

Close-Up

Inside:

**Painting and Photography, a
Journey in Creative Thinking**

Fine Art Shows

**Compete to Become a Better
Photographer!**

Tech Tips: Sensor Cleaning

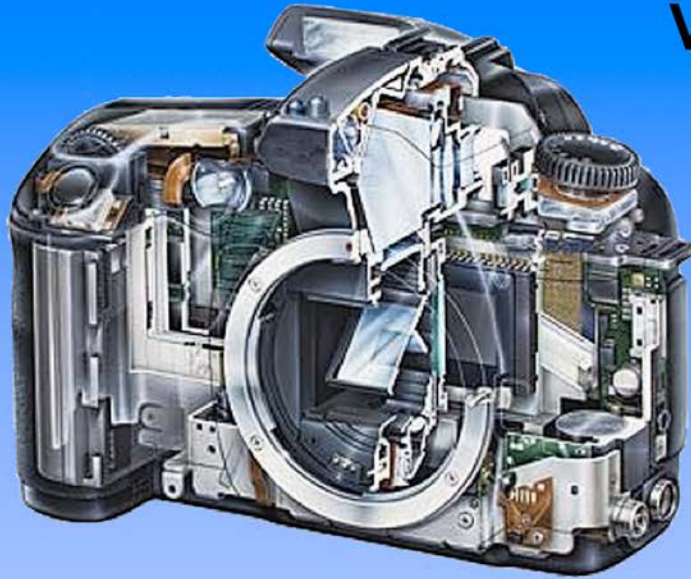
Panoramic Photography

Polarization: Part 2

and more.....

**"Crested Caracara" (*Polyborus plancus*) by Chantal Jacques
was shot at the 20th Anniversary of the Rio Grande Birding
Festival, November 2013, in Harlingen, Texas.**





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Victoria Camera Club

Close-Up is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club,
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Mailing address: 2642 Quadra Street, PO Box 46035, Victoria, BC, V8T 5G7.
Deadline for submissions for the April issue is March 5th 2014.
Editor, Richard James, e-mail to newsletter@victoriacameraclub.org
for submissions or to advertise in *Close-Up*.

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

Events

We hold a number of events including:

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

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

Membership

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

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

For additional information: please contact the appropriate Committee Chair:

Membership: membership@victoriacameraclub.org
Workshops: workshops@victoriacameraclub.org
Field Trips: fieldtrips@victoriacameraclub.org
Meetings: meetings@victoriacameraclub.org
Website: webmaster@victoriacameraclub.org
Close-Up: newsletter@victoriacameraclub.org
or call Lois Burton, President at 250-652-6940.

What's Inside

Club Calendar.....	4
President's Message	4
Painting and Photography: a Journey in	
Creative Thinking	5
Fine Art Shows	8
Compete to Become a Better Photographer!	9
Competitions	10
Tech Tips: Sensor Cleaning 101	15
Panoramic Photography: Part 1	16
How I Did It.....	18
Shoots Around Victoria	19
Beginners' Corner: The Influence of Colour	20
Polarization: Part 2	21

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

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



Calendar

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

Thursday, March 6th; Competition Night

The February competition results will be presented. One of the judges will review selected images. March's submissions are due; the theme competition subject is "Architecture."

Thursday, March 13th; Presentation Night

Our guest speaker is Gavin Hardcastle, a Nanaimo based landscape and outdoor photographer, who will share with us the secrets of how he researches and plans his shoots, the basics of landscape image composition, his image processing workflow and how to create realistic looking HDR images.

Thursday, March 20th; Members' Night

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

Featured Workshops

Lighting SIG: Refractography

Hands on Exposure

Featured Field Trips

Maritime Museum, see page 19 for details.

Esquimalt Lagoon

Meeting, field trip and workshop visitor policy:

Visitors are welcome to attend any three events in a two month period subject to the availability of space and a \$20 per session fee for workshops.

Cover Image

The cover image "Crested Caracara" (*Polyborus plancus*) by Chantal Jacques was shot at the 20th Anniversary of the Rio Grande Birding Festival, in Harlingen, Texas. This birding festival takes place every year at the beginning of November and is attended by over 800 birders and provides exceptional photographic opportunities. This image placed 1st in the January Intermediate Digital Nature competition.

President's Message

The Victoria Camera Club has grown significantly over the past year, and I thank all who have been involved in making our club better and stronger, and for making my role as President such a rewarding experience. Through your energy and ideas we have achieved a great deal, and as members you can take pride in your association with one of the most prestigious camera clubs on Vancouver Island. This prominence is a direct result of having a very active and accomplished membership.

Over the past year we have seen the club evolve in many ways, and as we move forward and shape the club's future many opportunities exist for a progression of new and creative ideas to have a positive impact on the club. These will keep us challenged and motivated, but all clubs depend on the enthusiastic participation of their members for continuing development and success.

