



Close-Up

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Lois Burton

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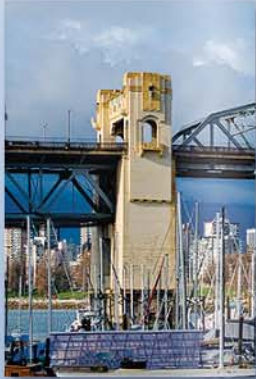
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Victoria Camera Club

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
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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, May 5th: Annual Competition and Awards Night

The Annual Competition results will be presented as well as the Frank Turner Award.

Our competition and meeting program will resume in September. Our workshops and field trip programs continue throughout the summer, please check the calendar for details victoriacameraclub.ca/club/clubschedules.aspx.

Cover image: "Phoenix Rising" by Judy Bandsmer. Part of the creative process for me is to go and have fun. This is a two-fold process, the first is the going. That means I can't sit at home and imagine I'm doing this. That's not to say that none of this occurs at home. Before I consider going out I need to study techniques and equipment, and to make sure I know how to use all my equipment.

Then comes the footwork: finding the right location and scouting for the right time of day, talking to models and acquaintances to see who is also interested in doing this shoot, organizing outfits, hair, makeup, driving, model releases, etc. Then the final part of the first step, setting a date and time.

Secondly, the creative process needs to involve having fun. Grace Mahary, an international fashion model, said that "*The truest form of an artist... is play.*" This image is a result of two people being free to experiment: me, the photographer; and the model, Lauren. Each of us were playing, I with speedlights and the sunset, Lauren with her dance skills and in her favourite outfit. We didn't have an agenda, we didn't have a goal other than to try this out and enjoy ourselves.

Working with models is always a way to get more out of a shoot than one individual can put in. It is always a mix of ideas and interpretations. (See article on pages 24-25.)

Model: Lauren W. Shot with a Nikon D7000, 60 mm lens, ISO 100, 1/250 sec at f2.8. Flash was a Nikon SB-600 through a shoot-thru umbrella, infra-red trigger. The location was Saxe Point Park, Esquimalt, BC.

President's Message

If this were to be the last time I wrote the President's message, what would I write? Something old, as in a rewrite of something I've written before? No. Something new? No. Something borrowed? No, that could be plagiarism. Something blue? No, I'm not melancholic at all. But it would probably be a bit of each of the first three, but not by design. I wouldn't go back and read all the previous messages; I would just write what came to mind. So, as this is the last time, that is what I'm going to do.

Some may have noticed, and I certainly feel it, that I have developed a different view of the place of photography in my life. As I look back to where I think I was at a few years ago, I experience a heartfelt sort of puzzlement over this, one that seems to spring from a very real question of isolation. Not isolation as in being lonely. Isolation in that photography was just something I did, as opposed to it being part of me. And isolation in that it was not something through which I related or collaborated with others. It is only in the last two years that I've allowed myself to be open to the idea that my finished photographs are an expression of the real me. They tell something about me, and I've allowed myself to be open to discuss with others what that something might be. I've also allowed some close friends to not only question me on this and related ideas, but also to give me their real "no pulling the punches" thoughts on my work. This has led to much more personal satisfaction from the work I produce.

I know this kind of talk is not everyone's cup of tea; it wasn't mine until recently. And this coming from an engineer, typically thought of as being pretty left-brained? That may be as much of a surprise to you as much as it has been to me.

If you've got this far with me, and the above is way too far off the planet for you, the least I think I can challenge you with is to really think about why you photograph what you do. Here's a borrowed bit, in the words of Freeman Patterson from his book "Embracing Creation." "*Whenever we focus the lens of our camera on anything, we are focusing it on ourselves. Something ... has 'called,' however gently or strongly, to our inner self ... and we are responding.*" And "... each of us will make an image that reveals the relationship between the photographer and the subject matter."

So that's it. But whatever you do with the above, enjoy yourself. It has to be fun!

Lloyd Houghton, President.

by Jenny Clarke

In the last issue of *Close-Up* I mentioned bodies of work that have spun out of my reference photography for painting and how they led into whole bodies of photographic work.

It all started at Goldstream, decades ago as I stood freezing in the middle of the stream with my clipboard, noting the fixed action patterns of mating salmon. I have returned many Novembers since to make my annual photographs. Somewhere along the line my devotion switched to the gulls and their annual feast on the salmon. And then, upon looking closer, it became about their incredible feathered bodies and the water that wraps around them, their tender webbed feet in the frigid water, their absorbed expression as they stare into the water for a passing salmon egg. All the little tell-tale gestures of a life lived in another body and medium than my own. Foreign yet shared.



"Salmon"

The inevitable "Art" questions arose. What am I doing here? Why? What is this about? Why does it matter? And to whom? The dread "Artist Statement," evil but necessary to clarity, meaning and deeper engagement confronts me. Freeman Patterson, our native son who grew up on a farm and trained as a theologian, says that an artist is always raising or dealing with the question "What really matters?" and refers to photography as his "enabling medium in maintaining the integrity of his own life." He also refers to his friends and peer group as including animals, plants and rocks. He's my kind of guy, one who also feels the sentient "Other" in the bodies of our fellow passengers on this planet.

But as much as I relate to and love Patterson's work, it is Ernst Haas who speaks to the deeper artistic motivation of making images. The great pioneer of colour photography emerged from war-torn Austria into the 1950's

New York art scene and gravitated to the American landscape as the ground for his drive to merge painting and photography. His work, "Creation," says much about colour and the abstract process in photography. There is a deep "sublime" tone to his images that relates back to Patterson's spiritual connection with plants and animals and to my own fascination with non-human lives and the colours in water. Haas said, "The best pictures differentiate themselves by nuances, a tiny relationship, either a harmony or a disharmony, that creates a picture." He also pointed out that, "Every work has its necessity; find out your very own. Ask yourself if you would do it if nobody would ever see it, if you would never be compensated for it, if nobody ever wanted it, then go ahead and don't doubt it anymore." Words I can relate to as I stand alone, yet again, in the pouring rain at Goldstream.

Our seasonal calendar in Victoria is rich indeed. There is a huge opportunity to interact with natural lives and events. My photography for painting made me suspend "doubt" and be there year after year within the natural events that move me, and from that "necessity" came clarity. I am stalking Haas's tiny "nuanced relationships" in the form of animals and water using Patterson's photography as "the enabling medium to maintain the integrity of my own life."

As a biologist, bearing witness to the non-human lives around us is critical to my own integrity. In Haas's words again, "There are two kinds of photographers: those who compose pictures and those who take them. The former work is in studios. For the latter the studio is the world. For them, the ordinary does not exist; everything in life is a source of nourishment."

The photographs included here are from some of my pet subjects: salmon at Goldstream, and water at Butchart Gardens.



"Butchart Gardens"

The *Close-Up* editorial team, Richard James and Bobbie Carey, recently sat down for a discussion with Dr. Ted Grant, OC, who is probably Canada's best-known photojournalist and is often regarded as Canada's premier living photographer and "the father of Canadian photojournalism." Ted lives in Victoria but in his 60-plus year career he has fulfilled assignments worldwide.

