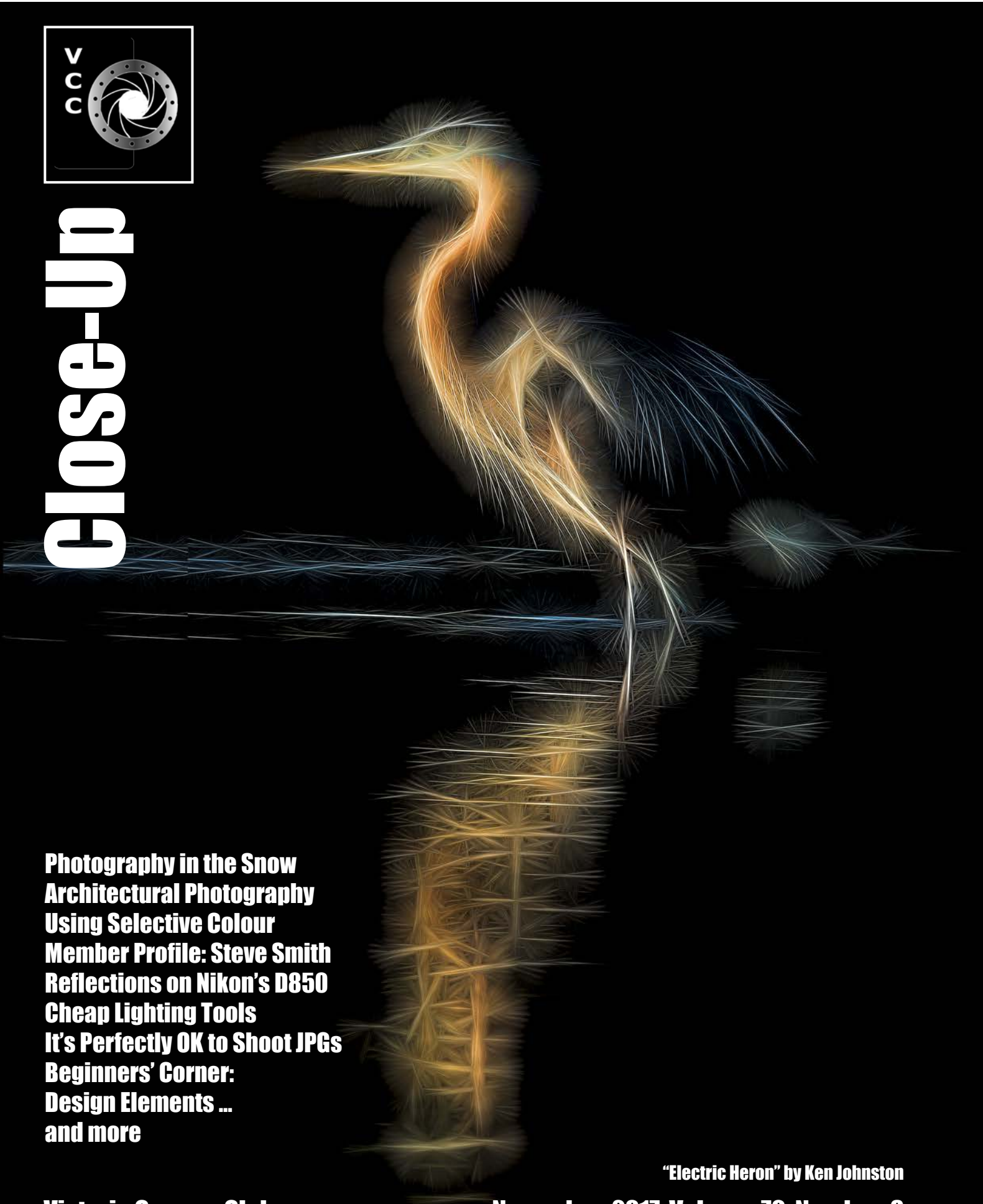
Close-Up



Photography in the Snow
Architectural Photography
Using Selective Colour
Member Profile: Steve Smith
Reflections on Nikon's D850
Cheap Lighting Tools
It's Perfectly OK to Shoot JPGs
Beginners' Corner:
Design Elements ...
and more

"Electric Heron" by Ken Johnston

Victoria Camera Club

November 2017 Volume 70 Number 8

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Established in 1944, the Victoria Camera Club is a group of people who share the love of photography. We come together to appreciate each other's images, to learn, both from the feedback on our own images and from the images of others, and to exchange tips on how and where to take effective photographs. Our focus is on continuous learning. Our media include both film and digital and our expertise ranges from novice to master.

Events

We hold a number of events including:

- Three meetings a month from September to April (excluding December)
- Field trips
- Workshops
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
- Competitions within the Club and externally

Meetings begin at 7:30 PM at Norway House, 1110 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC.

Membership

Annual fees include all workshops (except studio shoots and special events), meetings and all field trips unless travel/accommodation is involved. Annual fees are: Individual, $85; Family, $128; Student, $43.

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

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

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For additional information: please contact:

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

Calendar

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

November 2nd 2017: Competition Night

Competition season opening and introduction. The November theme competition is "Night Photography." The deadline for all submissions is November 2nd.

November 9th 2017: Presentation Night

Caitlin Chapman will talk about "Creativity in Photography: Think Outside the Camera." When the pixel-peeping and gear-lust take over, your photographs suffer. Let's talk about the creative side of photography.

November 16tht 2017: Members' Night

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

Workshop and Field Trip Highlights

Photographing Waterfowl workshop, Fraser Delta Birds field trip.

Cover Image: "Electric Heron" by Ken Johnston. I photographed this Great Blue Heron at Esquimalt Lagoon at sunset. It was a fairly mundane heron image, but had a couple of features which caught my attention, the very directional light shining on the heron's front, and the resulting reflection in the water.

I elected to experiment in post-processing and decided to try "Topaz Glow." There, I worked my way through some presets until I found one that seemed to enhance the photo well beyond the original capture. The name of this preset is "Electrify I." Topaz presents the user with a number of sliders to create variations in the 'electrify' effect. Again, I experimented until I found an outcome that I found pleasing.

At that point, with competitions in mind, I wondered what category this type of alteration might fit and decided on a print. I had purchased a sample box of MOAB paper and discovered one called "Slickrock Metallic Silver." Thinking that the metallic property of the paper would further electrify the image, I printed it and voila, beyond my expectations. It pays to put in the effort. You just never know what you might end up with.

President's Message

Like editors everywhere, our *Close-Up* editor has pages to fill and deadlines to meet. Couple that with the juxtaposition of yours truly, procrastinator-in-chief. Add my preoccupation with "Learning to See Creatively" with Bryan Peterson over the past weekend, so what better than to make my theme our encounter with Bryan Peterson.

First my quick take on the sessions held on Friday evening and all day Saturday. Significant ground was covered on the principles of colour, exposure and composition, all with an eye to unleashing one's creativity throughout the process. Bryan's wonderful images served to illustrate each point made. According to Bryan, much is revealed about photographers through the images which they present to the world. Although tools and technique are not trivial or to be overlooked, in the end it is composition which trumps the other elements. One of Bryan's key messages was to delve more deeply into a scene to exploit the potential at first overlooked. Zoom with your feet. Get closer. Seek the gems within!

Bryan's basic approach to photography was made even more evident during Sunday's workshop, when a smaller group had a chance to interact with him. It all started with the following directives. Bring a wide-angle, a telephoto and a macro lens. Set your camera to ISO 200, manual exposure, daylight white balance, and RAW capture format. But, wait! Can you teach an old dog new tricks? I use auto ISO, auto white balance, auto exposure and, horrors, jpg capture. Hmm...yes, I did follow instruction, albeit using RAW+jpg capture.

Our subject matter for the day included a start at the inner harbour, featuring some awesome reflections. Then over to Beacon Hill Park for star bursts, leaves and feathers in macro mode against black backgrounds, and more. Our third and final venue for the day was Ross Bay Cemetery. Many opportunities were present to check out various themes covered during the day and a half spent in Sidney.

Did I learn any new tricks? Some basics were reinforced. Some new topics were opened for further study, in particular regarding the use of flash in outdoor settings. My challenge now is to process and analyze over 600 image pairs and to report on my RAW vs jpg trial. Look for more on this in the months ahead.

Finally, my thanks to Graham and Cindy and to all of the many VCC volunteers who made all of this possible.

Garry Schaefer, President

Photography in the Snow

by Gordon Griffiths

Winter is considered by many to be the most difficult season to photograph. Winter photography can be a challenge, but it is both fun and rewarding.