Our club is fortunate to have a strong core of individuals who devote countless hours to make every facet of our club run smoothly. All non-profit clubs need their members to be involved for the club to function and be successful, but as is the case with many clubs it is often the same group of people who volunteer their time year after year to help keep our club viable.

I encourage all members, especially those who have not volunteered in the past, to think about what you get from the club and seriously consider giving back by fulfilling a role next year. By becoming an active participant you can have a positive impact through your contribution.

Photography, like most arts, is a discipline in which it seems that there is always something to learn. One of the ways to consider providing a service to the club is through teaching. Teaching others is an especially powerful and thorough learning experience because teaching calls for a better understanding of the concept. The mere act of getting out and sharing your knowledge and experience with others will always get you out of your comfort zone, but I think you will be amazed at how much you will learn during the teaching process.

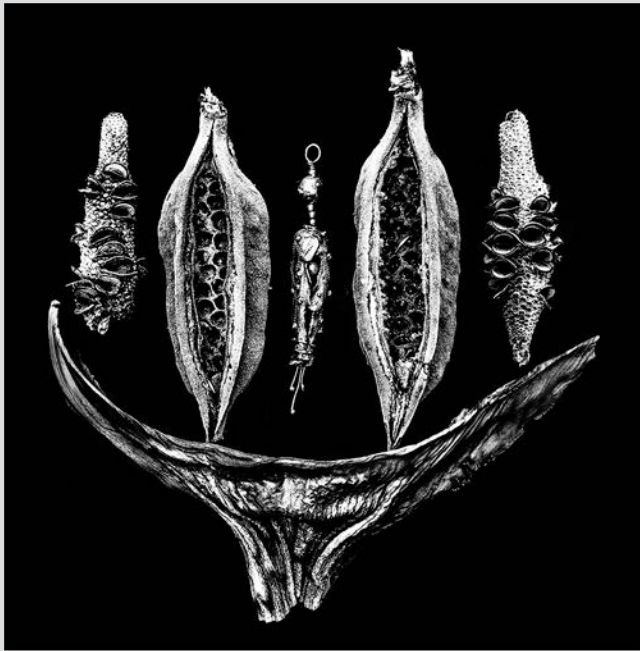
As we move into 2014 and celebrate the club's 70th anniversary, I am looking forward to your support and to working together to achieve objectives essential for Victoria Camera Club's future success.

How can you as a member get more involved? Just ask!

Lois Burton, President.

by John McConnell.

Sixty years ago I just wanted to be a creative guy in an advertising agency. I lived that life for 16 years in Ireland, England and, after immigrating to Canada in 1966, I became Creative Director in Toronto. At that point I began to seriously wonder what I was doing with my life. In 1970 I packed it in to teach art at a prominent Canadian boarding school. I enjoyed my teaching career for the next 19 years before deciding to dedicate myself to a growing career as a full-time painter in Ontario. This was followed by seven years in Ireland and, since 2004, here on Vancouver Island. I have been lucky to have made a good living during all three careers.



"Pods." Seed pods that I found in California and a pendant, inspired by those pods, which I made in silver, two cubic zirconia and a pearl.

Photography was always there for me, but more like an extension of my sketch book, when I don't have time to stop and sketch a landscape for a painting. I never work directly from a photograph but use it as a reference to stimulate my memory and my feeling for the spirit of a place that inspired me. Best of all, I like to paint a landscape on location, my back to the scene so as not to be too influenced by detail. My more abstract paintings never involve the camera because they come from an inner reservoir of thoughts, emotions, and spontaneous risk-taking. My more serious approach to photography came about because of the reduced market for art and because of the enthusiastic prodding from my wife's stepfather, Walter Stoy.

Walter is ninety-three and is one of only a few photographers who studied full time with Ansel Adams. Two years ago Walter set me on a new creative path with the generous gift of two of his own cameras.

Although I bring a lifetime of creating good graphic design to my photography, the technical aspect of the camera is my current challenge. My main interest in photography is landscape, especially black and white, which is interesting because my paintings are almost always full of strong colour. The transition from creating an image as a painter to creating as a photographer, seems to be mostly about learning to know your camera inside out. I think that could take a lifetime! The principles of design and the creative process are the same for both the painter and the photographer.

In order to create wonderful, balanced compositions one must first learn the principles of design. But it's just as important that, having learned them, one must then forget them! Good design, if one has absorbed the principles, will come automatically, without thinking it through every time. To be consciously thinking about dominance, repetition etc. is a distraction. Only at this point can the creative process really take off. It's about taking risks, thinking outside the box and having the courage to take a road less-travelled. This approach applies not only to painting, print making, sculpture, photography, writing etc. It also applies to how we should try to live our lives creatively. My wife and I have always tried to do that, and our lives have been wonderfully interesting and varied. In many ways we have lived our dream.



"Flowing Vines, Okanagan." Watercolour, 10" x 12".

