



Close-Up

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Member Profile: Lloyd Houghton

Hard Light/Soft Light

Digital Infrared Photography: Part 3

Creative Approaches to Night

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Beginners' Corner: Working Out the Rust

... and more

"Salmon Valley Church" by Kris Foot.



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Victoria Camera Club

Close-Up is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club,
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 Mailing address: PO Box 46035, RPO Quadra, Victoria, BC, V8T 5G7.
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 Editor, Richard James, e-mail to newsletter@victoriacameraclub.ca
 for submissions or to advertise in *Close-Up*.



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*.

For additional information: please contact:

Membership: membership@victoriacameraclub.ca
Workshops: workshops@victoriacameraclub.ca
Field Trips: fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.ca
Meetings: meetings@victoriacameraclub.ca
Website: webmaster@victoriacameraclub.ca
Close-Up: newsletter@victoriacameraclub.ca
 or call Lloyd Houghton, President at 250-580-7154.

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Member Discounts: VCC members can take advantage of discounts offered by several retailers in Victoria. Details are on the members section on our website.

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



Calendar

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

Thursday, April 7th: Competition Night

The March competition results will be presented with one of the judges reviewing selected images. The theme for April is "Shallow Depth of Field." The deadline for submission is April 7th. This is also the Annual Competition.

Thursday, April 14th: Presentation Night

"Seeing With Ancient Eyes:" Doug Gilbert is a very accomplished practitioner of photo based art. Over the years, Doug has worked in various art mediums ranging from oil, pastel, water-colour, pencil, clay, wood and metal. Although he has studied art on his own over his lifetime, he decided at an early age to keep it as a passion and not a career.

Thursday, April 21st: Members' Night

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

Featured Field Trips and Workshops

Spring Flowers field trips, Advanced Lightroom and Novice Image Review workshops.

Cover image: "Salmon Valley Church" by Kris Foot. Every photographers dream, a church in the middle of nowhere surrounded by trees and darkness. A perfect setting for such an amazing vertical panoramic shot of the Milky Way and a rare proton arc. Initially I was only attempting to capture a meteor shower. I started to set up and could see this glow behind me, so I turned around to find some of the most beautiful Northern Lights I have ever seen. I started shooting only to realize there was a proton arc now above the church lining up with the Milky Way. As a photographer you are usually not graced with so much of Mother Nature's beauty all at once. I spent the next few hours shooting back and forth torn on which way to point my camera. I hope that you all enjoy what I was able to capture. This image consists of multiple photos shot at ISO 8000, with a Nikon D3s at 28 mm f4 for 20 seconds. Truly an amazing thing to capture. (See article on page 24.)

President's Message

Coming towards the end of two years as president of the Club, I started to think about what I had achieved in that time. After a little while I decided to leave that for others to consider. It was of more interest to me to think about what I would like to do in the future, both in the Club and with my own photography.

My interests have always been on the edge of whatever is going on, I've never been one to be in the mainstream of anything. I enjoy going where others don't, and if some want to follow, I welcome that and am more than happy to lead and show the way. It is no different with my photography, nor will it be for whatever I get up to in the Club.

I did spend some time in our creative SIG before taking on the presidency, but time pressure meant, I think, that I only attended twice in the last two years. I want to change that. There is great satisfaction for me in mixing with people who are interested in discussing why they take photographs, what they want to express, the story they're trying to tell, rather than just capturing trophy images.

I'm very interested in making books. I've mentioned in this month's profile what I've done in the past and have on the go now, all using Blurb. I have used their free BookSmart tool to produce all of my books and have got the hang of its idiosyncrasies, so reach out if you would like some help.

While I like prints, there are only so many spaces on the wall. This is all very nice for viewing from a distance but it does leave us with a storage issue when we get tired of them. Having smaller images in a book can overcome this. The book can be left lying open somewhere and just turn the page every couple of days to look at a fresh picture. I have my "*Gypsy Jazz Jam*" book sitting on a stool that I frequently walk past during the day. I stop and actively look for a few minutes, maybe pick the book up, and turn the page before putting it down again. This is quite a different experience from walking past a wall of photos every day and never really engaging with any of them after the first few days of being hung.

I went on a one-day course on Coptic bookbinding and enjoyed the process of hand sewing a one-off book. I'd like to do use that technique to produce some photography books using my own inkjet prints and sewing them together as individual pages. I'm planning to do that with the "*Gypsy Jazz Jam*" book. Watch this space.

Lloyd Houghton, President.

by Jenny Clarke

Monet be damned, there is nothing worse than *en plein air* painting! It's hot, it's itchy, the light keeps moving and there are ants in my paint. Give me a quiet, cool contemplative studio any day. And so enters the camera into the equation. The camera has supported my painting and my painting in its turn, has changed my photography.

Firstly, reference photography is not about capturing the perfect image to take back to the studio and render into perfection. A good technically-resolved photo is constraining. One with "wow" factor is enslaving. The photographer's vision and skill can back the painter into a corner.



"In the Field"

Instead, it is the oddest photos, or a combination of many, that become treasures in the studio. Often hastily exposed and poorly composed, they are snatches of a scene that I was part of for a few hours. They are often taken in a series of "drive-by" shots where I am walking or paddling and just shooting. It is mostly about capturing and not about perfecting. There is a feeling of snatching these moments out of the air. If they were butterflies my camera would be the net.

Back at the studio, these images have "it", that experienced, felt quality that acts as a time-travel device. Perhaps it is the open softness of these photos that speaks for they are seldom sharp or tight. They somehow contain an immediacy that is transportable to the studio whereas "good" photos often do not.

I am an abstract painter. That process requires an open and dynamic relationship with the paint and with all the formal elements such as form, shape, composition, value, colour, positive and negative space. I have included a very ordinary image from my trip to Jas-

per last summer and the painting it spawned just last week. As you can see, it is a flawed photo. It was almost dark. The canoe was rocking. The moon burned a hole and the lake repeated it. But, it was the one of all I took on the lake that day, that held the workable magic. My painter friends know immediately what I am referring to. They have boxes of precious, potent, imperfect images too. For my photographer friends it is a bigger reach but I think Ernst Haas and Freeman Paterson might understand.

The offshoot of this more casual approach to photography has been to shake up my own photographic practice. I was trained as a nature photographer in the years when Parks Canada was building its slide collection. I could nail depth of field; I could freeze a fleeing elk with the right shutter speed; I slept through the dusty light of mid-day to shoot at dawn and dusk. And, I sat on culling committees ruthlessly throwing out 75% of everyone's images. As a result, we had a collection that could move an audience to tears.

So turning off that skill sometimes takes a directed effort and what I get is not at first publishable but it does open me to artistic possibilities, abstract qualities, and quirky activities or juxtapositions that I might not have seen or would automatically have ruled out. At the end of a day's shooting there is often a coherence in the shots that tells me what to revisit with my technical skill at full bore. It is a balancing act that I am still working on.

In the next issue, I will share some images that have crossed the floor. They are images taken in the service of painting, but a whole body of photographic work was embedded in them.



"In the Studio"

by Edward Moniz

In the last instalment of this series of articles (*Close-Up* January 2016) we discussed studying the master painters and the development of a digital workflow. The workflow sample provided in the article has hopefully helped you with the rendering of your RAW files to an acceptable image file. Once you have that and are able to consistently produce an acceptable image you will quickly want to move beyond the basics and may want to explore different directions for your images. In this instalment we will present some techniques that can be used to enhance your images beyond the basic RAW rendering.

One of the most fundamental ways to enhance images is by dodging and burning. This technique has been part of the photographic process since the beginning and was used extensively by the great photographers to create their images. In the days of the chemical darkroom this technique was very difficult and took a significant amount of practice to be successful.

Today, with the digital tools available in Photoshop and Lightroom, dodging and burning are much easier to execute. I use the local adjustment brush in Lightroom for basic dodging and burning and the image titled "Deas Island Park" was created with Lightroom. In this image I have selectively modified the contrast within the image by lighting and darkening key areas.

In this image the foreground is a little darker and the middle ground lightened to enhance the contrast behind the trees. Photoshop has a great tool for dodging and burning (beyond the basic dodge and burn tools) and that is the history brush. The history brush takes a snapshot of your image and then allows you to brush in modifications to the image by using blend modes with the brush. Taking the base image and the initial snapshot and setting the blend mode to multiply will allow you to darken areas, changing the blend mode to screen allows you to lighten areas. Few people I know use the history brush and I assure you that taking some time to learn this tool can have a tremendous impact on your editing abilities. In addition to dodging and burning you can also make a sharpened snapshot and a Gaussian blur snapshot and paint with these two snapshots alternately to sharpen and blur selected areas of your image.