Ted's first published photograph was from a stock car race at Lansdowne Park in Ottawa in September 1951. The Ottawa Citizen paid him three dollars for the image. That was the beginning of his lifelong career in photojournalism. From then on photojournalism was his future.

CU: Ted, if you had to pick the most important aspect of a photojournalist's work what would you choose?

TG: It's very difficult to say that one thing is "the most important," however anticipation is really the key to getting the shot. I don't just arrive at a location and start shooting. I get there early, keep my eyes open and plan the shots. My strategy is to be there first and leave last, be one step ahead of the competition. If you know what's going to happen at the event, plan for it, and be there.



"Anticipation, the Decisive Moment"

CU: You have said that "know your equipment" is another important aspect.

TG: Yes, notwithstanding all the planning, you have to intuitively know your equipment. It needs to be ready to go, pick up and shoot, and get it right. As soon as you take your camera out, set it up for the conditions. Shutter speed, aperture, focus, ISO, they all need to be ready for that first grab shot, without thinking, without changing anything. Then you can optimize for the next shot. Know where all the key buttons and menu settings are. Develop a set of pre-sets that you use most often.

CU: In art photography "composition is everything." How do you relate this to photojournalism?

TG: There are "grab shots" and there are more thoughtful images. You get "grab shots" with breaking news events. But photojournalism is a lot more than that. When you can, walk around the subject, pick the angle, consider the lighting, wait for the moment. Then crop in the camera. Consider how the competition will look at the subject. Can you outfox them by being the only person with a particular lighting and angle, the winning shot?



"Composition, Checking the Results"

CU: When you started photography, most images were black-and-white, especially in photojournalism. How has colour impacted photography?

TG: I would say that most of my work was shot in black-and-white. When you photograph people in colour, you photograph their clothes. But when you photograph people in black-and-white, you photograph their souls. At the technical level, when shooting black-and-white you have to ensure that the grey scales in the subject work, meaning different colours still look different in greyscale. Colour may "bring an image to life" but it may be printed in black-and-white, so it has to work there as well.

CU: Photojournalism is all about "the image." How do you handle subjects to get the great image?

TG: How you handle and relate to people is critical to your success. Tell them just as much as they need to know, not the whole story. Minimize posing. Try to have your subject do something that is very natural for them rather than "smile for the camera." However, many times you have to shoot what you can get. This is where your skill at showing their unprompted "pose" is critical. Being in the right place at the right time and looking in the right direction tells the story.

CU: With digital cameras you can shoot a lot of frames. Do you ever edit in-camera?

TG: Never! You simply can't see enough on the tiny LCD screen on your camera. Don't consider sharpness in isolation, could it be sharper? Maybe. But if it is interesting, critical sharpness is not that important in photojournalism. Is it a prize-winning shot? Probably not, but is it interesting? Look at the content as you edit.

CU: How much does lighting impact your images?

TG: Understanding light is one of the key elements of photography. Light and shadow work together to create shape and structure. You may not be able to choose the lighting (move the sun) but you can change your position, wait until the subject moves, or both. Kodak's rule "shoot with the sun behind you" is designed to minimize contrast, but shooting from the shadow side of the subject emphasizes contrast and often produces images that tell a much better story. If you can control the lighting for a particular shoot, keep it simple. Set it up and test it with a "stand-in" before the subject arrives.

CU: How do you prepare for a shoot?

TG: Firstly, the camera is on your shoulder, the lens cap is in your pocket, you're ready for the shot. But before you get to the location research it, and your subject. It's a lot easier today with web searches, Google mapping and more. Once you arrive, observe. Not just to avoid the garbage but to feel the environment, if you can't see a picture then you're not looking. Look for the vantage points; if you're shooting a horseback event, where is a problem most likely to occur? At the big jump, at the water jump, or at the finish line? Pick the location where something important and interesting is likely to happen.



"Be Prepared, Pan Am Games, Columbia"

CU: How do you make sure that you have "made the most of the assignment"?

TG: Use your research to make sure you have the right gear with you. If you react to something, shoot it. Don't think too much, don't fiddle with the settings too much, don't worry about shooting too many frames. Practice, between assignments, don't just put your gear away. And lastly, but not least, make sure you've got the shot that the client wants if it's a paid assignment, or that the editor will pick for the hot news story of the day.

CU: Could you pick your "best image ever"?

TG: I have only one choice? I thought I had more than one "best image!" People tell me that the image I'm known best for was the one I shot at the Liberal leadership convention in 1968. I was in the right place, at the right time, and the other photographers were already outside the front door. You'll notice it's not infinitely sharp, there are dark shadows, but the essence of the story is right there, Pierre Trudeau sliding down the banister.



"Pierre Trudeau, Liberal Leadership Convention, 1968"

Dr. Grant, you certainly have had a very varied career from covering political events, wars, your documentary series, portraiture, sports photography and much more. It's been a great pleasure to sit down and talk to you and hopefully pass on some of "Ted's Commandments" to our readers. There is really so much more to cover from your vast experience that we should refer to some of the books about you. The most recent of these is *"Ted Grant: 60 Years of Legendary Photojournalism"* by Thelma Fayle. There are more than 300,000 archived images illustrating Ted's life work at the Library and Archives Canada and National Gallery in Ottawa.



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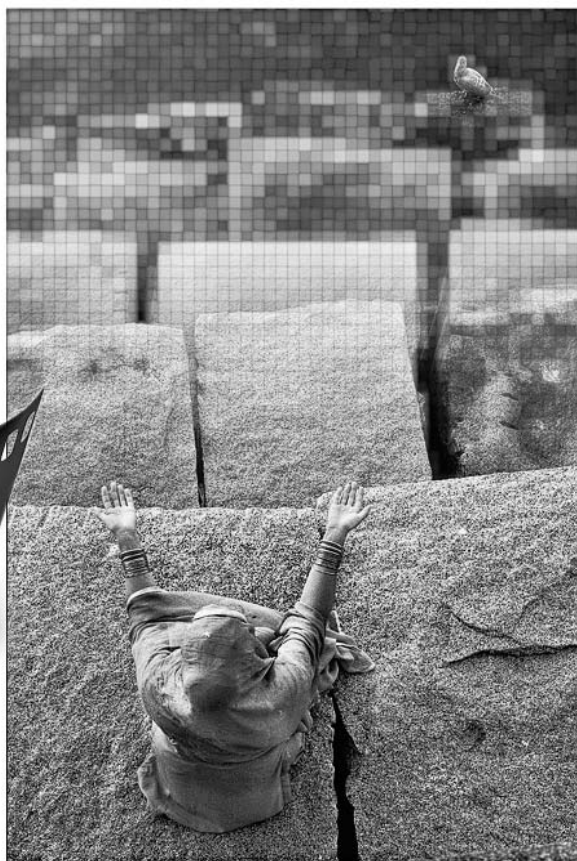
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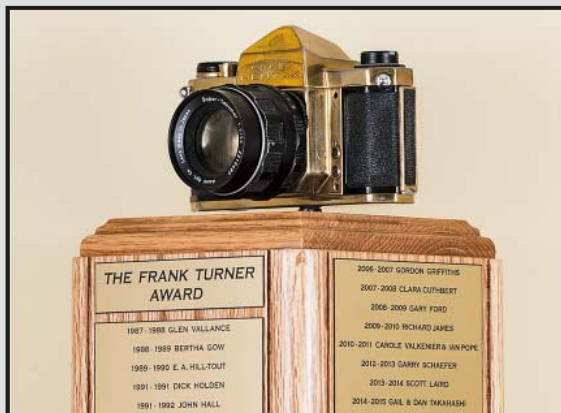
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A gilded Pentax camera, from the days of film, sits atop the Victoria Camera Club's most prestigious award. The Frank Turner Trophy has been handed down from recipient to recipient over the decades since 1988 in honour of its namesake and to celebrate volunteer service to the VCC. It is through recognition and emulation of the vital role of our volunteers that our Club will thrive now and in the years to come.