My paintings have been mostly influenced by the poetry of the late Irish poet laureate Seamus Heaney who is considered to be Ireland's greatest poet since Yeats

and one of the greatest poets in the English language. I have several letters from Heaney regarding the influence of his poetry on my work, and he gave me the best description of the creative process I have ever come across. Being a poet he put it into these nine words:

Impulse discovers Direction

Potential discovers Structure

Chance becomes Design

My “Ancient Soul” series of paintings is an example of this process. There are fifty-eight originals in this series in private and corporate collections around the world. I never know how these paintings will look before I start; I just know there will be the image of a soul travelling from this life to the next and the vessel in which that soul is travelling. I begin by throwing paint at the canvas and then I respond to the image as it evolves. The series was inspired by a 1959, hand-coloured photograph of a rotting wooden boat lying on its side in Adrigole Harbour, in County Cork, Ireland. Nobody in the family remembered the photograph when it was hung on the wall, in Oakville, Ontario, on the very same day that my wife and I had bought an old cottage, across that same harbour. The skeleton of that wooden boat in the photograph inspired the entire “Soul” series.



Number 52 in the “Soul” series. Oil on canvas, 30"x40".

The camera, like the painter's brush, is an extension of the creative mind. The painter uses a brush to express what he or she sees in the mind. It's a pretty direct response. For example when I work in watercolour I try to say as much as possible with one pass of the brush. I believe in always using a brush that feels too big for the job and using only one wash to avoid the work becoming an illustration. In other words I try to paint quickly and then leave it alone. This, it seems to me, is similar to a photographer trying to get the shot

right, in camera, with little or no post-production work.

When painting in oil or acrylic, I can paint over the image to change it. I see this being comparable to a photographer using Lightroom or Adobe Photoshop to change the photograph, and even going beyond the original image to explore the creative possibilities defined by the relatively new designation of “digital based art.”

In my approach to landscape photography, I first consider the composition. I look for a subject that stirs me and then zero in on elements which will give me a pleasing and interesting design. I look for an element to have in the foreground, something to lead the eye into the image and another element to allow the eye to rest and enjoy. It doesn't always work, but when it does, it's a “WOW”!

The choice of a lens is my next decision and I like to use a wide angle lens for landscape. I have a Canon 50 mm f1.4, a Sigma 10-20 mm f4-5.6, and, a Canon 24-105 mm f1.4. Now the difficult part is to choose a focus point and depth of field and this depends on what mood I want to create. At f2, the background will be in soft focus. At f22, and focusing on something about six feet away, much more of the scene will be in focus.

1. Focus on a near object and note the distance. Example 6ft.
2. Focus on the furthest distance you want to be sharp. Say, infinity.
3. Turn the focusing ring until the focus mark is one third the distance into this range.

Set the lens to the indicated aperture, which is approximate, and work from there. I don't always remember to do this, but I'm trying!

Visit John's website at johnmcconnellpaintings.com



“Lough Na-Fooey.” Photograph taken in Ireland.



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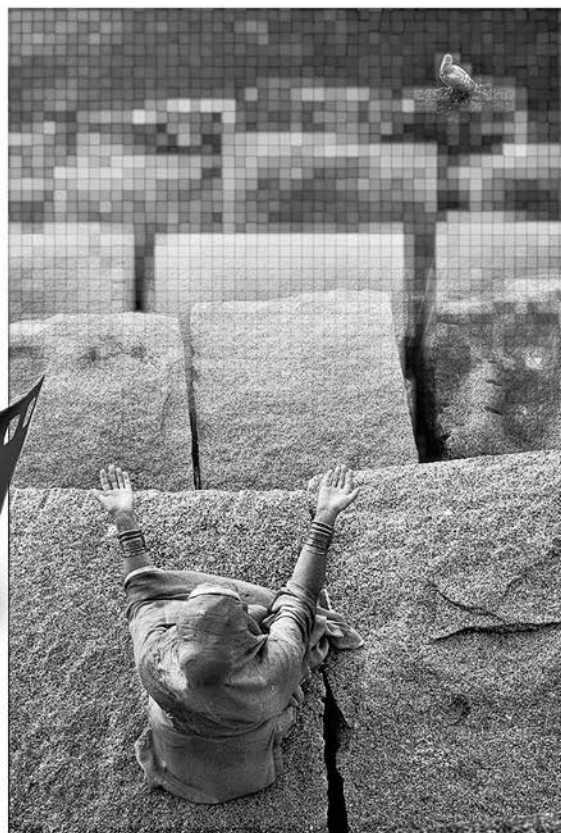
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Bridging Photo Technologies

by Hanna Cowpe

Have you ever thought you'd like to enter a Fine Art show but felt hesitant? If you feel you have images in your photo portfolio that you would like to share with the public, it just takes a little confidence and maybe a bit of a thick skin to become a participant. If you are a frequent visitor to art shows, you may have seen photographic prints or photo-based work that have made you think "I can do that," or "I have images like that." So what's stopping you?

