



Close-Up

VictoriaCameraClub.ca

Close-Up Production
Black & White Portraits
April Workshops
Tech Tips: Motion Blur
Oil and Water Drops
Member Profile: Jim Fowler
Focus Rails
Measuring Camera Performance
Wrestling with Photography
Beginner's Corner: Some Tips for Shooting Birds

Victoria Camera Club

"Companions" by Jim Fowler

April 2022 Volume 75 Number 4

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"Victoria Cityscape" by Cindy Stephenson

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
- Shared Interest Groups (SIGs)
- Competitions within the Club and externally

Meetings begin at 7:00 PM. All meetings, workshops and SIGs are currently on-line only.

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, \$107; Student, \$36.

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

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April 2022

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



VICTORIA ARTS COUNCIL



Calendar

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

Workshops, Meetings and SIGs are currently on-line only. Please check the calendar for updates.

April 7th: Competition Night. The March competition results will be presented.

April 14th: Presenters' Night. "Beyond Bugs and Butterflies" with Marianna Armata.

April 21st: Members' Night. Presentations of members' images, field trip slide shows, print reviews or short technical presentations.

Workshop Highlights: Introduction to Astrophotography and Focus Stacking.

Field Trip Highlights: Street Photography, Low Key, Hornby Island and Cars/Vehicles.

Cover Image: "The Companions" by Jim Fowler. The Creative SIG chose Gustav Klimt as a style model for their January "homework" and this photo was made in response. It is a composite of nine or 10 raw photos in over 20 layers. The model was photographed at Greg Eligh's portraiture workshop in 2018. The radiating lines are an anamorphic circle of a white picket fence. The stacked colour blocks are photographs of pastel chalks. The swirls and leaves are decorative elements I keep for use in composites. The dress is tree bark from my "texture" folder. The barred owl is from 2020.

I wanted the model's face and the owl to have photographic detail, but I wanted the decorative elements to be two-dimensional. I went with golds in tribute to Klimt, but decided the photo needed more oranges and reds. Compositionally, the "pickets" radiate from around her eye.

When working with selections and layers in Photoshop, I play with the blending modes between layers; you never know what happy accidents will happen. In addition to normal, I used "pass through," "linear," "soft light" and "colour burn" modes. The beauty of working in layers is that if you don't like an effect, you can undo it. There are many hours of work in this photo. This image placed first in the February 2022 Altered Reality competition (image reversed for the cover).

President's Message

In my three years of drone ownership, I've had an on-again off-again relationship with it. Mostly off-again. It's spent most of this time in my storage locker so I was very happy to find out that James Dies was organizing a Drone SIG. I was quite excited about my drone when I first got it. I passed the license test with a respectable 84%, and I was on my way. I did test flights to get the hang of things although I once had to order new propellers after a hard landing into some bushes.

One of my plans was to create stock footage. We live in one of the most beautiful places on the planet. Surely, I could whip up hours of breath-taking video of forests and mountain streams, while making side money to feed my photography habit. Instead, I produced minutes of extremely average footage. The colour was not right and the video had a sense of being not quite real. Something was most definitely wrong.

For useable footage, a shutter speed of 1/2x the frame rate is the key. For example, 30 fps needs 1/60th of a second. This low shutter speed now required me to use a neutral density filter. To get the colour consistent I needed to shoot in video raw and do post-processing. This was getting complicated. I decided to forgo video and concentrate on stills. I did get some decent stills suitable for the Web by extracting them from the video stream but shooting stills in raw and post-processing the same way as I do with my DSLR images was the way to go.

My journey slowed at this point. First of all, to get my drone out to where there were good shots was a bit of a hassle. As well, YouTube was fine for sharing but it's not a replacement for information and experiences shared between other flyer/photographers. What I really needed was to be part of a group of drone photographers and that's why I'm excited about joining the upcoming SIG.

If you have an underused drone, are thinking of getting one or if you just want to learn about it, I hope to meet others in the drone SIG!

A quick ask as we near our season's end: Our hope for next year is that we have a full season of participating in external competitions. The Club is known for its strength in competitions which are a key part of many a photographer's journey. We still need volunteers to make this happen. Please contact James Dies at directorat-large1@victoriacameraclub.ca for more information.

Steve Sproston, Acting President

Close-Up Production

by Richard James, Editor

The Club was formed in 1944 and the first known newsletter is dated 13th June 1946. By March 1947 it was produced in an 8.5 x 11" folded format of four pages with the title, "*Close-Up*". Over the years *Close-Up* has been through several iterations with different editors. When I took over as editor in 2008 the format was half size, 8.5 x 5.5", printed in black-and-white with no colour version. Colour came as the next change and we switched to a full-page format in January 2013. By July 2017 we were producing the magazine with the format that you see today.

The editorial objective for *Close-Up* is to present members' work and information about photography that is helpful and educational. All material is normally written by members in the context of "members helping members".

Close-Up is truly a cooperative effort by Club members. In 2021, 63 different members and one non-member wrote articles for *Close-Up*. This number has increased annually over the last four years and represents 25% of the club membership.

Currently the *Close-Up* team comprises nine individuals, the editor, assistant editor (currently vacant), two image editors, two layout editors, and three proofreaders. The intention is to have at least two people capable of doing any task to provide flexibility and coverage for occasions when someone is not available.

There are several key steps in producing *Close-Up*: planning and soliciting articles, pre-editing, page layout, image preparation and proofreading. We try to give authors at least one month to prepare material. From the submission deadline to approving the proof takes approximately three weeks. On submission articles are reviewed and edited for consistency, clarity and technical content. The layout is done using placeholder images so that image preparation can occur concurrently. Timing for the seven issues with competition images is always critical as we cannot request the images until after competition night which is up to six days after the article submission deadline.

Image preparation involves running a script that enhances detail so that when the file is reduced to print size, we retain more of the detail from the original image. We prepare two versions of each image. The sharpening required for our printing process printing is stronger than that required for printing on glossy photo paper and

much stronger than for images to be shown on the Web. Images printed on black-and-white pages need to be converted to greyscale and this is not trivial. "Convert to greyscale" simply does not work. We use Photoshop's black-and-white adjustment layer and may have to adjust the tonality to make different colours with the same luminosity value look different. Black-and-white images printed on colour pages also need to be converted to greyscale mode as RGB does not print as true black.

Adobe's InDesign software for page layout gives us extensive control over positioning, font appearance and the ability to adjust text to give evenly balanced spacing between characters and words. We go through each article adjusting the text to ensure that there are no widows or orphans (single word lines or single lines at the bottom or top of columns). Image positioning is adjusted to fit around the text with images preferably placed adjacent to the text to which they refer. In order to make the text and images fit properly it is frequently necessary to "fine tune" the text. All authors have the opportunity to review their articles before they are finalized.

The most important part of preparing each issue is the proofreading. This is done by two of the three proofreaders. The senior proofreader does all issues, the other two proofreaders do alternate issues. These changes are then incorporated in the final layout which is reviewed before sending to the printer. After approving the proof used for printing all the images and ads are switched to the web-sharpened version and hot-linked text is changed to blue to more clearly identify it as a link. All ads and logos are also hot-linked to their respective websites.

The production process for *Close-Up* has changed significantly over the years. Early issues were typed, duplicated and then had images physically pasted in. By the early 80's images and ads were produced as PMT's (photomechanical transfers) to add to the text pages and printed with an offset-like process. I was a member of the Club from '80-'85. In my last year I was the advertising person for *Close-Up*. This involved both soliciting advertising and producing the copy as the stores that were advertising did not have this ability. The ad copy was produced using Letraset (transfer lettering), paste-up images and then photographed for the PMT. Now, everything is electronic and, believe me, it's a whole lot easier!

The current *Close-Up* team is Richard James (editor), Bobbie Carey, Anne McCarthy and Jane Taylor (proofreaders), Gerry Thompson and Johanna Vanderpol (layout), Lorna Zaback and Wendy Clay (images). To close this off I would just repeat that we have a vacancy on the team for an assistant editor. If you would like to join this essential part of the Club's operation, please contact me.

Black & White Portraits

by Joseph Finkleman

Prior to the invention of photography, portraiture was reserved for the wealthy. With the advent of photography, portraiture became affordable for the middle class. As the industry progressed even people of limited means had access to a portrait done in a portrait studio mill. Early in my career I was an assistant for about five years at a commercial studio, I was used to moving lights around rapidly. I had lighting solutions that gave each portrait a distinct look. The average time for this was 20-30 minutes. I learned classic technique and found that it worked rather well for the myriad of faces in front of my camera. Working for a portrait studio I did approximately 100 sittings a week for two and half years, equating to roughly 10,000 sittings.

For almost 100 years almost all portraiture was black and white, with one exception. Daguerre introduced the daguerreotype process in 1839 but less known is that in 1842 hand tinting of daguerreotypes became feasible. However, it was not until the 1930s that colour film became a commercially viable product. Its popularity took off in the late 1940s and continues to this day.



"Zanya"

Zanya's portrait is so far the one exception to a studio shoot. This is a natural-light outdoor portrait with no reflectors or fill flash. It is however shot at 6400 ISO with a Fuji camera and a 27 mm normal lens.