Regardless of which technique you use for local adjustments with a brush the key is to do it slowly and



"Deas Island Park"

gradually build up the effect you want. The best way to achieve this is to use a low flow rate on your brush and very gradually add the effect. Slowly adding the edits will allow you to achieve the desired result without creating an excessively processed look.

One of the most amazing tools available in modern software is the crop tool along with the ability to create several different crops of the same image. Cropping into an image and only showing the viewer selected parts is a powerful tool for creativity. With today's modern sensors we have enough pixels to crop up to 90% of an image and still have enough pixels left to produce an image larger than the Club standard size for digital competitions and projection/web use. With the 1400 by 1050 size used by the Club the total number of pixels in competition images is 1,470,000. Compare that to a Nikon D810 with 36,000,000 pixels and you can easily see that severe crops can still be very effective for projected images.

The last technique I would like to talk about this month is subtractive editing. This is a technique that I developed while photographing in the style of John Constable, the English landscape painter.

This technique is similar to dodging and burning but instead of gradually building up the effect I start by using a brush in Lightroom with the exposure slider set to -4, the maximum exposure reduction available in Lightroom. I then take the brush (use a large brush for this) and brush this underexposure over the entire image making it almost totally black. Once that is done and with this underexposed layer active in Lightroom I then change to the eraser brush and with a low flow rate start to erase away the underexposure. Work slowly and very gradually remove the darkness. The image "The Farm" is a demonstration of this technique.

Once you have erased away the underexposure and are satisfied with the result you can adjust the overall exposure by adjusting the exposure slider with the underexposure layer selected. Try this technique with many different images and I think you will be quite surprised by what you can achieve. The image “The Thing”, which was awarded a first place in the October 2015 Creative Digital competition was created using this technique.

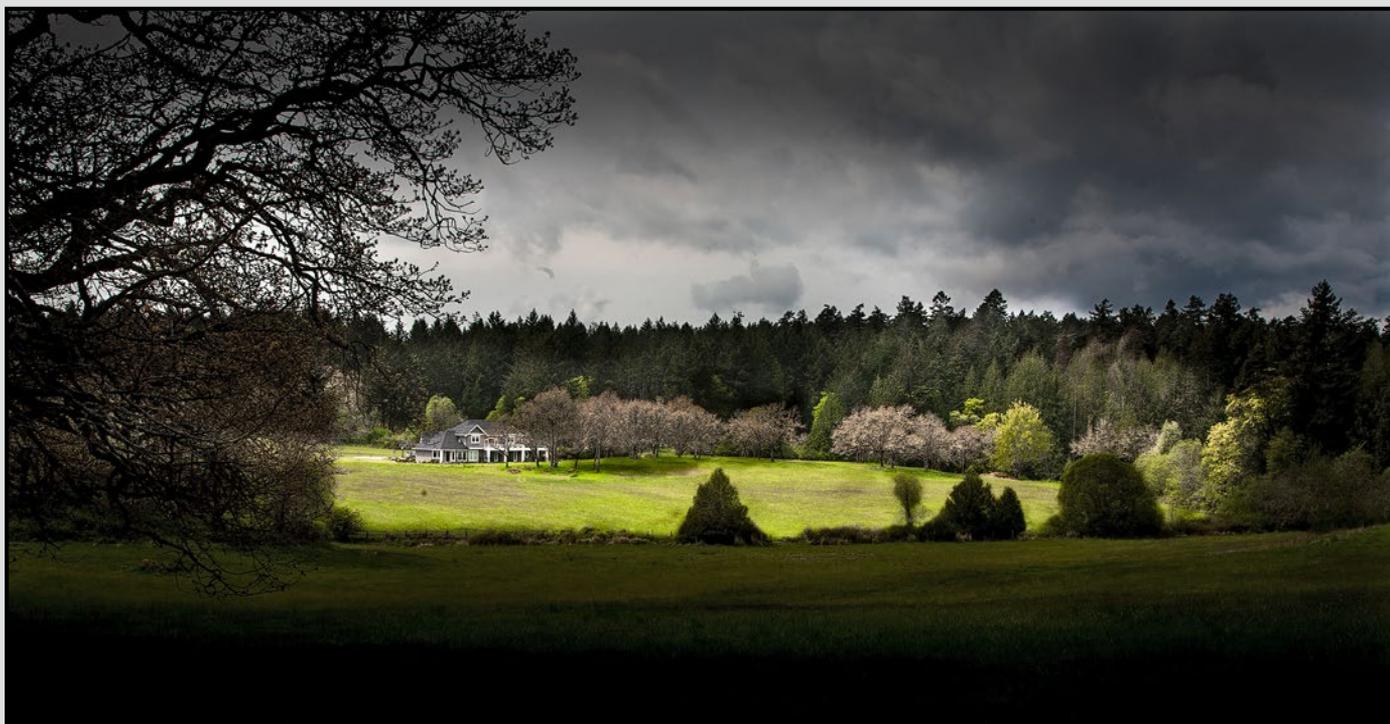
Seeing is a fundamental skill in photography, once you have seen an image and captured it in your camera you can then look further into the image and try to find other images that may exist within the original. Creative image making can be an extension of the original by recognizing the potential within it. Once you have found another composition within the image don't stop there but keep probing and try to find even more compositions. This type of effort will not only help you with post-processing but can lead to improved skill in image capture.

Often when we are out on a photoshoot we see a great scene and are moved to capture it. Once captured we are thrilled and move on to the next scene. If we have developed our seeing skills we may be moved to seek out other compositions beyond the first one that captured our attention. This ability to slow down and see potential in scenes and explore more than one composition can take you from a good photographer to an even bet-

ter one. The exercise below will help you develop these seeing skills in the post production which may then help you to see more with your image captures.

Practice will greatly enhance your ability to recognize alternate compositions within your image. One exercise you can do to improve this skill is to render your basic image, study it for a few days and then attempt to create 20 different compositions from that one image (note that a simple conversion to monochrome does not count as a different composition for the purposes of this exercise). The first few compositions will be relatively easy to create but each subsequent image will become more and more challenging. If you are able to complete this exercise with about five different images then you will see a marked improvement in your ability to create more potential compositions within your photographs.

I hope that you will try this exercise and some of these techniques to create multiple images, or perhaps you have favourites of your own. To make this exercise more effective I would discourage the use of Lightroom and Photoshop plug-in's to create the multiple images but rather use simple tools that will allow your personal creativity to develop. I hope you have enjoyed this article and that you have fun trying the techniques presented here.



“The Farm”



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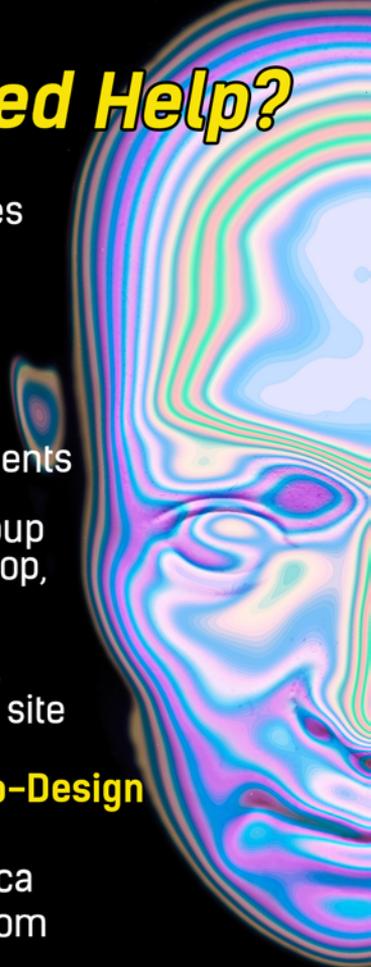
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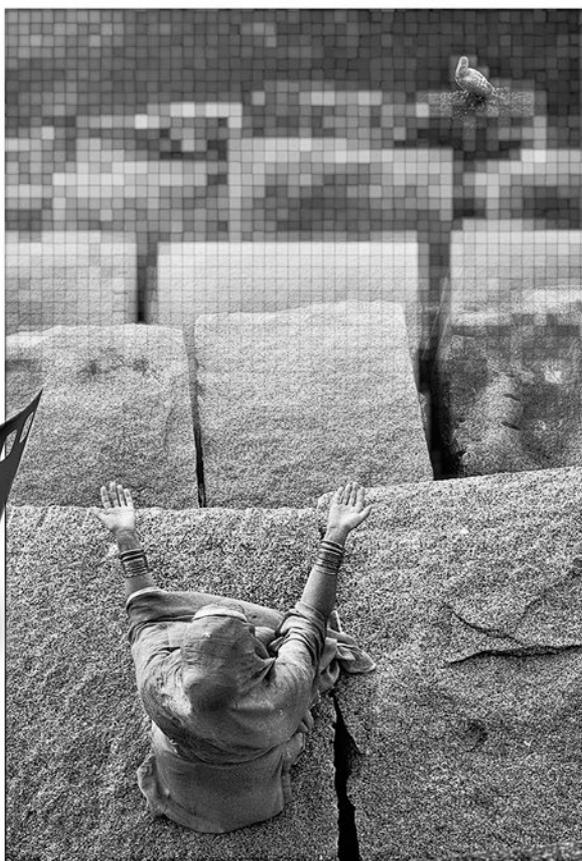


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Bridging Photo Technologies

by Richard James

Last month I discussed why you need to do all your editing on a full-size image and then save that as a "master image." Your master image contains all your edits and is a full size, uncropped image. This allows you to crop it in various ways depending on its content and its final use. In the article on page 6 of this issue Ed Moniz poses the challenge of finding 20 compositions within an image, a challenging task. Clearly, you need the original full-size image for this.