Exposure: No matter what kind of metering system your camera uses, one has to increase the exposure for snow scenes or the snow will appear grey. The key is to expose enough to achieve a true whiteness but not so much as to lose detail. For example, the snow reflection varies from 40% to 50% with dirty snow and up to 80% to 90% with freshly fallen snow. The following guide is neither precise nor exhaustive but it should provide a good starting point:

- Freshly fallen snow: meter the pure white area using spot metering and open 2 f-stops.
- Side-lit snow with a lot of detail (textured snow): open $1^1/_3$ to $1^1/_2$ f-stops.
- Sun with snow in the shadows: open up 1 f-stop.
- Overcast: meter the snow and open up 2 f-stop.

Of course, always check your histogram to see what conditions dictate and bracket a number of shots.

"Snow, St. Margaret's Bay, Victoria"

White balance: White balance adjusts colours based on the lighting conditions. Snow is very reflective and may cause a camera sensor to misread the white balance resulting in the snow looking blue. Experiment and adjust the white balance to a warmer tone to achieve a rendition of the snow closer to white.

Portraits in winter: When making a portrait or a small group photo in winter, if possible, fill the frame with the subject. This step will allow the camera to take a more accurate exposure reading of the subject and avoid the subject appearing backlit which may give a silhouette effect.

Flash: Photographers generally don't think of using a flash when photographing snow, however, a flash can pick up detail and add sparkle to a winter scene. If you have people in the image and don't mind losing some background detail, fill flash can make a difference.

"Edge of the Pond"

Snow transforms the landscape. Shapes and forms are more pronounced. Trees in both the urban and rural landscape make excellent subjects silhouetted against the snow or colourful skies. Colour can be muted in winter creating an opportunity to experiment with monochrome photography by either setting the camera to monochrome for the in-camera JPG or converting the RAW file to monochrome in post-processing.

In our climate we often get the gift of hoar frost even if it doesn't snow. Hoar frost, which is crystalline structures that grow from water vapour in cold conditions, usually occurs after a dense, overnight fog in cold weather. A macro or close-focusing telephoto lens can provide interesting images of these ice formations.

Tips

- Batteries run down much faster in cold conditions. Take spares and keep them in an interior pocket.
- Consider using cards better suited to extreme conditions, for example, SanDisk Extreme cards.
- Keep your camera dry and don't put a wet lens cap back on the lens. The result may be spots and condensation on the lens.
- Let your camera warm up slowly before you remove the lens when you return indoors. Lenses can fog up while the camera warms up.
- Dress warmly in layers with appropriate hats, gloves and boots. You may have to wait in windy, cold locations for conditions or lighting to change. Several manufacturers make thin fleece gloves with rubber grips on the fingers and palms allowing you to operate your camera.

I hope you will rush out when snow or hoar frost next appear and enjoy a unique photographic experience.

Architectural Photography

by Joseph Finkleman with images by Richard James

Classically, architecture fulfills three human needs: durability, utility, and beauty. In times of necessity, beauty is usually left out. However, whenever a building is designed for any reason other than necessity, aesthetics are included. In some buildings the aesthetics are co-equal to both durability and utility. There are notable edifices, some of which have endured from classical Greece or Rome, while others have languished and only parts remain.

The role of the photographer is dependent on the purpose of the photograph. If hired by a client, then the purpose will be from the client's point of view. But let's assume that what is needed is a straight-forward documentation of the front of an edifice, such as the British Columbia Parliament Building. It is a challenging situation; the building is very large. In order to photograph it in its entirety one has to step far away from it to get the entire structure in the frame.

The logical thing to do is to switch to a wide-angle lens, approximately 85 to 100 degrees angle-of-view. On a full-frame camera that is a 20-24 mm lens. On an APS sensor that would be a 14-16 mm lens. Even so, the building is so big that we get quite a lot of extraneous bits of landscape in the picture which makes the building's size diminish. Also, if the lens is sufficiently wide-angle, then there is a copious amount of apparent distortion to be corrected. Equally annoying is that, since it is a three-story building with a partial fourth floor located in the turrets, the building is at least 50 metres tall. Shot straight-on, the top of the tower is clipped.

"15 mm lens, straight on"

No matter what length of ladder we use, the probability is that to get the top in, we will be looking up at the building. As soon as we do that, the building will appear to be leaning backwards away from us. This is called key-stoning.

"15 mm lens, tilted up"

With a view camera, using the perspective control, we can raise the front standard that holds the lens and lower the rear standard that holds the film. By doing that, we centre the building and remove a great deal of the foreground. Secondly, we can tilt the standards in order to straighten up the vertical lines. Wait a minute, why can't we just use a digital camera with a tilt/shift lens? To a certain extent, we can. What the tilt/shift lens does is essentially the same as tilt/shift process of a view camera, except with less tilt and less shift.

"15 mm lens, tilted up and corrected"

With film, the lenses are designed to throw a cone of image larger than the film size. With extreme wide-angle lenses of around one hundred degrees angle-of-view the movements are fairly small. However, a wide-angle tilt/shift lens on a digital camera would not include a hundred degrees angle-of-view. At the extremes of tilt/shift the lens is throwing the light into the sensor wells at greater than a fifteen degree angle. That is where uncontrollable colour shifts occur. So digital works to some extent and it doesn't work to another extent. For a building as large as the Parliament Building there are other solutions. (These images were taken with a "normal" lens on a DSLR.)

One has to get back as far and as high as one can, and find the time of day most likely to be the most beautiful for the building. Personally, if I were commissioned to do such a building, I would get the necessary permissions and permits to do two things: (1) rent a very large boom and bucket to get me about fifteen to twenty metres in the air and (2) with permission, of course, have the proper security personnel clear all people away from the building for the few minutes needed to make the image. The shot would be at the most optimum time of day to get the best light.

Thankfully, most buildings are not quite so difficult to do. Let's take a much easier example, like a pretty old mansion, or part of a larger building. Firstly, it is less than 20 metres in height, perhaps only 15 metres. This means that you may be able to use a longer focal length lens.

"24 mm lens, corrected and cropped"

Secondly, let's assume there is no client, but you have permission from the owners to photograph their lovely old home. Let's further assume that you are determined to photograph the building with your digital camera. After scouting the location for the prettiest light (more on that later), you will need two things for this task. Here you may not need a super-wide lens, you may even use a short telephoto. Second, you will need a very tall ladder, at least three and preferably five metres high. You can rent these fairly easily. It is best to bring a friend for safety purposes and in general, to hold the ladder steady. These ladders are fairly heavy, so bring a young friend who owns a pick-up truck.

If you can get your camera up to a five metre height with a hundred degree angle-of-view lens, then the probability of shooting reasonably straight at the building is greater. There will be some apparent distortion and key-stoning, but not too much. Personally, I would shoot at as high an ISO as was needed to give me an f/stop of at least f11 and a shutter speed of at least 1/2000th or greater. If properly exposed, noise will be minimal.

The processing should be for maximum middle tone contrast, whether in colour or not; the more middle tone contrast, the greater the three dimensional effect. However, in the foundational stages, lens correction will be necessary. The apparent distortion is often corrected in camera or can be corrected in post-processing with lens correction. Generally you will be correcting the vertical distortion and that will eliminate the key-stoning effect. The software is adequate and though it does not look like a perspective controlled camera, it does look pretty good.

Now is a good time to look at lighting. Your light of choice for architectural photography is the sun. Remember that it is a light source, just like any light source, and so the placement of it matters. Let us assume that this will be easy and the building faces south. In the late spring to early fall the sun is relatively high in the sky, at least compared to the December sun, when it is quite low even at noon. What you want is the moment when the sun's light crosses the face of the building. If the building is facing south when the sun starts its transition from east to south or conversely when the sun is making its transition from south to west, the light is cross lighting the face of the building. This is when the exposure should be made. Cross lighting gives both highlights and shadows, defining the planar surfaces of the structure. In the winter, when the sun is lower in the sky, even though it is crossing the face of the building, it can look very strange. Ideally it is best to photograph as close to June twenty-first as possible because that is the prettiest light. Also, you have one more option at this time of year. The sun comes up in the north by north-east so, even if your building is facing north, when it transitions to east the sun will be crossing the face of the building.

The key elements for a good architectural image are good cross light and keeping all of the vertical and horizontal lines straight.

