

# Close-Up

[VictoriaCameraClub.ca](http://VictoriaCameraClub.ca)

**Nature SIG**  
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**Beginner's Corner: Landscapes**

**Victoria Camera Club**



**"Bald Eagles Mating" by Jill Turyk**

**September - October 2021 Volume 74 Number 7**

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"New Blue Bridge" by Ian Crawford

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 7:00 PM, all meetings, workshops and SIG's 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](http://victoriacameraclub.ca) where you can also read or download the colour version of *Close-Up*.

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**September - October 2021**

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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 program is too extensive to list in *Close-Up*. Please go to the calendar page on the website ([victoriacameraclub.ca](http://victoriacameraclub.ca)) for the latest details of all our workshops, field trips and meetings.

**All meetings and workshops are on-line only, until further notice. Please check the calendar for updates.** [Victoriacameraclub.ca/club/clubschedules.aspx](http://victoriacameraclub.ca/club/clubschedules.aspx).

**Sept 9<sup>th</sup>: Competition Night.** The September theme is “Humorous” (see April CU page 10). Competitions update and results.

**Sept 16<sup>th</sup>: Presenter’s Night Program** **CANCELLED**

**Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>: Member’s Night:** Presentations of members’ images, field trip slide shows, prints or short technical presentations.

**Oct 7<sup>th</sup>: Competition Night.** The October theme is “Reflections or Shadows” (see May-June CU page 10). The September comp results will be presented.

**Oct 14<sup>th</sup>: Presenter’s Night Program** **TBA**

**Oct 21<sup>st</sup>: Member’s Night:** Presentations of members’ images, field trip slide shows, prints or short technical presentations.

**Workshop Highlights:** Listening to Light, Artistic Expression: Photography as Art, Street Photography, Topaz.

**Field Trip Highlights:** Overnight at Fort Rodd Hill.

**Cover Image: “Bald Eagles Mating” by Jill Turyk.** This image was taken at Panama Flats in Victoria. I spent many hours there over the late winter and spring, watching this pair of eagles as they built and protected their nest. My intent was to get them nearby in flight or fishing.

One day I found one of them predictably on the nesting tree branch, and I waited hoping the other would return. Sure enough, I heard the high-pitched call back and forth between them, and it came into view. Instead of landing on the branch, he landed on her and so I witnessed the nature story in awe. It was a bright day, and they were somewhat silhouetted against the sky. As always it was worthwhile going for the shot.

I am now so grateful I got this shot, as later in the spring “Junior” showed up, and I kept watch over the summer until it fledged.

## President’s Message

I hope that all Club members have enjoyed their summer this year and have been able to get out and shoot. For me, it was all about friends and family visiting and a local trip here and there. Boy, it was so nice to be able to get away and see more of Vancouver Island. With the summer months behind us now, it’s time to kick off the 2021/22 VCC season!

Over the last year and a half we have learned so much on how to navigate the Club’s activities online. I would like to give a shout out to all those members who made this happen. You all did such a great job!

As we move into this year our plan is to continue to be online until it is safe to hold in-person meetings. I have heard from quite a few members that they have enjoyed watching our Thursday night meetings online and some have asked if it’s possible to broadcast these meetings so that they may continue to enjoy them from home. My response to them is that we will definitely try to do so. Why not? Even when we go back to in-person meetings, things will not be the same as before COVID and this is a good thing.

Our new board is excited about trying out some new ideas! If you have an idea that you would like us to look at, please bring it forward. This is how the Mobile Photography SIG started last year.

In a Club such as ours, it is you the volunteers, that keep all the many cogs turning. The diversity of our Club members in skill, knowledge and experience has been our greatest asset in finding help where it is needed.

If you’re not currently active in the Club, do you think that you might have some time now to give back? That way the time that someone else invested in you can be passed on to other new and passionate members. Leading field trips, workshops, and writing for *Close-Up* are just a few examples of committees to volunteer with.

Because of the size of our membership (over 230 members), none of these are time-consuming undertakings and are very rewarding. Not only is volunteering a way to meet more of our many members but you will also learn more about photography and receive the fulfillment that comes from helping your fellow photographers. Scientific studies show that volunteering correlates with better health, longevity and personal happiness and fulfillment. So, what are you waiting for?

*Teri VanWell, President.*

# Nature SIG

by Jim Gardner

The Nature SIG is focused on photography in the natural world. It provides an unstructured and informal venue for beginning to expert and award-winning photographers to share and discuss images, methods, equipment, and shooting opportunities. New members are always welcome. Occasionally, participants make more formal presentations on topics of their interest and provide leadership in organizing workshops and field trips. The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions forced a shift to virtual meetings by Zoom. These meetings allowed for the continuation of some Nature SIG activities. The easing of restrictions may soon allow for in-person meetings and trips. The Nature SIG now is faced with considering how best to meld the benefits of the virtual medium with past practices. Comments from Club members are most welcome.

Nature photography includes a vast array of subjects from the biotic to the physical and provides context, background and material in other photographic forms such as landscape, creative and documentary photography. The Nature SIG provides a venue for the exploration of this generality and welcomes images from novice to advanced photographers. While a primary focus has been wildlife and plants, often consistent with competition standards, the exploration of celestial, watery, icy and rocky subjects is encouraged as well.

The Nature SIG allows for a liberal interpretation of nature in recognition of the human influence on it. The many protected and managed natural areas and sites have provided participants with wonderful photographic opportunities. Even in Earth's largest and most remote protected area, the Antarctic Treaty zone south of 60° S, evidence of the "hand of man" asserts itself.



*"Icebergs and more at Bridge River Glacier"*



*"Banded South Polar Skua"*

The evolution of nature photography has been supported and enhanced by technological and other developments. Among these are the digital revolution in equipment, electronic communications, post-processing software, travel availability and the related growth of photographic workshops and instruction.

Information sharing and discussion has been beneficial to the Nature SIG. Indeed, an expressed need for a forum for these activities led to the birth of the Nature and other SIGs in 2012. SIGs take three forms, meetings, field trips and the development of the forums and galleries on the website.

The first meeting of the Nature SIG took place in September 2012 and meetings continue with attendance of between 20 and 40 participants. Meetings include showing images by members at all levels of expertise and from international to national, regional and local locations.

Portions of some meetings have been devoted to presentations on focused topics such as bird photography, and workshop topics, such as macrophotography. Accessible through the website, the Forum and Gallery probably would benefit with more usage. The Forum has been helpful in communicating and reporting on immediate opportunities for photography of birds and wildflowers, for example. The Gallery is available for posting images such as those made during extended field trips for which the Nature SIG has been the vehicle, such as those to Hornby Island and Tofino for wildlife, wildflower and other photo opportunities.

Hopefully, gathering and travel restrictions will continue to ease allowing a range of local to global nature photography opportunities and permitting the Nature SIG to offer an enhanced variety of media and venues for sharing the results.



# Lightroom Tips

by Cindy Stephenson

I have taught the Introduction to Lightroom workshop to Club members for the past several years. Here are answers to some typical questions I've received.

**What's the difference between Lightroom and Photoshop?** I wondered about this when I was just getting into digital photography and new to the Club, since both programs offer professional-level image editing. To begin with, the Library module is unique to Lightroom. It helps you organize your image folders, create virtual collections based on criteria that you set, and add keywords and ratings to your images. You can see image previews, perform batch tasks and search for specific photos. You can retrieve all the images you've taken with a specific lens or at a location. These tools are not available in Photoshop. Lightroom will take you a long way with image editing, and you can produce a competition-worthy print using Lightroom alone. However, image editing is where Photoshop really shines and can take your editing quite a bit further. Composite images, where you combine two or more images, are not possible using Lightroom. I recommend getting started with Lightroom and becoming comfortable with it. You will then be in a better position to decide if Photoshop is something you'd like to add to your repertoire.

**Why does my Lightroom catalog look different from yours?** Since Adobe re-branded Lightroom it can be confusing to figure out which version of Lightroom you are using. I recommend using Lightroom Classic, the traditional version with your photos kept on your hard drive. This is the version that I teach as part of the VCC workshops. It's available through the Adobe Photography Plan subscription along with Photoshop.

The other available version is simply called Lightroom (previously called Lightroom CC). In this version your photos are stored in the cloud so they can be accessed by all your devices, but if you have more than 1 TB worth of photos, the monthly storage and bandwidth fees can get expensive. While always being improved and easier to learn, this version does not have all of the features of Lightroom Classic. I no longer recommend the old perpetual-licence non-subscription version (Lightroom 6) as Adobe stopped supporting it in 2017 and for most people, it is no longer a viable option.

**What happens if I cancel my Creative Cloud subscription? Can I still access my images in Lightroom Classic?** Yes, you can continue to use Lightroom Classic to

import and manage your photos, view your edited photos and export copies of your photos. You just can't edit your photos using the Develop module and you won't be able to sync collections of photos from Lightroom Classic to Lightroom Mobile (the phone/tablet version).

**Where are my images saved?** Importing images into your Lightroom catalog can be a bit tricky when you are first getting started, particularly if you are importing images into Lightroom straight from your camera. Lightroom first copies the images to a folder on your computer and then, creates a catalog entry for each image in its database. They will show up as small jpeg previews. You specify where on your computer you would like Lightroom to put them. You do this in the Destination Panel during the import process. If you want to double check that your images went where you wanted them to go, in the Library module go to "Catalog" (left panel), select "Previous import" and you will see previews of the images you imported in the centre panel. Right click on any of the images and choose, "Go to Folder in Library". Lightroom will highlight the folder in the Folders panel on the left-hand side. If this is where you intended them to go, great! If not, you can move them.

**Can I reorganize files and folders from within Lightroom?** Once you have imported images into Lightroom it is critical that any moving and renaming of files be done from within Lightroom. That's because Lightroom creates a catalog entry for each image. It includes the image file name and where it is located. If you re-organize your images outside of Lightroom, the catalog entry is no longer accurate and Lightroom won't be able to find your images. You can click on any folder and you'll see the photos in that folder. To move photos from one folder to another, select the photos by clicking in the grey border. To move the photos, click inside the thumbnail of any of the photos you have selected and drag them into the correct folder.