While some of the early popularity of black and white portraiture can be understood in the better stability of the silver-based film and prints that does not address why black and white portraiture is making a terrific comeback today. We see in colour. We respond to a colour photograph as if it had the same reality as our experiences.

A colour portrait carries with it the same matrix of reality while a black and white image carries an entirely different matrix, an other-worldly experience, a mystery. Black and white carries a timelessness that a colour image can never achieve. Black and white focuses on the aspect of tonal value, not colour. It is an information packet all about the definition of planes written in light. That is the primary strength of all photography, whether colour or black and white, but when we have colour, our minds key on the colour, while our brains key on the tonal values and the impact of tonal value is lessened. Our mind is more dominant than our brain.

Portraiture is not just one thing. You learn to make a pleasing likeness but about 95% of a good portrait is the person's personality pushing themselves through the lens. About 5% is your skill level in lighting, posing, timing careful and composition.

Portraits will portray a specific message, thus a portrait for a head shot is different than a portrait for an ID, an environmental portrait is different for mom than a boudoir portrait is for a lover. The rapport that is crucial to making a successful image is an interesting aspect of the actual sitting. A great deal of trust must be engendered for the subject to feel vulnerable enough to push themselves through the lens. It is this vulnerability that I wanted to work with in order to do my current portrait project.



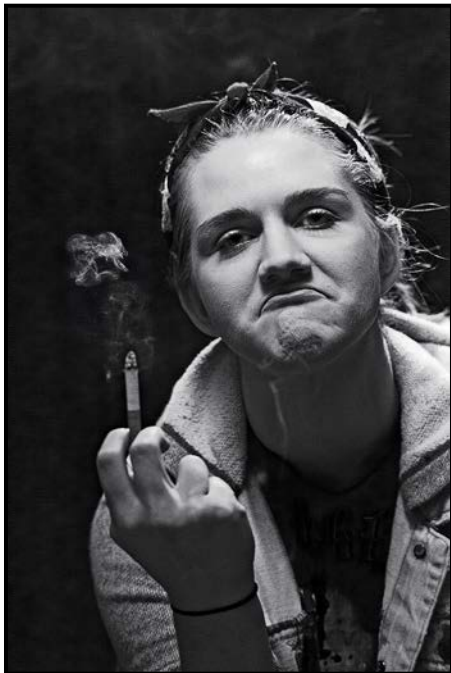
"Jenny"

Jenny's portrait was done with continuous LED lights at 6400 ISO and a Nikon D800e with a 135 mm DC lens. The Nikon DC series of lenses is the most sophisticated portrait lenses made in the last 60 years. The DC designation means defocus control. Translated from the Japanese it could also mean blur control or bokeh control. What it does is this: you set how wide the circles of confusion are going to be in the out-of-focus areas.

What that gives in this case is a portrait shot at f5.6 but an out-of-focus area as if it were shot at f2.

After I make the introduction, I pitch the story that I want. Everyone when they know they are going to interact with the external world puts on their outside face. Some literally paint their face. The choice in clothing, demeanour, even the way we walk, is part of that outside face. That is the first portrait that I want them to give me. The second portrait is that we all have an idea of our inner self. I want the image that portrays that inner self. The third portrait, wildest dreams, is more difficult for some people, easier for others. Thus, for some of these portraits, I have responses only to the first two questions, for others I have all three.

When I pitch this project to a potential subject, I carefully explain that this project will be offered to museums for a possible show. This means that every person that I make an image of needs to sign a model release. I also carefully explain that I am not interested in making a pleasing likeness; I am interested in the story. I think of this project as an assisted selfie. I choose the lighting, the point of view and the timing of the capture but the subject chooses what they wish to show me. In effect they are giving me the gift of their picture. The purpose is for each different person to present to me and the world, their ideas of what answers these three basic questions.



"Sonny"

Sonny's portrait session was interrupted by a telephone call from her very soon to be ex-boyfriend. They had an hour-long argument. When it was over, I asked her about the fight and she recounted the highlights. I asked

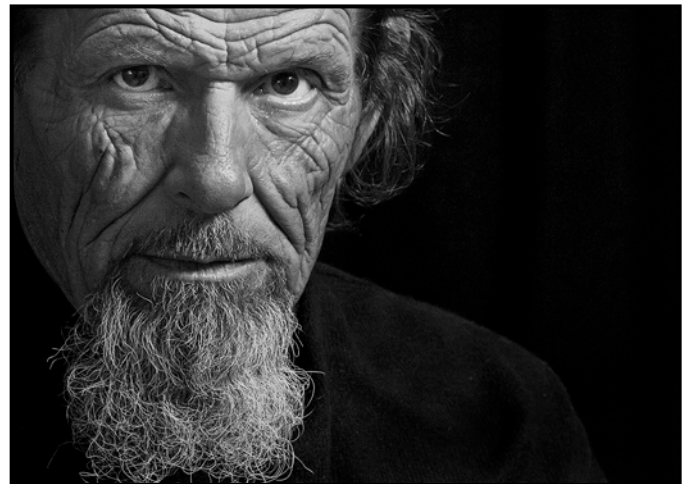
her permission to keep photographing her. This image was done at 6400 ISO.

I like to work in my studio and do these images in a low-key manner. For some images I use Loop Lighting, for some Rembrandt and for others Paramount Lighting. I always work with a three-point lighting setup: a key light, a fill light and a hair light. For most of these images I used continuous light so I could use the motor drive. With continuous light I would shoot at 6400 ISO. These images print at 20x30 inches with no discernible noise at any viewing distance. I generally use a Nikon D800e with a 135 mm DC lens. I shoot at f5.6 and I use daylight-corrected LED lights. I have decided however, to go back to strobes.

I now generally shoot 400-600 images whereas in the past, with film, I would have shot 6-12 images to get what I wanted. The goal always was to shoot three shots if I needed three images. From now on, I have decided to go back to one shot at base ISO with strobes.

Working in black and white means that in order to make a coherent image I need to define all of the planes of, in this case, a human face and or body. Crossing light is better at defining planes than frontal light. Yet we generally need to "open the eyes up" in a portrait which is why we use a fill light from as close to the camera position as is possible. And finally in order to separate the body or head from the background we create a penumbra of light that breaks the person away from the background.

Learning how to define planes in tonal value is so valuable that I always recommend that a beginner, if they are serious about photography works for at least one year in black and white only.



"Phil"

The final shot is of Phil, a musician. He is passionate about what he does, be it making music or as a documentary filmmaker. This image was shot at 6400 ISO.

April Workshops

by Jim Fowler

On April 4th, Richard James will present a workshop on focus stacking. All of you know Richard as the driving force behind *Close-Up* but newer members might not know that Richard has had a hand in virtually every aspect of this Club over many years. A regular contributor to various SIG's, competing member, field-trip leader, print-show planner, workshop instructor and former Club VP, there is no member who has contributed more to this Club than Richard. When it comes to technical know-how, Richard always approaches a subject with precision and thoroughness.

Why should you learn focus stacking? It is one small part of learning to control what you produce with your camera. If you want a crystal sharp frame-filling image of a mushroom or a wildflower, perfectly in focus from front to rear, you need to learn focus stacking. Maybe you will want to take sharply-focused foreground, mid-ground and background photos for landscape. Focus stacking can make it happen. Image stacking can also be used to reduce noise, to remove unwanted objects and for astrophotography, in addition to macro and landscape photography.

You should have a basic knowledge of your camera, know how to manually set aperture and focus and know the marker for the sensor plane. (This is the point from which you measure the distance to your subject.) You should also know the best focusing technique for your camera. Generally, live view with electronic magnification allows the most precise focusing.

Lens choices will depend on what you are shooting. Macro (or "micro") lenses are designed for close focusing but short lenses generally are capable of focusing on close subjects and longer lenses with an extension tube can also allow the lens to focus on closer subjects. Older cameras will require you to take a series of photos with varying focus points on your subject from near to far. Newer high-end cameras have in-camera focus stacking. You set the parameters and the camera makes the adjustments. Richard will cover use of a focus rail, which allows for re-positioning of the camera instead of re-focusing. For post-capture, Richard will cover both Photoshop focus stacking and special focus stacking software. Helicon Focus and Zerene Stacker come to mind.

The Zoom portion of Richard's workshop will have no limit to the number of participants. After the zoom

portion, Richard will conduct in-person instruction for groups limited to eight persons per session. Tripods and remote shutter releases will be helpful. Focus stacking is one of those photographic staples that all photographers should know.

Then on April 8th, join the Inter-Club Speakers Series for an evening with Joe McNally. Joe is an internationally acclaimed, award-winning photojournalist and commercial photographer. He is fearless in his choices of location, prepares thoroughly and uses flawless technique in the photographing of mostly extreme realism. You may have seen his work in National Geographic, Life and Sports Illustrated. He is famous for his dynamic portraits of world-class athletes. From Hollywood to the sciences, welders to dancers, Olympics to street basketball, little people to living tattoos, slum roof-tops to multi-level cities, Joe has done it all.

This will not be an evening of "artsy" blurs and abstracts, but if you want to see unflinching and impeccable realism with a tendency toward the strong and the brave, covering everything from military training to motherhood, this is for you. With the easing of COVID rules, Joe is resuming workshops. Catch him now while he is still Zooming.