Let us say you have a horizontal image that you want to crop to a vertical image for use in a digital competition. You can either use an arbitrary aspect ratio by just dragging the corners of the crop tool around with "unconstrained" selected or, you can select a fixed aspect ratio from the crop tool drop-down box and drag its corners around to fit the part of the image that you want. When you finish this you must "save as" in Photoshop with a new filename and a file type of TIF or PSD. In Lightroom you would "export" the file. I always add "Crop 8x10" to the filename (using the actual ratio for each image). If you don't change the filename you will lose your master image and this is not good. This is the file that I need for *Close-Up* images.

You now need to resize (image/image size in Photoshop) the image to the correct dimensions for the output. Let us say you're going to make this into a digital image for one of our competitions. The maximum dimensions are 1400 pixels horizontally and 1050 pixels vertically. Since it is a vertical image, you set the height in pixels to 1050. The size and resolution are irrelevant for a projected image so leave them alone. When I "save as" this image I add the tag "1400" to the filename to tell me it's been resized to that pixel dimension and is implicitly a projected image. In Lightroom you would again use the export dialogue to do this.

If the image is going to be printed then the resizing is a little different. In Photoshop you set the document size to the output size (for an 8 x 10 format image it will be 11" x 13.75" for 11 x 17 paper) and the resolution to either 300 or 360 pixels per inch depending on your printer. You need to check the constrain proportions and resample boxes. In this case it's the physical dimensions and the resolution that are critical. In Photoshop you now "save as" the image as a TIF/PSD file and I add "Print" to the filename. In Lightroom you do this in the export dialogue.

The next step is to sharpen the image using your favourite sharpening tools appropriate for a digitally projected

or printed image. When you have done this in Photoshop, you need to "save as" this file as a JPEG. So if I see "... 1400.jpg" on a filename I know that is a file for digital projection. For a print, it is saved as a PSD/TIF file. In Lightroom you use the export dialogue for this

If you are using both Photoshop and Lightroom, then when you are done you will need to synchronize the Lightroom catalog to bring in the changed files.

To export from Lightroom select the image then click on file/export. In the dialogue box specify the location, any change to the filename, and then move to the important settings which are "file settings" "image sizing" and "output sharpening." For an image to be printed the file settings should be PSD or TIF, Adobe RGB and 16 bits. For projected images it should be JPEG, sRGB and 8-bits. For image sizing you want to check "resize to fit" and select width and height. Then set the width and height in inches and resolution to 300 or 360 as required for your printer. If the image is to be projected then you set the width and height to 1400 and 1050 pixels Then check "sharpen for" and select the paper type for prints or "screen" for projected images. Hit export and your file will be saved. If you want a different crop, or output media then go to another virtual copy and work from that.

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Competition Changes for 2016 - 17

As we come to the end of our first competition season with the new website, the Competitions Committee will be reviewing our current procedures and recommending changes to improve the competition experience for Club members.

We have consistently had over 200 images per month this season. While it is great that so many members are participating, our current practice of showing all images on Competition Night has led to a long slideshow with the images shown at a quick pace. Comments have been made that with the short time to view the images, you are unable to get a really good look at them. As all images are available on the website, we are looking at ways to improve the viewing process on Comps Night. Options include showing only the placed images and reading out the judge's comments; or showing only the top 10 images in each category.

The number of prints in the novice and intermediate levels has remained low, so we are considering eliminating the different levels for prints, for example, all Nature prints will be in one level. Physically dealing with the prints and finding local judges skilled in judging prints is also an ongoing problem for the Comps Committee. We want to encourage members to produce and show prints, but we are not sure the current method is the best way to do it. Also, the poor lighting at Norway House makes it difficult to properly view and appreciate prints.

The current policy of allowing members to enter an extra image in the year-end competition will be dropped for next year as it does not really make sense. If a member has a good image they want to enter into a competition, then the best way to do that is to enter the image into a monthly competition. That way the image will be scored and the judge will (hopefully) give helpful comments on the image. Currently, extra images added into the year-end competition in April are not scored or critiqued and are competing against the winners of the previous monthly competitions. We do not see this as a benefit to members. The year-end competition will become a competition to select the best of the best.

We need to change the way we are doing things to work within the capabilities and constraints of the current website. If you have any suggestions or comments, please email me at competitions@victoriacameraclub.ca

Pam Irvine, Competitions Chair.

February 2016 Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to the judges for the February Intermediate and Advanced level competitions: Glenn Bartley, Paul Saturley, Francois Cleroux and Frank Pali. We would also like to thank our in-house Novice Judges for this month: Willie Waddell, Steve Lustig, Caspar Davis, Suzanne Huot and Judy Taylor. All the Club judges have taken the CAPA judging course. All images and judges' comments are available at: victoriacameraclub.ca/vcccompetitions.

Glenn Bartley (Nature Prints): Glenn is a world-renowned professional nature photographer from Victoria. He captures intimate images of birds in their natural habitat and focuses on portraits of rare and difficult to photograph birds from the Neotropics and hummingbirds. His work is regularly featured in magazines such as Audubon, Birdwatching, Canadian Wildlife, Birder's World, in several books by National Geographic and in his own "*Birds of Vancouver Island*" and "*Birds of British Columbia*," and guides on Post-processing, Flash, and Tropical Nature Photography. www.glennbartley.com.

Paul Saturley (Open and Monochrome Prints): Paul is a professional photographer and graphic artist living in Victoria. He says, "The interesting thing about the evolution of photography is that there is room for traditional film-based and digital images, and highly manipulated work. Neither is better. It is a question of individual style, viewer preference, and the success of the visual in communicating something beyond the obvious and the downright maudlin." www.inkriver.com.

Francois Cleroux (Digital Open, Creative & Theme): Francois was introduced to photography early, working for the Province and Vancouver Sun newspapers during high school. He lives in Delta and is a CAPA certified judge and a past-president of the Delta Photo Club. He says, "Through hard work, the study of nature, art and photography, we can tune our minds to the creative process, to better capture and present our world as we, photographers, see it." www.eyesonphoto.com.

Frank Pali (Digital Nature): Frank is an award-winning photographer with an enthusiasm for capturing a wide range of images, from portraiture through commercial imagery, landscapes and wildlife. Frank's high-level finishing and attention to detail is evident in every photo, many of which are represented by some of the world's largest stock agencies. Frank is a CAPA certified photography judge and member of the Delta Photo Club. www.frankpaliphotography.com.

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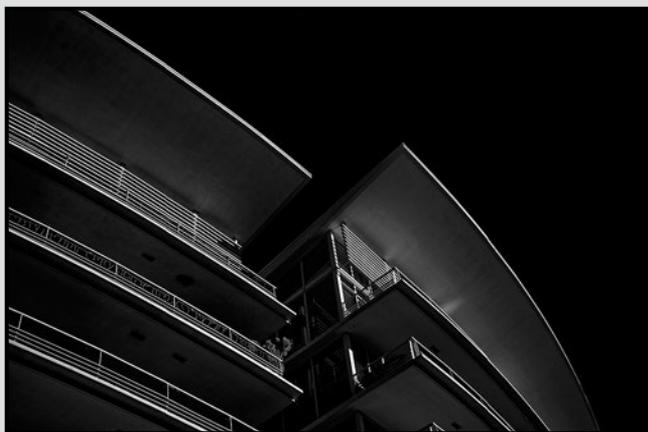
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Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
"On the Street" by Lois Burton

Judge's comments: Nice sharpness in the image facing the camera. This portrait tells a well-defined story of many years of hard living. In that sense it is didactic, and maybe a bit of a cautionary tale with an archetypal subject. Interesting work, it forces the viewer's engagement. I wonder what he is looking at?