If you feel unsure of yourself you might start on a more casual track and enter a photo competition where prints are required, such as the Monday Magazine photo contest. These are not juried but simply restrict you to a maximum number of entries. Frequently they have themes or categories on which to base your images. All the entries will then be judged and hung in a gallery for public viewing. Hopefully you'll be attending the reception to receive your well-deserved award. It's a fun experience in any case and gives you the opportunity to show off your work to the public. The "Look Show" is also open for submissions and does not have a jury process but your work can be offered for sale. Once you have participated in a few of these competitions or shows, you will gain the confidence to move on to fine art shows.

Quality fine art shows are typically juried events. That means that you are invited to submit digital images of your work or the actual prints which you wish to enter into the show and they are then juried and selected by a panel of judges. There will probably be a biography of each judge posted on the art show website. This might help you to take their background and style into consideration when you choose your pieces. This isn't to say that the judges will be choosing only artwork that suits their taste, but no judge is totally objective, so it might help you in your decision if you have a number of pieces to choose from. You will probably be given the opportunity to submit more than one piece.

The two main art shows in the Victoria area are the Sooke Fine Art Show and the Sidney Fine Art Show. They take place in the summer and autumn respectively. You can visit their websites and register with them, and they will send you an invitation to submit artwork. This usually is done about three months before the show. Typically entrants are allowed to submit three or four pieces of art for jurying. Some shows allow digital images of your work and selection is based on that. Others require the actual art work, which has its advantages in that there is no chance of misinterpretation of

quality through digital images. But it does mean you will be required to deliver the art work, collect it after the jury process and then deliver it again for the show if it has been selected. This can mean spending time travelling with your work and standing in line to deliver it, or perhaps having to find a generous friend to do it for you.

One thing you need to consider is the cost of entering a fine art show. You will of course have the initial cost of producing your art work. Then you will need to have it printed. This must be an archival print that will not fade or deteriorate in a few years. Keep in mind that people will be paying good money for your work and will expect it to last. You will be required to put a minimum price on each piece. There is also a fee for each piece of art you submit and in addition, if you have one or more selected by the jury, you will be required to pay a hanging fee for each piece.

This is where you need a bit of thick skin for there is no guarantee that any of your pieces will be selected. You may find it difficult to understand and accept that someone doesn't like your work as much as you do. You might attend the art show and be flabbergasted at the pieces that were chosen over yours, but you'll get over it and try again next year. Or you might be surprised to have it selected in a different art show by a different jury.

Notification of selection is done either individually in person or by mail, or it can be done en masse on the art show website, so you can see all entrants who have been successful. When your pieces are selected you will be required to prepare your work for hanging according to specific instructions. If you don't comply the pieces can be rejected. It must also be as it was presented for the jury process.

Shows may run for a few days or for more than a week. They have "meet the artists" night and award presentations for various categories. These provide an opportunity to mingle with the art community and perhaps make some friendships and connections. They are also more than happy to have your volunteer assistance with various aspects of the organization and running of the show.

I have entered art shows several times. I have been rejected, accepted, and have also been lucky to sell my work. It has been challenging, frustrating, perplexing, surprising and ultimately rewarding. So here's your chance. The Sooke Fine Art show will be publishing its invitation soon.

by Don Peterson, VCC Competitions Committee

Participating in the VCC monthly competitions will help you become a better photographer. The competitive process stimulates us to master new techniques, to be more creative and ultimately to produce our best work. While it is always a good feeling when one of our images scores well, VCC competitions are primarily about learning and improving your photography in a friendly and supportive environment.

Try these suggestions and you may be more successful in competitions:

1. Be Composed!

A prime way to have your image stand out is by paying close attention to composition. Definitely learn about the principles of composition in photography, but don't stop there! Try something unusual to make your compositions stand out as unique and memorable.

2. Be Simple!

Make sure your photo communicates just one subject, theme or idea. *"What's really important is to simplify. The work of most photographers would be improved immensely if they could do one thing: get rid of the extraneous. If you strive for simplicity, you are more likely to reach the viewer."* (William Albert Allard, National Geographic Magazine.)

3. Be Sharp!

With the exception of images where blurring or softness is intentional such when using camera movement, lack of sharpness means your image will not do well. If you don't know how to get tack-sharp photos, review your camera manual, seek information on-line, attend one of our workshops or access the VCC mentoring program.

4. Be Out There!

This is often what separates the average photographer from the good photographer. Often, seeking out images in unusual locations or under challenging conditions will yield great photos. If you regularly make the extra effort to "be out there" your photographs will stand out from the competition.

5. Be a Story Teller!

Photographs need to tell a story if the viewer (or the judge) is to easily understand what you are communicating. Practice finding visual stories when you are out shooting, whether it is people interacting with their surroundings, an interesting nature scene, or perhaps athletes,

musicians or other artists as they perform.