Finally, on April 29th, T.J. Thorne will explain to us why there is "No Such Thing as Bad Light". You must have heard photographers say that during the time between the revealing light of morning and the golden light of evening, there is little point in even taking out your camera. Bryan Peterson, for example, in his "Understanding Photography" field guide, refers to the "often harsh and flat light of the midday sun". T. J. will present his approach to that mid-day "crappy" light.

Based in Oregon, T.J. is a fine art and landscape photographer. Like us, he lives in a west-coast rain-forest environment, and so is used to photographing in visually-chaotic places. His approach, he says, is to open his heart and find simplicity. Does it work? Take a look at his theme-based galleries. You can find them at tjthornephoto.com. If you have taken any rain-forest shots, you know how "messy" they can be. I recommend his forest and tree work: see what he does with the complexity. Look at "Trust and Love - Upper Butte Creek Falls". See how he uses light and shade to control where we look in the photo and see how the complexity disappears in pattern and understatement, leaving a central highlight to anchor the image. He is resuming his in-person workshops in 2022. From June 8th to 12th he will lead a workshop entitled "Wonders of Olympic National Park". See what he is all about on April 25th, 2022. Check the Club Web page for details.

Tech Tips: Motion Blur

by Richard James

Even if you are using a high shutter speed there are some circumstances where motion blur is still visible. The typical examples are images that include very fast-moving parts of the subject such as aircraft propellers or helicopter rotor blades. In these cases, the moving parts may be blurred or show as curved instead of straight.

At the February Members' Night Bill Cubitt discussed an interesting twist on the topic of motion blur. Motion blur occurs when the shutter speed is not high enough to stop motion in part or all of the subject. Traditionally, in the days of film, you would calculate the allowable blur (circle of confusion) for an object at a given distance and speed and make sure that the shutter speed was high enough that the motion of a point on the film did not exceed that value.

While this worked very well for leaf shutters (installed in the lens of fixed-lens and view cameras) there was a problem with focal plane shutters. The focal plane shutter works by moving two "curtains" across the film or sensor where the speed of movement plus the width of the gap between the curtains determines the length of time the film or sensor is exposed to light. The wider the gap, the longer the exposure.

Now we are in the digital age and there is another variable to consider. Most still cameras use CMOS sensors which read out the information one row of pixels at a time. This is known as a "rolling shutter". This means there is a finite time between reading the top and bottom rows of the sensor. CCD sensors on the other hand read the entire exposure at once and do not suffer from this electronic lag. This is known as a "global shutter".

If the shutter curtains are fully open for most of the exposure, which implies a slow shutter speed, then the main consideration is the sensor readout time.

But using a fast shutter speed no longer eliminates the problem. The time that the sensor readout takes is not trivial. For CMOS sensors it is about 10 ms (1/100th second) depending on the camera brand and model. So even though the exposure time may be quite high this lag can impact the final image.

How you take the image also has an impact. One way of shooting moving subjects, particularly if they are moving across the frame, is to pan which is to move

the camera to follow the subject keeping it in the same place in the frame as the exposure is made. This is a good way to freeze the moving subject but it results in distortion of fixed objects.

The other way is simply to use a high enough shutter speed that the movement is essentially frozen. So long as the shutter speed is high enough the blur aspect will not be noticed. However, distortion may still occur due to the rolling shutter effect.



"Rolling Shutter – Movement towards Camera"

by Bill Cubitt

The two images in this article illustrate this. In the image above the subject is moving towards the camera meaning that if the subject is close there is sufficient movement that the image will be stretched. This is most obvious in the hands of the player. In this image the camera was being panned at a high shutter speed but both near and far parts of the image are skewed diagonally.

In the image below it may not be immediately obvious in the players; they could just be "caught" in that position as they are running but it is quite obvious in the background. To minimise this, try to get a more uniform background and use a wider aperture to give a stronger blur to the background.



"Rolling Shutter – Panning" by Bill Cubitt

September Theme: Friends

by Lorna Zaback

A friend, according to Webster's Dictionary, is "one attached to another by affection or esteem", or "a favoured companion". When the Internal Competitions Committee met to decide on themes for the 2022-23 competition year we decided on "Friendship" for September 2022. Since we have all spent the past couple of years under COVID restrictions, isolated from family and friends we have missed that in-person contact. We thought it might be a good time to think about what friendship means to each of us and to start collecting photos for the September Theme competition that depict affectionate attachment. As COVID restrictions start to be removed, opportunities to capture images of friendship will hopefully increase.

As we know, friendship isn't limited to human connection. Consider photographing tender interactions between humans and animals or birds. My friend in Vancouver has a crow that visits and chats with her daily. Many animals or birds form close, sometimes lifelong, attachments. Consider entering bear cubs playing, horses nuzzling, gannets intertwined and more into this competition. As is always the case in competitions, judges will be evaluating images for technical quality (light, colour balance, exposure, sharpness, etc.), compositional elements (space, cropping, distractions), emotional impact and imaginative presentation/story telling). Here is an opportunity to move beyond the "snapshot" to focus on creating a unique image that depicts affection, playfulness, closeness: friendship.



"Best Friends"

February 2022 Competition Judges

We sincerely thank our external judges listed below for the February Intermediate and Advanced digital competitions and Advanced print competitions.

We also extend thanks to our in-house judges for the Novice digital competitions: Pam Irvine, Lorna Zaback and Nicci Tyndall. Images and judges' comments are available at: victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx.

Francois Cleroux: Altered Reality. Francois currently lives in Delta and is a CAPA-certified judge and a past-president of the Delta Photo Club. He has worked in fashion and wildlife photography. Francois lectures and teaches photography workshops and classes.

Wes Bergen: Nature. Wes has been a keen amateur photographer for 45 years. He has been a member of the Lions Gate Camera Club and NAPA and CAPA for almost as long. Wes has taught Photoshop and is a frequent judge and presents workshops at local photography clubs and seminars.

Karen Stoyles: Open. Karen lives in Brantford, Ontario and is a member of the Brant Camera Club. Her photographic interests lie with wildflower, macro and creative photography. Karen has been judging photography for ten years for camera clubs, local organizations and fairs. You can find some of her beautiful images on Flickr.

Robert Laramee: People. Robert lives in Ottawa and photographs landscape, architecture, tabletop and portraiture. As well as being a CAPA certified judge, he has taught photography for the City of Ottawa and at Academie des retraites de Outaouais, conducted workshops and done private coaching and mentoring.

Larry Brietkreutz: Theme (Song Title). Larry has enjoyed the inspiration and challenge of all types of artistic images, whether created with the camera, software, or brush and paint for over 35 years. He is a CAPA-certified judge and teaches photography courses for Surrey Recreation. He is currently the Past-President of CAPA.

Mitch Stringer: Advanced Prints (Monochrome, Nature, Open). Mitch is a freelance photographer based in Victoria, BC, working in a variety of genres. He has led many destination workshops around the world. Mitch has over 30 years of experience teaching at Camosun College, the former Western Academy of Photography, as well as presenting many workshops and presentations to groups and corporations.

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Advanced Altered Reality - 2nd
"Captured in Ice" by Normand Marcotte

Judge's Comments: Rudolf is dead? A very dark image, literally and mentally. The subject matter is dark and obviously its not a reindeer, but the white snow-like effect of the water/ice treatment gives the image a 'Christmas-like' feel making one think of Rudolf. The image is nicely composed, and the very dark canvas plays well into the image. The 'ice' is well done. The natural looking dark vignette works well as does the choice of black frame that one would find in old images. I want this for my Christmas cards!!



Advanced Nature - 1st
"Red Rock Coulee" by Bill Cubitt

Judge's Comments: Wonderful late pre-sunset lighting with excellent colour saturation. An interesting sky. Very nice division of space and placement of foreground elements.



Advanced Open - 3rd
"Grace and Athleticism" by Gordon Griffiths

Judge's Comments: Perfect mid-air capture of the dancer. Technical elements handled effectively. The image conveys a good story at the peak of the action. Nicely done.



Advanced People - 1st
"Am I Pretty?" by Lorna Scott

Judge's Comments: A superb portrait of this beautiful lady. Very nice soft light from both sides providing good separation from the background. Beautiful palette of colours. A great composition.



Advanced Theme - 3rd
"Imagine" by Cindy Stephenson

Judge's Comments: An imaginative image created with a lot of care and attention to detail. Powerful story. One of the many strong compositional elements is the guitar in the top right to balance the strong visual weight of the figure on the left.



Advanced Nature Print - 2nd
"Superb Hunter" by Kathryn Delany

Judge's Comments: Excellent sharpness. Great blur background. A very good moment, the eye contact is excellent. Great print values. A very nice image/great capture. Well done.



Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
"Camel Thorn Trees, Namibia" by Steve Barber

Judge's Comments: A very strong image! The print values are very good for the most part. Well done.



Advanced Open Print - 1st
"Red and Blue Architecture" by Richard James

Judge's Comments: Super! Excellent print values, excellent sharpness, great use of colours. Strong lines/shapes. Excellent verticals and horizontals. Beautiful capture of shape and form! Well Done!