Advanced Digital Open - 1st
"Edge of Darkness" by Jonathan Adams

Judge's comments: A beautiful graphic image that conjures up shades of *Notan* with an elegant simplicity. It is a dark image and has been processed as such with the maker choosing to have a blackened sky. Composition is excellent. Keeping the very faint details of the dark undersides of the balconies is absolutely perfect; dark, yet with some detail. Well done. Bravo!



Advanced Digital Nature - 1st
"Overlander Falls" by Carrie Cole

Judge's comments: Wow!! The maker did a fantastic job in this long exposure. I love the silky river. The image conveys a good story with good use of colours. Excellent composition, the river takes you into the frame, this is composition at its best!!



Advanced Digital Theme - 1st
"Walk on By" by Hanna Cowpe

Judge's comments: This is a great street photography scene. It looks like a beautiful picturesque little village and the subject looks like he is on a leisurely stroll. Great composition enhanced by the downhill of the roadway which makes the image a little less static. Diagonal roadways are difficult at best to photograph and keep the image balanced. Here it works perfectly as the natural frame created provides the balance. Excellent sharpness and detail, great exposure and wonderful lighting. A perfect choice of B&W. Well done!



Advanced Nature Print - 1st
“Flyby” by Leah Gray

Judge’s comments: My favourite image of the bunch this month! Pan blurs are not easy to execute and I think you have done a really nice job here! I really like the cool colours and the way the background looks. Composition is perfect! Great job! If you like this type of image, check out the Swedish photographer Erik Malm. Really unique work with camera movement!



Advanced Digital Creative - 1st
“Dire Poppy” by Caspar Davis

Judge’s comments: The techniques applied to this image with the existing luminosity have worked perfectly. The old world charm it has created is wonderful. The colours are great as is the texture. The image detail in the centre is excellent. A very well done image. Congratulations.



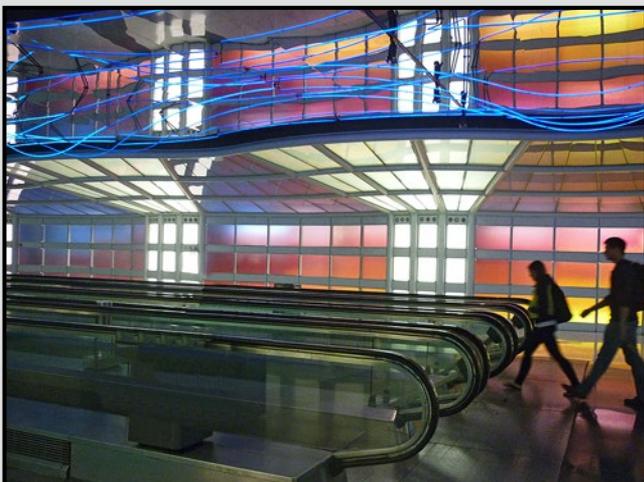
Advanced Open Print - 1st
“Great Grey Owl” by Mike Wooding

Judge’s comments: It is a great photo of the Great Grey Owl. Very sharp. The bird is certainly isolated against the almost uniform green background. Hard to think how this could be improved except with some interaction of hunter and its prey. It is a great image and a high quality print.



Intermediate Digital Theme - 1st
“Green and Blue in Spain” by Steve Barber

Judge’s comments: A beautiful playful image empowered by the bold colours. The colour scheme works very well here. The image is sharp and the composition is good. The beige tones here act as the frame(s) but are not an obvious composition style. A beautiful image.



Intermediate Open Print - 1st

“Moving Walkway O’Hare Airport” by Bobbie Carey

Judge’s comments: Overall, a very strong photo. The crop of the image emphasizes the length of the moving sidewalk, the blurred, semi-silhouetted figures lend a sense of motion that is in keeping with the unseen moving mechanism and the colours in the background really make this image come alive.



Intermediate Digital Nature - 1st

“Steller’s Jay” by John Clarke

Judge’s comments: Very sharp image, excellent capture. You did a very good job of blurring the background. It is nice to see a glint of light in the birds eye.



Intermediate Nature Print - 1st

“Zebra Pair” by George Skelton

Judge’s comments: I really like this image! The main animals are in a very interesting pose and seem connected. The blurred animals in the background are just the right amount out of focus to add to the story and not distract. Well done!



Intermediate Monochrome Print - 1st

“Nicholson’s Machine Shop” by Steve Smith

Judge’s comments: Great exposure in this industrial setting. Ceiling lights are bright without being distracting, focus is sharp throughout, and there are some good blacks in the print. Compositionally, the line on the floor brings the viewer’s eye into the image. Lots of detail. Reminds me a little bit of John Sexton’s work. Overall, nice work with an industrial subject.



Intermediate Digital Creative - 1st

“Painting with Light, Palouse” by Nicci Tyndall

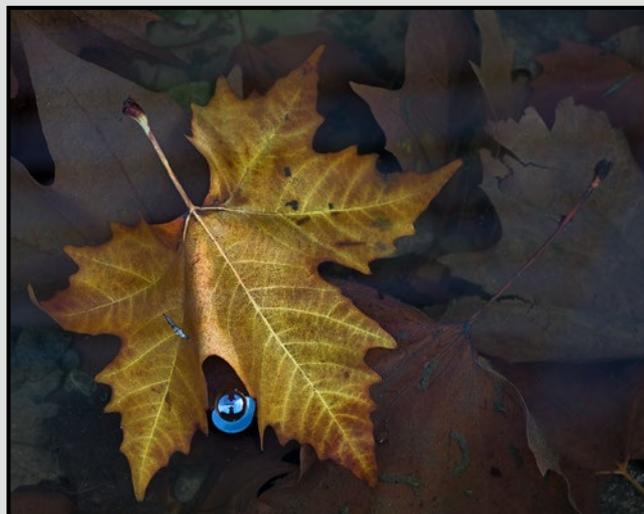
Judge’s comments: This is a great image with a lot going for it. I love the colours. Well exposed and sharp with great detail. The balance is superb and the vast negative space of the sky is perfectly filled with enough detail along with the trees that cut off the left edge to counter balance the slight right side dominance of the truck. Well done. The post-processing is slight but very intriguing making this image look like it was an airbrush created work of art and not photography. The post-processing works great with this image. A beautiful image to be proud of!



Novice Digital Nature - 1st

“Little Bee-eater” by Graeme Weir

Judge’s comments: This image conveys a good story with good use of colours. Great capture of this lovely little bird, well composed in the frame, nice placement of the bird with strong diagonal line of branch. Well done.



Intermediate Digital Open - 1st

“Self-Portrait in Blue” by Richard Marshall

Judge’s comments: A beautiful moody image created by the subdued earthy colours and textures of the leaves. Nicely composed with the frame nicely filled and well balanced. The bright blue and very clear bubble stands out and looks somewhat misplaced in this picture as it is so sharp and clear as opposed to the rest of the image. Fun none-the-less.



Novice Digital Theme - 1st

“Storybook Window to Secret Garden”

by Richard Letourneau

Judge’s comments: Well framed view out the window tempting the viewer to take a further look; well composed and focused, with good exposure. Well done.



*Novice Open Digital - 1st
"Incoming" by Nigel Bailey*

Judge's comments: Lots of wow factor in this image, it conveys a good story with good use of colours. Well composed, focused and exposed. Including the far wave adds to the drama and force of the water. Excellent capture, well done.



*Novice Digital Open - 2nd
"Sunbeams and Mist" by Peter Amundsen*

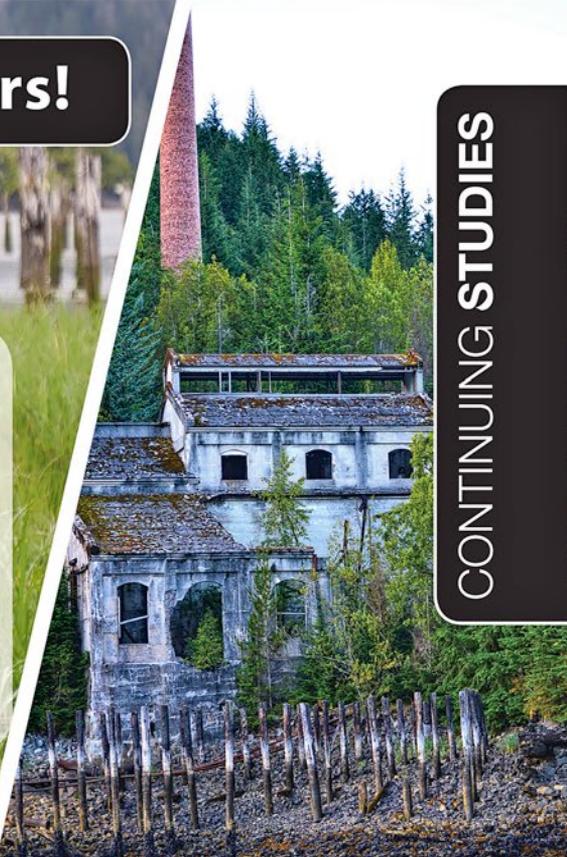
Judge's comments: A great capture of the sunbeams balanced by the trees and mist. Good focus on the trees, and well exposed for a wide dynamic range. Very well composed and B&W really works on this image. Well done.

