, the strobes made balancing the ambient light a piece of cake. Also shown here is the airsoft Thompson submachine gun. The red dress was less than \$10 on AliExpress.com. (Credit to Jessica Williamson for the BTS shots.)

Location scouting for this shoot was challenging. In our original concept, we were going to have a period-correct car as a backdrop and prop, which meant that we either needed a covered location that you could drive a car into or we would have to shoot at multiple locations for shots with and without the car. Nonetheless, shooting indoors was a key factor, because the dark look of film noir requires that you can kill or at least control the ambient light. While it is possible to do this with powerful strobes, we were going to be using continuous lighting, which is even more demanding in terms of ambient light. After considering options such as renting a horse barn or arena (too expensive), I tried contacting a couple of commercial real estate agents to see if they had any clients with suitable listings. As it turns out, Victoria has an acute shortage of vacant large commercial spaces, particularly if you're looking to use them for little or no money!

My first choice of location was the Roundhouse development in Esquimalt, but there were a couple of obstacles. First, at the time I was initially planning the shoot back in September, there was a movie shoot scheduled there that wasn't going to wrap up until October. Second, the owners wanted us to have at least \$2 million of liability insurance before they'd let us use the place. This would have been fine if we had more people to spread the cost around, but since we only had three photographers, costs would have added up quickly. As summer slipped

into autumn and then winter, it was becoming clear that location was going to be the hardest aspect of the planning. In the end, I fell back on a location I had used previously for a shoot: the B.C. Aviation Museum, near the airport. They were very accommodating, and we only had to pay the regular admission fee (\$10 per person) to use their space.

For a commercial shoot (or any shoot with a budget), recruiting talent (models, hair and makeup artists) would normally be done with a casting call through model agencies or online resources such as [ModelMayhem](#). However, I was running this shoot on a shoestring and I already had a vision for the model dynamic. I was lucky enough to have some friends (a mix of complete novices and varying degrees of prior experience) who were willing to work for free. For reference, however, one makeup artist I communicated with through ModelMayhem would have charged about \$100 to do hair and makeup for this project. Model rates will vary with experience, but there is no shortage of “time-for-print” models available on ModelMayhem should you choose to go that route.

Props and costumes were another area where I chose to get creative rather than spend lots of money on rentals. Prop guns, for example, are hard to come by, and even the ones that costume shops sometimes rent are usually far from authentic-looking. I was lucky enough to have one friend with an airsoft (i.e. BB) Thompson submachine gun and I was able to borrow an airsoft Colt .45 Model 1911 from my brother. Costume rentals would have been \$35-\$50 per person per day so, instead I was able to come up with workable wardrobe options through a combination of clothing the models already owned, some items I already owned, and several items obtained on the cheap through sites like eBay and AliExpress.



If you need a realistic prop firearm, airsoft (also known as pellet or BB) guns are not only safe and legal (under most circumstances), but also very realistic-looking. Just be careful if you're using them in a public place, because that's when you could get into trouble.

Although it was perhaps the least challenging aspect, on the technical and logistic front, we still had a few issues to contend with. Could we safely use all of our equipment (including the prop guns) within the confines of the museum's space? Would we have any control over the lighting? Was there adequate power nearby? Since we were confined to the short winter operating hours of the museum (11am - 3pm), would we have enough time to setup and teardown? And would we prep hair and makeup on-site or off?



A finished shot from our cinema-lighting setup. I had expected the continuous lighting to be more difficult to work with than strobes, but it was very much WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get). Expose for your subjects and don't worry about the background, if the lighting is setup correctly, everything works!

While I didn't track all of the expenses for the shoot, it probably ended up being about \$100 out-of-pocket including modest compensation for the models, props, food, and the museum admission fees. If I were to do it again, I probably would have been slightly less ambitious in terms of the number of shots we were hoping to capture. Another way around the time constraint would have been to plan the shots around the models so that two scene setups could have been shot with different photographers simultaneously. That's a case where creative vision would have been compromised in favour of logistics. I'm still hoping we can organize a follow-up shoot at some point involving the car we had originally planned for. As well, there were a few storyboarded shots that we didn't end up getting due to the change of location.

In the end, everything went fairly smoothly, although four hours did end up being a bit tight given the number of shots we were hoping to obtain. However, since I had dialled back expectations for the shoot somewhat, I think everyone involved found it to be a fun and worthwhile experience and I learned a lot about just how complicated it can be to plan a shoot.

Beginners' Corner

Keywords and Your Photographic Style

by Josée Ménard

What is the relationship between keywords and photographic style, you wonder? Both reflect what you consciously and subconsciously decide upon as you click the keys on your keyboard or press the shutter button on your camera. Also, both concepts often lead to confusion as we attempt to grasp them. Why, you may ask? Simply because they demand inner reflection. So, what is more difficult, the concept itself or the reflection in order to apply the concept? Read on if you dare.