Intermediate Open - 1st
"The Dark Chord" by Alec Lee

Judge's Comments: A lovely image with effective lighting and strong composition that conveys a good story. Nicely done.



Intermediate Altered Reality - 1st
"Pair on the Point" by Maureen Reid

Judge's Comments: Beautiful abstract with great colour contrast. Placement of one bright red spot in the top right helps to balance the heavy visual weight of the lower left corner.



Intermediate Nature - 1st
"Lift Off" by David Russell

Judge's Comments: Well-captured action with mud droplets crisply shown. Excellent shadow detail in the subject. A pleasing background.



Intermediate People - 1st
"Sitting in Centennial Square" Ian Clay

Judge's Comments: A very nice strong portrait. The character is interesting, and his pose makes the photo very dynamic. Good use of black and white. Good use of depth-of-field. Excellent composition.



Intermediate Theme - 1st

"Scarborough Fair (Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme) by Simon and Garfunkel" by Heather Thompson

Judge's Comments: Lovely clean image with great contrast, sharp subjects nicely composed across the picture space.



Novice Theme - 1st

"Here Comes the Sun" by Jane Williams

Judge's Comments: Lovely photo of a sunrise over the water with the mountains in the background. The old wooden pilings add interest to the photo. This photo instills an emotional reaction, strong composition, lovely lighting, strong colours, and sharpness overall. The panoramic crop is effective.




Novice Open - 2nd

"Snowy Dallas Road" by Stephanie Benoit

Judge's Comments: This is a beautiful, peaceful winter scene. We wouldn't necessarily associate this with Victoria, it looks more like rural Quebec. Well spotted! Effective composition with the path leading us into the frame. Good tonal range and soft lighting.

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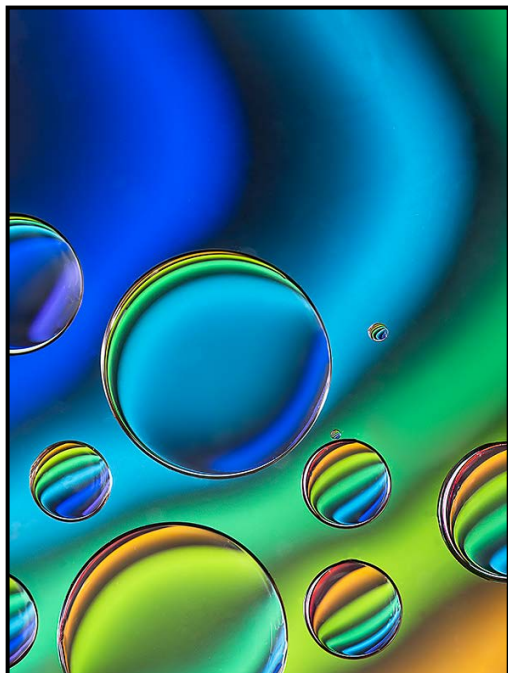
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Oil and Water Drops

by Lois Burton

Drops of oil floating on the surface of water is a fairly easy classic subject for macro photography which is easy to do and creates some extremely colourful abstract images. The technical equipment requires only a camera, tripod, macro lens or extension tubes and an off-camera light source.



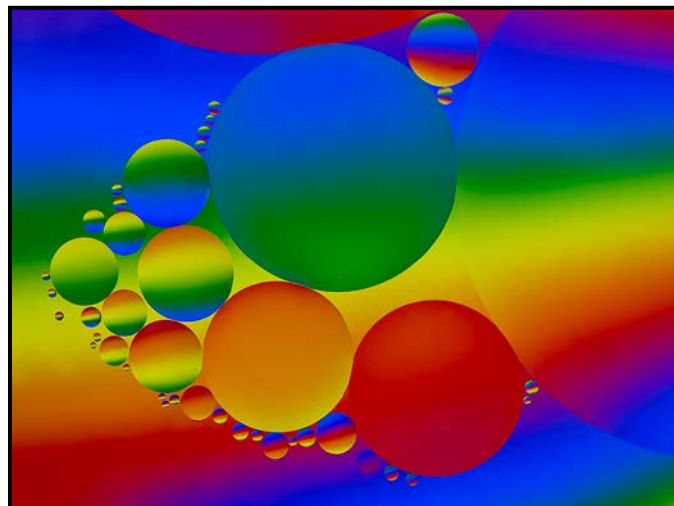
“Orbiting” 3D Bubbles - Oil and Detergent

Your camera will be shooting directly down onto the oil drops so a tripod that allows you to set up the centre column in a horizontal position is best. The rest of what you need are common household items, a shallow glass container with no logos or markings on the bottom, water, oil, liquid detergent and an assortment of colourful backgrounds such as fabric, wrapping paper, coloured paper or printed backgrounds. The background will be out of focus so the emphasis when choosing your background should be on stronger colours that add a greater degree of contrast and depth.

Providing distance between the bottom of the glass container and your background will soften and blur out the background. This can easily be done by suspending the container above your background between two objects of equal height, such as stacks of books or blocks of wood.

I use a sheet of glass from a picture frame placed over 10 cm high blocks of wood above my background. This has several benefits. It prevents the background from getting wet, it allows you to move the background

around while shooting and you can easily change backgrounds. More importantly it allows an off camera light source to be directed onto the background.



“Kaleidoscope” Oil on Water

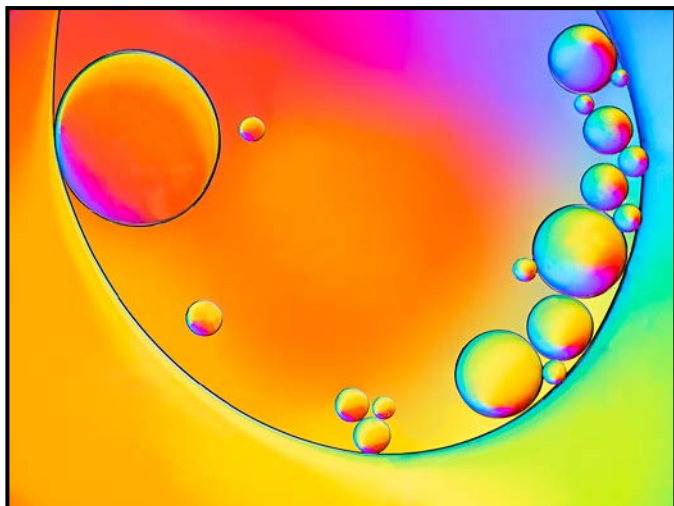
The first step is to fill the container with water and add some cooking oil. Oil is less dense than water and will rise to the top of the container creating drops of oil in a variety of sizes. The relative amount of oil to water is a personal choice and depends on what look you are going for. Less oil creates more negative space around the bubbles and more oil will create numerous bubbles to fill the space.

Any type of oil will work: olive oil, canola and other cooking oils but I found that they produced amber coloured bubbles. Baby oil is colourless and works equally as well. I use distilled water to a depth of 2-3 cm in a 15x20 cm glass dish.

To add the oil, you can use a teaspoon or eyedropper but by using a syringe and needle (available at your pharmacy or on-line) you have control over both the placement and size of the drops creating some wonderful waterdrop structures.

Adding a drop of liquid detergent to the water will change the properties of the oil bubbles making them more translucent and giving them a nice three-dimensional appearance. In images taken without adding liquid detergent, the drops appear to be quite flat and they merge into each other on contact, producing very large drops.

Once your camera and lens are mounted on your tripod, make sure that the plane of the lens is parallel to your container. A bubble spirit level that fits on the hotshoe of your camera is ideal for this purpose. You need to make sure that your focus is sharp. Set your camera to manual focus using live view and focus on the bubbles ensuring



“Halfpipe” Oil and Detergent

that the details are sharp and in focus. I sometimes float a piece of printed paper on the top of the water before adding the oil and focus on the lettering to ensure sharp focus. Since the water and oil bubbles are on the same focal plane your entire image should be in focus.

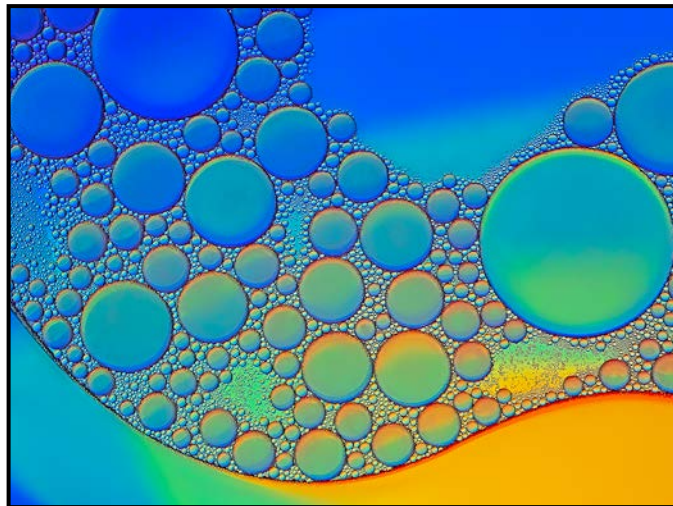


“Equipment Setup”

It is very easy for the light source to create distracting reflections on the bubbles when the light is aimed directly on them. I use two dimmable LED lamps on each side just below the sheet of glass to illuminate just the background. It is still difficult to avoid some blown-out areas.