During his time in our midst, Frank Turner was a vital and important member of the Club. He filled several positions on the executive, including that of President, over a number of years. He gave generously of his time and talent to foster progress in photography among the Club's members. Frank's personal talent and skills in photography were clearly present and well developed. He won many awards for his art. We are fortunate to have been bequeathed a small collection of Frank's prints. These have been copied to digital format and are displayed on our website.

A long-term commitment to volunteering with the Club combined with an excellence in photography epitomize Frank Turner's example of a suitable candidate for this award. By tradition, each recipient is chosen by a committee of the three previous awardees. The undersigned were pleased to have had the privilege of undertaking that responsibility. We soon reached unanimity as we zeroed in on this year's recipient: Lois Burton!

Lois Burton joined the Victoria Camera Club in 2009. Her story serves as both a fine example and an inspiration. Lois' passion for photography began in that very same year, with her first acquisition of a digital SLR camera. Things moved quickly from that point onward.

From the outset Lois gained inspiration, knowledge and skill through her interactions with members of the Club. The important thing was that this quickly became a two-way street, a matter of both receiving and giving back.

Early on, Lois volunteered as an assistant to the web-site team. Her previous experience with Paypal was brought to bear as that platform was introduced as a way to manage membership dues and payments for special functions.

Lois' progress in photography was striking. She took full advantage of the Club's competitions as a venue to sharpen her technical and artistic skills. Only four years after joining, Lois won the High Aggregate Award at the Advanced level, based on well placed images in most competition categories. But, as always, it didn't stop there.

There was also the giving back to her fellow Club members. Having gained expertise in the creative process through the use of Photoshop and Lightroom, Lois then offered workshops which introduced those skills to members just starting out on that journey.

The successful direction and functioning of the Club requires volunteers at all levels. When a need was evident, Lois did not shirk. Often support was offered somewhat below the radar. Perhaps it was in the kitchen, keeping members happy during break time through the provision of cookies and drinks, and, yes, for the cleanup thereafter.

Preparations around a print show requires more hands than those of the coordinator alone. Lois was among those at the ready. Special functions such as annual banquets (yes, we used to have those) or pot-luck specials at Christmas offered many opportunities to pitch in. Lois did that.

Less frequently a volunteer was needed to fill a position on the Executive. There too, Lois was up to the challenge. During her term as Vice President she answered the call to fill in as President and continued in that role for an additional year ending in 2014.

We thank Lois for her many contributions as a volunteer in service to the Victoria Camera Club and to all of our members. We celebrate her achievements in photography. Readers are invited to once again peruse the inspiring text and images presented in her Members Profile article found in the January, 2016 issue of [Close-Up](#). Finally, we are happy to name Lois Burton as this year's recipient of the Frank Turner Trophy Award!

The selection committee consists of the last three winners of the trophy: Garry Schaefer, Scott Laird, and Dan and Gail Takahashi.

What's in a Name? Titles Matter

Our Club hosted two Canadian Assn. of Photographic Arts (CAPA) national competitions at the end of March and it was very interesting to hear the judges' reactions to the titles of some of the images. Jesse Hlady, a local professional photographer, spoke to the Club volunteers at the judging night about the importance for putting some thought into the titles for your images.

The purpose of a title is to guide the viewer to see the photo in a particular way and supply some context. Additionally, a title can be used to evoke a suitable emotional response to the photo.

If you give your image a silly, jokey or flippant title, the chances are good that your image will not be taken seriously. This may be fine to the maker but don't expect the viewer to give your image serious consideration and don't count on high marks from a judge in competition.

Whatever name you use in your title will be the expected subject of the image. Let's say you have an image of a young girl with only the back-end of a dog out of focus behind her. If you named this image "A Girl and her Dog" then you are telling the viewer/judge that both the girl and her dog are the primary subjects of the image, when in reality the primary subject is just the girl.

Be careful of "in jokes." The viewer/judge is not aware of the context in which the photo was taken. "Jilted Bride" is not a good title for a close-up image of a sad woman in what might be a zombie costume. The title makes no sense to a viewer who was not at the scene when the image was captured of. Is it supposed to be funny or is it an "in joke?"

For Nature and Wildlife, most photographic organizations suggest using the subject's common name and preferably the scientific name as that is less ambiguous. For example you may refer to our local Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) as a "Blue Jay", but that is really the local name for a different bird in other parts of Canada and the USA, the Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*). So, confusion reigns.

When in doubt, keep titles simple and neutral, less is more, more or less. Titles become a part of your art. Make sure your titles effectively communicate what you want the viewer to understand. It's worth the time you invest to put some thought into how you title your work.

Pam Irvine, Competitions Chair.

March 2016 Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to the judges for the March Intermediate and Advanced competitions: Paul Tedrick, James Emler, Dana Naldrett, Judy Higham and Glenn Bloodworth. 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.

Paul Tedrick (Nature Prints): Paul graduated with a BA degree in Photography from Brooks Institute of Photography. Paul has had a successful career in Victoria ranging from photographing weddings to portraiture, to advertising and landscapes. www.paultedrick.com

James Emler (Open and Monochrome Prints): James was Head Instructor at Focal Point in Vancouver for six years, taught at Vancouver Photo Workshops, and was Department Head of Digital Photography at Vancouver Institute of Media Arts. While living on Gabriola Island, he was an active participant in the local arts community. He now lives and works in Victoria. His published work spans the commercial arena as well as fine art photographic publications. www.jamesemler.com

Dana Naldrett (Nature and Creative): Dana has been involved in film and digital photography for over 30 years. He has worked on candid, sports, and scientific photography, but his passion is for landscape, wildlife and fine-art photography. Dana has had the good fortune to travel extensively but his favourite places for photography remain the mountains and the west coast of North America. www.mountainladdiephoto.com

Judy Higham (Theme): Judy has been photographing seriously since the late 1990s and has been a CAPA judge since 2006. She has a traditional Black & White darkroom and enjoys portraiture, macro (especially flowers), wildlife and abstracts. Judy and her husband Ed started the "Darkroom Group" of Coquitlam in December 2009, a CAPA club with 17 members. They focus on analogue photography and alternative photography methods from the 1800s. higham@shaw.ca.