6. Be Persistent!

Persistence is having the discipline to keep trying lots of different locations, times and techniques as well as learning from both good and bad results. If you do well in a competition, then congratulations! But whether your image scores well or not, always try to learn from the experience. Also recognize that the judging process is a subjective one and good images do not always receive the recognition they deserve! (That's what I always tell myself anyway.)

So, just enter your images and you will soon become a better photographer!

VCC's Mentoring Program

by Jane Taylor, Mentoring Coordinator

men·tor noun: someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced person

We are pleased to announce the launch of a Mentoring Program in which more advanced members provide less experienced members with one-on-one help and advice. Requests for help can be something very specific, such as "what kind of flash should I buy for my Nikon camera?" Or they can be more general such as "I'd like to get better at macro and close-up photography."

Requests for mentoring assistance should be emailed to the Mentoring Coordinator (mentoring@victoriac-ameracub.org). The coordinator will then try to find a mentor who can assist. Please keep in mind that there are a limited number of mentors. To avoid overloading our mentors, each match-up is limited to two sessions, unless the mentor is available for additional sessions. If there are requests that are very similar, we may try to coordinate them into a one-on-two (or more) session.

If you're sending in a request, try to be as specific as possible, and please let us know what brand/model of camera you are using.

If you're an experienced photographer and can donate some time as a Mentor, we'd love to hear from you.

And finally, we hope that any member who benefits from Club mentorship will one day find themselves in a position where they can take on the role of mentor.

Pixels and Dots

by Richard James

So what's the difference? It's quite important that you understand the difference between pixels in a digital image and single colour ink dots in a print. Pixels (picture cells) are the way that we describe the resolution of a digital image. They are literally dimensionless but are related to printer ink dots by the resolution of the printer itself which is expressed in (ink) dots per inch (dpi). Let's discuss the digital image and the print separately.

For a digital image that is going to be projected, the best way to prepare it is to resample it so that it has the correct number of pixels for the device that it's going to be projected on. For the club's projector that is a maximum of 1400 pixels wide by 1050 pixels high. For this purpose the pixels per inch or the physical dimensions of the image are irrelevant.

For a printed image the resolution ideally needs to be matched to the pixel resolution of the printer that you are going to use. This is typically 360 (Epson) or 300 (Canon) ppi. When you resample the image for printing the physical dimension must clearly match the print size (say 11" x 17") and the resolution should ideally be the resolution of your printer. So for an 11" x 17" print at 300 ppi you need a pixel dimension of 5100 x 3300 pixels. Note that this is not the ink droplet density that the printer heads will lay down the ink at, which is quoted in printer ads.

Although the printer resolution is an ideal value, in practice anything above 180 ppi is generally considered acceptable as that is finer than most people can resolve. Anything over about 360 ppi does not give you any visibly better results.

In both cases you use your editing software to resample the image to the correct dimensions. There are instructions on the website on the competitions page and also some notes in the February 2011 Close-Up (available under Close-Up Archives on the website).

So the key parameter for a projected image is the actual pixel dimensions. It is always better to do this conversion in your editing software than to let the computer video driver do it.

For prints the resolution should be between 180 and 360 ppi at your required output size. Remember that you must do the resizing before you do the output sharpening for either medium.

January 2014 Competition Judges

We would like to thank our judges for the Intermediate and Advanced categories: Lilo Binakaj, Anne Lamarche and Judith Higham. We also wish to thank our in-house Novice category judges: Pam Irvine, Caspar Davis, Suzanne Huot and Paul Ross.

Lilo Binakaj, (Prints): Lilo holds a Master of Photographic Arts degree, is a Nationally Accredited Professional Photographer and has been a photographer for more than 30 years. After a career in photojournalism, he became a portrait and wedding photographer combining his photojournalism skills with his passion for portraiture.

After a career spent producing world-class images, he decided to give something back. In 2007 he started teaching at the Pacific Design Academy, where he leads a very popular photography class. Lilo has received numerous national and international awards but he continues to strive to improve his vision and "to capture the beauty of the moment in every person I photograph."

Anna (Boudreau) Lamarche, (Creative and Nature): Anna is from Essex County, Ontario. Her photography strives to capture the unusual and interesting aspects of everyday life in rural Ontario as well as when she travels overseas. She has a great eye for and understanding of the beauty in ordinary things. Anna enjoys pinhole, landscape and travel photography, as well as using alternative technology, such as iPad apps, Lensbaby and the new Lytro camera.

In 2009, Anna helped to co-found "Shooters Photography Club" in Kingsville, Ontario. The emphasis is on sharing and participation. You can find a few photography tips at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Photography-Framing-by-Anna-Boudreau/6904683748>.

Judith Higham, (Open and Theme): Judith lives in Coquitlam, has been photographing seriously since the late 1990's and has been a CAPA judge since 2006. Judith is an American Orchid Society Awards photographer. Her images are published monthly in newsletters of orchid societies in the US and Canada, in various orchid journals, as well as on the Society website.