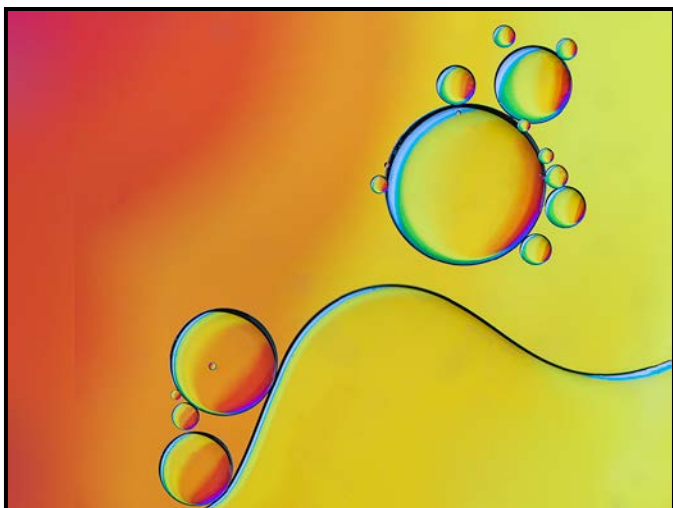
My equipment includes a Canon 5D Mark III with a cable release and a 100 mm f2.8 macro lens fitted with both 12- and 36-mm extension tubes for closer focusing ability. Set the camera to manual mode with an aperture of f7, ISO 200. The shutter speed depends on the lighting conditions and colour of the background. This can range from 1/80th to 1/4th of a second.

You will find after a while that the oil will migrate to the sides of your glass container and out of view of the camera. Some articles suggest gently stirring the mixture with



“Shoreline” Oil and More Detergent

a spoon but I have found that this creates many tiny unwanted air bubbles and causes considerable post-processing work to remove them. Instead, you can use the syringe needle to pull the oil away from the edges causing it to reform into various new sizes and shape. Post-production in Photoshop includes boosting the contrast, clarity and saturation to make the colours pop a little more, cloning out any dust particles or blurry drops and finally applying an unsharp mask.

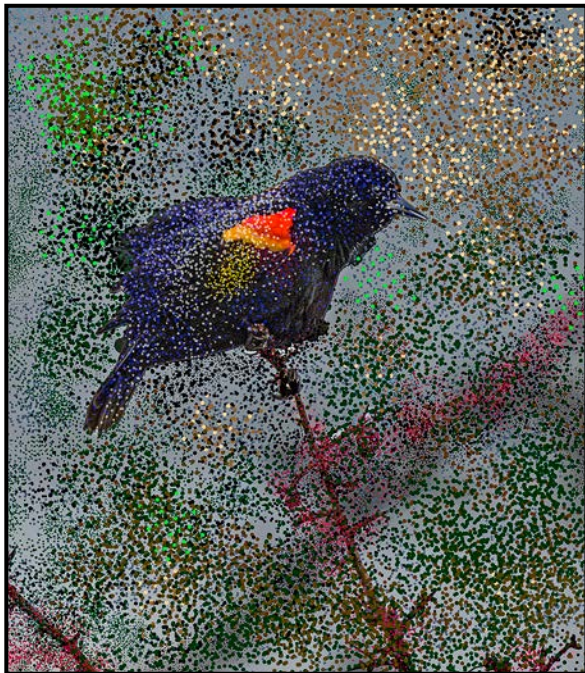


“Over the Edge” Oil and More Detergent

Here are a few tips: Stabilize the back leg of your tripod with a bag of flour, rice or ankle weights. Carefully clean your container with a microfibre cloth to eliminate lint and dust. Inevitably spills happen so have paper towels or a rag close at hand. Dust will settle on the top of your oil/water mixture and will be visible in your finished images so, to avoid considerable post-production work, change your oil and water mixture frequently and cover the container if you are going to take a break from shooting. Change things and try shooting water on oil, instead of oil on water. No two shots will be the same. Have fun!

Member Profile: Jim Fowler

My early history with photography was pretty standard. It began with family snapshots with a child's point-and-shoot camera, followed in succession by better cameras, SLRs, first digital cameras and DSLRs. Like most VCC Members, my family and career took precedence, relegating photography to keeping a family record during those busy years. I was lucky though to visit art galleries from Vancouver to Ottawa to Montreal to London to Munich to Paris, implanting images by Paul Klee and Tom Thompson and many others into my memory.



"Pointilism or Splatter Paint?"

Eventually my family grew up, I retired and joined the Victoria Camera Club. For the first time I had access to workshops and inspiration, and time to pursue them. Photography was a perfect fit: I always loved the "click" of the shutter, and pictures are not words. Pictures never argue. After 31 years of litigation I was sick of words.

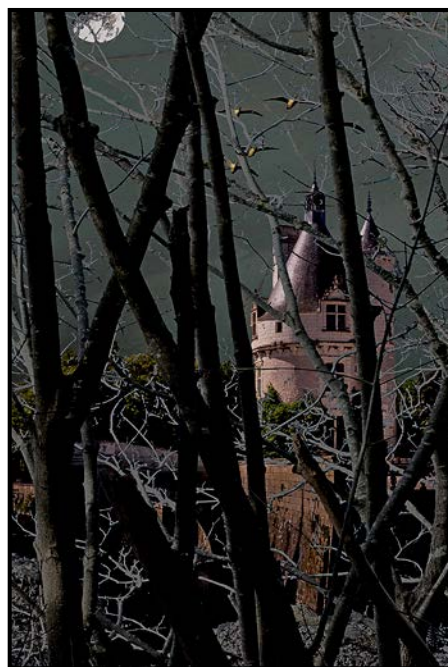
I never really knew there was a connection between my love of art and my interest in photography. Luckily for me, I decided to learn as much as I could about composition. It was a fortunate choice because in searching for information on composition, it was unavoidable that I would notice that composition in art and photography followed the same principles. What a joy it was to use a painting by Claude Monet and a photo by Henri Cartier-Bresson in the same discussion. I am not advocating the study of composition. The way I see it, the trick is to pursue whatever works for you. Maybe you need to win competitions. Maybe you are a technical hound sniffing eagerly at every new piece of equipment. To each his own.

Currently, my attention (dare I say my "focus"?) is on the resulting picture which may or may not resemble whatever I saw that caused me to initially take a picture. It is said that we each accumulate a unique library of visual data during a lifetime of observation. One person might have a special fascination with stairs, another with feet or maybe a colour, and so on.



"The Reader"

Images resonate with pictures we have tucked away in our data banks since we first opened our eyes. Pictures long forgotten by our chattering consciousness but still resident as images to be awakened, can resonate in an instant, the way memory can be triggered by a long-forgotten perfume. We may not know quite why we are drawn but the attraction is compelling. Finding an image that is pleasing is like falling in love: it cannot be engineered, and we may never know why, but it surely is a beautiful journey.



"The Secret Castle"

Focus Rails

by Roger Botting

One of the areas that photographers look at but rarely explore in depth is close-up photography. Usually, it's just "Get as close as your lens permits" and that's it. Eventually some will explore photographing flowers, insects and smaller items. This starts wandering into the realm of higher technical skills and the need for precision work where the need for steady support and positioning becomes glaringly obvious.

With higher subject magnification the ability to focus accurately becomes a matter of millimeters or less. At a 1:1 ratio, the range of sharp focus can be a matter of 1 or 2 mm and moving the camera into the ideal position is a struggle.

Depth of focus becomes even smaller at higher magnifications to the point that the plane becomes paper thin. Modern software allows the macro photographer to take a series of photographs and stack or blend the in-focus parts into one image (Helicon Focus and Zerene Stacker for example).

Some digital cameras have the ability to take a series of photographs while adjusting the lens focus between shots. External camera controllers such as Timelapse+ and phone or tablet software such as Helicon Remote will do this provided the camera and lens combination allows external control of the camera.

Let's discuss another tool, the focusing rail. This lets you move your camera in precise measured amounts. Using a focusing rail will allow you to move your camera back and forth to the subject. There are three basic types. One is the expensive automated Cognisys Stackshot and its imitators. That's outside my budget but most de-



"Rack and Pinion Rail"

sirable. The other two are types of manual control focusing rails. Both types of manual rails have a knob-driven mechanism that allows for precision-controlled movements. They vary mostly in how the rail is driven. Build quality shouldn't really be a concern unless you obtain a damaged one or one with cheap plastic moldings.

One type has a rack and pinion movement that uses a pinion gear perpendicular to a toothed rack. Rotating the pinion gear moves the carriage back and forth along the rack. Solid, pretty simple and lots of cheap and not so cheap examples are in the marketplace. I use a 1980's vintage Soligar. The other type uses a lead screw which is set up parallel to the movement of the carriage. Turning the screw moves the carriage to and from to the subject. I have a Fittest brand rail and NISI makes a very similar rail.



"Lead Screw Rail"

They both achieve the same results but for one difference, the ability to have fine control over movement. If I need to move the camera 1 mm between each shot with my rack and pinion rail one rotation of the adjustment knob moves the carriage 25 mm. This requires that I rotate the knob $\frac{1}{25}$ th of a rotation. If I need 25 shots, that will mean turning the knob $\frac{1}{25}$ th of a rotation 25 times. A bit hard to do accurately by hand unless you set up some sort of calibration or reduction gear mechanism. With my lead screw rail system, each rotation of the control knob moves the carriage 1.25 mm, making a 25 mm movement requires an easier 20 rotations.