"15 mm lens, tilted up, corrected and cropped"

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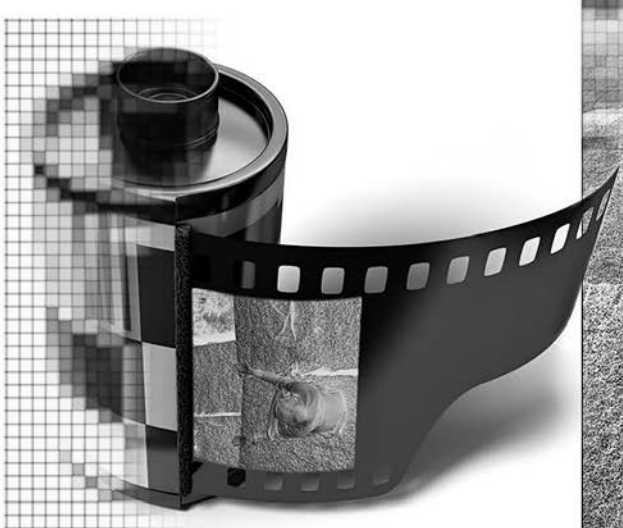

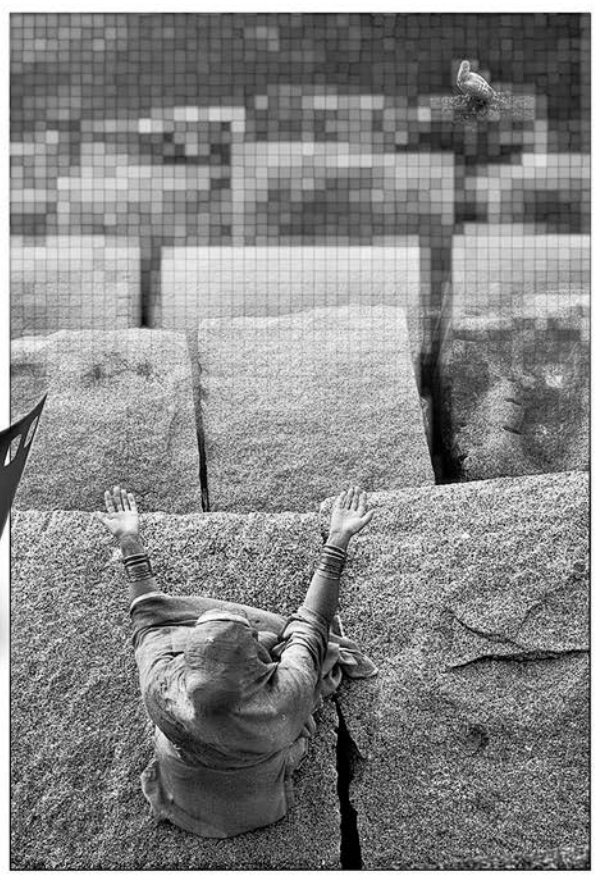

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Using Selective Colour

by Richard James

When we say "selective colour" we generally mean one of two things: a black-and-white image which has one colour retained or, an image where we have changed one or more colour ranges for emphasis or creative effect.

At the September Presenters Night Vladimir Kostka discussed the way that he uses selective colour in his black and white images. At the October Creative SIG meeting Pam Irvine showed how to do it in Lightroom and I showed several methods to do it in Photoshop.

In Lightroom, in the Develop Module go to the HSL tab and move all the Saturation sliders to the left except for the colour that you want to retain, adjust this colour's Saturation, if needed. To remove any unwanted colour areas go to the Adjustment Brush in the Basic panel and set Saturation to zero. Now paint over the part of the subject you want to remove the colour from.

As usual, there are many ways of doing it in Photoshop or Photoshop Elements. You can use a number of methods of selecting the area to be changed and then a number of ways of effecting the colour change. I strongly recommend that you use adjustment layers and/or smart objects for this as they are editable later if you wish to change the effect. The way you make the selection is largely independent of how you apply it so the following examples can be mixed and matched.

Colour on black-and-white: This is the easiest adjustment to make since you are not changing the colour of the part that you are revealing however, you can do so if you wish using one of the methods below. First, create your black-and-white adjustment layer and optimize the tone range by adjusting the colour sliders. Next, click on the mask in the layers palette and make sure that the colour is white, the default, which applies the change to the whole image. Now, select the paintbrush tool and change it to an appropriate size (using the [or] keys). Make sure the brush is using black (type "D" then "X" to change it to the default (white) and then invert it to black). Now, carefully paint over the area in which you want to reveal the colour. You're done. If you use another way of creating a black-and-white layer, such as a plug-in like Nik Silver Efex, then use the output layer from that instead of the adjustment layer and create the mask on that layer.

Colour Range and the HSL adjustment layer: The Colour Range tool (Select/Color Range) allows you to use a colour sampler to select multiple colour ranges within an image to create a mask. It has two main controls: Fuzziness that controls the width of the colour range selected, and Range, which determines how far away from the selected point in the image similar colours will be selected.

The selection is then applied as a mask to the HSL adjustment layer. The next step is to adjust the hue and saturation so that you achieve the selective colour change to the area that is not masked (image below).

"Amazing Pink-Bellied Pelican"

Luminosity mask and colour balance adjustment layer: As an alternative to changing a colour range you can change a luminosity range, for example the range of greys in a partially cloudy sky. Luminosity masking is a little more complicated than other types of masks. A number of plug-ins are available to assist you in creating the required masks. A web search will find a lot of discussion of the technique including how to create a mask from basic Photoshop tools as well as discussion of the plug-ins themselves.

Instead of selecting by colour you select by luminosity. This means that you can select different colours more easily if they have the same luminosity range. Another advantage of luminosity masks is that they are generally "edgeless" whereas other masks may have relatively sharp edges unless you deliberately feather them.

Once you have created your luminosity mask you simply apply it to a colour balance adjustment layer and adjust the three sliders to achieve the effect that you want. Remember that, as this tool works independently on three luminosity ranges, you will need to work with the correct range (highlights, mid-tones, or shadows). The use of the mask allows you to more finely control the parts of the image where the changes are applied than simply selecting highlights/mid-tones/shadow.

In addition to HSL and colour balance, you can use any of the adjustment layer tools that affect colour such as photo filter or selective colour.

January Theme: Geometric Shapes

by Judy Plummer

Search for "geometric shape images" online to see some examples. This may give you an idea of the kind of "geometric shape" you want to work with.

In the art world, there are generally considered to be two kinds of shapes: Geometric and Organic Shapes. Geometric shapes are associated with "made by humans" although crystals are considered to be geometric. Organic shapes are associated with things from the natural world like plants and animals.

In photography we are always considering shape, the outward form of an object as defined by its outline. In the visual arts when talking about shape as an element of art it is referred to as an enclosed space, the boundaries of which are defined by other elements such as lines, colour, form, value, space and texture.

Geometric shapes are made by connecting lines to form a square, triangle, circle or crosses. These shapes are often symmetrical, have a structured look and feel to them, and are two dimensional. By adding more lines to geometric shapes they may become cubes, pyramids or spheres and are now three dimensional. Remember that the three dimensional can also be shot as two dimensional when it is a silhouette.

Will you be using geometric shapes already created for you such as a circle, a bicycle wheel, or are you going to create the geometric shape, for example, a triangle, by photographing a tree?

Once you have found your geometric shape your next decision is how you want to present it. Are you going to use pattern, the repetition of the shape, or are you going to use movement or rhythm? Will it be proportion or unity or emphasis? How will the photo have balance? How are you going to use the combination of these principles of design to create your entry?

To accomplish your photo project try a different lens from the one you are accustomed to using or use an unfamiliar point of view. Are you filling the frame with your geometric shape? Did you really need a background or, if you are using repetition, will it spill over the edges of the photo? Post-production is your choice in the Theme category.

The deadline for the January competition is Thursday, January 4, 2018.

September Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to our external judges for the September Intermediate and Advanced competitions: Rick Leche, Michael Easton, Karen Stoyles, Hazel Breitkreutz and Paul Tedrick. We would also like to thank our in-house Novice Judges: Normand Marcotte, Steve Lustig, Anne McCarthy and Caspar Davis. All images and judges' comments are available at: *victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx*.

Michael Easton: Natural World. Michael is a fine art nature photographer living in North Vancouver. He has a PhD in ecological genetics from the University of Liverpool, UK, and specialized in the genetic impact of contaminants and pollutants on plants and animals. Proceeds from the sale of his photography helps support his environmental research and advocacy work. *www.naturphoto.com*

Hazel Breitkreutz: Open and Theme. Hazel is a member of the Crescent Beach Photography Club in South Surrey and a CAPA certified judge. She has won awards for her photographic art as well as her paintings. Hazel enjoys sharing her experience, ideas and inspiration by teaching courses and workshops.

Karen Stoyles: Altered Reality. Karen lives in Brantford, Ontario and is an active member of the Brant Camera Club. Her main photographic interests are wildflower, macro and creative photography. She travels the back roads of Ontario where she finds many species of wild flowers hiding in ditches and woodlands. Karen has been judging photography for over 10 years for many organizations. You can find some of her images on Flikr.