Judith runs a black and white and colour darkroom. With her partner, Ed, she started "The Darkroom Group" in December 2009, with the aim of promoting the art of the traditional wet darkroom in the Vancouver area. The group is now a CAPA club with 15 members.



Advanced Digital Open - 3rd
"Snow Drift" by Lee-Anne Stack

Judge's comments: Wonderful shapes in the snow and sky. Very soft sky with fairly deep blue shapes; intricate textures, lines and shadows in the snow, very well done. Extremely well exposed with the fence and post a ground between the sky and snow.



Advanced Digital Creative - 1st
"Fall In Yaletown" by Gordon Griffiths

Judge's comments: Great interest and impact. Nice effect on the leaves and building.



Advanced Open Print - 1st
"Shakima - Beautiful One" by Lois Burton

Judge's comments: Great expression portrait.



Advanced Nature Print - 1st
"Bat-eared Fox" by Elaine Freedman

Judge's comments: A feeling of real wild life moment and nice composition makes this image outstanding. I like the idea of putting subjects head outside the upper right power point.



Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
"Mount Shuksan" by Richard Webber

Judge's comments: A superb print with a true black and white tonality.



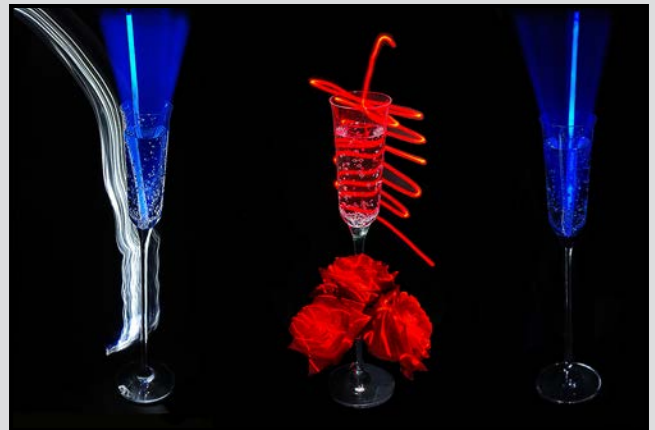
Intermediate Monochrome - 2nd
"Standoff" by Keith MacKenzie

Judge's comments: I like it a lot, a story telling with a statement to it.



Intermediate Open Print - 2nd
"Conservatory Blooms" by Bobbie Carey

Judge's comments: Nice lighting and a shallow depth of field gives tulips a pleasant feeling.



Intermediate Digital Theme - 2nd
"Wine & Roses" by Pam Irvine

Judge's comments: Although the composition seems static, lighting shows great imagination. Lovely white and grey abstract shape on the left of the glass. Nice to see each glass with a different treatment.



Intermediate Digital Open - 1st

"Blues Man in Black and White" by Don Peterson

Judge's comments: Excellent street portrait of a working musician, very sharp, background out of focus. Hands and instrument are as important as the face. Intentional crop of the hat is a good choice. B&W presentation allows the viewer to focus on the main form without distraction. Subject's facial expression completes the image.



Novice Digital Open - 1st

"Slow Dive" by Richard Marshall

Judge's comments: Wow! Excellent exposure. Composition draws the viewers eye to the subject. Beautiful colours.



Novice Digital Theme - 1st

"Music Magic" by Ian Crawford

Judge's comments: High impact and great imagination. Great effort in creating a photo that fits the theme. Nicely balanced.



Novice Digital Nature - 2nd

"Bee" by Sara Neate

Judge's comments: Beautiful shot. Great composition. Excellent exposure & colour. Sharp focus.

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Course starts Mar 6, with Tony Bounsall

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Course starts Mar 19, with Mike Sroka

Photography Level 2 – Intermediate,

Course starts Apr 1, with Mitch Stringer

Photography Level 1 – Introduction,

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– How To Get Better Photos On Your iPhone & iPad,

Course starts Apr 8, with Tony Bounsall

Nature Photography, Course starts Apr 22, with Josh McCulloch

Photography As Art, Course starts April 30, with Mike Sroka

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by John Roberts

In the last issue we discussed how to reduce your chances of getting dust on your sensor, and for many of you that is all you will need. But there are the few unfortunate ones that have that black speck that stands out on the top left side of your images in the sky and, well, now we have to clean your sensor.

First of all, let's confirm how many specks of dust you are dealing with:

- Set your camera to the lowest ISO setting
- Set Aperture priority at a setting of f22
- Be sure to set your focus on the lens to manual, and focus at infinity
- Now, take a plain piece of white paper, put the camera up to a window, with the paper in between, and during the exposure, slowly drag the paper or move the camera around. This way you do not see the texture of the paper and mistake it for dust
- Take an image, and now either zoom in on the LCD of the camera, and scroll around, or take the image to your computer or tablet. I prefer to see it nice and big myself.

If something appears to be BLACK and sharp, that is sensor dust. If something looks weak muddy-grey, and not all that sharp, that is texture of the paper, and you did not pull the paper long enough. If you have dust, or an eyelash, they will appear to be sharp and very dark.