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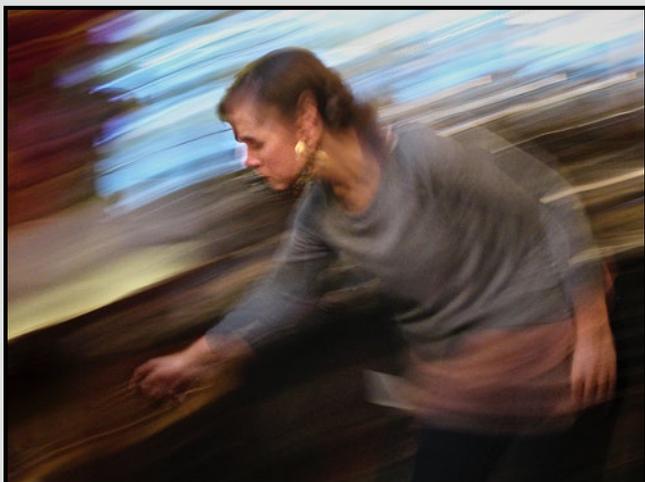
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Contact: Rob Bryce at Rob.bryce@unbc.ca or (250) 960-5982 for more information



CONTINUING STUDIES

My interest in photography started 40 years ago in New Zealand. I moved to Victoria in February 2012, and joined the Club in April of that year.

In the beginning my photographic endeavours were family and holiday shots. An encounter with the photography of Ernst Haas was the starting point for my creative style of photography. He countered the slow speed of 1950s Kodachrome by using a slow shutter speed and moving the camera during the long exposure to capture motion blur. I had a lot of fun teaching myself how to do that but, after a while, life and family distractions led to a cessation of creative photography.



from "664 Discovery St"

An Australian photographer, Ken Ball, re-energized my creative juices when I took his Impressionist Photography workshop in Auckland, NZ, in September 2009. That was followed by another two workshops that he ran with another Australian, Louis Mann. Both of these photographers had a huge influence on me, giving me a good grounding in the fundamentals of this style. The main thing they taught me was about rules. There are none for creative photography.

Competitions do not have the same attraction to me now as they did a few years ago. I find that my creativity is inhibited by the rules, constraints and criteria imposed by publications and competitions. As well as this, competitions are nearly always looking for a single image, a trophy. I prefer creating a collection of images for myself and those people with whom I share common interests. Currently, I'm finding that producing books is a great way to do this.

So far, I have produced two books "664 Discovery St: Coffee in Motion" has 100 pages of images from a Victoria coffee shop. "Gypsy Jam Jazz" has twelve images

of jazz musicians playing hard. A third book is in progress, images from the owner of Victoria's Urban Iron art work: "Ironman."

Guy Tal writes "I'm a photographer because I place the highest value on the experiences I seek, rather than their lesser by-products, images." For me, the "experience" is not only what happened when I was there with my camera, it is also the reminiscing and dreaming that is triggered by looking at the final photograph. This is increasingly so for me now that my final product deviates significantly from the reality of what was in front of the lens. There can be an imaginary journey, often back in time, that emanates from my creativity. What is now visible in the expressive image was not "real" at the time, but now can be.

It has not been an easy task to sort out exactly what these "experiences" are as for a long time my camera was like a gun, and I fired it at anything and everything. There are two "experiences" I enjoy photographing now. The first is the human figure in motion, often in the act of creating, and often capturing gestures. The second is what I'm calling the hand of man, things we've created and our presence in the created world.

I will be making a permanent move back to New Zealand in 2019. In the meantime, I'm always on the lookout to make connections with people who may have similar photographic interests and are seriously interested in exploring creative photography. You can see some examples of my work here.



from "Gypsy Jazz Jam"

Photography Courses



Digital Cameras for Absolute Beginners Joel Friesen
Photography Level 1 Intro Mitch Stringer *DAYTIME & EVENING*
Photography Level 2 Intermediate Mitch Stringer *DAYTIME & EVENING*

Apr 2
Apr 5, 7, 13
Apr 7

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by John Roberts

One of the things that photographers come up against when they first start using flashes with their photography is finding out about the “Hard Light” that flashes create when used without any modifier on them, or the “Soft Light” where you have to add something to the flash to get it, be it reflecting the light off of a white wall or a reflector, or an umbrella/softbox.

So, I am going to walk you through some of the different types of accessories that you can use, and what kind of light they can offer you.

First of all, a short lesson on why light from a pop-up flash or an add-on flash on top of the camera is considered “Hard.” A flash from the pop-up or add-on flash, has a really small surface area which the light is coming from. Think of it as like a clear and sunny day, the sun is far away, and creates a small source of light, and therefore it can create shadows with definitive lines where the shadow starts and stops. On an overcast day, the clouds are much closer to us, and the light source becomes much larger, relative to the subject, and light takes on a different look, a softer look, the shadows are no longer as harsh, if there are any shadows at all, and the light seems to wrap over everything. With that difference between the shadows, the hard line shadow, or the soft shadow, we get the terms “Hard Light” and “Soft Light.”

So, you are asking me, since I have identified issues with “Hard Light”, why would anyone ever want to use that type of lighting?

It certainly is not my favourite type of lighting to use, but it does have a time and place. In some movies and TV shows for instance, you will often see that kind of lighting being used, to emphasize when the scene is in the desert, or beach. Many fashion magazines like to use hard light, again to emphasize something, such as a dress, making it stand out against the background, by either darkening the background or balancing the exposure on the background and the subject.

To get the hard light, you would be using flashes just as they are, without any modifier mounted to them, or with a silver reflector dish, or a beauty dish. A reflector dish is what most studio lights come with, they prevent light from the flash head straying back into the lens. A beauty dish is a slightly bigger version of the reflector. There is a slight amount of diffusion with it, but since many of them are a silver colour where the light is reflecting from, the

light is still quite directional, and hard as it were.

In contrast to this, we are used to seeing the soft light that is used in almost all TV programs, as well as in much portrait and wedding photography. That soft light is perfect for those types of photography. The same can also be said for macro photography.

To get soft light, you would typically be placing something between the flash and the subject, such as an umbrella, softbox, reflector disk, bed sheet, a couple of layers of paper towel, or anything that you can think of, I am sure it has been done before. Just one thing to keep in mind: flashes produce heat when they fire, so do not put anything flammable in front of the flash and leave a little bit of space between the flash and the material that you are shooting through. The more powerful the flash, the more important that becomes.

One of my favourite things while shooting on location is to bounce the flash off of a white wall, or the white ceiling. This gives a nice soft but natural-looking light on your subject. My second favourite method would be to use a translucent reflector disk and shoot through it, or the off-white side of a reflector.

I will regularly have a 42” translucent reflector only a foot or two away from my subject, with the flash lighting it from behind. Again following the simple theory that I mentioned earlier, the larger the light source, the softer the light. So by having the reflector surface so close to the subject, you get a huge surface area reflector when compared to the subject, resulting in that lovely soft wrap-around light that is even across your subject with very little shadow. For portraits, weddings or flowers, the light is extremely flattering.

There are a lot of great resources out there that you can use to show you more useful in-depth lighting scenarios and set-ups. Some of my favourite books are, “*The Hot Shoe Diaries*”, by Joe McNally, and followed up by another book of his, “*Sketching with Light*”. Both of those books are a great way to learn how to use small flashes to achieve big results. I really like Joe’s writing style too. It is like you are sitting at a pub, sharing a pitcher of beer, and he is just dispensing his lifetimes worth of flash knowledge at you while you are waiting for the chicken wings to arrive. It is very casual, and easy to follow.