Glenn Bloodworth (Digital Open): Glenn is an active member of the RA Photo Club in Ottawa, where he is the leader of the Tools and Techniques and Fine Art groups. Glenn has taken the CAPA judging course. www.glennbloodworth.com.

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Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
“Light and Shadow” by Lois Burton

Judge's comments: A classic photograph, well executed and printed. You have rendered the Tulle perfectly, it is sharp and has a very nice quality. Your rim lighting is delicate, lightly sketched with excellent diffused highlight details along the body. I appreciate the diffused highlight on the right arm and knee provided by the Tulle as well. Her pose is classic with the intersecting knee providing a nice dynamic for the rest of the pose. Well Done!



Advanced Open Print - 1st
“After the Storm” by Gordon Griffiths

Judge's comments: A beautiful piece! Print it larger if you can and hang it on the wall. The colours are engaging and the viewer will be inclined to look at it for a bit longer than normal trying to understand what they are. Well done!



Advanced Digital Nature - 2nd
“Short-eared Owl” by Mike Wooding

Judge's comments: Wonderful composition and depth of field. The owl looks at the photographer as though they were the next meal! This really captures the owl's stare.



Advanced Digital Creative - 2nd
“Let it Fly” by Bob Gray

Judge's comments: Excellent blending of layers to give a misty effect. The angle of the plane gives a very nice composition with space for the plane to fly into.



Advanced Digital Theme - 2nd

“Heavy Metal Plant Works” by Richard Webber

Judge's comments: This image relays the feeling of dark foreboding, haunting, mystery. It evokes an emotion because of your excellent post processing techniques, good work! Sharp where necessary with lots of detail. Well done.



Advanced Nature Print - 1st

“Wood Duck” by Jacqui James

Judge's comments: Great composition and placement of the duck. The out of focus, swift moving water really enhances this image. You have a very nice image here.



Advanced Digital Open - 1st

“The Dancer” by Barbara Burns

Judge's comments: Very well composed, the negative space gives strong emphasis to her form!



Intermediate Digital Theme - 1st

“Heavy Lifting” by Peter Koelbleitner

Judge's comments: This image indicates a good sense of technique and tools: tiny bits of red paint in the centre of the image are barely perceptible, a detail that complements and more importantly relates specifically to another part of the image; choosing monochrome for the basis of the photograph yet providing a contrasting colour in a single red tool; placing differing shades of silver or grey in different areas; selective sharpening; providing a contrasty tool (vertical chain) as an entryway to the picture. This is a good example of analyzing the image and then choosing different techniques to complement your image. Excellent composition. Well done.



Intermediate Digital Open - 1st
"The Old Woman Sits and Waits" by Nicci Tyndall

Judge's comments: This image conveys a good story with good use of colours. There is nice eye contact between subject and viewer.



Intermediate Open Print - 1st
"Arriving in St Lucia" by Normand Marcotte

Judge's comments: This image conveys a good story with good use of colours, very impressive!



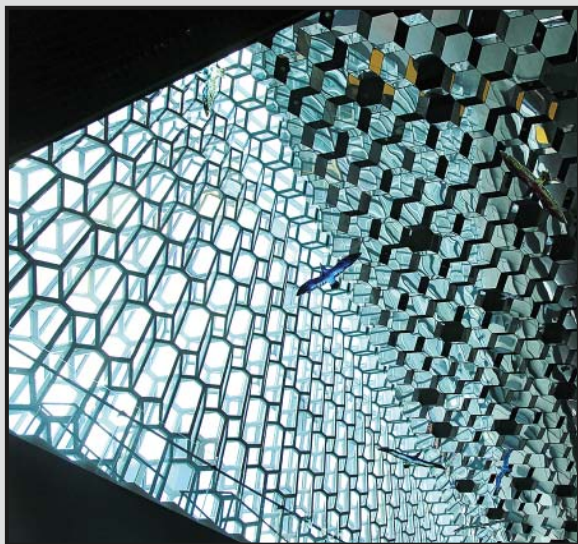
Intermediate Digital Nature - 1st
"Next Stop, Breakfast" by Ian Faris

Judge's comments: This image has all the right elements in it! It follows the rule of thirds for composition, it is very well exposed, showing detail in shadows as well as highlights, and the sky provides a dramatic background. Well done!



Intermediate Monochrome Print - 1st
"Havana Cigar" by Steve Barber

Judge's comments: This is a powerful portrait and I have few comments to offer about it. The strength of his character is prominent in the image.



Intermediate Digital Creative - 1st

“Geometric Skylights” by Carol Christensen

Judge’s comments: Very creative use of shapes, sizes and colours! Composition having darker elements in the upper area would not usually work, but it does well in this case.



Novice Digital Theme - 2nd

“Cutting Rebar” by Peter Amundsen

Judge’s comments: This image conveys a good story with good use of colours. A great composition, lots of diagonal lines, sharp focus and good exposure, looks like a bluish colour cast added but it adds drama to the image. Well done.



Intermediate Nature Print - 1st

“Flowers of India” by Bobbie Carey

Judge’s comments: You nailed the focus, good use of depth of field. While this image makes sense to have the wildflower in the centre, experimenting with the placement of the flower and the rule of thirds within the scene, maybe having the flower off centre, could lead to additional successful images.



Novice Digital Nature - 1st

“Pintail Pair” by Richard Letourneau

Judge’s comments: This image conveys a good story with good use of colours. A very well composed shot; birds are focused and the eyes are sharp; good exposure; nicely done.



Novice Open Digital - 1st
"Hartebeest in Mirage" by Graeme Weir

Judge's comments: This image conveys a good story and good use of colours with its painterly effects. Great composition, use of subdued colours and soft focus gets it a perfect 10. Very well done.



Novice Digital Open - 2nd
"Undulations" by Rea Casey

Judge's comments: This image conveys a good story with good use of colours. A lovely shot of the undulating hills with varying shades of greens, focused and well exposed, nicely done.

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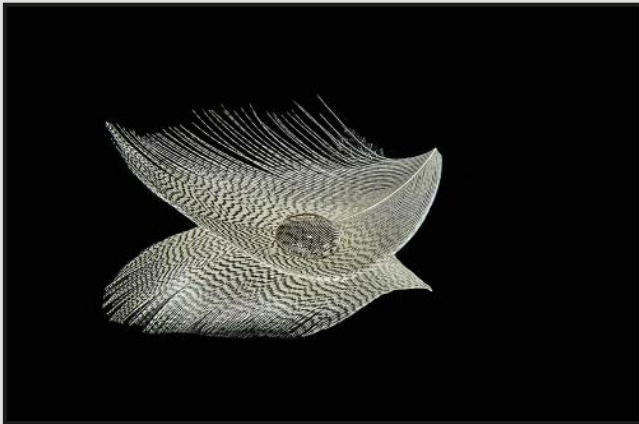
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"You will throw away 99 percent of your photographs." That was some of the best advice I have received about photography. That advice helped me deal with my disappointment in having a roll of film developed to discover perhaps one or two keepers at most. Now with digital images, it has helped me make friends with the delete button.