To create a new folder, right click on the parent folder and choose, "Create folder inside \_\_\_\_". For example, if you have a 2021 folder and want to create a sub-folder within that, highlight the 2021 folder with your mouse, right click and choose, "Create folder inside 2021". That opens up a menu box. Type the name of the sub-folder and then select "Create". You can also rename folders. Right click on the folder you want to rename and a menu box will appear then choose, "Rename". When you make these changes to your folder structure within Lightroom, the changes will be reflected on your hard drive.

**What is the difference between folders and collections in Lightroom?** In the Library module on the left-hand side, there is a Catalog panel, a Folders panel

and a Collections panel. The Folders panel shows you where your photos are physically located on your hard drive. If you click on a particular folder title you'll see all of the photos in that folder. Think of this as the physical level of organization.

Collections are virtual groupings of photos. When you create a collection and assign photos from different folders you are not duplicating them, just creating virtual groupings. You can add the same photo to several different collections. You can create "Collection Sets" with sub-folders such as Events, Family, Travel, Field Trips, Workshops, etc., whatever makes sense to you. If you enjoy taking photos of your grandkids at family events you can set up collections for each child and then tell Lightroom to add these photos from different events to specific collections. This avoids creating duplicate folders of photos on your hard drive. You can also create "Smart Collections" which populate automatically based on criteria you specify.

**My hard drive crashed and I cannot access my images. Help!!** This is not a question I enjoy getting. Fortunately, if you have a workable backup, things should be okay. It's important to back up your images and catalog, preferably to more than one place. I store all my images on an external hard drive, copy them to a second external drive and also to the cloud (using [Backblaze](#)). In addition to backing up your images, whenever you exit Lightroom, you will see a prompt to "backup your catalog". It is very important to do this. If you don't, and your catalog becomes corrupted, you will lose all the work you have done on the photos in your catalog (such as your ratings, keywords, and all edits you made to your images in Lightroom).

**Do you have suggestions for using Lightroom while travelling?** Many workshops require that you take a laptop with Lightroom (or similar software) installed, in preparation for image critiques. If you're travelling on your own, it's even more important to have a way of checking your images to make sure everything is working the way you want it to, particularly if you're somewhere you may not get back to.

I have Lightroom Classic installed on a laptop. I copy my images to my laptop each evening and may do some editing on them. Once I return to Victoria, while still working on my travel laptop, I right-click on the folder containing my travel images and choose "Export this folder as a Catalog". Lightroom will ask you to name your catalog and where you want it exported to. I suggest exporting it to a portable drive that you can plug into your desktop. Within the same dialogue box you should also check: "Export negative files" and "Include available previews".

Once you've exported your catalog, it will show up as a new folder on your drive.

Then, with your portable drive plugged into your desktop computer, open Lightroom and under the "File" menu at the top left choose "Import from another Catalog". Now, navigate to your newly created folder, and inside that folder, select the file that ends with the file extension ".lrcat", and then click "Choose". To copy your original images to your desktop computer in the "Import from Catalog" dialogue box, go to the "New Photos" section on the left and under "File Handling" choose, "Copy New Photos to a New Location and Import". Lightroom will ask you to choose where the images should be copied to. Ideally, you want them to go in a folder in your master photo library. In any event, navigate to where you want them to go, click "Choose" and then click "Import". The result is that all your images are now on your desktop computer's hard drive and in your Lightroom catalog. If you made any edits to your images these edits will have been transferred as well.

**What is Lightroom's new Super Resolution feature?** Super Resolution was previously available only through Adobe Camera Raw but you can now use it from within Lightroom. It is an extension of the Enhance Details feature. Unlike Enhance Details, which only works on raw files, it works on tiff and jpg files as well. It uses advanced machine learning to intelligently enlarge photos while maintaining clean edges and preserving important details. It doubles the linear resolution of a photo. So, you will have twice the length and width of your original image or four times the original pixel count, an eight megapixel image becomes a 32 megapixel image.

Under the "Photos" menu (or accessed by right clicking on an image), choose "Enhance". A dialogue box opens, check "Super Resolution" and press "Enhance". Lightroom creates a DNG file that is stacked with your original and stored in the same folder. Any adjustments you made to the original file are carried over. You can then edit the DNG file like any other photo. This is not something you would routinely do but it could come in handy if you want to up-size a photo taken with an older low-resolution camera for a large print. It also works well if your photo is tightly cropped say, if you are photographing a bird from further away than you'd like. You might also consider it if your cropped image will be displayed as a full-page image in a photo book.

In terms of computer power both Enhance Details and Super Resolution take time to run so it helps to have a newer, faster CPU and GPU. Both have minimum operating system requirements and result in larger files which can impact your hard drive storage space.

# Workshops in September and October

by Jim Fowler

In the old days, before COVID-19, one of my favourite things to do was to view and discuss the prints on display at Norway House. One night I happened to express to a fellow member my appreciation of a particular print, and to my surprise, Mike Murchison, who was not known to me at the time, was standing behind me. He introduced himself and told me it was his photo.

Most members know that we have many fine photographers in our Club. I greatly admire the work of a number of them. There is a difference, though, between the practice of photography and the ability to talk about it in a way that is both engaging and instructive. Not only is Mike Murchison a fine photographer but he is also articulate about photography. He gives the impression of one who has learned what he knows, not by memorization, but by careful and thoughtful consideration, to the point where he truly understands. I was lucky enough to attend his, "Learning to See" workshop a couple of years ago and it made a lasting impression on me.

We began with a short walkabout at East Sooke Park. After a few minutes, Mike stopped us and asked us to tell everyone what we saw. Most members saw grasses, shrubs and trees. He saw the patches of light and shadow. Where the rest of us saw "things", Mike saw the light.

Mike always talked about light as a subject worthy of its own workshop and now he has done it. On September 21<sup>st</sup>, Mike will present a workshop entitled "Listening to Light". We all know that light is an essential element in all photographs and that great light goes a long way in creating a great photo, when combined with an interesting subject, good composition, and the decisive moment. But do you have a clear sense of what types of light assist in the portrayal of which subjects and do you appreciate the mood-altering effect of different types of light? Mike is more likely to see the light first before identifying a particular subject. I, for one, look forward to hearing what Mike has to say about light.

A week later, on September 28<sup>th</sup>, Chris Harris will present a workshop entitled, "Artistic Expression: Photography as Art". Chris is known for his workshops and 13 books exploring the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region of B.C. He now works out of Gabriola Island and Bella Coola. Chris encourages photographers to identify and then articulate (visually) what it is in a subject that catches their attention. Far from "rules-based photography", Chris encourages photographers to use any technique from in-

tentional camera movement to multiple exposures, that works to express the deeper connection they feel for the subject. Trial and experimentation are encouraged. The goal is to create not just a portrayal of a thing but an image that sings, to make visible what was previously felt but not clearly seen. He believes the possibilities for artistic expression in photography are endless.

Re-energize your photography with a healthy dose of creativity on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Check out his work at [www.chrisharris.com](http://www.chrisharris.com). His photos range from representational to impressionistic to abstract.

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, Pam Irvine plans to continue with her monthly novice image review series. If you are a novice, this is for you. Offering your work for review by others is a key element in growing your skills as a photographer. Photography is a very subjective art and, while individuals can (and do) disagree about the merits of individual photos, it still remains that there are skills and techniques to be learned that do, in time, improve one's ability to make good photographs.

The reviewers do their best to be appreciative and kind while at the same time giving a gentle nudge in a direction most likely to improve. If you are a novice, get involved, take the risk and ask questions. Hear what others have to say about your work. The more you expand your ability to discern and articulate your vision the more your vision will be appreciated by others. Check the calendar monthly for review dates.

Joseph Finkleman has both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in fine arts and has shown his work in more than 100 exhibitions. He has been a professional photographer for over six decades. He has experience in teaching and, you must know, he has been writing the Beginner's Corner for *Close-Up* recently. On October 18<sup>th</sup> Joseph will present a workshop on street photography, followed by an image review, on November 1<sup>st</sup>, of photographs taken by participants. Most of us know already that street photography is different. Those who don't practice it usually fear the potential for interaction with strangers. Hear Joseph talk about some different approaches. Learn from a professional. Joseph is yet another repository of great knowledge and experience who just happens to be a member of the best camera club in North America: ours.

Workshop registration opens on the Saturday morning, one month before the scheduled week of the event. Although some workshops allow any number of attendees, others have limits. On our website, check the "Members Only" tab, "Upcoming Workshops" dropdown. Further information is just a "click" away.

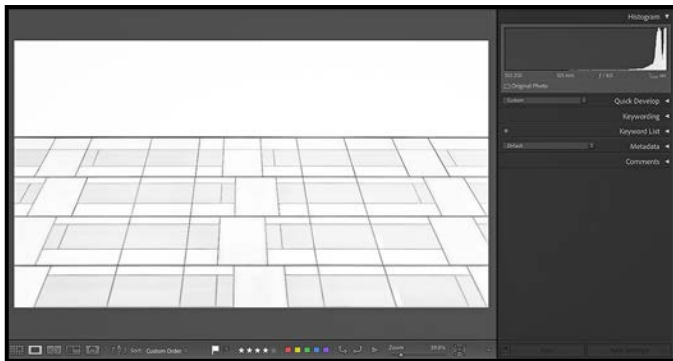


# High Key Images

by Normand Marcotte

High-key photography refers to images that are bright, with a range of light tones and whites and not very many blacks or mid-tones. In high-key photography, tones that would have been mid-range become much brighter and near-white tones become white.

It is easy to translate the definition to the histogram. The image pixels in the middle of a histogram have a tonal value of 50% grey. When most pixels in the image are located at the right side, the image will be light. In this Lightroom screen-shot of a black and white building facade photo, the histogram pixel distribution is skewed to the right, but there are still some pixels reaching towards the mid-tones at the centre of the histogram. This means there are some “shadows” in the image (no pure blacks or dark shadows), but the predominant tones are whites and light greys.



*“Building Façade” (Lightroom Screen-shot)*

High-key is purely an artistic decision, a good choice for softer and more subtle images. With its predominantly lighter tones and lack of any real contrast, high-key images convey a sense of peacefulness and tranquillity. It is a popular style for portraits, but the subject can be almost anything. The most successful high-key shots tend to feature subjects that are themselves in high-key tones, for instance human subjects should wear light or white colours. High-key is an excellent choice for both colour and black and white photos.