Paul Tedrick: Advanced Prints. Paul is graduate of the world-renowned Brooks Institute of Photography and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Photography. Paul has had a successful career in Victoria ranging from photographing weddings to portraiture, to advertising and landscapes. Paul currently resides in Shawnigan Lake. *www.paultedrick.com*.

Rick Leche: Wildlife. This is the first time Rick has judged for us. Originally from Alberta, he currently lives in Black Creek, BC and is an avid photographer of anything and everything. Rick loves to travel and capture the world and never leaves home without his gear (Canon)! He is a member of the Langley Camera Club where he was recognized as the top image maker for 2012-2013. Rick is also a member of CAPA. Rick's images can be viewed on Flickr or on his website *ricklechephotographer.zenfolio.com*.

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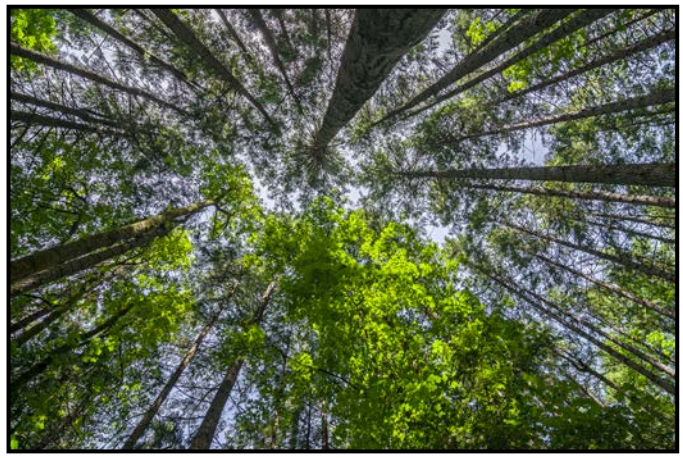
Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
""Cannery Building Windows" by Normand Marcotte

Judge's comments: A superb image which I enjoyed looking at, very captivating with the cobwebs, good composition. Great tonality in the printed image showing wonderful contrast, engaging leading lines and nice highlight detail. Very well done!



Advanced Digital Natural World - 1st
"West Coast BC Forest Canopy" by Peter Reid

Judge's comments: Very well done.

Advanced Digital Open - 1st
"100 Gun Salute to Vimy Ridge" by Steve Smith

Judge's comments: Really captured the power and drama of this event! Well exposed and caught as the canon fired. The people standing add perspective and a presence drawing the viewer into the drama. Well captured in that there is faint detail in the distance allowing a background, mid-ground and foreground.

Advanced Digital Wildlife - 1st
"Racoon Kits" by Lois Burton

Judge's comments: Not cute enough LOL, Seriously this is a wonderful image invoking emotion, nature, curiosity, wonder, youth and on and on. Technically excellent, sharp, well composed, great lighting. Thank you for sharing this beautiful image!

Advanced Nature Print - 2nd
"Bee on Cow Parsley" by Richard James

Judge's comments: Well executed technique with a difficult subject to get in focus. The composition keeps my eye on the bee.

Advanced Open Print - 2nd
"Art Deco Rooftop Reflections" by Garry Schaefer

Judge's comments: A very nice capture, love the detail in the sky and highlights.

Advanced Altered Reality - 1st
"Alberta Bound" by Lorna Zabak

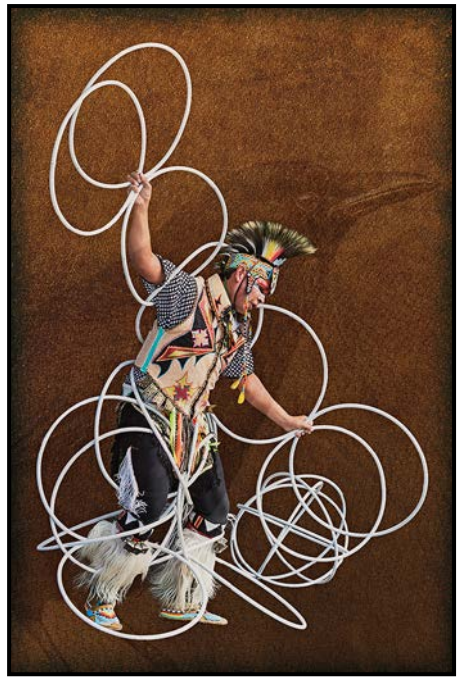
Judge's comments: Technique accentuates the rusty condition of the vehicles and enhances the mood of the image. Lovely colours and contrast. Subjects placed well within the frame. A very well done image.

Advanced Digital Theme - 1st
"Out Of The Fog, Halifax" by Richard Marshall

Judge's comments: Intrigue and mystery! Lovely division of space. The crisp hard lines of the pier balancing the soft romantic quality of the ship in the mist draws the viewer close. Well exposed.

Intermediate Digital Natural World - 1st
"Rainy Day at the Seashore" by Don Piper

Judge's comments: I really like this image. There is lots to explore without being too busy.



Intermediate Altered Reality - 1st
"Ancestral Dance" by Richard Letourneau

Judge's comments: Very pleasing composition. Background sets off the subject effectively and implies there is a story and association between the two. Well done.

Intermediate/Novice Open Print - 1st
"Raw Energy" by John Clarke

Judge's comments: Excellent live performance photo. Great use of B&W to put emphasis on the emotion of the moment. Well composed and exposed. Nice print on matte paper with rich deep blacks. Very well done.

Intermediate Digital Open - 1st
"Lotus Elise" by Mark van Arragon

Judge's comments: Literally a "moving image." Beautifully handled to allow for sharpness yet this amazing smooth movement that makes the viewer feel like they are being swept down the road in this amazing car! Just enough colour in the background to allow placement and a narrow ribbon across the bottom framing this image beautifully.

Intermediate Digital Theme - 1st
"Sheer Force" by Graeme Weir

Judge's comments: A bold well composed image. Real drama here and action. A unique way of seeing makes this image unusual and intriguing. Very nicely placed in the picture space. Enough light to add drama.

Intermediate Digital Wildlife - 1st
"Great Blue Heron Hunting at Sunrise"
by Evan Guengerich

Judge's comments: A+ on the reflections captured in this image and the shutter speed used to freeze the moment! The clarity in the image is breathtaking and to be commended The lighting conditions captured are both natural and pleasing Kudos to the image maker!.

Novice Digital Wildlife - 1st
"Great Horned Owl" by Suzy Dickstein

Judge's comments: Excellent portrait of a raptor. Very well exposed and the eyes are perfectly sharp. Background is suitably blurred and out-of-focus. The face of the owl is well placed in the frame and there is just enough room around the edges. Well done.

Novice Digital Open - 1st
"BC Aviation Museum" by Teri VanWell

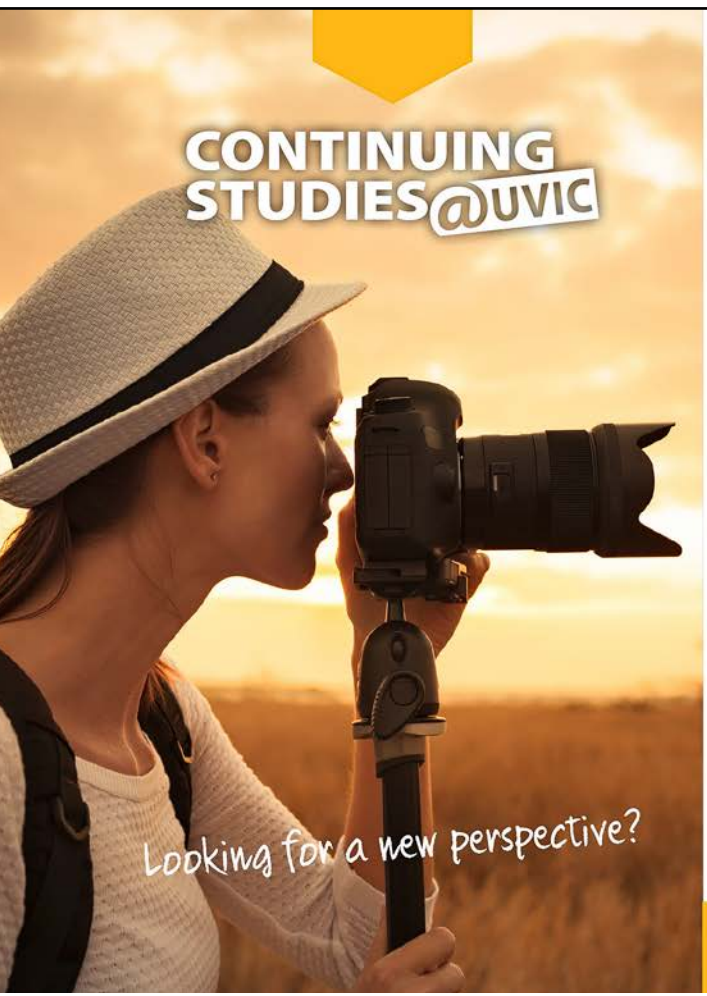
Judge's comments: Very creative use of post-processing to bring out colours and details. The saturation adds impact and interest in the sky. Good point-of-view. The bright sun and flare are not distracting in this somewhat surreal treatment.