Now, the hard part to remember is that where you see it in the frame and where you see it on the sensor are opposite to each other; so dust on the top left of the image is actually on the bottom right of the sensor, and so forth. So remember this; that is pro-tip #1 for you.

You now have a choice of what method to use to clean your sensor. There are a few dry methods, as well as wet methods and we will discuss each method briefly.

We will start with the simple Blower Bulb. First off, take a look at your blower. Does it have a brush tip attached or is that in your bag? Throw that one away; you need the newer bulbs with the filters in them that prevent dust from being inside the blower. What is the point if you only blow more dust into the camera than you are trying to get rid of? First, turn the camera to sensor cleaning mode, or to bulb; most cameras have a cleaning mode built in now. Turn the camera, hold it above your head and aim the blower up into it (do not put the tip of the blower any closer than the lens

mount). Give it a few good squeezes, and let gravity do the rest of the work. Easy peasy! Take another test shot and repeat as needed. I keep my blower bulb in a zip-lock bag, so no outside dust or dirt can get into it. I always give it a couple of squeezes before using it to clean the sensor to make sure the tip of the blower bulb is clear.

I am going to only say this once: *Do Not Use Canned Air!* That will do more harm than good! You can short your circuit board with the solution that sprays out of the tip, or you can make the dust wet and stuck on.

So make this simple; just don't. Canned air on the sensor is very bad.

My current personal favourite, of the sensor cleaning methods I have used, is the "Arctic Butterfly" by a company called VisibleDust, a nice Canadian company. They started off by cleaning scientific slides for microscopes, so these people know what they are doing when it comes to needing a dust free environment.

The Arctic Butterfly comes in several sizes and models; you will need to look at what will be best for you. But I have the 728. It is a 1.5x crop size, anti-static brush with fine filaments that are super soft and will not scratch your sensor when used correctly. It also has an LED light to see what you are doing.

This brush only has to kiss the sensor; no need to drag it all over and "mop" the sensor with it. The brush has a spinning head on it. This will give the static charge that the brush needs to draw the dust to it. This is why the brush only needs to, as I call it, kiss the sensor. It will then do the rest using the wonders of static charge. Once you complete a pass, pull the brush out, and give the brush a spin again. This gets rid of any dust you picked up and charges up the brush again for your second pass going in the opposite direction. Take another photo of your progress and repeat as necessary.

If you get your brush too dirty or oily, it is easily cleaned by buying the cleaning solution they offer. Or you can buy the cleaning tablets, mix them with distilled water and clean the brush with that. VisibleDust has some amazing videos on their website on how to do this properly. I highly recommend checking that out and seeing how it goes from there.

OK, so I am way too wordy for one issue. We will get into the last two methods in the next issue.

by Doug McLean

Panoramic photography, also referred to as wide format photography, records images with expanded fields of view using common equipment and software. The resulting image is cropped to a relatively wide aspect ratio giving a broader field of view than a lens can provide. An image is considered to be a panorama if the aspect ratio exceeds 2:1, ranging to 10:1 or more, all the way to 360 degrees. The view from our eyes is panoramic at about a 2:1 ratio.

There are four main types of panoramas; flat or planar, cylindrical, spherical and cubic. Flat is the most common.

- Flat panoramas are conventionally viewed, as is, without perspective control. These are relatively easy to create and display without distortion on flat print paper or the screen. This is the type that we will concentrate on in this article.
- Cylindrical panoramas are viewed as if curved around the inside of a cylinder and special viewers are needed to view them.
- Spherical panoramas are meant to be displayed on the inside of a sphere and require image coverage of 360 degrees horizontally and 180 degrees vertically. They too need special viewers or software to display.
- Cubic panoramas have 6 separate cube faces with undistorted flat images for each face.

Panoramas have been with us almost as long as photography. From the beginning photographers wanted to show city scenes that could not be provided by a single lens. In 1844, Friedrich von Martens invented a camera with a moving lens covering an arc of 150 degrees. The image recorded on a daguerreotype was 44 cm by 12 cm.

After the invention of flexible film in 1888, cameras such as the Cylindrograph, Wonder Panoramic, Pantascopic and Cyclo-Pan were produced as specialized equipment for panoramic photography. In 1899 Kodak introduced the Panoram for amateurs, taking photographs 30 cm long with a field of view of 180 degrees. They were used for landscapes, groups and cityscapes.