Achieving high-key images is not as simple as over-exposing. Check your histogram as you are shooting. You will want it to peak more on the right side but be careful not to overexpose the image. Remember that over-exposed pixels can not be recovered in post-processing and will be pure white in the final image.

A properly executed high-key image still needs post-processing including the usual sharpening, lens correc-



*“Mannequin Head”*

tions, perspective correction, etc. Open your images in your program of choice and view your histogram. Some define a high-key image as having absolutely no pixels below 50% grey on the histogram, i.e., no pure blacks nor dark shadows. This is not a rule set in stone and many photographers include a few darker pixels to add some interest, contrast and depth in order to make it look less flat and less overexposed.

You can experiment with the tone sliders (whites, blacks, exposure etc.) as well as levels and the tone curve to create an image that has only a few blacks and middle greys but retains details in the whites.

High-key photographs are tricky to master but it is worth giving this technique a try. The effort will help you understand and appreciate how highlights, whites and shadows come together to create a unique and interesting photo.



*“Victoria Tourism Centre”*

## November Theme: Waterlife

*by Pam Irvine*

Think about nature photographs around water such as images of sea mammals (e.g. seals, whales, otters), fish (can be in an aquarium), sea creatures or birds that live primarily around water (e.g. cormorants, gulls), or shots of people playing in the surf, competing in a swim meet, etc. Images can be edited in any way you wish.

You can use a polarizing filter to eliminate glare on the water and enhance the colours in the image. Twist it to a right angle to the light and the reflections will disappear, letting you see below the surface.

Remember not to disturb the subject when taking its picture. Some animals, like whales or seals, are difficult to see from land but can be photographed well from a boat. Using a boat can allow for a low perspective as well as a silent approach which means that the animal's natural behaviour can be photographed and not disturbed. Using slow shutter speeds when wild animals are moving through water can result in some interesting imagery.

Photographing fish in an aquarium can be fun and with persistence you'll get some great photos. Zoom in close so that the fish fills the entire frame. A zoom lens like a 55 – 250 mm lens is well suited to the job. It's possible to move back far enough to focus easily and zoom in close enough from there to fill the frame with the image. Using a flash can be very tricky. Fish scales are very reflective as well as the glass tank.

The biggest challenge to creating aquarium images is external reflections. The aquarium is lit so the light reflects off everything! The walls, your clothes, your camera and even you, may all be visible as reflections in the tank glass. In order to even attempt taking worthwhile photos you need to control the reflections. The solution is to use a lens hood (preferably rubber). When pressed against the face of the aquarium tank the lens hood will form a cone of reflection-free darkness.

Another issue you may face will be the background. Pictures of your goldfish look weird when it appears to be swimming next to your couch. You will need to provide an appropriate background for your fish images. Try a sheet of black or white poster board positioned on the far side of the tank.

The purpose of themes is to encourage members to get out of their comfort zone and try something different. Who knows what you will find?

## Internal Competitions

*by Lorna Zaback*

VCC's first meeting in September starts our monthly Internal Competitions. We hold six internal competitions annually with entry dates in September, October, November, January, February and March. The results are shown at the following Competition Night but can also be viewed on our website (Competitions>Competition Results). There are three levels of competitions: Novice, Intermediate and Advanced. Digital categories at the Advanced and Intermediate levels include: Open, Nature/Wildlife, People, and a specific Theme. There are three categories of Advanced prints: Open, Nature, and Monochrome but Open only for Intermediate.

We are changing the Novice level competitions to try to encourage more new photographers to enter. We have reduced the digital categories to two: Open and Theme and are now allowing two images per category. Novices can now submit up to two prints in the combined Intermediate/Novice Open Print category, so these prints will be judged as a single level. We will review the impact of these changes in December 2021.

Advanced and Intermediate images are judged by experienced professional photographers or by CAPA or PSA certified judges (non-VCC members). Novice digital images and Novice/Intermediate prints are judged by a committee of experienced VCC members. Our goal is to provide gentle feedback about what works in an image and what could be improved.

The popular Theme competitions are meant to challenge our creativity, encourage us to play, to think outside the box and to come up with a unique way of depicting a concept. For more information on the 2021-22 themes and on competitions in general, see the VCC website (Competitions>Internal Competitions then [Themes](#) or [Guidelines](#)).

Many members who enter competitions claim that they do so to "compete with themselves" rather than against other members. Most are interested in the judges' feedback rather than in their scores or placements (although it can't hurt anyone's self-esteem to be awarded a 1<sup>st</sup> place, or an honourable mention). As one member put it, "I like competing because it is a chance to get my work 'out there', even if it doesn't receive high scores or rave reviews". We hope to make competitions as inspiring and supportive as possible for members. Competitions are not for everyone but members who enter often comment that competing has helped them gain confidence and improve their photographic skills.

# CONTINUING STUDIES@UVIC

## Fall 2021 Photography Courses

We are excited to offer a number of interactive photography courses this fall!

**These courses will be offered online in real time:**

- Capturing Fall Colours
- Introduction to Digital Photography
- Close-up Photography
- The 8-Week Photo Club v 5.0
- Composition and Light
- Creating the Personal Archive
- Analogue Film Photography
- iPhone/iPad Artography
- Cashing in on Your Photography

**The following course will be offered in class at the UVic campus:**

- Photography Plus: Understand Your Camera and Improve Your Photos

Visit our website for complete details about all of our photography and visual arts courses or call 250-721-7797.

[continuingstudies.uvic.ca/photography](https://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/photography)



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# PRISM IMAGING

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## Portfolio: Kathryn and Nick Delany

We both have a passion for wildlife in-motion photography. Photography is a rewarding passion for us and we see it as a way to discover new places that we want to visit. Traveling for photography became very viable when Nick took semi-retirement in 2013 and we then discovered the freedom from going to work on a Monday morning. Now we could dedicate time to developing new photo skills and visiting new locales. As a teen Nick's first camera was a Kodak Instamatic and that was when he found that his muse was wildlife. He graduated to a Pentax SP1000 and eventually landed up with various Nikon DSLR cameras currently with the D850. Kathryn's prior experience with cameras was with point-and-shoot cameras as a child but, eventually, she found smartphone cameras. One of the best pieces of advice given by a pro photographer is that the best camera is the one you have with you. When we determined photography was a big part of our life, Kathryn chose the Fuji X cameras as her tool as, they were not only a little retro in functionality, they were lighter in weight and suited her needs.

That said, in the past month we both decided to commit to one mirrorless camera system over DSLR. We packed up all our combined gear and traded our various cameras and lenses to acquire the Sony Alpha 1 system as Sony's stunning advances in autofocus is irresistible. One of the most instrumental changes in our joint photographic journey was triggered by our miserable results from our first VCC competition foray and the arrival of the COVID-19 lockdowns. When COVID-19 arrived we decided to learn new skills with emphasis on camera operation and post-processing to improve our images. After six months of tuition with an innovative wildlife photographer and a really outstanding trip to the Discovery Islands to photograph the Bald Eagles, we found ourselves in a new dimension.

In conclusion both of us are excited about committing to the Sony A1 mirrorless system. One advantage to both of us having the same camera is that if one or the other runs into trouble we have a partner who is familiar with the same camera and can usually get us out of a jam. We also can selectively interchange some equipment when necessary. It simplifies our lives a lot. The speed of this camera is amazing. It is full frame which means we can capture lovely big images. It also has an incredible ability to handle high ISO without degrading the shot too much. For example, Kathryn's "Supersize Me" image was shot at ISO 8000. With other systems that would mean a pretty useless image. High speed and low light photography just got that much better for us.



*"Elephant and Acacia at Dawn"*

The Sony A1 camera has the ability to shoot 30 frames per second with a 50-megabyte sensor and the fastest autofocus system. It also allows us to shoot at high ISO. The combination gives us more opportunities in high-speed or difficult shooting conditions.

**Nick:** While on safari in the Serengeti Plains we had a pro photographer guide with us. During this trip I learned that you cannot go to see wildlife; you must wait patiently for them to reveal themselves to you. Leaving the camp for the Serengeti Plains while it is still dark, in anticipation that a wonderful wildlife discovery awaits, is magic. On this morning we parked and waited while three different herds of 30 to 50 elephants magically walked past us at sunrise. Nikon D850, 200 mm lens, ISO 180, f11.



*"Goðafoss, Iceland"*

I spent two weeks circumnavigating Iceland in winter again with a pro photographer whose specialty is landscape photography. In Iceland during a February winter, I found that the land transforms into a black and white image only relieved by the startling blue of glacial waters. According to one legend, Goðafoss (God's Falls) is so called because the King of Norway demanded that



the local chieftain destroy the statues of his Norse gods. The legend has the chieftain throwing the statues into the falls where they remain today in the icy blue waters. Nikon D850, 55 mm lens, ISO 64, f22.



*"Ravenous Eagle"*

Nestled into the southern end of the Great Bear Rain Forest at the mouth of the Bute Inlet in BC is a unique geographic and natural phenomenon that occurs every year for about 10 weeks each spring. The mouth of the Bute Inlet narrows so much that it creates incredibly powerful sea rapids. Hake and herring, migrating through the harsh Arran Rapids, get thrown about so violently that their air bladders get disrupted sending them to float on the surface of the sea. This results in their exposure to ravenous flocks of Bald Eagles feast at the start of each flood. My goal was to try to capture vignettes portraying the feeding frenzies. Nikon D850, 500 mm lens, ISO 2,000, f5.6.



*"And Like A Thunderbolt He Falls"*

One of my ongoing quests is to find new ways to tell the story of the magnificent power, agility and speed of Bald

Eagles in flight. In this image I believe I have managed to show exactly that: a Bald Eagle diving at over 100 km/hr. Eagles will generally glide to their prey. In this case the eagle has made an attack decision at 50 m requiring a flip over and dive at an astonishing speed. Nikon D850, 500 mm lens, ISO 4,500 f5.6.