If you have any questions, email me at jrphotography-bc@icloud.com.

by Richard Webber and Graham Budd

White Balance Considerations

While there are several factors that impact infrared images such as the sensor, wavelength band of the IR filter, whether you shoot RAW or JPG, the white balance used at the onset of the workflow is particularly important. In part 2, we discussed setting a custom white balance in-camera to remove the typical magenta hue associated with IR images. If your camera does not have that capability you will discover that Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop do not handle RAW IR well because of white balance settings. You can work around this problem by creating a custom camera calibration profile using Adobe DNG Profile Editor.

Check out these links on how to use this software in *Lightroom* and *Nikon Capture NX2 and Canon Digital Photo Professional* (you can access the links from the PDF version of Close-Up). These custom DNG profiles allow you to move the white balance sliders for Temperature and Tint past the current limitations of 2000 and 150 respectively and thus provide additional latitude in processing IR photos.

How to Process Colour IR Images

Choosing one of the colour filter options in the IR camera conversion process opens up an infinite variety of creative post-processing options. A quick Google search will return more results than could possibly be covered in one short article so we will cover some of the basics that you can use as a jumping off point in exercising your own creative direction. To help you get started, we've also included some useful links to tutorials and articles that cover the topic in more depth.

Once a custom white balance has been applied to the RAW image a second step is necessary to remove the predominant red cast still evident in the image and replace it with a False Colour treatment. This is done by opening the image in Photoshop and selecting Image/Adjustments/Colour Balance and swapping the red and the blue channels. This is also a good time to boost the contrast with a Curves/Levels layer as IR images tend to look better with the extra punch this produces. This 90 second YouTube video illustrates how to do this: youtube.com/watch?v=9Yv6jFwtu_s.

Notice how our image has taken on a duotone appearance. Adding a new Saturation adjustment layer at this point is a great way to experiment in achieving different

looks using variable colours, luminosity and saturation. For those of you that prefer written instructions go here (includes creating custom WB profiles) photography.tutsplus.com/tutorials/an-in-depth-guide-to-infrared-photography-processing--photo-9540.

Almost all IR images will benefit from channel swapping and contrast enhancement and as a result lend themselves to automating the process using Photoshop actions. For those who are unfamiliar with creating their own actions, Flaming Pear offer a nice collection of freebies including a Colour Swap option. flamingpear.com/freebies.html.

As a primer to help stoke your imagination visit this site to see some of the creative applications that can be achieved when post-processing colour IR images in this way: tutorial9.net/downloads/101-absolutely-breathtaking-infrared-photographs.

How to convert IR images to Black and White

There are several methods for converting digital IR images to black and white. Here is a brief outline of some of them. Check online for others; you might be surprised at what you discover. With IR images you can take away the colour and create a more dramatic statement where the strength of the image relies on texture, the light, shadows, shape, form and composition. With digital IR there are so many different kinds of looks that can be achieved, ranging from nostalgic to soft effusive ethereal images or in the case of portraits, the "porcelain effect." Don't be afraid to experiment.

Photoshop and Photoshop Elements

Method #1

This technique can also be used in Lightroom. You can convert your IR image to black and white without ever leaving Camera Raw (ACR) by following these steps:

1. Use Hue/Saturation/Lightness (HSL). Check the Convert to Grayscale box, and use the colour sliders to intensify a sky or other areas of impact within your image.
2. Use the Split Toning control to tone your IR image in ACR, if you wish to add colour to your B&W image.
3. Once you are finished making adjustments in ACR you can save your image or choose Open Image, which opens your image in Photoshop.
4. Apply local adjustments such as Curves to set

the black and white point and expand the overall tonality of the image. Other recommended adjustments include increasing image contrast and adjusting saturation and colour to suit your taste. Dodge and burn to create depth in the image.

5. To add to the ethereal glow, add a Gaussian Blur layer and set the Blend Mode to Soft Light.
6. Traditional infrared film shots can be quite grainy and you can replicate this by adding digital noise from Photoshop's Filter menu.

Method #2

The Channel Mixer, discussed previously, is also a good way to convert your IR image to black and white. Often, the basis of a good monochrome image is to create a colour image that exhibits good tonal separation. For example, a blue sky with wispy or puffy clouds can really add interest to your image, create a powerful story, and keep the soft contrast intact.

1. Open your image in Photoshop.
2. Go to Image/Auto Tone (this is an alternative to doing a white balance adjustment).
3. Next, go to Image/Adjustments/Channel/Mixer/Black and White with Red Filter (From there you can adjust the sliders to get the effect you want).
4. To get the classic infrared glow, check to make sure that in the Tools palette the colours are set to the default, black foreground and white background. To be sure, a simple way to set this is to hit the letter D to reset the colours to the default state.
5. Then, duplicate your layer (Cmd/Ctrl J), and go to Filters/Filter Gallery/Artistic/Diffuse Glow.
6. In the Diffuse Glow filter, set the sliders so you can see some halo glows around the white areas of your image. You will have to adjust these to suit your image but it will create the classic graininess and glow of film infrared photos. If the glow amount is too strong and you're getting blown out highlights, you can decrease the opacity of your glow layer in the Layers Palette.

These are some sites that we have found useful.

Digital Photography School: [Creative ways to process infrared photographs](#).

Layers Magazine: [black & white and beyond](#).

How-To Geek: [colour to stunning black & white](#) (Channel Mixer, Gradient Map and Over-lays)

Method #3

Black and White Adjustment Layers in Photoshop and PS Elements is one of the most effective and flexible ways of creating monochrome images. Harold Davis provides a great outline of this approach which is available here at [graphics.com](#). [Linda.com](#) is also a great resource for Photoshop and Lightroom users.

Method #4

Nik Silver Efex Pro 2 is one of the industry's best-known tools for black and white conversions. The program can be used as standalone or as a third party plug-in within both Lightroom and Photoshop. This program is highly recommended and there are many online videos available including:

Mark Johnson Photography: [msjphotography.com](#).

Anthony Morganti on [YouTube](#) (note: Lightroom option)

Nature photographer Jennifer Wu on [YouTube](#).

Method #5

Other recommended third-party software for black and white conversion includes: (All these programs are available as demos.)

[On1 Photo 10](#)

[Topaz Black and White Effects 2](#)

and one I just discovered recently, Power Retouche 8, [Black and White Studio](#).

This concludes our series on IR photography. If you are interested in learning more, here are a few resources

Web sources:

[kolarivision.com/articles/about-ir-basics](#)

[lifepixel.com/tutorials/infrared-photoshop-videos](#)

[youtube.com/watch?v=aKCddBQ4SJK](#)

If you prefer books, check out:

Digital Infrared Photography Photo Workshop, May 2009 by Debroah Sandige.

Digital Infrared Pro Secrets 2007 by David Busch.

Complete Guide to Digital Infrared Photography, 2006, by Joe Farace.

Groundwork

by Lorna Zaback

This image is my favourite of a small, but growing, body of work that I think of as my “Layers Project.” Experimenting with creating a visual representation of what might lie beneath the surface of a landscape, an idea, a turn of phrase, an interaction or whatever comes to mind. In *Groundwork*, leafless trees grow above ground, but I hope it is what is going on underground that draws the viewer’s attention and sparks the imagination.

I created this piece almost entirely in Photoshop. I set the canvas size and imported the various images, duplicating, sometimes inverting them, and positioning them. I isolated the moth from its background using the Quick Selection Tool and some edge refinement, but all other images were incorporated using various blend modes, and brightness or hue/saturation adjustment layers.

The images were taken with a Nikon D600, with the exception of the pattern at the bottom that was taken with a D7000. The “goddess” candle holders, the “Celtic” triangle and the tulip were all shot on my work table with a 105 mm f2.8 micro lens, as was the moth on a wall, using a hand-held flash. The mosque wall was taken using an in-camera flash with a 16 - 85 mm f3.5-5.6 lens at 32 mm. The trees are in Holland, where it is often possible to photograph them against a clear expanse of sky and shot from a moving vehicle using a 50 mm f1.8 lens.



City Birds

by Peter Koelbleitner



Do you normally carry a camera when you go into Victoria? Me neither. However, when I go out of town I like to take a camera with me. I have a FujiXE-2 which is so much easier to carry around than my DSLR. The Fuji has an 18 - 55 mm lens, (27 - 84 mm in 35 mm equiv.), which I find a good all-around city range.

It was one of those rare winter days in Vancouver when there was a clear, crisp, blue sky. I tried several shots, but the shadows were too harsh and the light too bright for my liking. About 40 minutes before sunset, I crossed the street and noticed that everything appeared in silhouette because of the low light angle. Next, I noticed the long shadows, at which point I reached for my camera. I then saw the pigeons, with their long shadows, trying to dodge the feet of the people but my patience was tested by the stream of passers-by. Finally, the sidewalk was clear enough and I fired off a series of shots.