Novice Digital Natural World - 1st
"Evening Turmoil" by Kim Smith

Judge's comments: Excellent long-exposure of a very dynamic scene. Nice contrast of the turmoil in the water and the smooth surface of the rocks. Great use of panoramic cropping with right balance of rocks and water. Beautiful image.

Novice Digital Theme - 1st
"Early Morning Ferry" by Peter Amundsen

Judge's comments: Great image of the ferry in moody atmospheric conditions. Very sharp throughout. Good placement in the frame to include its reflection on the water. Well done.



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Member Profile: Steve Smith

My photography began at age 15 in a closet where I would grope amongst clothes to transfer film from my camera to my development tank. Then I would work in the bathroom making contact prints in my makeshift darkroom. With the advent of digital photography I eventually came out of the closet and spent less time in the bathroom.

I made the usual progression through photos taken on holiday, mountain climbing, skiing, back-packing and of our kids as they grew up. Later, most of my photography was to complement my professional reports. After I retired I bought a Canon Rebel DSLR and started taking photos that were more focused on image making. My daughters bought me a photography course with a local photographer, Mike Byrne of ClockTower Images. Mike opened my eyes to a fascinating world of interesting subjects, composition and light. I learned about landscapes, portraits, using flash, night photography, understanding my camera and how to get my settings right. I enjoyed Mike's course so much that I looked around to see if there were any camera clubs in town and came across the Victoria Camera Club, so I promptly joined. First I bought a Canon 70D and then assorted lenses and lighting equipment, then a full-frame Canon 5D MK 4. These were incremental steps towards my present state of poverty.

Photography has improved my ability to see instead of just look. Now I enjoy wildlife and landscape; backyard bird photography and other nature photography; table top and macro photography; studio photography and street photography. I like the challenge of manipulating shadows and complementing ambient light with the artificial light from speed lights and studio strobes.

Along with improving my camera skills I have learned much about the photographic dark side where an image is dragged into the digital darkroom to have its pixels developed, layered and sometimes cruelly mutilated. I read a lot of books and articles and then try out the ideas and insights that I find there simply by taking many photos.

"Vimy Ridge Anniversary, 100-Gun Salute"

The Vimy Ridge image was taken at night in Fort Rodd during the 100-Gun salute to Vimy Ridge. I listened to the cadence of the gunnery commands until I knew which command came right before "fire!"

"Island View Beach"

The image of Island View Beach was taken soon after sunrise, patiently waiting for the sun to properly light the foreground rocks and for the clouds to increase their presence in the sky.

"Northern Harrier"

The shot of a Northern Harrier was taken at Boundary Bay. At the end of a cloudy day the low November sun broke through sending golden shafts of light onto the land beyond dike and ocean.

Every day I continue to learn about photography by reading and listening to others but, mostly I learn by taking as many photographs as I can in as many different situations as I can find. If I haven't done it before is the reason to do it now.

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Reflections on Nikon's D850

by Sterling Wood with Matt Speight

I recently had my first hands-on experience with Nikon's new D850 camera. It is much as you would expect any professional camera to be: solid feeling and fast, with a big, beautiful optical viewfinder and a state of the art LCD with which to interact. It has the battery grip and EN-EL18a battery which gives an impressive nine frames per second. Focusing, which uses technology borrowed from the D5, is blazingly fast and accurate.

But this is not a review of the D850; that has already been done, thoroughly, and by the usual sources. This is meant to be an introduction to a technology just starting to make its way into full-sensor cameras. New to Nikon, previously unique to Sony, is the full-size (36 x 24 mm) backside illuminated (BSI) CMOS sensor. BSI sensors have been used for several years in cell phones, where the technology is able to produce acceptable quality despite extremely small sensors.

A conventional sensor chip starts with a solid support substrate onto which active layers, sometimes only a few atoms thick, are deposited. There is a layer of light-sensitive material that will eventually produce the pixels in the image and then layers of conductive tracks, essentially millions of wires to move the signals from the sensor chip to the processor chips. Then there is a layer of red, green, and blue filters so each pixel registers its correct part of the spectrum and to top it off, a layer of micro lenses. One of the major weaknesses of this construction is that the light has to penetrate a mesh of wires to get to the light-sensitive material. This obviously blocks some light and, I suspect, degrades the image slightly.

A BSI sensor starts off with a similar support substrate followed by a pixel layer and the conductive layer and then a top support layer is added. This is turned over and what was the bottom is ground off, allowing light to hit the pixels directly from what was the back. This is much more efficient. Of course, it still needs its Bayer filter layer and micro-lenses. The result is superior image quality, especially toward the corners of the picture, and better light collection, giving improved high ISO performance.

A recent advancement goes back to the point where the conductive layer is being added. Because this will end up being behind the sensor and not obstruct any light, the designer can add additional layers. These are logic circuits where image-processing functions are added directly to the sensor chip. Electric impulses from the light sensitive layer only need to go a very short distance before they start to be processed. This reduces signal loss which translates to pictures with less noise. A BSI sensor with added processor circuits is called a stacked CMOS.

I intended this to be an article explaining BSI sensors, using the D850 as an introduction to the topic but I find the explanation is both shorter and drier than I had hoped. So my mind wanders into another feature of the camera. The most obvious is megapixels, where a lot of issues play into the question: "Do you need them?" Isn't the megapixel race just like meaningless horsepower in cars? Yes, no, maybe, are all valid answers.

I am going to look at both sides from a slightly unconventional point of view, starting with an enigmatic character: the 'Normal' lens. Normal focal length is defined as being more-or-less equal to the diagonal of the film/sensor size. For 35 mm film or a full-frame sensor that is around 45-50 mm. Why? It is said to give the same angle of view that your eyes take in.

If we observe how people look at prints it is quite consistent from person to person. Small prints up to about 8"x10" are viewed at reading distance. That is generally around 12", which is the diagonal of an 8"x10" print. As print size increases the natural viewing distance stays proportional. About two or three feet for a 16"x20" print and a hundred feet or so for a billboard. The 'normal' lens happens to be the focal length that gives a natural perspective and magnification in a print viewed at normal, natural viewing distances. But what does all that have to do with pixels? The pixel density regarded as standard in a photograph is 300 dpi, and it refers to the finest detail we can see under optimum conditions. For normal viewing distances 300 dpi is going to apply to prints 8x10" and smaller. As prints get larger, normal viewing distance increases proportionally and the required dpi decreases proportionally. A 16"x20" print only needs 150 dpi and a three foot x five foot print, only about 75 dpi. The upshot of all this math is that at normal viewing distance, we can easily calculate the number pixels for optimum print quality and we can see it is constant for any size print.

- For a 8"x10" print, (8" x 300 dpi) x (10" x 300) = 7,200,000 pixels
- For a 16"x20", (16" x 150 dpi) x (20" x 150) = 7,200,000 pixels
- Seven megapixels is the magic number!

So, why do we crave so many more pixels? One answer is cropping. Imagine how much you can crop 46 megapixels and still have 7 MP to work with! Today most photos never make it farther than the LCD on someone's phone or tablet. Do you really need all those pixels? Yes. No. Maybe.