*"Bearing Down"*

The Discovery Islands are home to black bears that, early in the season, can be found foraging on the foreshore at low tide for eels and barnacles. This bear is presenting me with a malevolent expression as I have distracted him. Sony A1, 200-600 mm lens, focal length 600 mm, ISO 10,000, f6.3.

**Kathryn:** Having been a professional artist for 35 years I like to try to use an artist's eye in addition to a purely technical perspective to my photography. I have always been fascinated by digital art and for the past 11 years have become a recognized digital fine artist. In my past I always saw photography merely as a tool to aid



*"Do Not Approach"*



my art versus an art form in and of itself. I would use a camera to source my original reference work but I did not think about composition, light, and time of day for optimal shots. With the advent of smartphones and having that new tool in my pocket, I started discovering a lot more ways I could be creative with my photography rather than just my art. Now I am even more thrilled to discover that in the photographic world there are categories that are called “creative” which allows me to apply all my art skills and combine them with my photo skills.

In Tanzania I wanted to capture the power and potential savagery of a Cape Buffalo. Catching this one with drool dripping from his mouth was a perfect shot and story waiting to be told. During post-processing I was able to make a dramatic statement illustrating my vision. Fuji XT-2, 400 mm lens, ISO 1,250, f10.



*“Meal on The Wing”*

Like Nick, I like to challenge myself to find different and more dynamic poses for wildlife shots. Here the unusual shape of the bird is what allowed me to design the image from a different viewpoint. Nikon Z6ii, 500 mm lens, ISO 3,200, f5.6.



*“Supersize Me”*

The challenge with eagles in flight is their speed and often the light differs greatly along their flight path. With midday sun and heavy shadows at water level this was a tough shot, not only to track the bird but also to be sure I exposed the shot correctly. This eagle grabbed a hake almost as big as he was and barely got off the water a demonstration of his awesome strength. Sony A1, 560 mm lens, ISO 8,000, f8.



*“Bee and Rose”*

I have always enjoyed painting flowers and now find that photography allows me to pursue closeup compositions in more detail. I have also discovered an obsession to capture bees along with the flower. The best spot to practice this is at Butchart Gardens. Sony A1, 135 mm lens, ISO 1,000, f5.6.

While out doing wildlife photography often times nothing moves for fairly long periods of time. In those instances, on our jaunts, finding something to distract me such as little “nature still life” compositions fills in as one of my creative muses. I saw this empty shell on the sand and the way the early light caught the sand and shone through the clam shell is the story here. Sony A1, 135 mm lens, ISO 1,000, f11.



*“Nature’s Still Life - Clam”*



## Portfolio: Lorna Scott, ACAPA

My photographic journey started so many years ago that I have been taking pictures for as long as I can remember. My first camera was a Brownie Hawkeye that I probably got sometime in the early 1960s and my next camera was a Kodak Instamatic. My husband bought a Canon AE manual SLR in 1976. I still clung to the lighter point-and-shoot cameras as I had small children and the weight of the SLR was too much for me. Eventually I got a Minolta digital camera that was still basically a point-and-shoot camera but had whopping four-megapixel images.

Fast forward. My very generous husband surprised me with a Nikon D80 for Christmas 2006. I spent the next two weeks reading the manual and taking pictures to experiment with all the functions. We were going to Peru in April 2007 and I was worried about taking my new precious camera to a poor country. My daughter told me I was nuts not to take it. It was no good to have a fancy camera that I wasn't going to take travelling. I did improve but still set the camera on auto and only shot as JPEGs.

We did a fair amount of travelling in those days and I got into scrap-booking my pictures to make visual memories of our trips. I would come home, look at my images, choose many to have printed, and I would then manually crop them (cut them up with scissors) and put them into albums, complete with stories that I wrote. It was extremely time consuming and I slaved over those books for a number of years. Eventually I got so far behind making the albums that I gave up but not before doing albums of our trips to China, Peru, Vietnam, Cambodia, South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Swaziland in 2009.

Oh, if I had only known then what I know now I would have had much better images of all the incredible ani-



*"Gorilla"*

mals we saw. We also did a trip to Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zanzibar in 2010 and were able to go gorilla trekking. The gorillas were deep in the jungle and the light was terrible. I had to have high ISO to get the exposure correct and the camera that I had at that time (still the Nikon D80) was poor at handling noise.



*"Leopard"*

In Uganda I did happen to take this picture of a leopard that was a show-stopper. I had taken a beginners Photoshop course in 2008 from Sheena Wilkie and learned the basics of layers and layer masks. The leopard picture needed some work that I couldn't accomplish so I phoned Sheena and asked for help. She edited it for me and I got it printed and framed. It still hangs on my family room wall. This was in 2010 and Sheena told me that I should join the Langley Camera Club (I live in Langley).

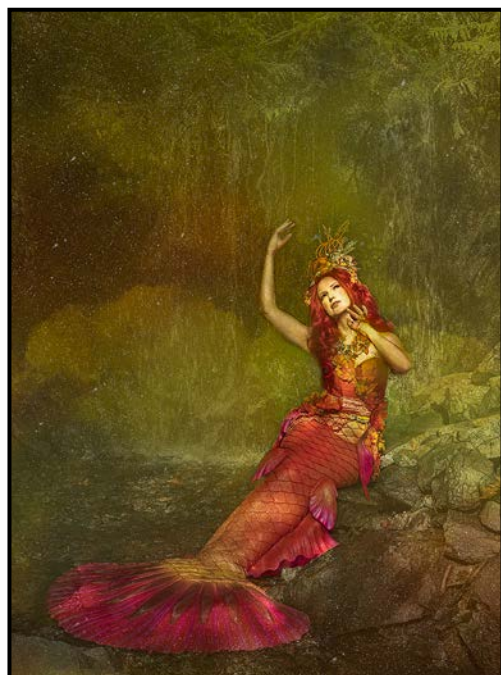


*"The Stranger Project"*

I joined the Langley Club in September 2012. I embraced the Club and took part in as many field trips as they offered and through the Club I learned so much from the other members, the presenters and development nights. I started taking online courses in Photoshop and I really think that is where my photographic journey started, and when I actually became a photographer.

When I started my photographic journey I tried out many genres including: landscape, seascapes, wildlife, birds, macro and still life. I shot anything and everything and went out shooting with as many people as I could to as many places that I could go to. I joined meet-up groups that offered different types of photography and went to as many as I could. One meet-up group that I was involved with had a “Stranger Project”, where you had to approach as many strangers as possible (this was in False Creek in Vancouver) and ask if you could take a picture of them. At the end of two hours, I had accumulated 27 portraits. I found that I really enjoyed interacting with people and added street photography to my repertoire.

In 2016 my photography began to take on a new life. I began to start playing around with lighting. I bought a Nikon external flash and began to experiment with it. It was a very big learning curve. I played around with some portraits at this time. I asked a random girl to be my model and we set up a shooting space in my basement. I experimented and she was a good sport. We became friends and played at making many images. We did a mermaid set that was my first publication in a magazine.



*“Mermaid”*

I joined a study group to learn to use external lighting in different ways. It was a fun group and we sometimes had assignments and would then show the results. One of the assignments was that we were to find someone we didn’t know and ask if we could take images of them. I found a guy on the seawall at Stanley Park who had a very interesting face so I approached him. He was okay with this and wow, I got some splendid images. He had what I would say is a “character face”.



*“Character Face”*

Around this time I decided I needed another light so I bought a Yongnuo flash, receiver and transmitter. This in my estimation was a mistake; the receiver and transmitter were finicky and sometimes didn’t work. This is frustrating when you are just learning techniques. My friend and I were doing water splash photography using flash. We had a “water drop” theme at our camera club and I remember spending three days on this and was slightly suicidal by the time I got good results.

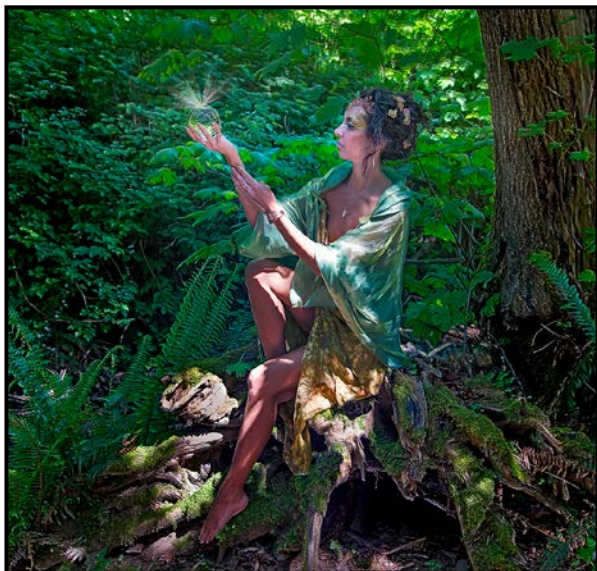


*“Water Splash”*

Probably in 2017 I bought a set of used strobe lights from Craigslist. It included everything I needed to set up a home studio. I had no idea what to do with them but it started what I call my “career as a creative portrait artist”. After setting up a studio in my home I made my way into the modelling world via Facebook.

It takes a while to build a strong portfolio but once you have several good images posted on Instagram (@lorna





*"My First Photoshoot"*

2369), then more models and makeup artists will want to work with you. Sometimes the inspiration for the shoot was my idea, sometimes it was the makeup artist and sometimes it was the model (one included using a wolfhound) or, at times, it was a theme for a magazine that was requesting content.



*"Wolfhound"*

I graduated to a Nikon D610 in January 2014 and loved it. This opened a whole new world to me but I now needed to purchase new lenses. It was a very faithful workhorse of a camera and worked extremely well until I was in Portugal for a month and it quit working three days before coming home. The shutter curtain had broken. It was repaired quickly when I got home but I learned a valuable lesson. Take two camera bodies on trips!

**September - October 2021**

After planning a trip to Morocco in September 2018, I decided to buy a Fuji XT-2 with a kit lens. Off I went to Morocco with only the mirrorless camera and one lens. Surprisingly, I found I could be happy with this little camera; it took excellent images, sharp and with good colour. It had a crop sensor though so when I came home I went back my Nikon D610 because I had the lenses I needed and wanted to use. I sold the Fuji in July 2019 and bought the camera I'm using today, a Nikon Z6. I'm still trying to justify buying the Z-mount lenses.