It was my dad's Pentax K1000 metal body film SLR camera that I first shot with. I was 17 when he handed me the camera and gave me a crash course on how to use and care for it. A talented friend of mine mentored me for a while and I learnt a lot of the basics from him. In university I joined a photo arts club where I learnt and later went on to teach darkroom film development. It wasn't until years later in 2011 that I decided to get my first digital SLR, a Nikon D3200.



"Intricacy"

I joined the Victoria Camera Club a couple of years ago and it is with the collective wisdom of the Club that my photography has vastly improved. The membership of the Club is very generous with sharing their knowledge, tips, techniques, and helping with any photography related topic; I have learnt much, and have been greatly inspired by them.

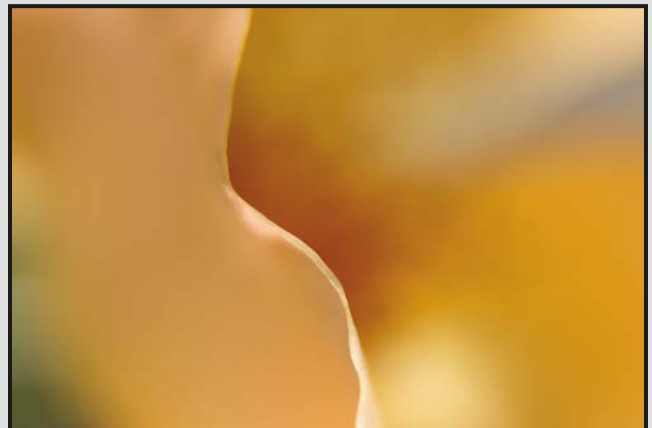
I shoot mostly with a Nikon D750 which is great for landscapes and low light situations. I also shoot with a crop sensor Nikon D7100 for wildlife. For most wildlife and some portraits I use Nikon's f2.8, 70-200 mm lens, and sometimes for landscapes where I take several overlapping shots and stitch them together later. For extra magnification, especially when shooting wildlife, I pair this lens with a 1.7 teleconverter. For shallow depth of field or low light situations I sometimes use Nikon's f1.8, 35 mm lens and for landscapes I use the f3.5-4.6 18-55 mm kit lens which is now overdue for an upgrade. For lighting I use two SB 800 speedlights.



"Avocet"

I started with a more documentary style of wildlife photography, but since last year I have been drawn to experiment with more artistic photography. Perhaps it's a natural evolution that most photographers experience but I find myself pushing to be more creative in my camera technique and with editing in Photoshop. Lately I have been experimenting with creating 2.5D videos from photos, also sometimes known as the parallax effect. A still photograph can be turned into a short video clip where the point of view of the camera moves, and as it does it gives the illusion of 3-dimensionality in the photograph.

My interest in photography remains mainly in wildlife but I dabble in landscape, night, table top, portraits, and macro photography. I've also had the pleasure of taking photos for families and friends. These opportunities have helped me practice portrait photos of individuals and families, corporate head shots, advertising photos for a bird of prey business, engagement photos, and other events. Recently I just finished taking food photos for a friend's new eatery in San Antonio, Texas.



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by John Roberts

Today I want to talk to you about some of the features of the Electronic Viewfinder (EVF), what you will like about it, and what you may dislike about it. In many cases you can see these features in both the EVF or LCD screen on the back of the camera.

Unlike traditional Single Lens Reflex (SLR) cameras that have a prism and mirror system that allows you to see through the lens, the Compact System Cameras (CSC or Mirrorless) have only an EVF, which allows you to see exactly what the sensor is seeing in almost real time.

This gives you several advantages. One of my favourites is if you over or under expose, you can see what effect it will have on your image before you even take it. This is a great tool for me, in allowing me to get the effect of my image by compensating the exposure, and not having to guess what it is going to look like.

My second favourite advantage, is seeing a live histogram, even that small histogram in the corner of my EVF, allows me to see where my exposure is, and knowing just by a glance, if I have to adjust it.

Another advantage is if, like me, you have a lot of older manual focus lenses, then you can turn on focus peeking. You may have heard of this. Some of you may be wondering what it is, and whether or not it will be useful to you. It is really popular with the video crowd, or those photographers who like using older manual focus lenses to help them nail their focus.

It achieves this by showing a colour band along the sharp areas of the image. So if you are shooting a portrait, when the eyes of your subject are shimmering along their edges, you know you have nailed the focus right.

The first time I used focus peeking, I instantly hated it. It looks weird and distracting. Why does it have to be that hard to focus on anything else yellow? Well, it turns out that in many of the cameras which have focus peeking, you can customize it, and change the colour. In my Panasonic for instance, I have it set to green. I could have just as easily set it to red, blue, white, or whatever options that particular manufacture offers for the peeking setting.

The last advantage, but something that not all EVF cameras have, is called Zebra for lack of a better term. It is the equivalent to Focus Peeking, only for exposure.

This is, again, another feature that hails from the professional video side of the business, so this feature resides in cameras that specialize in video. Some of the Panasonic's, and most of the Sony's have this feature.

It can be set to several strengths, so if you focus primarily on people, set your Zebra setting to 75-80% (depending on the skin tone of your subject), and when you nail your exposure for their skin, the display will flicker with a Zebra pattern. This can be very distracting at times, but if you are just using it to get your exposure right in the first place, then you can turn off the Zebra mode when you have nailed it.

A disadvantage of the EVF's, is that while they are close to "live," there is a slight lag. If you set the refresh rate very high to prevent that lag, then the camera uses up more energy, and will drain the battery faster. This is especially problematic for any camera using only one battery, which in the compact size of the CSCs, may only have one battery unless you add an optional battery grip on the bottom, thus negating the benefit of having a smaller camera. Thankfully, many of the CSC batteries are nice and compact, and you can carry several with you in a pocket, or in a zippered pouch in your bag without adding too much weight to your load.

Here is an example of what the Focus Peeking and Zebra look like together on the LCD of a camera I had handy. You can see where it is showing red for what is in focus, as well as where the image is well exposed with the Zebra pattern showing (see the colour image on-line).



Lastly, if there is a topic you would like me to discuss here, let me know. I try to write these technical articles on topics that I find are sometimes not always known or thought about, but are useful information. So if there is something you want to know about, let me know! jrphotographybc@icloud.com.

by Ove Christensen

The state of Utah is home to such a large and diverse landscape that it is a “must visit” for any photographer. Landscapes vary from deserts to mountains and canyons to monumental pinnacles of rock. The vast power of 50 million years of erosion tells the story. This article is Part 1 of a two part review of some of the shooting opportunities in this vast area.

Utah’s breathtaking landscapes are preserved in a series of national and state parks, recreational areas and historic sites. Utah has 5 national parks, 7 national monuments, 2 national recreation areas, 43 state parks and 1 national historic site. All of these sites offer unique opportunities for great images. Those who are more mobile and able to scramble up and down the canyon walls and walk around the pinnacles from ground level are fortunate. For some of us older folks we have to be satisfied with taking photos by either looking up or looking down.