Cheap Lighting Tools

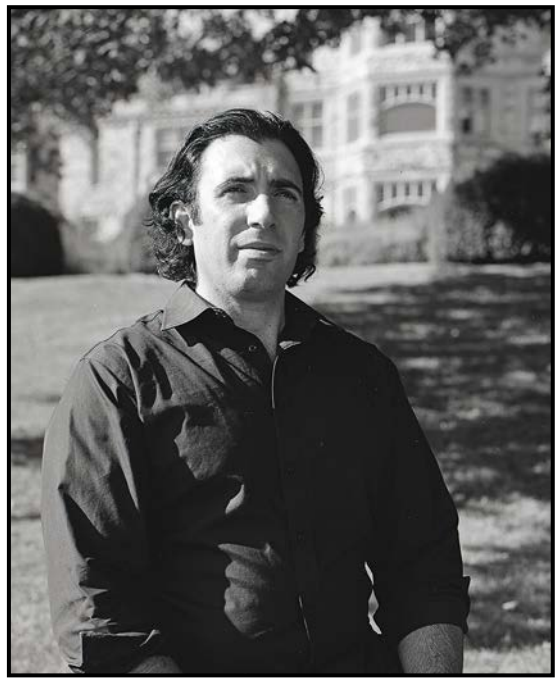
by Karl Schoepp

A cheap and very effective lighting modifier (bounce), that can be purchased for under $25 is Korolite. Korolite is a type of Styrofoam insulation used in construction that is white in colour and can often be found with a silver film on the back. One can find Korolite at most building supply stores in 4'x8' sheets (A 1" thickness is recommended). It will probably be most advantageous to find a white Styrofoam Korolite product with silver film on one side. The white side is a general-purpose bounce material that can be used with both natural and artificial light. The side with the silver film will typically look unnatural if used as a bounce source with direct sunlight or artificial lighting sources but may be extremely useful in overcast conditions.

As a 4'x8' sheet is quite large you will need an appropriate vehicle to transport it to your residence. It will most likely then be advisable to cut down the sheet to a smaller size for portability in the field. Standard bounce sizes are 4'x8', 4'x4', 3'x3' and 2'x2'. A size of 3'x3' or 2'x2' is probably going to be the most practical for transportation. 4'x4' and 3'x3' tend to cover a subject head to toe while 2'x2' is best for headshots only. Korolite can be cut with an X-Acto knife, or any type of handsaw (do not use power tools). Please be aware that when you cut the Korolite at home it is going to make a large mess. It is best to have a vacuum on standby or, better yet, have another person hold the vacuum as you cut the sheet.

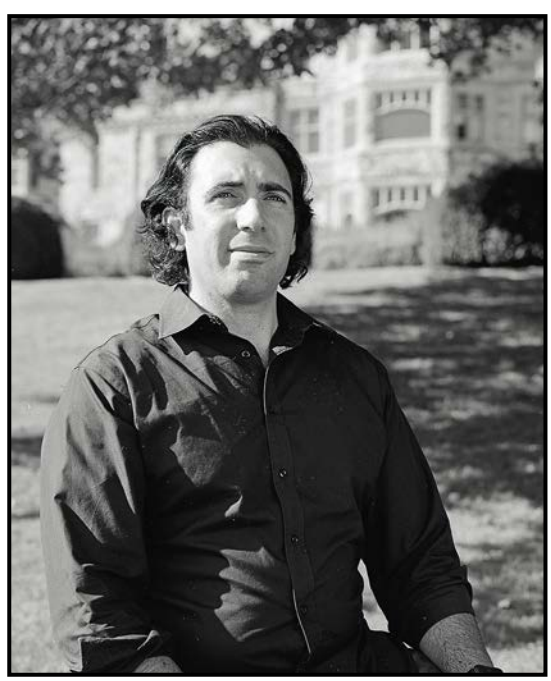
A Korolite bounce offers the user a neutral, soft-looking, physically strong, portable, and lightweight bounce for $25 or less. Korolite does not change the colour of the bounced light, nor does it look artificial if used outdoors. Korolite is the standard for the film industry over photoflex style bounces as these tend to change in intensity with wind. Korolite is, furthermore, cheaper, typically larger, doesn't break as easily, and is easier to use with clamps or lighting stands. If you are looking to make your bounce a bit more durable, simply put the 2" wide tape of your choice around the edges of the bounce to keep the edges from disintegrating. The film industry standard for taping 1" Styrofoam bounces is 2" white cloth tape (gaffer's tape) however 2" duct tape or painters' tape make great affordable alternative options.

Take your bounce to an even softer level by creating a book light. A book light is a standard in the film industry for creating a natural-looking light from an artificial



"Without Korolite bounce"

source. A book light is simply three lighting tools: a light source, a bounce, and a diffuser of your choice. The light source (continuous or flash) is placed in the middle facing the bounce, the bounce is used to direct the light back towards the subject, and the diffuser softens the light before it hits the subject. A cheap, effective, and natural looking form of diffusion is muslin. Muslin is simply a fancy word for white bed sheets. One can also use muslin as a bounce by taping it to a wall or using it in a frame, etc. Lighting on a budget truly teaches photographers both discipline and creativity and helps them focus on the image rather than the equipment.



"With Korolite bounce"

CAPA and PSA

by Rick Shapka, FCAPA.

The Victoria Camera Club and some individual Club members are members of the Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA) and the Photographic Society of America (PSA). Even though ours is one of the most active photography clubs in Canada, there are many benefits from these national photographic club umbrella organizations.

CAPA: is a volunteer-run organization that promotes all forms of photography across Canada.

- Canadian Camera magazine publishes articles and images from individuals and member clubs. The fall issue cover image is from our member, Cim MacDonald, with an article on photographing sailing regattas. Other VCC members, including Dan and Gail Takahashi and Leah Grey, have produced outstanding images and articles for Canadian Camera.
- Our competition committee regularly enters images in a number of CAPA club competitions showcasing our work to other clubs.
- The CAPA-certified judging course may assist you in reviewing your own images. It is held in the lower mainland and in Victoria and Nanaimo.
- CAPA membership provides a number of discounts from suppliers.
- CAPA hosts a bi-annual convention.
- CAPA's website is at *https://capacanada.ca*

PSA: is an USA-based photographic organization for individuals and clubs with members in over 80 countries.

- For the first time in recent years the VCC competition committee is entering Club member images in PSA competitions. Individual PSA members gain recognition for acceptance and placement in competitions.
- One of the many benefits of PSA membership is being able to participate in numerous competitions and contests. PSA has three unique competitions: the Website, Newsletter, and Council's Challenge competitions for which VCC has received some significant recognition.
- For individual members PSA offers significant educational programs that you can check out here: *https://psa-photo.org/index.php?education-online-courses*.
- PSA hosts an annual convention.
- The PSA website is at *https://psa-photo.org*

If you have questions about CAPA or PSA, please contact me at a club meeting, workshop or by email at *capa@victoriacameraclub.ca* or *psa@victoriacameraclub.ca*.

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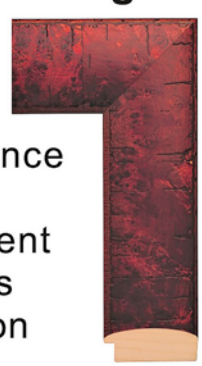

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How I Did It

Moonlight on Redoubt Peak

by Doug McLean

Backpacking in the mountains presents a terrific opportunity to take photographs. This image was taken in the Tonquin Valley just south of Jasper, Alberta, a valley made famous by the Canadian guide and outfitter, Fred Brewster, who opened the area to pack trips in the 1920s.

The image was taken at the Amethyst Lake campsite accessed by a 22 km walk over a 2,440 m pass, starting at the Mt. Edith Cavell parking lot. The collection of peaks including Redoubt is called The Ramparts. They rise over 915 m above Amethyst Lake which is hidden in the gap in the foreground of this image.

The equipment I took included a Nikon D800, 24-70 mm f2.8, 70-200 mm f4 (light weight), 1.7X converter, a sturdy tripod and ball head, together weighing 6 kilos.

The image was taken by moonlight (90% full moon) looking SW from the east side of Amethyst Lake at 1:00 am, using manual settings of 23 seconds, f2.8, ISO 320, at 24 mm on a full-frame sensor.

Moonlight is both a blessing and a curse, but properly handled, it can provide enough light to define the surroundings and, if the camera is pointed away from it, still allow the planets and brightest stars to show. I used the Photographers Ephemeris app to plan when to shoot, timing the shot with the moon rising from low in the night sky. The stars show slight trails indicating the earth's rotation. The wider the lens the longer the exposure before the star trails show. I composed the image and set up the equipment in the daylight when my head was clear.

Lightroom was used to edit and adjust details in the shadows. Nik Color Efex Pro fine-tuned the colour of the image.

Just Another Brick

by Sharon Moysey

Fellow Victoria Camera Club members Judy Plummer, Jill Turyk and I spent an enjoyable day downtown in late January 2017 taking pictures on the "monochrome architecture" theme for an upcoming Club competition. Because we planned to do a lot of walking we each brought only the lens we had on our camera and no tripods.

We started out near Market Square and worked our way northwards, meandering through the narrow alleyways of Chinatown. Being a Pink Floyd fan, this window on a brick wall caught my eye. (Yes, I was one of those who had the poster from their "Dark Side of the Moon" album on the wall of my first apartment.) My original photo was a straight-on picture of the brick wall, with the window on the left side. It was taken with a Nikon D5200 camera at f3.5, 1/100 second, ISO 400 and 18 mm focal length lens.