Now suppose you are photographing the eye of an insect at 4x magnification. The depth of field is so small that each movement needs to be 0.25 mm. Can you turn a pinion knob 3.6 degrees in an accurate and repeatable motion? Or is it easier to turn the lead screw $\frac{1}{5}$ th of a turn?

There is a focus-stacking workshop on April 4th that will include the use of focus rails.

Measuring Camera Performance

by Neil Schemenauer

This article will introduce how camera systems can be evaluated using Modulation Transfer Function (MTF) analysis. The details of the method are complicated but the basic idea is not. It is possible to self-test your camera system and get a better sense of how it performs.

Testing is usually done using greyscale targets and what is being modulated (i.e., changed) is the brightness value of image pixels. The transfer function is a mathematical model of the process of taking the original target pattern and producing an image of it. If the camera system was perfect, the transfer function would be one-to-one.



“Example of Contrast Reduction Due to Blurring”

Real camera systems are not perfect and detail is progressively lost as the pattern becomes finer. The figure above shows a simulation of detail loss due to blurring. The left patch has full contrast (100%) between black and white lines. The center patch is partially blurred and has reduced contrast (approximately 50%). The right patch is completely blurred and has no contrast (0%). When MTF is presented as a single number it is typically given as the line pair spacing that produces 50% contrast. If MTF is shown on a chart, the relative contrast (e.g. 100% to 0%) is typically plotted on the y-axis. The x-axis is the distance from the center of the lens.

Most lens manufacturers publish MTF charts for their products. You can find instructions on how to read those charts by searching online for “MTF lens charts”. There is some value in doing your own testing. Not every lens is identical and the performance of the lens depends on the camera body it is mounted on. Testing does not involve any expensive or exotic equipment.

An online search will find a number of MTF test charts that can be printed and used for self-tests. The example shown below is from Norman Koren’s web site.

For my testing I used the “sinusoidal” pattern on the top row. It varies gradually from fully black to fully white and

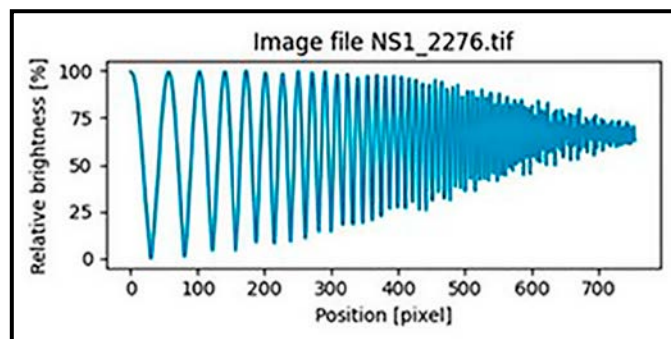


“Example Section of a MTF Testing Target”

the detail gets finer from left to right. The sinusoidal pattern is useful if you are using a computer program to compute the MTF. When visually assessing results (by eye), a hard-edged pattern, like in the third row, is more useful.

Capturing images of the target takes some care. It must be the correct distance from the camera, depending on sensor size and focal length. The target must be mounted as flat and parallel with the focal plane as possible to avoid being out of focus. A sturdy tripod is needed since even a small amount of camera shake will compromise sharpness. Use a shutter release process that avoids shaking (e.g., a remote or timer and use mirror-up or the electronic shutter feature if available). Flash can be used if required to provide adequate light.

Data extracted from one of my test images is shown below. Plotted on the y-axis is the brightness of the sinusoidal pattern from the top row of the target. The spacing of the black lines gets finer from left to right.



“MTF Graph”

To compute the MTF at 50% value, I wrote some custom software. It finds the position where the brightness varies at 50% of the maximum variation. For the image above that’s near the 550-pixel point. The cycle period at that point can be determined by measuring the number of pixels from one peak to the next.

Traditionally, MTF is given in units of line pairs per distance on the film, e.g., lp/mm. A line pair corresponds to a complete cycle. Using the sensor pixel pitch, the cycle period in pixels can be converted to standard units. Recently, MTF is often given in units of cycles per picture height, e.g., cy/ph. That’s more useful when comparing digital cameras with various sensor sizes.

Open-source and commercial software packages are available to extract MTF values from images. One example is “mtf mapper”. Or, you can do the evaluation without software by visually examining the image. On the Norman Koren chart there is a 50% contrast strip that can be used to judge the point at which the contrast drops to that level. The MTF value can then be read directly from the chart (assuming you printed at

the correct size and positioned the target the correct distance away).

Some results from my testing are summarized below. All tests were done at an aperture of f4.

Brand	Lens model	Camera	Image Size	Freq lp/mm
A Nikon	85 mm f1.8 G	D850	Large	81
B Nikon	85 mm f1.8 G	D850	Medium	46
C Nikon	85 mm f1.8 G	D850	Small	46
D Nikon	85 mm f1.8 G	D750	Large	38
E Nikon	24-120 mm f4 G VR	D850	Large	47
F Nikon	70-200 mm f4 G VR	D850	Large	56
G Tamron	45 mm f1.8 G VR	D850	Large	61
H Tamron	15-30 mm f2.8 G VR	D850	Large	70

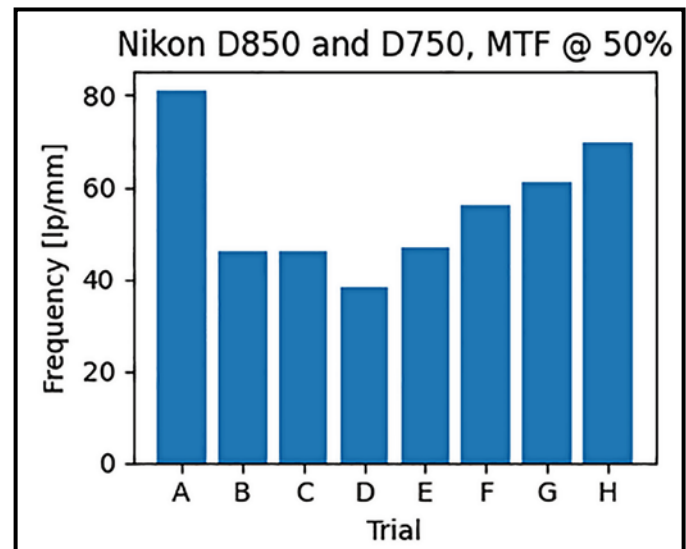
Some comments on my results:

- The 85 mm prime lens performed best. For its cost, it has excellent performance.
- The medium and small raw file sizes of the D850 significantly degrade performance. The file size for a small raw is about half of a large raw. It could be useful in certain situations like shooting hand-held photos at a social event. 46 lp/mm is still plenty of detail for most photos.
- The 24-120 mm f4 zoom lens seems well matched with the Nikon D750 body. However, on the D850 body the lens appears to limit the sharpness of the camera system.
- Likewise, the sharpness of the 85 mm f1.8 G lens seems more than adequate for the D750 body. Upgrading to a more expensive lens, like the 85 mm f1.4 G on the D750, would likely result in only minor improvements to the sharpness of this camera.

MTF charts from lens manufactures typically show how sharpness varies across the lens, from the center moving outward. Usually a lens is sharpest at the center and softest at the edge. My self-tests were all done at a fixed distance from the center of the lens.

Testing was done at f4. A smaller aperture could improve sharpness by giving more depth of field. However, at small apertures, diffraction becomes a limit. Lenses generally have a sharpness "sweet spot" that is typically about 2 or 3 stops smaller than wide open.

For smaller digital sensors, diffraction becomes limiting sooner than you might guess. A one inch sensor is likely diffraction limited at f11. Even if you have a larger full-frame sensor you probably don't want to be shooting landscape images at small apertures like f22. While that



"Test Comparison"

aperture gives you a lot of depth of field, the photo is likely to be significantly blurred by diffraction effects.

These MTF values cannot be compared to published tests as the conditions are not the same. This kind of testing is evaluating only one aspect of the camera system and in artificial conditions. Having the camera on a sturdy tripod, eliminating shutter release shake and getting near-perfect focus is often not possible. There are lots of other things that go into making great photos.



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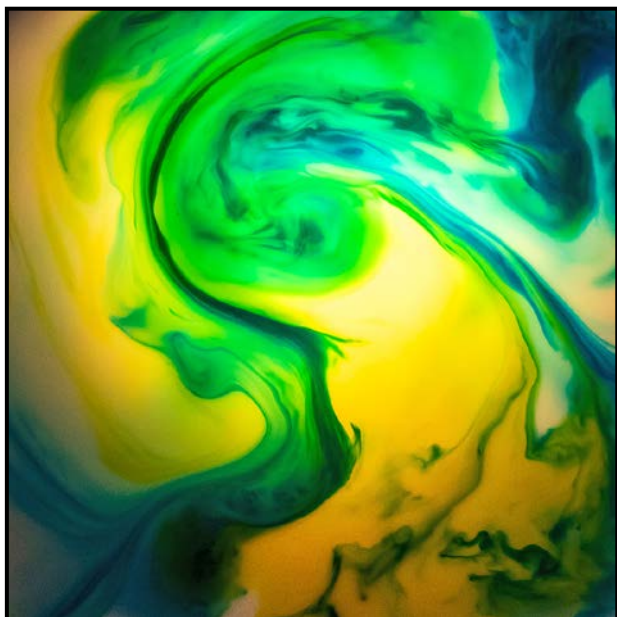
How I Did It

Colouring Milk

by Richard Letourneau

One overcast February day I decided to stay indoors and conduct a little creative experiment. I decided to do some table-top photography using items found around my home.