*"Silhouettes"*

I have served as the Treasurer for the Langley Camera Club for several years. I also took on the Treasurer job for CAPA Pacific Zone and have served in that capacity since 2015. This year I have given up the job of Treasurer at the Langley Camera Club and have taken over as President. The executive team that I have assembled is wonderful and we have a busy year planned.

My passions in photography include creative portraits, wildlife, horses, dancers and anything that is of the creative nature. The past year I have been trying to shoot series, which makes themes more meaningful. My future plans include a shoot with a young indigenous woman in her native regalia. A trip to shoot grizzly bears is also planned for this year!

My history with Victoria Camera Club began in October 2020 when meetings went to online because of COVID 19. I had looked at the VCC calendar when the Langley Club was transitioning to the Visual Pursuits web platform and the calendar of events just blew me away. The only mistake I made was rating myself as Intermediate. I regretted that almost immediately, but as I knew no one in the Club, I did not think I was able to change to the Advanced Level.

I love the Victoria Camera Club and all the activities and presenters that you offer. Hoping some of the Club stays with on-line presentations so that I'll be able to enjoy it in the coming year.

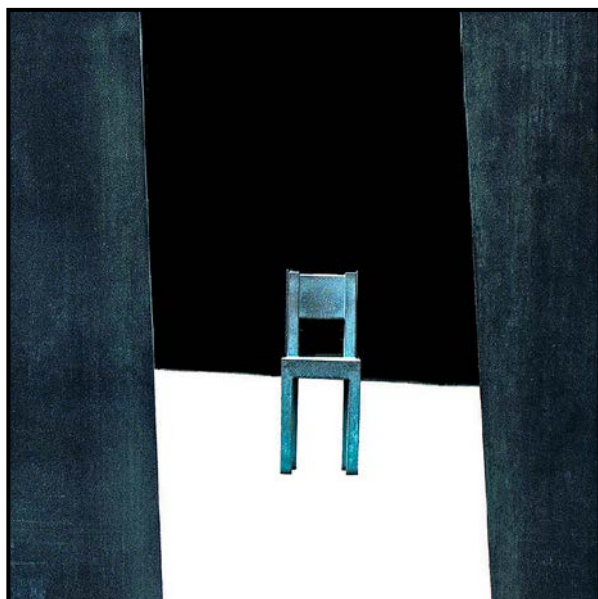


# Urban Abstract Photography

by Rick Lawrence

I started taking pictures with an old box camera when I was six, but it took me many years to produce photographs that I really liked. My father was probably my first major influence. Equipped with low budget cameras of the 50s, he captured impressive images of people despite having only eight chances to do so for each roll of film in his Kershaw Eight-20 Penguin camera.

I attempted to get more serious about photography while at university by buying an early 60s Praktica SLR and learned darkroom skills in that very confined triangular space under the stairs in the house I shared with fellow students. However, memorable images of my friends eluded me and, just like some hereditary traits skip a generation, this ability passed me by and became one of my daughter's gifts.

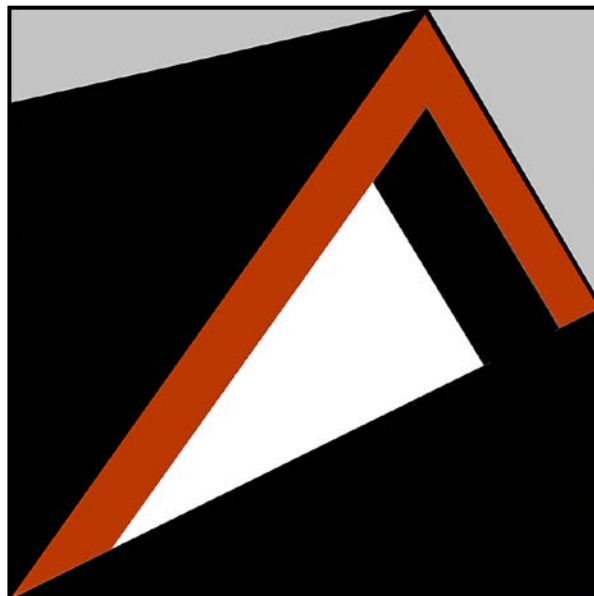


*"Street Sculpture, Toronto, Ontario"*

My work and personal travels have taken me south to the cities, towns and villages of Mexico, Peru, Brazil and Chile since the 90s. It was there that I discovered the great beauty of not only colonial architecture but also the colourful simplicity of more modest dwellings. I took pictures of doors and windows and imagined what might be hiding behind them. The attraction also extended to walls and stairs which also became my frequent subject matter.

I am sure now that these preoccupations were connected to some of my childhood memories, perhaps traumatic dreams or experiences, and I contend that our emotional memories are the source of many of our images.

I bought my first digital camera in 2003 and started taking photos of architectural details in Vancouver where I lived at the time. So began what I called Urban Abstract, a style that was facilitated by the digital medium and with generous helpings of post-processing. I soon discovered that I could also manipulate architectural photographs taken on film, aided by acquiring a scanner. Most of my early urban abstracts were taken on point-and-shoot cameras which were small enough to take everywhere in my pocket. I also used to keep a camera in the side pocket of my car so that I was ready if something caught my eye while at a traffic light, stuck in traffic or just driving through town.



*"Roof Geometry, Vancouver, BC"*

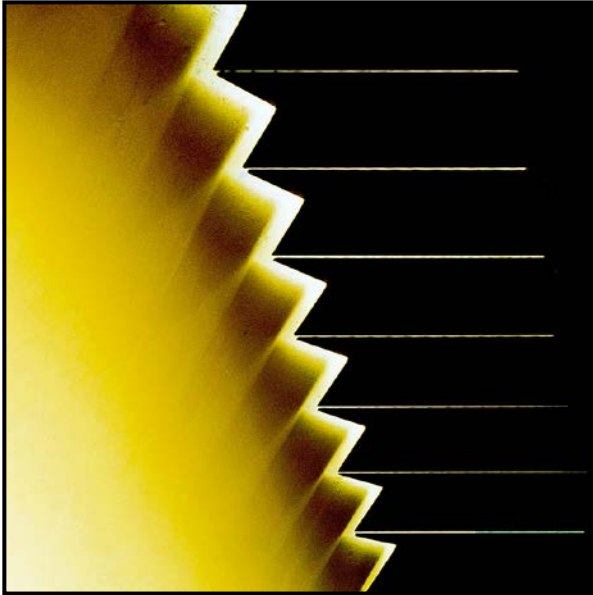
Picture-taking on foot has often been similarly spontaneous while I was out for some other purpose. When on an actual photographic mission I have spent a lot of time looking at the backs of downtown buildings and other subjects in city alleyways as you never know what you might find.

Sometimes I take out my Nikon Z6 with a 24-200 lens but my aging iPhone is my go-to camera these days, relegating the Nikon to landscape and moon photography. Expediency and convenience over pixels.

The seeds of my abstract work were probably sown in the 1960s when I was introduced to the paintings of Paul Klee, Josef Albers, Piet Mondrian, Mark Rothko, and Frank Stella, to name a few. Since then, the post-impressionists, particularly Vincent Van Gogh and the work of Henri Matisse in his Fauvism period, characterized by intense colourism, have also been influential.

David Hockney continues to influence my ways of seeing both urban and natural landscapes and some have

commented that my images are more like paintings than photos. Perhaps I might have taken up the brush if my efforts at school had not received such scornful criticism. At least I now have digital brushes.



*“Under a Metal Staircase, Vancouver, BC”*

In this article I have included five images created from objects or structures commonly found in the urban environment but presented with a different visual interpretation. Contrary to my normal practice I have added titles to these images to facilitate recognition of what would usually be regarded as unremarkable items.



*“Crosswalk, Lima, Peru”*

I do not worry too much about composition when framing a shot since I am usually only interested in capturing a part of what appears in the frame, removing the rest in post-processing. My objective is to reduce an image into its fundamental or essential elements of line, shape

and colour. As in the examples shown, I have a preference for the square format. I have mainly used Photoshop for editing although I now often start in Lightroom and from time to time have used Apps such as Snapseed or even Hipstamatic to achieve a specific effect.

Overall, I do not feel I have a duty to reproduce faithfully the form or colours of an object be it from the urban or natural environment. Post-processing in Photoshop is usually done rapidly and I tend to discard an image if I cannot readily create what I saw at the moment I took the photograph. I use several tools but colour contrast and the balance between contrast and saturation are key design elements. Dodging and burning are frequently applied but often accomplished using blending modes utilizing the fade command to reduce opacity as required. The linear burn blend mode is a favourite due to the contrast it produces in darker colours but with a lower degree of saturation.



*“Intersecting Walls, Belo Horizonte, Brazil”*

Since I produce many face-on images of buildings, I use the perspective crop tool in Photoshop to correct converging verticals and horizontals and which is also functional for exaggerating perspective to achieve a particular result. I use the fill or brush tools to do colour blocking on parts of an image to produce a flat, 2-D effect with no noise due to unwanted detail or pixelation if the image has been greatly enlarged. Shadow is often an important element in my images as it is in all photography. It is all about light after all, including its absence.

Five years ago I moved from the city to a rural setting where urban abstract opportunities are less plentiful but are still taken if they arise. My current interest is more in finding inspiration and the hidden beauty in the forms and colours of the forest, ocean and sky.

# External Competitions

*Compiled by Kathryn Delany*

Welcome back to a new year of photography. The external competitions page on the website is now updated for the coming season. You can find details by visiting the Competitions Summary page and clicking through on the links for more details. For 2021-22 we currently plan on entering the following competitions: CAPA Nature and Wildlife, Digital Open, Smartphone Open, and the theme "Curves and Lines", PSA Nature, Creative and PID (Inter-club digital) Open.

The CAPA Smartphone Open category is new for us this year. The Open category means that a wide range of images may be submitted and you may enter up to two images. Images must be originally captured on a smartphone or tablet equipped with a camera. There are several genres that you can enter: Landscape, Closeup, Urban Scenery or Architecture, and People.