Both keywords and your photographic style relate in that they reflect you, the photographer. Keywords represent the logical component through words that categorize your images while photographic style represents the creative through the manner in which you capture the subjects in your images.

In case keywords are unknown to you, they assist you in your search for a specific image that you have linked to in Lightroom (or other software supporting keywords). For example, you can easily search for the terms 'BC', 'whale', 'family'. All of the whales from other geographical areas as well as single whale shots stay filed in the background. If you do not use keywords, you may classify your images using a letter and number system. BCwhaleF17 followed by _001 could represent the image code for keywords above. No matter the system, you are still thinking about words or letters representing words for your images.

From an organizational point of view, think of it as a flowchart guiding you from the general to more and more specific. As you scan the images, general words come to mind. People, animal, botanical, etc. Go to the next level to get more specific. After people could come



"Family Stroll at Sunset"

street or studio. Continue and you can even narrow it down to colour, location, size, scene types or time of year or day. Sorting through words, that is easy. The hard part is to choose wisely. No matter the flowchart system you may use, remain consistent.

Establishing keywords first gets your mind on track towards discovering your photographic style. The keywords identified begin to describe your style. This is where you hear the qualifier: street, wildlife, or landscape photographer. As much as we may perceive both concepts as defining or limiting of ourselves, we need to remember that, as photographers, we constantly grow. At a PPOC conference, it was great to hear how accomplished photographers in one field sought certification in another as a means of renewal. So, no worries, nothing is final, everything is a process.

Starting to identify the best words to represent images leads you to exploring what you have been capturing. The keywords exercise becomes valuable in that you are now able to look at your images more objectively. Without realizing it, you may have chosen to photograph more people than animals or have progressed into the botanical world leaving behind the mammal world.

As a photographer, you are growing and exploring different fields. Is this your photographic style? Not exactly, however you are making way. Looking at my collection of images, colour and nature, be it wildlife, landscapes or flowers, mostly dominate. Here and there, street sneaks in. My preferred photographs tell stories maximizing the natural elements at the scene in a realistic way. Peaceful moments, reflections, ambient light, fun moments. Patiently, I await.

Photographic style demands more research and inner reflection. The hows and whys now come into play. Your style begins to establish itself. Preferred techniques, elements of composition, and principles of design are chosen to communicate the stories of your images.

When you think of Ansel Adams; what comes to mind? The words that pop up are part of his style. When you look at his black and white images, you recognize his particular signature or style.

Still grasping this abstract concept, think of Picasso, Monet, Van Gogh. A late era Picasso is definitely not a Monet. Explore their collections. It took them a while to establish their style, their markers. It will for you, too.

The best news of all is that none of this is carved in stone as both, your style and your keywords, evolve with you, the photographer.

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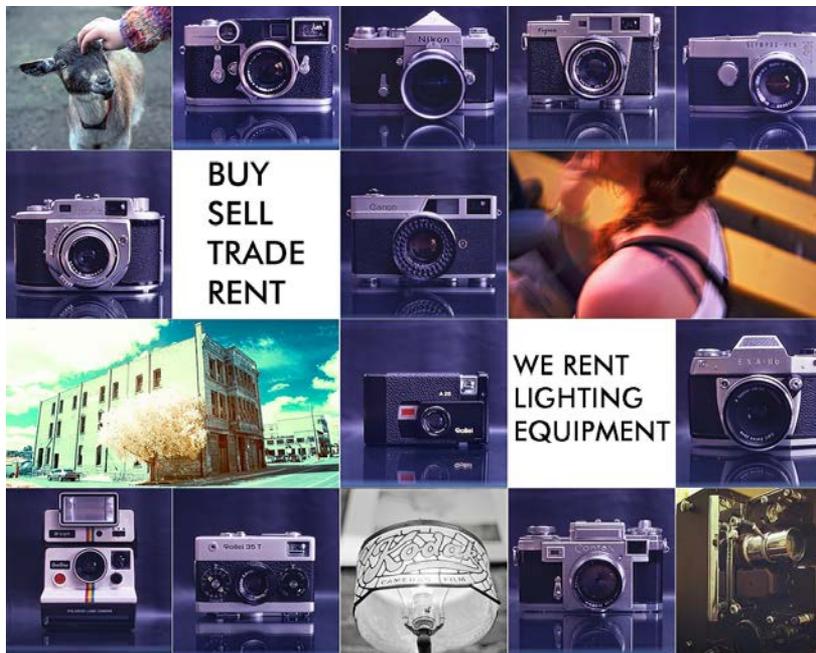
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