My intent in post-processing was to try to make the brick wall feel like an extension of the poster. I was aiming for an "urban grunge" look: high contrast, graffiti-like, and texture you want to reach out and touch. I rotated and cropped the picture to take out most of the blank brick wall and give the poster in the window more prominence. After some tweaking of the contrast and exposure, I used the "silvered" and "carmine" filters in Adobe Photoshop Express to add the grunge factor. Adobe Photoshop Express is a free app that I have found to be a great beginner's tool for touching up my photos. I have subsequently taken Cindy Stephenson's "Introduction to Lightroom" workshop and have signed up for "Introduction to Photoshop" in the fall, both through the Victoria Camera Club, and am looking forward to tackling future post-processing with better tools and more knowledge. I highly recommend the Club workshops to anyone who is interested in getting full value from their Adobe programs!

Tuesday Shoots

by Daniel A. Roy

The leaves have fallen along with the mean temperatures, but don't let that get you down in winter. We are usually much warmer than any other place in this wonderful country of ours. Come out and join the Tuesday Shooters for another monthly selection of varied and interesting themes.

November 7th: Bay Street Industrial Area. This shoot will stretch from the west end of the Point Ellice Bridge to Government Street. I've never taken my camera to this part of town, so I am looking forward to the adventure. This vantage point may also provide a unique perspective of the Blue Bridge.

November 14th: B&W/Monochrome. Some consider Black & White to be the purest form of photography. I'm not sure I agree but it does provide an element of style that often evokes feelings of nostalgia, wonderment, and intrigue. This is also a popular method to apply while capturing "street-style" images.

For this theme, it has been suggested that you set your camera to shoot in Black & White. This will aid in visualizing the end result on the LCD panel, and if you prefer, you can set your camera to shoot RAW so you will also get a full-colour image.

Use this field trip to capture images related to the Club's February theme: "Monochrome Landscapes."

November 21st: Lt. General Ashton Armoury and Museum. The Museum presents a history of some Canadian Army regiments, including World War I and II, the Korean conflict, UN Peacekeeping Missions, and the Boer War. Twenty-two vehicles are on display in addition to various uniforms used by these units through the 20th Century.

November 28th: Geometric Shapes and Patterns. Geometric shapes and patterns are the January theme subject. They are characterized by straight lines, circles, triangles, and a multitude of other shapes derived from the principles of geometry. Subjects are plentiful in the city's downtown core. Please see the January theme description on page 10 for some ideas.

Some events require registration and a fee may apply. We generally meet at 10:30 am at the stated location, and regroup for lunch afterwards. Please check the Club calendar for details related to each field trip, especially the meeting location.

Weekend Shoots

by Teri VanWell and Vanessa MacDonald

Here are some of the trips we are planning for the month of November. As always, keep an eye on the calendar and your email for new field trips being added.

November 3rd-6th: Tofino Weekend. The Club has organized weekend trips to Tofino for several years. The theme is **"Winter Storms and Rain Forests."** There are numerous beaches and rocky foreshores as well as rain forest trails to explore and create challenging images of their often unique environments. As the surfing capital of Canada there are options for sports images. More urban locations include Tofino and Ucluelet town-sites with historic and modern buildings, their harbours and more.

November 11th: Englishman River Falls. One of the gems of the island, Englishman River Falls is located just west of Parksville. This Provincial Park features two impressive waterfalls, a canyon, bridges, lush old growth trees and plant life. You will have a good range of subjects to capture from macro flora and fauna, to wide-angle river landscapes. If it is a sunny day, we will have some nice golden hour light mid to late afternoon at the main falls. Sunset is around 4:30 pm at this time of the year. Bring your ND filters, polarizers, tripods and shutter remotes for long exposures.

November 25th: Fraser Delta Birds. The elusive snow geese are what we are after if they are cooperative. We will look for them close to the Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary or Terra Nova. We will then move on to Boundary Bay or Brunswick Point to look for raptors and owls. Wherever the birds are we will find them, even if it takes the whole day.

Other Photographic Opportunities: Two non-Club events that you may be interested in are:

November 15th to January 2nd: Festival of Trees. This year celebrates the Festival of Trees 26th Anniversary. The trees will be located at The Bay Centre exclusively. Be sure to check out the locally sponsored and decorated tree displays.

November 25th: Island Farms Santa's Light Parade. Begin your Christmas Season in Victoria with the magical Island Farms Santa's Light Parade. There will be floats and bands, entertainment and lots of fun for everyone. The parade starts at 4:45 pm at the Legislature Grounds and runs along Government Street.

It's Perfectly OK to Shoot JPG

by Neil Boyle

In the photographic world, there is huge pressure to use the RAW format to store images, and while there are circumstances where RAW is the best option, many photographers continue to store their images as JPGs and are perfectly happy with the results. So, instead of telling these happy photographers to change, let's talk about how to make these JPGs as good as possible.

For those who aren't clear on what these two formats are, here is a brief explanation. All digital cameras produce RAW images, the information coming directly from their camera sensor. The camera computer applies a number of modifications to this information to improve the image (as envisioned by some technician in an optics lab in Japan), compresses it as a JPG, and displays this JPG on the LCD screen on the camera.

The modifications that the camera applies to the RAW data can be changed by the photographer. If the user is saving the image as a RAW file, then this JPG is embedded in the RAW file and both can be written to the camera card. If saving only as a JPG, then only the modified, compressed, much smaller JPG file is saved and the RAW data is discarded. Once the file is compressed into a JPG, these modifications are "baked in," limiting how much post-processing can be applied to a JPG.

A RAW file will look good with much more manipulation than a JPG can tolerate, so it is important to get the image perfect in-camera if it is to be stored as a JPG. To compress a RAW file to make a JPG, information that, according to a complicated algorithm the human eye tends not to see, is discarded. Too much compression, or the loss of too much information, leads to artifacts (mosquito noise around fine details, etc.), banding in uniform areas, or blockiness.

There are two major benefits to shooting JPEG: size and time. You can store many more JPEG images on a disk and, if the in-camera JPEG settings are done well, there is no time spent post-processing. Some professional photographers who shoot a lot of images, and don't want to spend a lot of their time on a computer, use JPEGs, but they make sure the final image is done well. For a passionate defence of this position, see Ken Rockwell's article "*JPG vs Raw: Get it Right the First Time*."

How to make a great JPG

The more information in an image file, the better it looks and the more manipulation it will tolerate, so choose the largest JPG size possible. By compressing a RAW file, information is removed (to make it smaller). The photographer chooses how much information is given up by choosing the size of the JPG; the larger the JPG, the more information is retained. My Nikon camera allows three levels of compression, each about half the size of the next one up. The more information in a file, the better the image (less banding, less artifacts, and more post-processing can be applied). Unless camera card space is critically low, always use the largest JPG file possible.

Given the reduced ability to change the exposure of JPG files in post-processing, getting the exposure perfect in-camera is essential. The histogram is important here; the image needs to be the "right" brightness without "exposing to the right" which you would do for a RAW image. Aim to have the right side of the histogram near but not touching the right side of the frame. Don't clip highlights and try not to clip shadows. A JPG will tolerate darkening better than brightening, so a little over-exposure is better than under.

Colour balance should be close to perfect in-camera. A JPG will tolerate very little post-processing modification of colour balance and it doesn't take much to produce unnatural colours. In a modern digital camera the auto setting usually does well, but over-ride it if the LCD indicates a colour cast.

"Picture Control Menu"

My Nikon D800 gives several scenarios for manipulating JPGs and calls them standard, neutral and vivid (buried in a menu called Set Picture Control). It also has other scenarios called monochrome, portrait and landscape. Each of these scenarios has different settings for sharpening, contrast, brightness, saturation and hue. The monochrome option also allows setting tone and filter effects.

Most modern digital cameras have other scenery settings

"Standard Picture Controls"

such as night, fireworks, food, sport, water and so on, although offering somewhat less control over the basic options. All of these settings manipulate some aspect of the JPG, allowing some very sophisticated in-camera tweaks and some excellent end results.

Saturation, contrast, and hue can be modified depending on the subject and the ambient light. Saturation changes the intensity of colours. Contrast adjusts how quickly the "grey scale" levels change. Hue modifies the colour by increasing yellow or red, useful for paler skin colours. Brightness changes the luminosity of the JPG compared to the RAW exposure.

Sharpening is necessary for all images but the type and amount of sharpening depends on the subject and what is to be done with the JPG (screen or print). If the image destination is known, use the appropriate sharpening. If not, don't sharpen in-camera; do it in post-processing as you don't want to "sharpen the sharpening" by doing it twice.