First of all, I gathered my gear: a Canon R5 camera body, an RF 35 mm f1.8 lens, and my Manfrotto tripod. Other equipment I used included a couple of empty lens boxes, a shallow, circular glass dish, some milk, food colouring, olive oil, toothpicks and a flex-necked LED desk lamp.



I used the lens boxes to create a base for the glass dish. I positioned the LED lamp such that it was in the space between the box “frame”, with the light shining directly up through the glass dish. The camera, on the tripod, was aimed directly down into the dish. I poured about five cm of milk into the transparent glass dish. When I turned on the LED lamp I was surprised to see the milk was a rather dark opaque yellow colour.

I then randomly placed drops of red, green, yellow, and blue food colouring into the milk. I gently swirled the colours with a toothpick to create different patterns. I quickly realized that using all four colours at once created an unpleasant mess so I dumped that batch and tried again being more cautious with the number of drops and choosing colours which would complement each other. For some photos I added a few drops of oil which dispersed the colours in certain areas. I created eight pleasing and unique photographs.

Victoria Cityscape

by Cindy Stephenson

For me, an unexpected outcome of the pandemic was the opportunity to learn Photoshop through online classes with Sharon Tenenbaum. As a result, I’ve become better at seeing photographic opportunities, and then being able to execute my vision. It goes without saying that I still have a long way to go but in the meantime, the journey has been fun!

In this image I wanted to create a long-exposure panorama of Victoria’s Inner Harbour. The walkway in front of Laurel Point is a good spot for this. At the time the clouds weren’t that interesting but I knew I could jazz them up in post-processing. I also planned to create a reflection of the city skyline to fill in some of the foreground and add interest.



Step one was to create the reflection. There are a number of videos available online that go through the process step by step. From there it just takes a bit of practice. It’s a bit like learning how to replace a sky. The trickiest part for me with this image of the Inner Harbour is that the horizon is not a straight line.

Step two was the sky. The clouds in my original image were patchy and not evenly distributed. The most interesting cloud formations were on the right-hand side of the image. Could I select the right half of the sky, duplicate it, flip it, and then slide it along to the left-hand side of the image? That’s exactly what I did. It was then a matter of blending the images together to create a seamless transition.

It’s taken me a bit of time to learn Photoshop however, it has given me a lot more freedom as a photographer to try new and creative approaches. This has opened up a whole new world of possibilities. Rather than individual images I have also become more project focused in my photography and I find this immensely satisfying.

This image is a cropped version of the banner image on page 3 and was also the website banner.

Shoots Around Victoria

Scrap Metal Yard

by James Dies

Photographers can find shooting gold in the ugliest of places. Just because something is thrown away because someone thinks it has no purpose anymore doesn't mean it's useless for instance, at an old scrap metal and junk yard. If you're a professional photographer or an enthusiastic amateur there is always something interesting to shoot at these places. It can be a story about human nature, environmental issues or the passage of time. All it takes is a little imagination and a creative mind.

Our Club is arranging a field trip to Brentwood Auto and Metal Recyclers at 7481 W Saanich Road in Saanichton on Friday, April 8th from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm. It has to be during the week as they are closed on the weekends. Check the Club website calendar for details when it gets posted. Before you head out be aware this is a junkyard and consider your safety. Number one is to wear waterproof comfortable shoes. These places usually have mud roads and muddy puddles to navigate. If you have steel toed boots, all the better. Number two is that there are usually forklifts and other vehicle traffic buzzing around the surroundings.



"Bear on Wrecked Tractor"

Junkyards are a contradiction sometimes. It can be out-of-place, something different or intriguing. You never know what you will find as the junkyard is dynamic,

changing from day to day. I like the idea of nature fighting back against human waste and detritus. You might see a beautiful flower trying to bloom between a pile of scrap metal or a discarded doll against some other scrap, wondering what its story is, or a shiny piece of chrome on a rusting-out old car. Junkyards typically sort their scrap into piles of different kinds. There might be piles of car radiators, or batteries, radiator grills or other types of junk. They can make interesting abstract photos if they are stacked symmetrically or some orderly way. The idea is to tell a story.



"Do Not Dump Here"

We have seen photos by professionals who have a beautiful model posing against a pile of trash. If you don't have any friends as models to pose for you, ask one of your buddies on the field trip to pose for you. Instead of a model, bring a small delicate, beautiful prop of your own. Use your imagination and try to think of something very unusual that would be out-of-place in a scrap yard. I'm bringing a cute little teddy bear and placing him amongst the trash.

Another great idea is to do black and white photography. Black and white is always good for creating pathos, ironic moods and feelings. It creates a sense of a time since past. To get some ideas for your shots, here are a few websites for you to study: [gettyimages.ca/photos/junkyard](https://www.gettyimages.ca/photos/junkyard) and www.pinterest.ca/dirtyworkaustin/junk-yard-photos. Another good one is: fineartamerica.com/art/photographs/junkyard.

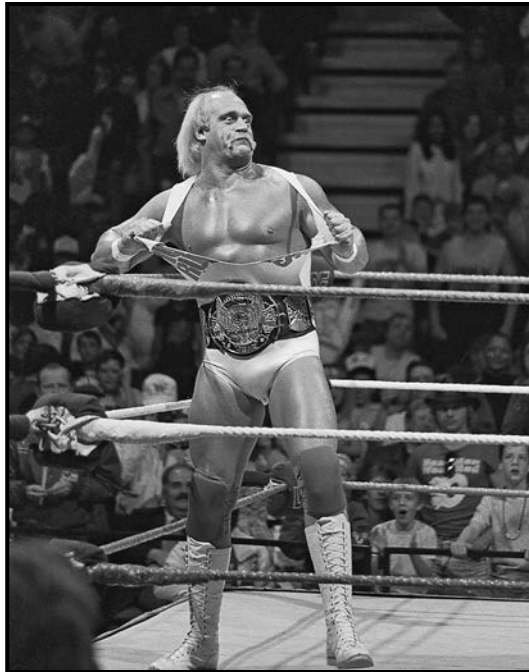
When you have finished your shoot at the junkyard and want another interesting shoot before you head home, less that a kilometer North on West Saanich Road is the Our Lady of the Assumption Church. This historic church was built in 1909 and was an important part of the community. The views of Saanich Inlet and the farmland from behind the church are fantastic.

Wrestling with Photography

by Bill Cubitt

Picture yourself in a sports arena in 1984. On the speakers the announcer cries out, "Now coming to the ring, weighing 305 lbs., from Venice Beach, California, Champion, Hulk Hogan". The music is loud and the crowd goes crazy with excitement screaming and pounding their feet.

Pro Wrestling has been on the TV since the 1950's and has been very popular with fans ever since. Love it or hate it, Pro Wrestling is full of larger-than-life cartoon characters. It was the perfect venue for me, a photographer in my twenties, to try to photograph this crazy action. My purchased seat would be my spot to take photos from. With one roll of 36 exposures of Black and White film I would plan out how many photos I could take for each match making sure I had at least six remaining for the big final match. It sounds so funny in today's digital photographic times.

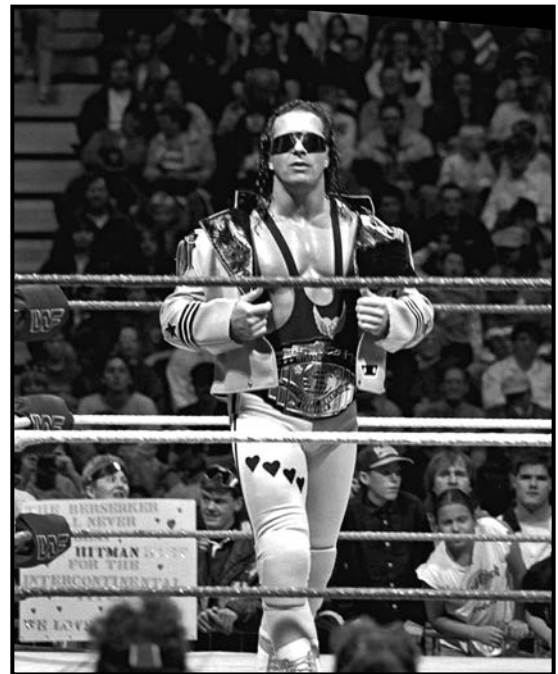


"Hulk Hogan"

I moved to Calgary in 1981 and I loved this crazy wrestling action. Forty years later I have amassed a large photographic record of that unique history. Calgary was home to the famous Stampede Wrestling TV show. This action was hosted by Calgary's TV personality Ed Whalen and Promoter Stu Hart. Pro Wrestling has many outlandish characters, some are heroes and the other half are villains. Their facial expressions and actions are very exaggerated so the fans in the back rows can also enjoy the action.