Don't forget to check out VCC's YouTube channel ([youtube.com/channel/UCsqH4lhdpkiBfEG\\_by5i6A](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsqH4lhdpkiBfEG_by5i6A)) to view all the results from this past year.

**George Glennie Diversity Competition.** VCC placed 9<sup>th</sup> out of 26 clubs. Congratulations to the top VCC award winners shown below with their makers' comments.



*"Grizzly Cubs Play Fighting" by Steve Smith*

This image placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the Mammal category. It was a softly lit September 2020 afternoon on the Chilko River. Our boat floated downstream towards a wide reach of the river called Canoe Crossing. Ahead of us we saw two big grizzly cubs and their mother in the river. As we approached the two cubs started wrestling and play-fighting. They were growling, grunting, pushing and body slamming each other with great energy and intensity. Luckily, I was at the front of the boat and took a series of shots as low to the water as I could. This shot

captured a memorable moment in the Chilcotin wilderness. This image also won Best in Show at the Lion's Gate Celebration of Nature, and placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the Eastwood competition.



*"Blue Soldier Crab" by Daniel Rondeau*

This image placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the Marine category. The small Blue Soldier crab (*Mictyris longicarpus*) typically travels in tight military formations, with hundreds in a platoon. I isolated one of them and lay flat in the sand to reveal both its prominent eyes and the beautiful sand of its environment. These crabs move quickly across the sand requiring a fairly fast shutter speed. Taken on Rainbow Beach (Queensland, Australia), the beach is named after the broad pallet of sand colours found on its shores and cliffs.



*"A Serpents Warning" by Suzanne Huot*

This image received a Merit award. Reptiles and frogs have fascinated me since childhood so when the opportunity arose during a photographic trip to Costa Rica to participate in a special shoot, I jumped at it. Our guide arranged a full morning of reptile and frog photography. This small but very venomous Eyelash Viper was one of the subjects.

**2020-21 Eastwood Photographic Society vs VCC.** This is a friendly competition with the Eastwood Club in Glasgow, Scotland. It was initiated a number of years



ago when one of their members came to Victoria and joined our Club.

The scores were: Intermediate/Novice: Eastwood 504, VCC 482 and in Advanced: Eastwood 500, VCC 503. Total score Eastwood 1004, VCC 985. Congratulations to Eastwood! In the Novice/Intermediate Category the top four scores went to Scottish images. Congratulations to the top VCC award winners shown below with the makers' comments. The Novice/Intermediate images are:



*"Giraffes at Mt Kilimanjaro" by Jackye Mills*

This image placed 5<sup>th</sup>. The shot was taken in 2014, mid way through a safari that included Kenya and Tanzania, six best friends and a wonderful guide. Every day was full of excitement and wonder enjoying free roaming animals in their natural habitat. The park that we stayed at in Ambosellie had everything to offer, zebras, wildebeest, lions, foxes, elephants, cheetahs and birds and monkeys of all shapes and sizes. The most beautiful backdrop was snow-covered Mt. Kilimanjaro which is across the border in Tanzania and is the highest mountain in Africa. The giraffes roam across the plain often stopping for a curious look at the crazies popping out of van windows and roofs to take photos and enjoy the view.



*"Blue Dasher" by Donna Christie*

This image placed 7<sup>th</sup> for VCC. The image was taken on a walk near Cowichan Lake. The Blue Dasher landed nearby and was very content to sit and let me move around and photograph it. I liked this particular image as it clearly shows its body parts and the patterns in the wings.



*"Timeless" by Alison Poole*

This image placed 8<sup>th</sup> for VCC. This handleless pocket-watch once belonged to my great grandfather. With such exquisite engraving it truly is a piece of art whether it is working or not. For weeks I struggled with the logistics of how to photograph it exactly the way I had envisioned it. The front and back are both visible and in-focus, a challenge indeed. The variation in colour is true. The time-piece itself is considerably more polished on the back-side than on the front. f16, 1 second, ISO 200, 70 mm lens, two focus-stacked images.



*"Bosque del Apache" by Kahsia Hartwell*

This image placed 9<sup>th</sup> for VCC. This photo is not about the birds of Bosque del Apache, in New Mexico. It is about the light and the incredible scenery found there. I spent three days there to photograph the birds. After

thousands of birds had “blasted off” at dawn, I would drive around the dirt roads looking for other photographic opportunities. This photo is a typical morning in the Land of Enchantment.

In the Advanced category the top two scores went to Scottish images. Congratulations to the top award winners shown below with the makers’ comments.



*“Too Wild in the Sand”  
by Leah Gray FCAPA, PPSA, AFIAP*

This image placed 3<sup>rd</sup>. This stallion was photographed in the Camargue in the south of France. The handler brought the horse to the beach where we had the opportunity to photograph him. Unfortunately, I’d had a camera strap break the previous day submerging a camera and lens. I was limited to using my 100-400 mm lens and a second body. This image was taken at 100 mm and is slightly cropped.



*“Dancing a Duet” by Nick Delaney*

This image placed 5<sup>th</sup>. It took multiple trips over four years for the opportunity to capture this image. Pacific White-sided dolphins are both beautiful and graceful mammals but rarely present themselves dancing in the waves during a mating ritual. These mammals frequently travel in large pods and this particular one consisted of around 50 very active dolphins, making it difficult to

anticipate where they would surface next. Capturing this spectacular moment is very special for me.



*“I Wish I was a One Man Band” by Normand Marcotte*

This image placed 6<sup>th</sup>. The image was taken in Los Angeles in 2018. The idea was to modify the pedestrian’s shadow to reflect his dream to be a “one man band”. The image was imported into Lightroom, processed and was converted to black and white in Nik Silver Efex Pro.

One reason the Club encourages members to enter competitions is that entering can be a helpful tool toward improving your photographic skills. Entering competitions prompts you to think more about your work and what kind of images you would like to make.

As a way to encourage our members to enter competitions the Club sets up a monthly theme category. Committing to pursuing photography that has a single theme can help you focus on and explore new avenues of interest by encouraging you to study other photographers work in that genre. The first few themes for the next season are Humorous, Shadows/Reflections and Water Life. These are also great topics for creating a series of photos or techniques.

If you are unsure of whether an image is “good enough” to submit, consider posting it to our members-only Review Forum on the website for some honest and respectful critiques on how you can improve. The gains you can make by entering a competition can be very beneficial in the way you look at a particular image, how you assess your personal growth, your post-production methodology and evaluate whether or not you are growing as a creator.



# Filters for Black and White Film

*by Roger Botting*

With the resurgence of interest in film photography there is some relearning to do with how you take a photograph. Unlike digital photography, it is not always that easy to remake a photo after the fact.

One of the best ways to get a better photograph on film is to plan what to do before the shutter is clicked.

Let's start with Black and White photography. Black and White film is usually equally sensitive to all colours of visible light (panchromatic). We can make or lose a photo by not being aware of colour, yes, colour as it translates into black and white.

The film will render all colours into equal shades of grey if different colours have the same relative brightness. Don't let your eyes be fooled as they are not a great judge of absolute brightness.

We use coloured filters as contrast filters to enhance the photographic effect. Coloured filters in black and white photography will lighten (same colour) or darken (opposite colour) areas of your scene. For instance using a yellow filter will darken a blue sky. If you remember your colour theory from art class or, if you never took art, yellow is on the opposite side of the colour wheel from blue. The yellow filter allows yellow and adjacent colours of light to pass while blocking most of the blue light. This makes the sky look darker relative to the sky and the rest of the scene. Likewise, photographing a red flower with a red filter will make the flower look lighter in tone and the green leaves look darker.

Using the appropriate filter will affect the brightness of some parts of the scene. We can do the same thing for contrast. Selective use of the filter can differentiate two parts of a scene that are similar in brightness yet are different colours, for example, a red and blue plaid shirt. They might photograph as the same shade of grey but using either a red or blue filter you will get a pattern of lighter and darker tones.

Contrast can also be affected by weather conditions. A yellow filter will nicely separate a blue sky from white clouds, while not using a filter will render the sky a lighter tone, often not adequately separating the blue from the white clouds. Look at landscape photographs from the 1800s. If they have a textured sky, the photo is a multiple exposure. The film at the time couldn't separate clouds from blue sky.

Using a blue filter in the same situation will make the sky brighter and the clouds will disappear, not always a desirable effect but it can make a hazy day look quite foggy. And using a red filter will make the blue sky almost black in tone. Old school Hollywood used to use red filters and a bit of background underexposure to film "night" shots. The foreground subjects were lit to help them stand out.

That's all good for pictorial use or for when you want to hide or reveal a colour, but what about portraiture? Here you step carefully because good intentions don't always give good results. Using a red or yellow filter when photographing a Caucasian person will render their skin lighter than usual. You might end up with a pasty looking complexion. With the exception of teenage "Goths" white lips don't make it. A green filter will often bring out more skin detail than might be desirable. It will show "character" such as all those camera club photos of grizzled old sailors but your female models might not appreciate it. And, since all skin has some element of red to it, you might find a green filter will render darker skin too dark.

Film photography does not like underexposure or overexposure. It is really easy to attach the filter to your lens and shoot away but it might not give you the best results. Because coloured filters block some light and pass other colours your camera's light meter can easily be fooled. The best way to meter is to use your camera or handheld meter to meter a neutral grey card and then apply the filter factor. Especially in older cameras the light meter might not be equally sensitive to all colours.

For example, the filter factor for a yellow filter is two. That is use twice the exposure time as without a filter. A red filter is usually eight so open the aperture three f-stops or change your shutter speed from 1/250<sup>th</sup> to 1/30<sup>th</sup> second.

Polarizing filters can be useful for controlling reflections in black and white photography. Attach the filter and rotate it until the reflection is minimized. Most polarizing filters have a factor of two. Again, double the exposure time and if using it with a coloured filter add the two filter factors. The polarizing filter is hopefully neutral in colour so it should have no effect on the coloured filter. Polarizing filters are not a good way to darken skies; you will often end up with uneven exposure especially with wide-angle lenses.

What filters to buy? Start cheap, buy them used at your camera store and get better ones if the need arises. I would suggest a yellow filter to start then consider a red filter and later a green and blue filter.