During our last visit in April, 2015, Carol and I managed to take pictures in a number of these parks. We went during the month of April, before the crowds and the summer heat arrived. At that time of year, because of the high altitude of some places, it is not unusual to find snow, which helps to make an interesting image, but the roads can be treacherous. Utah’s state motto is “Life Elevated” in reference to the high altitude found in most parts of the state.

Before you go, take some time to investigate the many locations to ensure you get the most out of your trip. You cannot see it all in a three week trip. The Internet is full of sites offering advice to photographers and park visitors. At the first national park you enter, purchase a one-year pass to all National Parks, Monuments and Recreational areas for \$80. This will save you money in the long run.

Zion National Park



Zion National Park is the eighth most visited National Park in the US. The canyon itself is only accessible in the summer (March to October) by a very efficient free shuttle bus system run by the Parks Service. The bus stops at nine locations in Springdale and nine in the park allowing visitors to get off and spend time hiking the various trails.

One of the most popular hikes in the park is Angel’s Landing, which climbs 450 m (1,490 ft) from the valley to the peak and offers spectacular views of the valley below. We understand that this hike is not for the faint of heart! Another popular trail is The Narrows, which follows the Virgin River through a very narrow canyon. If you do this hike, be prepared to get wet.

Once outside of the main Zion canyon the spectacular drive on the Zion-Mount Carmel Highway is filled with switchbacks and tunnels. Pullouts abound for many photo opportunities. Canyon Overlook Trail is a great spot for views high above the canyon.

Bryce Canyon National Park



Bryce Canyon is like no other. It is not actually a canyon but a vast collection of huge amphitheatres overlooking the red, orange, and white colors of the rocks that provide spectacular views for park visitors. Although hoodoos (pillars of rock, usually of fantastic shape, left by erosion of soft rock under a harder “capstone”) can be found in many places including here in BC, Bryce has the largest known concentration of hoodoos in the world.

There are many viewpoints along the rim of the canyon where you can take shots of the rock formations below. Hiking trails are also abundant, both along the canyon rim and down into the canyon where one can walk among the hoodoos. The rim of the canyon is between

2,400 and 3,750 m (8000 - 9000 ft.) above sea level so hiking back up can become very strenuous.

Gooseneck State Park



Gooseneck State Park, just north of the town of Mexican Hat, UT, features spectacular entrenched “incised meanders” of the San Juan River. The river, through twists and turns, flows for 8 km (3 miles) while progressing only 1.6 km (1 mile) westward. The viewpoint in the park allows for an interesting look at the river as it meanders 300 m (1000 ft.) below you.

Moab Area

Moab is considered to be the “Adventure Capital of the United States.” The area around Moab consists of spectacular scenery, majestic viewpoints high above the mighty Colorado and Green rivers provide the landscape photographer with seemingly endless opportunities. This magical area has been preserved by a collection of National and State Parks including: Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, Deadhorse Point State Park and Colorado River access points. Moab holds the title of the jeep capital of the world. Many rental companies are available for those wishing to get off the beaten path.

Canyonlands National Park

Canyonlands is a huge park covering a total of 137,000 hectares (527 sq. miles) of colourful landscapes where countless canyons, mesas, and buttes have been formed through the erosion of the Colorado and Green Rivers and their respective tributaries. Only two out of the four areas of Canyonlands National Park are accessible by paved roads: Island in the Sky, and the Needles. Other areas are accessible by the many four-wheel drive gravel roads or hiking trails. The Island in the Sky district is the most accessible of the

four districts. This high mesa towers upward of 730 m (2400 ft.) above the Colorado and Green Rivers. Many viewpoints provide stunning visual examples of how erosion from these two rivers has carved deep into the plateau beneath you. Most famous of the viewpoints is the Mesa Arch where many a photographer has spent hours attempting to capture the perfect shot of the morning sun reflecting off the arches underbelly.

The Needles District attracts the more adventurous visitors and those who enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the backcountry. Many hiking trails and off-road routes allow access to a multitude of photo opportunities.

Arches National Park



Arches National Park is known to include over 2,000 natural sandstone arches. Created over millions of years by water, wind and ice these salmon and buff coloured arches attract more than 700,000 visitors a year. Access for some of the arches is a short hike from the many parking areas just off the paved roads. Longer hiking trails abound throughout the park so people can enjoy these wonders of nature.

Delicate Arch, the most famous arch in the park is viewable from two different points. The lower viewpoint is a short, easy walk from the parking lot. You will need a good telephoto from this point. You will also be shooting upward with the sky as your background through the arch. The other trail to see Delicate Arch up close is a 5 km (3 mile) round-trip and climbs 146 m (480 ft.). Don't miss the easily accessible Parade of Elephants, Double Arch, Balanced Rock and Windows rock formations.

In the next issue of *Close-Up* we will slip south and add the area around Page, Arizona just a few miles from the Utah border, that is often regarded as the heart of the desert Southwest's Canyonlands.

Green Tree Snake

by Ken Johnston

While on a 10-day Naturescapes photo workshop in January to Costa Rica, I had the opportunity to photograph several unsavoury critters. The setting was Hotel Lagarta Eco Lodge. The staff had accommodated our group by capturing and supplying a pit viper, a green tree snake and a tarantula for us to photograph, as well as arranging for bat photos in the evening.

The tree snake in the image, unlike the pit viper, was only moderately poisonous but we were advised that a bite would result in a trip to the hospital. As he was doing his very best to bite me while dangling from the tree, my attention was significantly divided between aperture, shutter speed, depth-of-field and being bitten. As the latter was my primary concern. It's really quite miraculous that a couple of the images turned out reasonably well.

Everything was hand-held, as the proximity to the subject varied constantly. I used my Canon EOS 1DX with the new Canon 100-400 mm f4.5-5.6L II USM lens at the full 400 mm for my safety. The settings were f5.6 at 1/500 sec and ISO 800.

As the photo was taken in flat shade, I upped the contrast, vibrance and clarity in Photoshop.

With the benefit of hindsight, a flash at reduced power would have done a better job of capturing colour, as well as freezing the subject. As it was, the lens was wide open at f5.6, resulting in a depth-of-field that was appropriate for the photo, as it allowed the snake's head to be the very clear subject, and the snake's body suggestive without being clearly or sharply defined. A pretty good accident I thought.



Early Morning Light

by Mary Weir

This image was shot one morning in September in the Sossusvlei salt pan at Namib-Naukluft Park, Namibia.

My husband and I were staying in a camp about an hour's drive outside of the park and had explored Sossusvlei the previous day. I was fascinated by the stark beauty of the gnarled, twisted petrified trees and thought that they would be best captured in the morning light.