You can set every knob, button, dial and menu item on your camera perfectly and still not like the result. The final step after taking any picture on a digital camera it is to review it on the LCD. Check the obvious things (histogram, highlight warning (blinkies), exposure, composition, level horizon, things intruding on the edges, and so on), and the settings. Are the saturation, contrast, brightness, and hue showing the way you want? Are there any JPG artifacts, such as blockiness or banding? You will likely have to enlarge the LCD image to see these problems. If necessary, correct whatever needs correction and re-shoot and you will have the best JPG you can make.

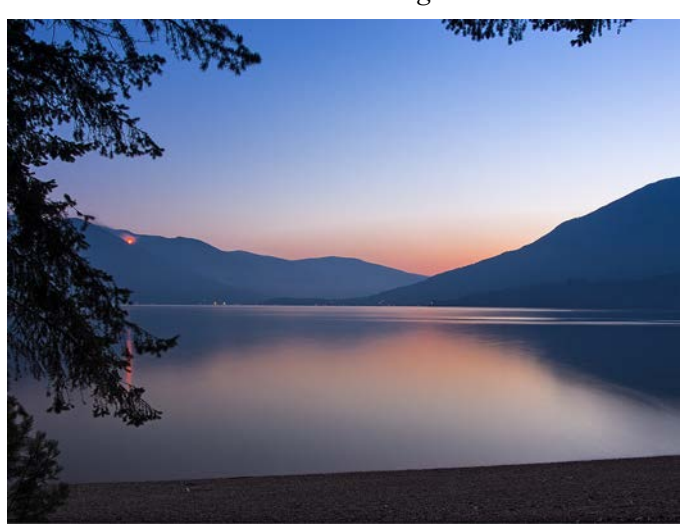
Key things to check:

1. Choose the largest file size possible
2. Perfect exposure in-camera
3. Perfect colour balance
4. Choose the desired scene setting or in-camera menu settings for hue, saturation and contrast
5. Sharpening: choose in-camera or post-processing
6. Review the LCD image and consider tweaking. Re-shoot, if necessary

From this you might surmise that it would be a good idea to consider your JPG settings and adjust them as required for each scene you shoot, or when the lighting conditions change while shooting the scene. This would certainly give you the best possible JPG image for that scene.

The following images show typical JPG artifacts in an image. The top image shows banding and blockiness that are typical of over-compression. Banding typically occurs in near-uniform, near-texture-less areas. The JPG algorithm assumes "nearly the same" is good enough. Often it is not. The second image was not compressed as much and the problem disappears.

"Poor JPG Image"



"Good JPG Image"

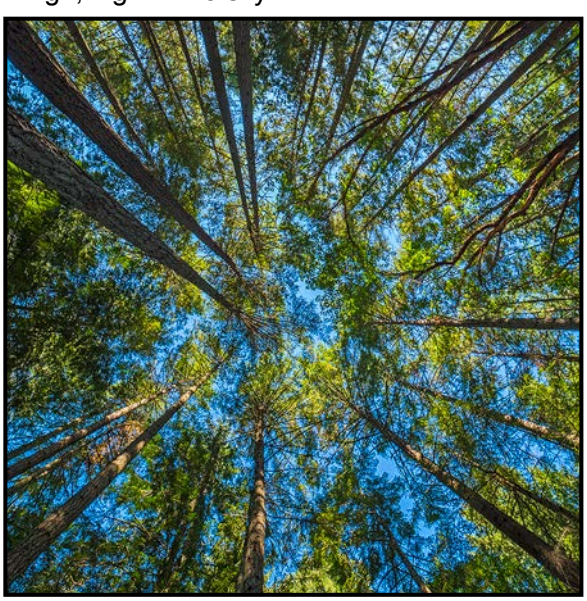
Beginners' Corner

Design Elements

by Josée Ménard

My Spring and Summer articles focused on sorting out keywords and photographs. While this may have brought a sense of an insurmountable task, even pros have little time to take care of it all so, don't sweat it, keep your organizational system simple. In the same vein, this month's article is simply focusing on some elements of design in composition. Why? Because unlike the Rule of Thirds that you will tangent away from, you will want to keep these concepts close in mind to compose impressive images. That being said, there are more than a handful of elements to learn to see and key principles to be applied.

No worries. Let's simply start with the first design element: the point. As you consider this to be your focus or where the viewer's eye is to be guided, also think about how to emphasize its size, position, and number in order to best communicate your message or the emotions you wish to evoke in the viewer. Lost in choices, go back to the Rule of Thirds to assist you in your planning. The concentric trees lead purposefully to the central point high, high in the sky.



One could debate that the line should have been mentioned first since most lines lead to a point. Nevertheless, its influence is considerable. Just think of directionality; vertical, horizontal, diagonal, or curve. Then add its width and its length or play with the direction of its motion. Ultimately, the best thing about lines is that the choice is all yours. Play it wrong and it is blah; play it right, and it brings the viewer in with passion, as all lines lead to emotions, moments and past experiences. Remember how looking at an image of people lined-up waiting for jugs of water brings feelings of despair to mind or how leading lines to a sunset take us away to romantic travels. In the same train of thought, what emotions would tight vertical lines create versus widely spaced ones? What inner or reflective feelings are you intending to awaken? The psychology of lines reveals that thin lines feel fragile and elegant compared with the strength and boldness of thick ones; horizontals evoke calm and security while vertical lines create more energy and strength. Historically, vertical lines also refer to aspirations of touching the Heavens. Subsequently, diagonals and zigzag lines create energy in your image whereas a meandering river curves smoothly through the peaceful landscape. To the picture in your mind add the Rule of Thirds. Imagine your lines positioned in the different squares. Where does the placement of your lines and point of focus balance your image?

Excellent, you may say. Topic complete. Well, not exactly since what do lines create? Shapes and form of course! Photos are imagined, scripted and unscripted. As a patient photographer, the longer you spend in a small area, the more is seen to create, to achieve satisfaction with what is before you. The staircase image uses basic lines. The steps, angled columns and rail are the shapes and form created by lines coordinating. Waiting for perfect variations of light, the touch of diagonal in the columns frame the peaceful and limitless feeling of ascension provided by the staircase.

Exploring this thought further, Western BC mountains would create triangular shapes whereas old Eastern mountains, curvy ones. How would you use the mountain range to accentuate your message. Could it create a line dividing your horizon? How can you use it to guide the viewer's eye to your focal point? Conversely, could you use it to scale a grizzly at the water's edge? How will point, line, shape, and form play to your advantage in scale, distance and depth dimensions? How will they help you improve your photograph? For the next month, play with these basic elements. How can the lines before you lead in and around? Alter one variable at a time. What do you see now? Is it better or worse? Are you reducing post-production time? Simple can indeed be better. And for next month's discussion, more Elementals, dear Watson.

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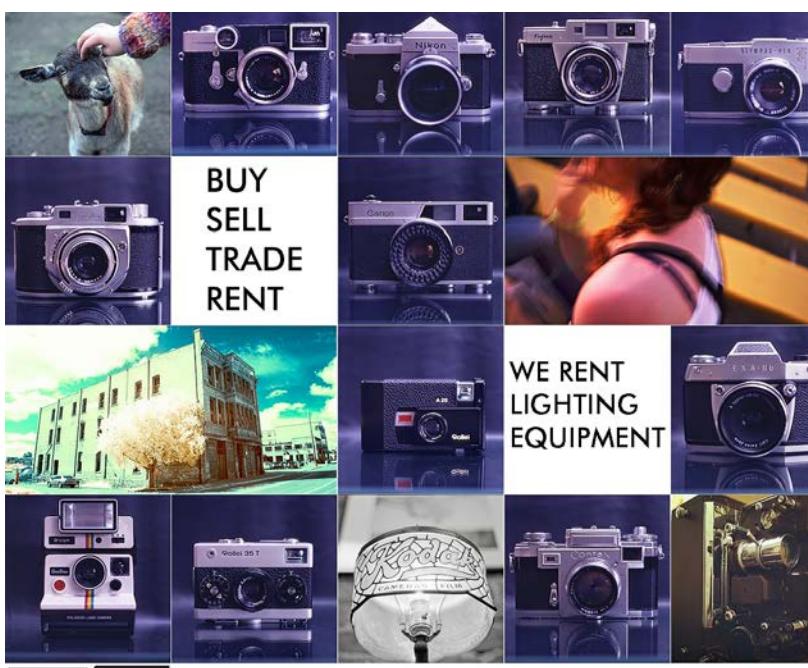

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