Back in 1979 in College I had taken photography courses and loved them. My first camera was the Canon AE-1. For wrestling photos I shot with black and white film because it gave me greater latitude in the low light arenas. One roll of 36 exposures and the cost of processing was all I could afford. I took a roll of 400 ASA film and sometimes pushed it to 800 hoping to shoot fast enough to freeze the action. Rarely I would shoot in colour.

At the Stampede Wrestling shows the smoke-filled Pavilion arena was quite small. On TV the ring and arena looked huge but only 200 people on a Friday night would fill that space to capacity. No one cared that I was taking photos back then. Over the decades these events moved into the Calgary Corral and finally to the Saddledome. Up until that time I might have been the only fan attending who brought my camera and a 200 mm lens.



"Bret Hart"

In 1985 the Pro Wrestling world changed as Vince McMahon from New York was buying out the smaller promoters across North America. Stu Hart sold his young talent including his oldest son, Bret Hart, to the World Wrestling Federation. Over the next 15 years Bret would become a World Champion with the WWF and the most recognized Canadian on the planet. Unfortunately, over the years, many of those wrestlers would die tragically. This would include the youngest of the Harts, Owen Hart who died at the young age of only 34.

I purchased my ticket for a seat that I thought would be best placed to photograph the action. Twenty years



"Owen Hart and Bad News Allen"

ago I could ask for a specific seat location. Center of the ring and about five rows up in the stands. I felt that at this vantage point I was back far enough from the ring ropes and they would be less of a distraction in my pictures and above the fans in the floor seats. I was now using a Tokina 80-200 mm f2.8 zoom lens. I could zoom in close enough to pick up facial expressions.



"Andre The Giant and Kamala"

I continued to shoot mostly with black-and-white film but sometimes in colour. These shows would only come to town a couple of times a year. The first big draw I photographed was Andre the Giant, billed as the Eighth Wonder of the World.

In the stands the loud cheering crowd would stomp their feet to the action and this posed a big problem with camera shake. I tried to take photos at a speed of at least 1/125th second with a 200 mm lens. The lights at these shows would always be different from show to show and you would never know if the light would be bright enough. With today's digital cameras it would be so easy to capture this action but remember we are back in the late 80's and 90's when there was no Auto-ISO with film.

When "Macho Man" Randy Savage climbed the corner post he would hold his pose for a few seconds and revel in the cheers of the crowd. A perfect photo opportunity as he was not moving. On one occasion I tried on-camera flash photography but hated the results. The ring rope in front of me would be over exposed and I felt the flash would upset the wrestlers if I happened to sit ringside.

As I look at my wrestling album over the past 30 years, I feel privileged to have captured on film some of the most intriguing wrestling stars of the day. Hulk Hogan, Andre the Giant, Bret Hitman Hart, The British Bulldogs, Jake the Snake and Randy 'Macho Man' Savage to name just a few.

Many wrestlers are on the road for over 300 days a year. Unlike the NHL, they worked without a Players Association. This means they had to work when injured to earn a paycheck. Many wrestlers were dependent on pain killers, alcohol, steroids and other drugs.



"Stampede Wrestlers: Davey Boy Smith, Chris Benoit and Brian Pillman"

My camera has captured a history of professional wrestling as it has traveled through Calgary. The wrestlers were treated like rock stars and lived the same lifestyle. If you attend an event today, every single fan has a camera-phone that takes incredible photos. Back when I was creating my wrestling history, I was unique.

These photos have been viewed by pro wrestlers over the years and they have enjoyed seeing my collection of their past glories. I have even sent some wrestlers photos of themselves, and I have enjoyed contributing to their personal collections. A couple of my photos have even been published in wrestling books. Showing my wrestling photos to people brings back so many powerful memories. That's the beauty of photography.

My Wrestling photo library can be seen on Instagram at [instagram.com/billswrestlingphotos](https://www.instagram.com/billswrestlingphotos).

Beginner's Corner: Some Tips for Shooting Birds

by Joseph Finkleman

It used to be that the only bird I could identify with any certainty was a chicken. This is still largely true but with the last several years of sequestration I have been learning how to photograph birds. There are several venues for photographing birds. One venue involves waterfowl and shore birds, another venue is the birds in your garden and finally there are birds in inconvenient places.

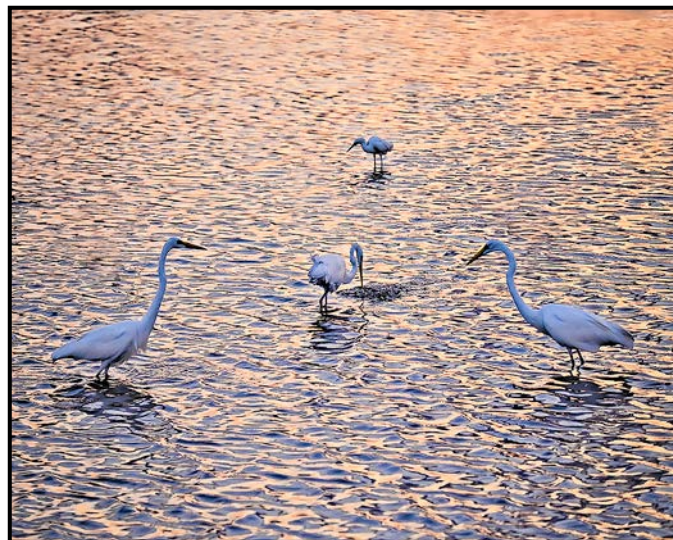


"Wood Stork"

Shore birds are the easiest since they do not mind if you are reasonably close to them. The backgrounds are usually uncluttered and their behavior is interesting. Garden birds are a bit skittish but with patience one can arrange reasonable backgrounds and the commute is short. Then there are birds in inconvenient places where one must hike long distances and wait really long times for the elusive dinosaur to be found.

For shore and garden birds the equipment needs are very reasonable. Moderate telephoto or long lenses are usually adequate. Sometimes an on-camera flash is also useful. Lenses that are twice, or even eight times normal, are about the right focal length. For a full-frame camera I have found lenses that are between 100-300 mm to be just fine for the task. On an APS sensor anywhere from 50-200 mm seems to be the right focal lengths.

For the inconvenient birds one never has a long enough lens. On a full-frame camera somewhere between 400-600 mm is the starting point and a Tele-Extender of 1.4x is usually required. Tele-Extenders are either 1.4x the focal length or 2x the focal length. You lose one stop



"Herons"

with a 1.4x and two stops with a 2x extender. A 1.4x will usually not degrade resolution noticeably while a 2x extender will usually degrade resolution a bit. A flash with an extender is almost always required as birds are like light sponges, and having a fill flash is more than useful. There is never enough light nor enough shutter speed so 1600 ISO would be the minimum ISO that I would use. However, higher ISOs mean one needs to be extra careful about the exposure and extra careful in processing. A JPEG will usually not handle an ISO higher than 1600.

I cannot say that I have been too successful with inconvenient birds yet. I have begun branching out to nature preserves in our local flyway. Other than needing long lenses and extra light, I have been reasonably successful. I say reasonably because getting a long lens really stable is a technical triumph and one needs a sturdy tripod with a gimbal in order to stabilize these longer lenses. With practice and patience, photographing the inconvenient birds will become easier.



"Brown Pelican"

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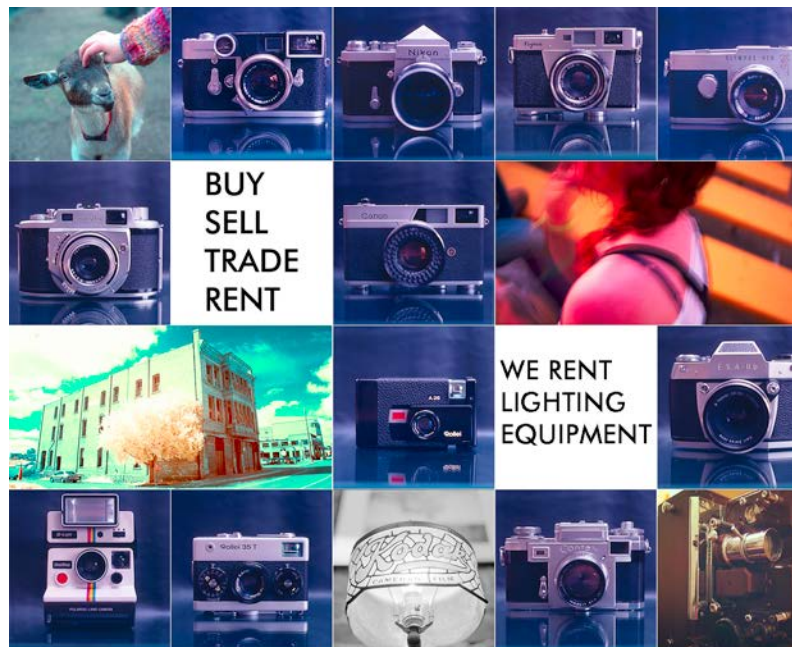
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