# Black and White with Silver Efex Pro

by Richard James

Before I get into the workings of Nik Silver Efex Pro it is appropriate to review what we are trying to do in producing a black-and-white image. Colour is a critical element of our everyday view of the world. But without colour we have to rely on shape and tone to identify objects.

Cameras record everything in colour in the raw file (unless it is a Leica Monochrom or similar). If you set the colour mode to monochrome this only impacts the in-camera JPEG image and the file settings. You should save and edit the raw file, so that you start with the colour image, and create your black-and-white image from that.

Some images simply shout “I’m black-and-white” while at the other end of the scale some pose real challenges. Since our eyes deal more with colour than tone we have to ensure that different colours are separated by tone in black-and-white. So, this becomes the first step in creating a black-and-white image with impact. As an aside, this is all that we can do in producing black-and-white versions of colour images for *Close-Up*. We may use some tricks but the function of Silver Efex Pro goes way beyond this so we do not use it for *Close-Up*.

The original Nik Collection package was bought up by Google who later sold it to DxO who now own and update it. The current iteration is version 4 which was released in June 2021. I’ll be discussing this version and will note (with an \*) what is new or changed from version 3.



“Greyscale (Top), Silver Efex (Below)”

The simplest conversion to black-and-white is to hit the “greyscale” conversion under Image/Mode in Photoshop

or Lightroom. This rarely gives an acceptable result. In this image the top half is a simple greyscale conversion while the bottom half is the same image converted with Silver Efex Pro and adjusted to emphasize detail. Comparing the upper and lower oars clearly identifies the difference. Similarly, comparing the hull of the boat above and below the divider shows much more detail in the bottom.

Silver Efex (and the other Nik Collection tools) open with a listing of presets and the history on the left-hand side, the image in the middle, and controls on the right. The first thing I do is to set the preview to split screen so I can see the original and the edited version side-by-side and set the history to “original image”.

Next, I run through my “favourites” in the preset library. This includes presets I use often from those supplied with the software as well as my own imported or saved presets. This gives me a range of treatments to choose from as a starting point for my own adjustments targeted at each specific image.

Adjustments are split into five groups, global, selective (using control points\*), Clearview\*, colour filters, film type and finishing. There is also a loupe and histogram drop-down at the top of the screen. The adjustments panel layout has changed significantly in version 4.

Global adjustments are brightness, contrast and structure (reinforces small details and textures in the image). These affect the whole image. Colour filters operate in a similar manner to the way that filter would work with black-and-white film in a camera (see article on page 23). There are six filters, yes, grey is a colour (neutral, red, orange, yellow, green and blue). For each filter you can adjust the hue and strength to achieve the effect you are looking for, however, I much prefer the sensitivity controls under Film Type.

Film type allows you to select emulation of a number of black-and-white film types. This sets the sliders to “best represent” the way that the image would have looked if shot on that film type. It also includes film grain adjustment, colour sensitivity and a levels and curves adjuster. The grain drop-down allows adjustment of the emulated grain in black-and-white film. This is not the same as “noise” in a digital image which needs to be dealt with before you get this far into your processing. The levels and curves adjustment is similar to that in Photoshop or Lightroom but I generally prefer to make that adjustment as an adjustment layer in Photoshop.

The adjustment that I probably make the most use of is the colour sensitivity. This is where you achieve separation between colours with similar grey tones. The sliders





*"Silver Efex Conversion"*

start off with settings assigned by the preset you have chosen which is your starting point. My technique is to look at the colour and how it is rendered as black-and-white in the split preview and then adjust the appropriate slider to either lighten or darken a colour to achieve good separation from another with a similar grey value. There are six sliders: red, yellow, green, cyan, blue and violet.

Clearview\* is similar to the adjustment in PhotoLab 4. It reduces blue haze and increases contrast to improve distant landscape shots.

Finishing adjustments include image toning, vignette, burn edges and image borders. Toning allows you to apply an overall colour to the image such as traditional sepia or platinum toning. There are several presets and you can adjust the strength, silver hue, toning and balance for both the image and the background paper. Vignetting allows you to lighten or darken the edges of the image. You can adjust the amount, shape, size and centre of the effect. Burn edges gives a variable rectangular darkening effect on each of the four sides of the image. Image borders adds a white border and black "fuzzy film edge" within it with variable size, spread and clearness. There is also a "vary border" randomizer.

The loupe lets you examine small areas of the image at high magnification. The histogram shows the distribution of tones across the image with a 10 point "zone scale".

Selective adjustments\*, called control points, are an important tool now available in both the Nik Collection and DxO PhotoLab 4. This allows you to make adjustments based on the parameters of a specific area of the image and apply them to similar areas within a defined circle. The adjustments are blended in so there are no hard edges that you need to deal with. You can have mul-

iple control points which can overlap and adjust different parameters. Control points have been significantly upgraded in version 4 compared to version 3 with all adjustments made from the side panel rather than with a few sliders overlaying the image.

To use a control point you click on the icon in the adjustment panel, then on the appropriate part of the image. You adjust the radius that it will influence by dragging the outer circle. You can move, duplicate, add and remove control points as well as group them.

Control points operate on colour selectivity (luminance and chrominance), brightness, contrast, structure/fine structure, amplify white/black's, selective colourization, and tone ranges (high, mid, shadow and blacks). Unfortunately, these do not operate on colour sensitivity which may mean that in particularly difficult cases you will need different masked versions of the black-and-white image as separate layers in Photoshop.

The Nik Collection (except for Perspective Efex) now has a built-in non-destructive workflow. You can also achieve this from Photoshop by duplicating all layers, flattening the duplicates into a single layer and making it a Smart Object. Working on this in the Nik Collection means that you can go back to it later and start where you left off.

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## How I Did It

### Amaryllis

by Peter Amundsen

The first step in photographing this amaryllis flower was to plant the bulb sourced from Buckerfield's. It grew quite quickly which amazed me as I have a level three black thumb in horticulture. The next step in the process was to try and get the photograph that I had imagined in my dreams. After many set-ups and failures, I thought I had achieved a decent raw file.



*"Amaryllis"*

The plant was placed on a small table with care. Amaryllis have quite a long stem, become very top heavy and are prone to falling over. A 50 x 50 cm piece of polar white mat board was placed about 60 cm behind the flower (just leaning against a wall) to provide a clean white background.

The lighting was provided by two Canon flashes on light stands with a 75 cm reflective umbrella for each. The umbrellas were placed about 60 cm to the left and right of the flowers with the edge of the umbrella just level with the front of the flower and at the same height as the flowers. I tried to get the lighting on the flowers as even as possible.

The raw file was imported into Lightroom and developed so that all the texture in the brightest parts of the image was still visible. After the work in Lightroom the colour image was still a bit harsh.

I then used Nik Silver Efex Pro 2 for conversion to black and white. This resulted in an image that was still a bit contrasty (harsh). I then used Nik Analog Efex Pro 2 and the Classic Camera 7 effect. This was followed by some dodging and burning and masking out some of the texture from the Classic camera effect.

## The Mermaid and the Jellyfish

by Don Piper

This composite of two images was taken at the Oak Bay Marina on one of the Club's field trips.

The first image is of the reflection of the sailboat masts, the Lion's Mane Jellyfish, and the dirty water. The second image is of the Mermaid which was a sculpture of tin foil, paper and wire in the gift shop.



*"The Mermaid and the Jellyfish"*

I made some adjustments to both images in Lightroom and then transferred each one independently via "edit in Photoshop" but not as layers. I wanted them to be independent items in the tool bar.

The water and jellyfish layer was just what I wanted. I only dealt with the Mermaid image using the quick selection tool to outline her and include all the fingers, hair and bits and pieces.

Because she was made of paper and wire it was difficult to get a good smooth image of her. I had to use the + or - keys with the quick selection tool, (the ALT key on a PC or the OPT key on a Mac) to work all around her, adding and subtracting as I went.

Once I was happy with how she was selected, I went to the move tool and just moved her on to the second image and dropped her there.

The image was far too big so I went to Edit>Free Transform. The image then appeared in a bounding box that allowed me to resize, relocate and rotate where I wanted it on the background.

I then hit the check mark in the tool-bar and the layer was positioned. From there it was just a matter of going up to Layers and down to Flatten Image. Job done.



# Shoots Around Victoria

## Horticultural Centre of the Pacific

by James Dies

Flowers and photography are two things that go together well. At the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific (HCP) you get the opportunity to do both. Sometimes called a “garden for gardeners” it is 3.6 hectares of beautifully maintained gardens found nowhere else on the island. There are over 20 different gardens and 34 different areas to explore. There are over 10,000 varieties of plants with most of them labelled. The best suggestion before you go there is to re-read the article by Lois Burton, “*Use of Colour in Floral Photography*” on page 16 of the April 2021 issue of *Close-Up* and refresh your knowledge on the best way to photograph flowers. It is available on the VCC website.



“HCP Gardens”

Amongst my favourite areas are the Takata Japanese Garden, the Zen Garden, the Bonsai Garden and the Rhododendron and Hosta Garden. The Japanese Garden has a unique Japanese style bridge designed to keep evil spirits from following you into the garden. The Bonsai Garden has over 60 miniature trees.

I could spend a lot of time strolling the pathways or sitting in the bamboo Ceremonial Teahouse in the Zen Garden overlooking a pond that is filled with goldfish.

Another garden that is worth visiting is the hands-on Children’s Garden with its little gingerbread house.

If you are interested in shooting bees, butterflies and hummingbirds there are gardens dedicated to just attracting these insects and birds.

There are garden sculptures by local artists scattered throughout the gardens, some of them are quite unique and I assume some are worth a lot of money. They will add character and interest to your shots of the gardens. There are also a lot of interesting landscape features to shoot, such as the little rustic cottage surrounded by a sea of flowering plants that has been turned into a library for gardening books.



“Gingerbread House”

The gardens are usually full of volunteers and students because it is a teaching facility for the Horticultural College of the Pacific. This is where they teach all the gardeners that look after our gardens in Victoria. The staff, students and volunteers are all happy to help you with your questions and will point out a lot of interesting details in the gardens. The students are required to build a garden structure as part of their course so that is somewhere to explore and take some shots. I am sure you could even ask them a thing or two about your own gardening problems and they would be happy to give you some advice.