One of the challenges was to get there before the sun was too high in the sky but, because this was a pan surrounded by dunes, it afforded us some extra time before the sun came fully over the dunes. We left camp at 6 am and drove until the gravel ended and the sand began, axle-high sand that we plowed through with our 4-wheel drive truck for about 4 kilometres. As I hoped, the light was wonderful! As I walked through the pan, shooting various petrified trees, the sun rose higher in the sky and the challenge became to find a subject that was closer to the dune where the light was still a bit soft.

I saw this wonderfully twisted, gnarled tree set against the dune. I shot a number of images of the full tree but, in previewing the shots, I realized that I wanted to capture the light on the tree trunk.

I used a Canon 70D with a 100-400 mm lens at 400 mm, ISO 200, AV Mode, f5.6 at 1/640 sec. In Lightroom, I enhanced it by increasing the contrast, clarity and vibrance, and decreasing the highlights and shadows. In Photoshop, I removed two small twigs that didn't seem to be part of the overall composition.

Tuesday Shoots

by Wayne Swanson

May 10: Joints

Joints? The mind boggles: knee joints, sleazy joints, marijuana joints, beef joints, etc., etc. Maybe we can catch a sprinter with elbows and knees bent, or perhaps people hoisting pints at Big Bad John's, or a welder working on a construction site. The list goes on because a joint is where any two things come together. They occur in manufactured structures where parts are joined; or in nature where a branch joins a stem. In slang, a joint refers to a cheap bar or a marijuana cigarette. The interpretation is yours. Let your mind roam freely.

May 24: Sweet

Is your mouth watering thinking about ice cream or candy? Now is your chance to indulge, or at least, capture images of others indulging. Remember, sweet isn't just about chocolate, even if you regard it as the pinnacle on your list of sweet things. Surely you apply the term to your special someone as well. It's up to you to create a sweet image.

June 14: How Well Do You Know Your City?

Victoria images adorn many travel albums cherished by visitors from around the world but many tourists miss much of what is truly beautiful about our city. Let's display some of the lesser known treasures found downtown, such as the foyer of the Atrium building, Pioneer Square next to Christchurch Cathedral, or the grounds of St. Ann's Academy. Think of parks, gardens, historic sites or public art. It can be anything that captures the essence of our city, which you would like to use to impress our guests "from away."

June 28: Friendly Shoot Out

Your turn! Come armed with three topics, each jotted down on separate sheets of paper, that you would like one of the group members to tackle. All the papers will be put into a hat for you to draw from. Make sure you don't draw one of your own ideas. There will be no opportunity for advance preparation. The objective is to be creative and have fun. If you get a topic you don't like, you can give whoever suggested it a bad time over lunch. Remember it's only a game.

Weekend Shoots

by Steve Smith and Rea Casey

May 14: Christie Falls

West of Ladysmith, Bush Creek forms three small very photogenic waterfalls in a forest of Douglas Fir. The lower falls are a gentle cascade shrouded by forest. The middle falls carry the most water and are quite open. A rope allows you to scramble to the top of the middle falls where the water tumbles through a cleft in the rocks before plunging over the rim of the middle falls. Here is a great opportunity to practice time exposures of moving water. A wide angle lens helps to capture the falls at close range.

June 25: Botanical Beach

When the tide at Botanical Beach is low another rarely seen world opens up for the photographer. In the intertidal zone you will explore tide pools teeming with life, snails, chitons, anemones, sea urchins, and star fish. As you walk along the sandstone shelf you will find ridges of shale and quartz jutting up through the sandstone.

This trip will also be of interest to creative photographers searching for interesting backgrounds and B & W photographers who are hoping to capture abstract images. Bring along wide angle, macro and long lenses as there are a nearly infinite number of possibilities for image capture on this trip. A polarizing filter will be especially helpful if you wish to try to capture images through water and in the pools. Bring a tripod for time exposures of breaking waves and close up shots.

June Crowd Events

The 2016 Victoria Cycling Series events are on June 3rd – 5th. On June 3rd, competitors race against the clock in Sprint Trials on Dallas Road. The Grand Prix runs on June 5th with riders racing at breakneck speeds around the Legislature. www.victoriabikerace.com

The Aboriginal Cultural Festival will also be held June 17th- 19th. There are great opportunities to capture colourful costumes and striking dance moves and poses. It also provides challenges in the way of crowds and variable ambient lighting. Speedlites and shallow depth of field are two ways to achieve some great and unique images. <https://www.aboriginalbc.com/victoriaaboriginal-festival>.

by Judy Bandsmer

"Whenever we focus the lens of our camera on anything, we are also focusing it on ourselves." Freeman Patterson.

I thought this would be an easy article to write, but during the process of writing it, it has become more complex than I had anticipated. I was asked to discuss my motivation for the creative work I do. In one aspect, the answer is relatively simple. In another respect, I find it difficult to describe, and sometimes even to know, exactly why I make what I make, and so this article has turned into a semi-philosophical treatise. But I'm hopeful that by sharing some of my creative journeying, the practical tips I have learned can help any of us become more creative as photographic artists.

The easy answer when asked how I make my creative images, and I suspect it is the same for most of us who do creative photography, is that I just play. I like it! It's fun. I set scenes I want to photograph. I find complementary textures, cropping, layers, and/or play with colours in post-processing, trying to get to an image with impact and atmosphere. Wherever my mind goes, I let it try to get there. Often I don't have a goal in mind other than to try things and see what happens. For example, the mini-editorial "Evil Queen" was shot because a friend said she thought her sister looked like an evil queen. We thought it would be great fun to dress up her sister and shoot the results. So we did.



"No Regrets" How do I complement the fantastic look of the model? Model: Emma Smyth; Make Up Artist: Nicolette; Headpiece, Maria Curcic.



"Day 26,058" Playing with a new technique that I learned in the Creative Special Interest Group (SIG), I came out with this. It is unusual, but I like it, and it has ended up holding quite a bit of meaning for me.

When you give ten photographers the same base image to "play" with, none of us will come up with the same result. My creative take on that same image will be different from your idea. What is it that makes our images unique, that makes my final result so different from yours?

Freeman Patterson said that *"art has everything to do with making the unconscious part of ourself conscious."* Do we always know what motivates us? Can we discover things about ourselves by looking at our art? Or what about vice versa, can we use the process of creating art to consciously explore things important to us? I think it's a "yes" to the last two of these questions, and this is where things get more personal.

For me, some of my creative photography is more goal-oriented; it is not just "playing." It is a conscious exploration around a theme. Six years ago I became ill with mononucleosis, which turned into a lingering and highly debilitating disease, chronic fatigue. I lost my career, my job, my financial stability, and a lot of my sense of self-worth in the process. It is still a daily struggle with a variety of feelings and frustrations that come from having to live with a hidden disability. This led to one of the creative projects that I am working on, where I am using models and elaborate sets and/or compositing to portray different aspects of living with a hidden disability. It's a form of processing and expression for me, and also a way of turning something difficult into something

that I hope is beautiful and worthwhile, not only to myself, but also to a wider community.



“Persephone” This image ruminated and developed in my head for a long time until I finally found the right place and person to do this image. It stemmed from a comment a co-worker made to me when I came back to work “after” my illness and attempted a Return-To-Work program. She cattily remarked that it must have been nice to have had such a long vacation.