I processed the image in Lightroom and after trying out a number of adjustments to the colours, I decided to try out all the options for monochrome. This “Antique” version came closest to how I first saw this scene.

Lessons learned are to carry a camera with me whenever possible, don’t be afraid to shoot into the sun, and to explore the many options available for post-processing.

Tuesday Shoots

by Wayne Swanson

April 12: Unusual Shapes

As usual, you must increase your powers of observation and search for shapes (not human figures) that do not conform to the normal geometric shapes such as triangles, circles and squares. Look for the irregular rather than the regular, find shapes or patterns that intrigue us, get us to question our vision, or puzzle us in some way. Look for unusual angles that distort normal shapes. Perhaps you can find a curious angle for viewing stairs. Maybe part of an object reminds you of something else, like you can “see” common shapes in clouds. Most of all think about presenting your subject in a unique way to capture our imagination.

April 26: Green with Envy

April, when we in Victoria bask in spring splendour, most of Canada only anticipates the return of spring. We call it gloating season, a time to turn friends and relatives to the east green with envy. Although there is green vegetation in abundance, being the Tuesday group, we don't want to limit ourselves to plants. There are many green things that attract our attention in some way. Anything green that will cause others to drool will work for us. Just remember that vibrant colours attract the most attention. Dull colours won't elicit any reaction, especially not envy.



“Public Art” by Wayne Swanson

Weekend Shoots

by Steve Smith and Rea Casey

April is flower month on south Vancouver Island so we will be dedicating most of our field trips to photographing wild flowers. This offers the opportunity to dust off your macro and close-up lenses and practice photographing with shallow depth of field. You might even want to try to get “bokeh” shots. As it is difficult to predict the weather and the availability of wild flowers, please check the website and your email regularly for updates. We have two scheduled field trips this month.

April 9: Gore and Oak Haven Parks

These two small parks provide easy access to some beautiful wild flowers. They are both Garry Oak ecosystems with a mix of Garry Oak meadow and second growth conifers. An easy 15-minute walk to the summit rewards you with spectacular views of the Peninsula, Saanich Inlet, and Sidney and James Islands.

There is a variety of wild flowers including: Satinflower, Camas, Shooting Star, Calypso Orchid, Fawn Lilies, California Buttercup and Red Columbine. For close-up and macro photos you need a tripod with a removable column, or a home-made alternative. Complimenting ambient light with flash and/or reflected light gives an opportunity to be creative. This trip is weather dependent.

April 30: Hunter/Jumper Show (Saanich Fairgrounds)

Beautiful eyes, velvety noses and graceful movement are all attributes of horses. At this competition, you will have the opportunity to catch these magnificent beasts and their riders as they leap over obstacles in an outdoor ring. In the stables, you may be able to capture horse portraits or “street” images. There should be lots of interesting opportunities as riders warm up and cool down their horses, brush and bath them, and tack up.

When photographing horse shows, a longer lens is essential because horses are spooked by sudden movement. Avoid getting low and being quiet, this is a sure way to scare a horse. Never use flash around horses as it startles them. Working with a long lens is a good way to take interesting shots of riders interacting with their equine partners. Simply speaking to the riders may get you an invitation to come closer. This is the beginning of the horse show season and there is a possibility that we might return in May. Stay tuned!

by Sue Ferguson and Kris Foot

“I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night” Sarah Williams (The Labyrinth).

We have all experienced the summertime magic of being outside and gazing up at the night sky; lying back, head resting on a log, feeling small and insignificant in the vastness of our universe. Satellites glide silently overhead, meteors streak across the sky and vanish in the blink of an eye; we make a wish on a falling star.

It comforts us; a feeling of harmonious awe. All is as it should be. The daily noise replaced by waves lapping against the shoreline and wind rustling the sea grass.

Silent and beautiful, stars glitter above, the Milky Way reaches like a cloud overhead and the glow of the aurora builds on the northern horizon. Moonlight reflects on water and casts beautiful shadows in the night. The Big Dipper, Orion, Polaris are always there, the same but ever changing as the world turns.

This open canvas pulls us in. Welcome to the last article in our series on night photography.



“Aurora Glow at Sidney Marina”

Night photography has many forms and styles, but photographs taken in low light and at night contain a certain dreamlike quality which is unlike any other photographic form. This article should help you to feel comfortable enough to head out into the night and be able to create beautiful works of photographic art.

To begin, it's good to be familiar with your location. Not only for safety reasons, but quite often you'll discover something that would make an excellent foreground subject (such as a creek, logs, or an old building) and then, you can plan your composition beforehand.

When shooting at the beach, always know the *tides* as well as the weather forecast for the area. It is also good to know when the *moon* is rising, setting and its phase. (Illumination is a big factor).

There are apps to assist with night photography that help you to position yourself exactly where you need to be to get the best shot, i.e. orientation of the Milky Way to a specific foreground feature, or times and locations for moon-rise and moon-set at a specific area.

Google Earth has recently added these features and the Google Sky Map app is wonderful for quickly locating stars and constellations. However, two favourites are; Photopills for iOS, and Plan-It! for Android OS. The Photographer's Ephemeris is also useful but requires its companion, The Photographers Transit (for iOS only), to match the photographic capabilities of the other two.

Night Sky and astronomical information can be found at [Earth Sky News](#), [NOAA Weather](#), [Space Weather.com](#), [Soft Serve News](#), etc. The list of sites is endless.

Varying weather, astronomical events and sky conditions require different exposure settings. Cloudy nights are perfect for shooting nightscapes with long exposures. Ambient light from towns or buildings reflects off the clouds and can add texture and depth to your composition. Fast-moving clouds on a moonlit night are perfect for long exposures and make for beautiful streaking in the clouds.

With long exposures, aperture settings do not need to be wide (f4.5 and higher) and the ISO does not need to be too high (i.e. 400). It's a good idea to use bulb mode, as you will often be shooting at well over 60 seconds.

The full moon on a clear night can create an almost daylight effect with dramatic long shadows. This is perfect for night landscapes. Settings will be f4.5 and higher, and ISO again should not have to be too high (400 - 800 range). Shutter speeds will be fast, less than 60 seconds. If there are stars in the photo, then, shutter speeds should be significantly less to avoid star trails.

Clear nights with little or no moon are best for shooting stars, nebulae, star trails and the Milky Way. In order to have the sharpest stars possible, use the best glass and your widest lens. Shoot at f2.8 if you can. ISO can be fairly high (over 2000 at times). I am always wary of high ISO due to noise and try to keep it as low as possible.

The Long Exposure Noise Reduction (LENR) feature adds a second “exposure” with the shutter closed and subtracts the noise component. LENR is fine unless you are shooting where the environment is quickly changing. Your camera will take twice as long to process images with LENR.

Because of the earth’s rotation, exposures have to be very short to avoid blurring of stars. The “Rule of 500” is used when calculating exposure time to avoid star trails. The formula is: 500 divided by the focal length of your lens = maximum seconds of exposure. For example, a 24 mm lens would mean 20 seconds. This formula is not set in stone and is meant for full frame cameras. With a crop sensor, time is less by about 1/3. The most important thing to remember is, “If stars are in your composition, exposure has to be fast, or blurring occurs.”

If there is aurora activity, a clear night with less than 25% moon illumination is preferable. Any more moonlight can wash out the glow. Depending on the brightness of the aurora, exposures range from 2 to 30 seconds. 1250 ISO seems to be the magic number. The aurora looks the best with a good foreground anchor or over a body of water as it reflects beautifully. It arrives from the north to north east, so look for N/NE facing beaches.

[Soft Serve News](#) offers an “Aurora Alert” app as well as an email message alert. Spring and fall are generally the best times for aurora activity.

Remember to dress for the elements. Keep a light in your pocket and only use it if absolutely necessary. A miscast beam can be extremely frustrating to your mates and could ruin their shots. Learn to use your equipment before you head out into the night. Have an exit strategy so that you can pick up your gear and leave if you must turn lights on to make adjustments or, just wait until everyone has finished shooting.

A sturdy tripod and cable release are preferred. Wide, fast lenses are great, but start with what you have and learn to focus using the LCD screen and zoom tool. Some people like to use mirror lock-up to avoid vibration.

Turn off IS/VR and switch your lens to manual focus as it will not be able to auto-focus in the dark. Set the lens to infinity and then, just back it off ever so slightly. It is still important to do test shots. Use the LCD review and manually focus to make sure your stars are sharp.