Adjacent to the gardens is Viaduct Flats, a 40 ha conservation area with wetlands surrounding a small lake with bike paths and a bird watching platform. Take the walking path through old growth Douglas Firs, and you might see a bald eagle dive into the lake to catch a fish.

If you are lucky local artists and musicians will be at the gardens painting, drawing or playing their music. Plants are always on sale and you can take one or more home with you after your shoot is over. There is also a small gift shop where local artists display their work. You might stop and pick up a little gardening nick-nack or two.

Finally, if you get hungry there is the Charlotte & the Quail Café on the premises ([Charlotteandthequail.ca](http://Charlotteandthequail.ca)) where some of their ingredients are grown in the gardens at HCP. The name “Charlotte” is for the cat that lives there, who you will meet, and who loves to get her picture taken.

# Portraying Mountains

*by Neil Boyle*

I have been photographing mountains since we moved to the foothills of the Rockies when I was a kid. I imagine most photographers with any interest in shooting landscapes have shot mountains. I wish I had known the following things 50 years ago.

Safety matters, as the terrain, weather and wildlife can kill you. Tell someone where you are going and when to send in the search party: it makes it so much easier to retrieve your remains. Oh, always look behind you, for the wildlife and the view.

You can often get some “good shots” if you just show up with a camera, but planning the time of day, season and place, and looking at the weather will provide many more really good images. Try to pre-visualize the images you want, then use the Photographer’s Ephemeris, Plan-It or PhotoPills apps to place the sun or moon, shadows and camera angle/lens combination. Revisit the special sites again and again and examine your images with an eye for improving them. In so doing you are much more likely to get that award-winning image. Also, have a plan B for when you get blind-sided by the weather, traffic, hordes of tourists, or simply get lost.

Take a good camera body and a back-up for when old reliable isn’t, with a wide-angle, medium and maybe a short telephoto lens for details. Take UV filters for lens protection and to reduce the glare common in the mountains and ND filters for long exposures. Take a polarizing filter for water, specular highlights, reflections or snow, but don’t polarize the sky too much. A tripod makes planning a shot easier, and the shot sharper. Take more batteries and cards than you need, a raincoat for your camera (and for you) and a first aid kit.

Post-processing makes a huge difference to an image. Beyond basic image touch-ups, HDR, panoramas and B&W are processes every landscape photographer should be able to use. Luminosity masking and Photo-shop (or its competitors) are very useful. The question of how much can you change an image is not an ethical problem at all; it is an artistic consideration. If you want a documentary picture (“nature” rules), don’t post-process it (much). If you want an artistic image, there is no limit to what you can do.

Composition, light and colour (or tone-separation for B&W) matter. Once you have those right, the image can be enhanced with extras such as long exposure, focus

stacking or HDR. Mountain compositions change dramatically with only slight camera movement so move around until all the elements in the image align properly. Simplicity is good, keep the number of elements odd and few.

Sharpness matters as do a faster shutter speed, good tripod (weighted, centre column down), remote or delayed release, mirror lockup. Avoid wind. Scale matters, as do people, especially those brightly dressed, and keep them far enough away so they don’t compete with the scene. Take them in interesting poses.

The golden and blue “hours” are shorter in the mountains. Alpenglow doesn’t last long and it’s hard to tell when it’s best, so get there early and shoot lots of images while you’ve got it. Bad weather makes better pictures but in the mountains it is more uncomfortable and dangerous.

Highlights, especially from snow, are easy to blow out (so bracket them) and a polarizer helps with reflections from snow, water, and vegetation. Reflections on water work well. Consider getting really low to emphasize the reflected feature and using a polarizer, evaluating both the maximum and partly polarized effect on the water and leaves.

Horizon placement: unless the sky is spectacular the one-third point is a good starting place, less if the sky is a clear blue (unless you want negative space). But consider the symmetry of placing the horizon in the middle of the image when the reflection matches the main subject.

Rivers and streams make good leading lines and often, with a little searching around, you can find S- or C-curves. Mountain-sides are also good leading lines.

Shoot wide for the bigger picture and use a telephoto for details. Foregrounds aren’t essential but they add a lot when they are interesting; consider one with a contrasting colour.

Landscapes do better with more of the image in focus so choose the lens focal length and aperture to control this and consider focus stacking.

Social media is full of iconic shots but finding your own shot is so much more satisfying. Go for a hike, get off the beaten track, take the road less travelled. If you find a really good scene keep returning until everything is right.

All these images required research, planning, travel and multiple visits. Time of day was important and weather frequently interfered with my pre-planned images. All of the images were taken on a tripod with measures to improve sharpness and all are heavily post-processed.





*"Alpenglow on the Watchman"*

"Alpenglow" This iconic shot of the tallest mountain in Zion National Park, Utah was messed up by the alpenglow showing earlier than I'd predicted and rapidly disappearing as the cloud bank blew in, obscuring the scene. Nevertheless, I got a few good images before leaving. Flooding closed the park later that day, preventing returning for another try. It only required a shutter speed of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> second to soften the water. In Photoshop, I made the mountain taller than nature did.



*"Shiprock"*

"Shiprock". This geologic formation is a monadnock, the eroded core of an extinct volcano in the Four Corners area of the US (Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico), hard to reach, on confusing roads. It is significant to the Navajo people who control access. This panorama works, but a drone shot would have been better.



*"Gray's Peak"*

"Gray's Peak". This mountain in Kootenay Glacier Provincial Park, is easy to see from the south side of Kootenay Lake but very hard to frame. I spent several days driving about to find an acceptable view. It required a 500 mm lens with great care to stop vibration.



*"Mt. McLean at Night"*

"Mt. McLean". The symmetry of this curve in Duffy Lake Road west of Lillooet is a good foreground for the mountain, and I 'improved' the image by making it a one-minute long-exposure to get the car lights outlining the road, and to give the clouds a softer texture. It took a lot of experimenting to find the correct timing. I found this site while hiking in the area and returned to photograph it several times. The hike to this site is long and steep, the camera location needed to be above a long drop and at least one resident bear wanted to know if I was food.



*"The Town of Nelson, BC"*

"Nelson". This is one of my favourite towns to photograph and this shot, courtesy of my guide, Nick Shave, required a 4-wheel drive vehicle to get up a forestry road on Toad Mountain to reach a lookout on the Bedframe Mountain biking trail. Nick has a spectacular shot of the same valley filled with clouds at sunrise, and we plan to return to shoot it in the winter. I used HDR for this shot.



# Beginner's Corner: Landscapes

by Joseph Finkleman

First you need to choose between making an image that is iconic and has been done to death or making the image in your own voice. Neither is wrong nor best. It always comes down to what story you wish to tell.

This article is not about the iconic image. There are images of Lake Louise in Banff National Park that are classic or Zabriskie Point and the Fire Falls in Yosemite National Park that one can find in any book or on the postcard stand. There is nothing wrong if you wish to emulate these images, but it seems to me that this says nothing personal about you, the artist, and as such, is frequently boring since we have all seen these iconic images over and over again.

However, it is more work to make the image personal to you while simultaneously making it interesting to others. What it takes is asking yourself the question "What is actually interesting to me here at this spot and how can I best show it in my images?" This is not a casual question and the more you think about this the deeper your personal vision will be developed.



*"Alabama Hills, Sidelight"*

Now onto the myths. The number one myth that needs to be cured is the idea that the widest-angle lens is the best lens for the grand vista. Please just throw that notion out into the garbage can. The proper use of a wide-angle lens is to show a near-far relationship. How this nearby big tree or rock relates to that far away tree/rock or geological structure with all of it in focus and with nice straight lines.

If you want to make a grand vista use a normal or moderate telephoto lens and learn how to stitch a few frames together as a panorama. There is too great

a chance of making a boring image out of one really wide-angle lens. Please remember that the bulk of all landscapes ever made in the history of photography were done with normal to moderately long lenses.

The next myth that needs to be nuanced is the "It is best if everything is in focus" myth. There are images where a lot of depth-of-field is best just as there are lots of images where a more selective focus is best to emphasize and isolate the subject.

The reality is that lots of landscape images are best done with longer lenses just as normal lenses and even wide-angle lenses have a utility. There is no universal lens that is the "best" lens for all subjects.

The other reality is that the Golden Hours have really nice light but not any nicer than light at straight-up noon. It depends on the subject matter and the story that you are telling.

If all of your images are shot at the Golden Hours you are wasting the best parts of the day and worse those sorts of images become boring to look at if that is all you have to show. Generally speaking, the most interesting light is a crossing light (sidelight) that reveals details and textures.

Lastly, the best light is the light that tells your story to the best advantage. There is no time of day better or worse for light. As long as there is light, that is the best time of day. As an addendum, when there is any moonlight, even a quarter moon, with a long exposure one can make some very interesting landscape images.

One of the biggest myths is that you need a better camera or lens to make a "sharper" image. Motion blur is always the biggest culprit in detracting from a "sharper" image. Regardless of image stabilization advances the best piece of kit you can invest in is a sturdy tripod.



*"One Quarter Moon, Midnight Alabama Hills"*



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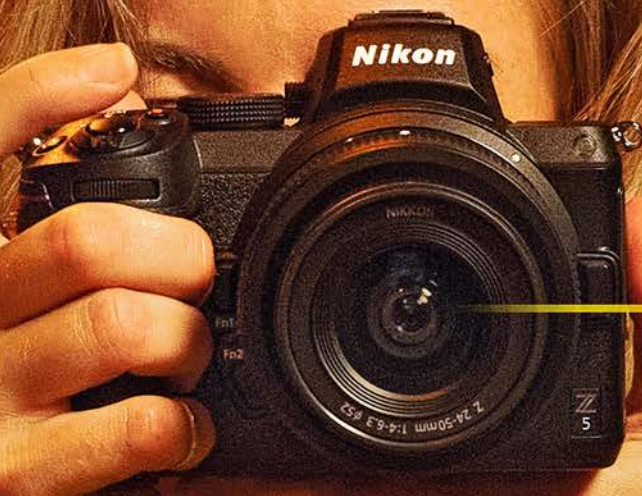


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