So some of my images are not a matter of playing, but of conscious design. But then, to play Devil’s Advocate, I could argue that this conscious exploration on a theme might just be another form of play. For children, play is sometimes a way to express and cope with feelings, for example, after a traumatic incident. So maybe my “Disability Project” is just an adult version of playing, where I am just coping with my feelings and expressing myself. Perhaps both processes, the first of just going where our thoughts take us and the second having a goal towards an end, are perhaps different forms of play. Perhaps both, to some degree, just express what is going on inside of us. Maybe both get us to the same place.

This is all quite personal, but I do hope that there is some relevance to be found for anyone who wants to develop their skills with creative photography. I would humbly suggest three tips towards that end.

1. Equip yourself to play. Learn photographic techniques and editing software. Watch YouTube videos or take workshops on photographic and editing techniques so you have more tools to let yourself explore. The Creative SIG of the Victoria Camera Club is one way to be pushed to learn new things and see what it’s possible to do with your camera and with editing software.



“Temptation” An image that began as playing, but ended up becoming part of my Disability Project. Perhaps this illustrates that our “playing” also just expresses what is already going on inside of us. While it didn’t start off as being an image destined for my project, it fits in just as well as many of my more conscious attempts.

2. Have fun. Play. Make the images you are excited about. Don’t make them for other people. Experiment. Let your thoughts carry you along, and don’t say “no” to them. You won’t always succeed in making an image you love, but the more we play with our creativity, the further we get.
3. To push yourself even further into the realm of fine art, look through your work. Do you have an image that is especially meaningful to you? Think about what makes that image important to you. If you can, put to paper what it is about that image that is meaningful. Then, make yourself a challenge and create a 20-image series exploring this topic. In this way, we can use what is important to us to help us create, direct our “play” to help us learn more about ourselves, and maybe help us make something that is more easily shared with a broader community.

I believe there is something of the sacred in the process of creating. It is as unique as the individual. It is worthy of being seen. As we play, we create from what is inside us. As Grace Mahary, an international fashion model, said, *“play... is the truest form of an artist.”* It takes some bravery to take our uniqueness and show it to the world around us. Any creative artist, be it musician, dancer, photographer, etc., takes a risk when they show themselves and their interpretations to the world. But I think it is through this sharing that we multiply the richness of this world.

“... the best and finest way we can receive the gift of life is to use consciously the creativity we have been given.”
Freeman Patterson.

The Star of the Show

by Nancy MacNab

What do you really like to photograph? This is probably one of the most frequently asked questions when two photographers meet (along with: "What equipment do you use?").

Some frequent answers to the first question include: nature, people, animals, landscapes, or street photography. These responses give you an idea of what is going to be included in their photographs, of what is going to be the centre of interest.

However, when you look at some of the gazillions of images that are posted on the Internet, on Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest and many other websites, sometimes it is not obvious what the centre of interest is supposed to be. Is it the little out-of-focus dog in the middle or the garden? Is it the kid with the cowboy hat shadowing his face or the amazing red rocks and cliffs of the Grand Canyon behind him?

You can use exposure and composition to guide your viewer's eye to the star of your image. Here are some things to think about when setting up your camera to ensure that those who see your images know what the centre of attention is supposed to be.

Unless you want to deliberately show motion blur, your subject should be sharp and clear. If a person or animal is the subject, then the eye should be your focal point, even if some of the rest of the face or body is slightly out of focus. A catchlight in the eye adds a gleam of life to the image.

Whatever is sharp will immediately stand out when part of the image is blurred. You can accomplish this by using a wide aperture at the f2.8 – f5.6 end of your lens. An out-of-focus background also helps to remove those less-than-desirable objects that distract the viewer. Be careful to ensure that light items in the background are appropriately placed as they can end up appearing even larger and more distracting when out-of-focus.

The placement of your main subject also helps to ensure that it is the centre of interest. The traditional advice is to use the "rule of thirds," dividing your image in to three parts, both vertically and horizontally, and placing your subject at one of the four points where the vertical and horizontal lines intersect.

Try experimenting with a series of photos with your focal point placed at each of the four intersecting spots, as described above. What is your impression of each? How does each subject location make you feel? Do you prefer one of the placements to the others, and if so, why? This all helps to develop your eye for composition.

Another way of drawing attention to your subject is through the use of leading lines. These can be straight or diagonal, curved or wavy, but they should lead towards your centre of interest. Because in English we read from left to right, we usually find that lines that start at the left hand side of the image lead into the image, while those that head from the subject to the right hand side will lead the eye out of the image. For those who read their language from right to left, the reverse is true.

Colours will also attract the viewer's attention. Light colours immediately pop out of the image, which is why having out of focus light spots in the background can be so distracting. Bright colours, particularly red, tend to catch the eye.

Again, try experimenting with colours in a series of images. How do you react to the same subject (for example, a flower) when you have the following series: light subject on a light background, light subject on a dark background, bright subject on a light background, bright subject on a dark background, dark subject on a light background, and a dark subject on a dark background.

You can use colour to establish a specific "feel" in your image. A young girl dressed in a flowing white dress will give a very different impression to that same girl dressed in a dark business suit, sitting behind a desk.

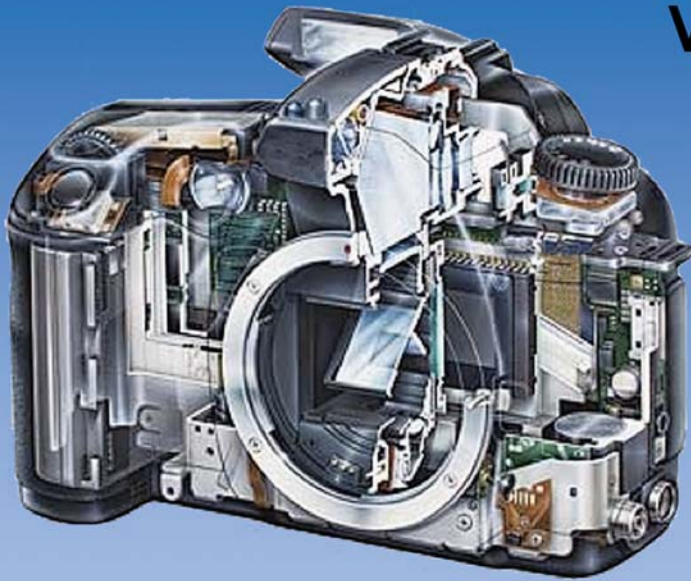
Try to eliminate as many distractions as possible prior to clicking the shutter. These can include stray bits sticking into the edge of the frame, chopping off a part of your subject (unless it is deliberately done), distracting bright spots or highlights in the background, and unwanted extras that obscure or draw attention away from your subject.

It is easy to get excited when you get ready to take that award-winning photo, but take a moment to ensure that your subject really will be the centre of attention. And when you review your images from your daily shoot, ask yourself if a total stranger would ask you what this is a picture of, or if they would know who or what is the star of the show.

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