A great way to check composition in the dark is to turn your ISO up and take a shot. White balance can be set



“Queen Anne’s Lace at 1 am”

to “tungsten.” UV or protective filters can cause side light or flare and reduce image quality.

Always shoot in RAW. Our cameras have the ability to pick up light that is not visible to the naked eye. If shooting in JPEG an incredible amount of usable data is lost.

What we see on the back of the camera will always need some enhancement in post-processing. In the histogram, the majority of the curve should be dark on the left up to the half-way mark. This will ensure you have a lot of data to work with in post-processing.

There many types of night photography such as star trails, time lapse and combining light painting with astrophotography. Photos can be stacked in-camera or with programs such as [Starstax](#). Stacking is often used for star trails, moon shots and deep space work.

Astrophotography progresses and goes from shooting the night sky with basic equipment, to using an attachment with a telescope or installing a “tracker” on your tripod. A tracker moves the camera with the earth’s rotation so exposure times can be substantially increased.

At the end of the day, it’s about feeding our curious minds with something that is different, creative and immensely rewarding. It’s about having fun and spending quality time with like-minded people who share their passion for the night. Eventually, we all do find each other.

This concludes our three part series. We loved putting this together and we hope you have been inspired to try one of the many creative forms of night photography. Be warned, it can be addictive!

“Go out and paint the stars” ... Vincent van Gogh.

Working Out the Rust

by Nancy MacNab

Will March be in like a lion, out like a lamb? And will April showers bring May flowers? Spring is typically a time of unpredictable weather, but don't let that stop you from getting out with your camera to get some wonderful images. Many people stop, or at least reduce, their outdoor photography over the dreary months of winter (that's not you though, is it?), and now is the time to work the rust out of your photographic vision.

To help you get back into the swing of photography, here are some reminders of things to do before you leave home:

1. Make sure you're prepared. Check that the battery in your camera is charged and that you have a spare battery, also charged, in your bag. Do you have enough room on your card for today's shoot and do you have spares in your bag that have been downloaded and erased?
2. What kind of photography do you plan to do and do you have the right items with you? There is no point in lugging around your biggest lens if you are going to a garden to do macro photography of flowers and spiders! Do you have the lens you will want? What about dust blower, tripod, filters, or flash, or reflector, or, or, or?
3. Are you prepared for the weather? Yes, you could wait half an hour for the drizzle to stop, but it may turn into a downpour instead! There are various waterproof camera covers available, but home-made ones can work just as well. A shower cap can stretch over a camera with a smaller lens, or get a large, sturdy plastic bag, place it over your camera and lens, and put the lens cap on, pushing down hard on it. This will leave the outline of your lens' diameter on the bag, which you can then cut out and voila, you have a rain cover with an opening that is customized to your lens. To ensure it stays in place, a bit of tape or an elastic band will secure it. (Thank you, Herman, for this method).

Once you arrive at your destination, find your subject and get ready to click the shutter, it's time to remember composition. Have you arranged the items within the frame in the most pleasing way and have you excluded things that do not improve your image? It's a good idea to take multiple shots and experiment. Sometimes you'll find that you like your first one best, and other

times it takes time and experimenting to find the right angle and exposure to suit your vision. Here are some things to think about:

4. Frame your image. Have you avoided the dreaded "tree growing out of Uncle Albert's head?" Does your bird have feet and wing tips? What about a reflection in water? If you are deliberately shooting a tightly-framed portrait, then make sure the trimming of parts looks deliberate!
5. The opposite of cutting off parts. Check that you don't have stray bits and pieces just barely making an appearance along the side or corner of your image. These can be quite distracting as the viewer is not quite sure whether it is supposed to be in or out of the scene.
6. Where is your subject placed and is that the best spot for it? The suggested rule of thirds is a useful starting point, but it is up to you to decide if it should be applied to this specific image.
7. Decide on your exposure. If your photo contains something in motion, whether a waterfall, moving car or animal, then you will usually decide on your shutter speed first. Do you want the moving subject to be frozen with a fast shutter speed, or blurred with a slow one? Are you going to pan (follow the moving subject with your camera), or have a sharp surrounding with a blurred subject?

If your subject is stationary, then you will probably choose your aperture first as this sets the depth of field, or how much of the image, from the closest to the furthest point, is in focus. A shallow depth of field (f2.8, f4 end of the lens) gives only a small part in focus. If you want as much as possible of the image to be clearly shown, then you'll want to use the f16, f22 end of the lens' range (and a tripod or other support). Once you have selected your first of the three factors for exposure, then adjust the other two as necessary. You all remember that the three factors are aperture, shutter speed and ISO, right?
8. Click the shutter, and start again!

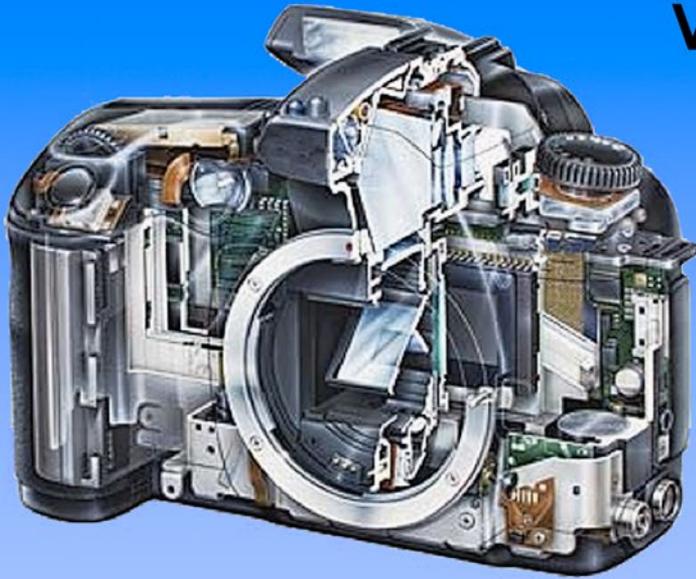
If possible, take multiple shots from different viewpoints (crouch down, climb on a rock, shift to the right or left), try both horizontal and vertical framing, different apertures (depth-of-field) etc.

Once you have worked out the rust, these steps will become so automatic that you won't even realize you're doing them. We look forward to seeing your images at the Club's Members' Night.

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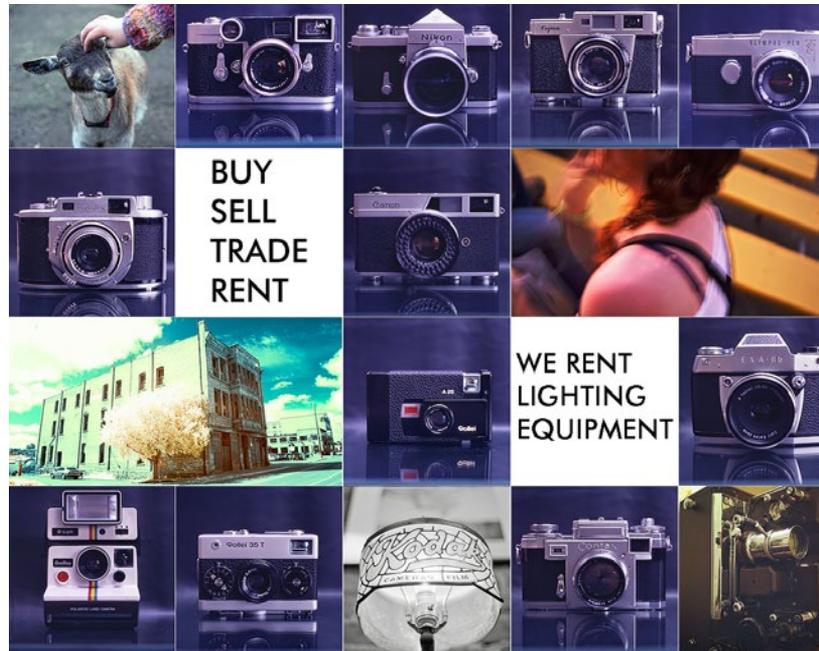
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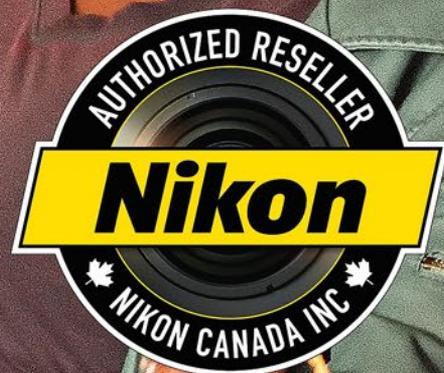
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