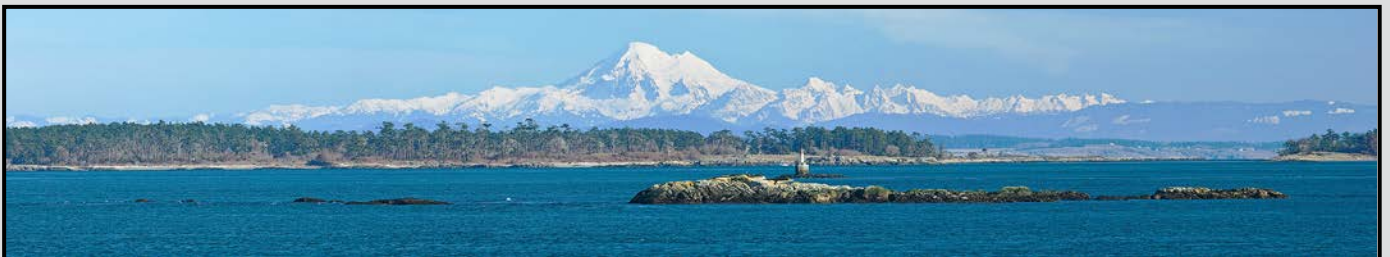
In the past, panoramas were made using expensive specialized equipment or time-consuming and difficult darkroom techniques. With the advent of digital cameras, panoramas have been made easy and we can use our own equipment, software and printers to produce spectacular results. With some point and shoot and camera phone cameras, the process is automatic. But to produce a high quality result you need to follow some basic procedures and understand some concepts peculiar to shooting panoramas.

Panorama subjects are as varied as your imagination and include landscapes, macro, wildlife, cityscapes, architecture and groups.

Here are some guidelines to help you get started. Experiment with the various options and methods to create your style with your favourite subject. Panoramas can be made with very little gear or with some of the most amazing, finely-machined, accessories and complex procedures. Specialized equipment is available from a large number of companies but is not essential for creating panoramas. I will outline some basic factors to keep in mind that should be considered in all setups. If you decide to expand your horizons in panoramic photography there is a dazzling array of equipment and software to satisfy even the most demanding photographer. Yet very good results can be produced with equipment and software that we all have.

Tripods: A tripod is recommended and can be used to steady the camera preventing shake and allowing shooting in low light conditions. Having a group of levelled images will require less adjustment in your software, avoiding, for example, having to crop your panoramas down thereby achieving better overall results. Your tripod provides a stable platform that can be levelled, locked and rotated in a horizontal plane. A bubble level on the tripod itself will allow you to properly level the tripod head. Bubble levels can be used in your camera's hot shoe if it does not have a built-in horizon display to allow you to level the head.

If the exposures are long, a remote shutter release



and the mirror lockup feature can minimize camera vibrations while taking the photograph.

Hand-holding your camera is acceptable if you find yourself without a tripod, as long as you hold the camera steady and you use high shutter speeds.

Exposure: You want to avoid different brightness levels between images. This can happen from a change in light levels within the scene in areas, for example, with more sky, darker treed sections or changing weather conditions. You must maintain a constant exposure throughout the panorama. It is important to set your camera to your chosen exposure level in manual mode so it won't change. One method to select the exposure involves recording the exposure settings of both shutter speed and aperture across a scene. Select an average, and then adjust that setting slightly darker (faster shutter or higher f number) to retain detail in the highlights. Consistency in image brightness will make for a cleaner stitch.

Polarizing filters should not be used as they significantly change the darkness of the sky across the panorama.

Lenses: Surprisingly, the best lenses for panoramas are not wide-angle lenses as you might expect, as difficulties arise with keeping proper perspective and combining the overlapping sections of the photos. It would take fewer images to cover the scene with a wide-angle lens but shooting with a normal lens (50 mm for full frame and 35 mm for a 1.5 cropped sensor) will result in a sharper, more detailed image.

Panoramas taken with a telephoto lens will show more detail and require more images than a normal lens. If a zoom lens is used, make sure the focal length does not change. You might consider placing a small piece of masking tape overlapping the lens barrel and the zoom ring to ensure there is no change in the focal length.

Panoramas can be stitched in a horizontal or vertical orientation. Vertical images allow you to capture taller subjects, for example, so experiment.

Overlap: Overlap the images by at least 20% to give the software plenty of information to create an accurate stitch or join. Experiment with the overlap and develop your best practice according to your camera and lens. Areas of blurring can occur if the overlap is too small.

Image orientation can affect how the perspective changes from shot to shot. Portrait mode reduces the perspective change between each shot and the stitching software needs less distortion correction.

Shooting in portrait orientation gives a longer edge for the software to work with. Try it in both landscape and portrait modes and compare the results.

Shooting multiple rows and columns of images is a great way to expand your panoramas. Have you ever been frustrated in trying to represent a building with one photograph? Try multiple exposures both horizontally and vertically then stitch them together.

Panoramas can be printed using the roll paper option available on many good quality consumer printers that you may already be using to print your images.

In the next issue I will explain the options for software, panoramic tripod heads and their use and I will introduce the important concept of rotating the camera around the nodal point in the lens.

Panoramic photography ranges from the simplest phone camera to the complexities of elaborate multiple lens and 360 degree 3D displays. Using sound techniques, basic camera equipment and common, often free, software, we can produce beautiful panoramas. The only limits are our imaginations.

Images provided by Dick Auchinleck.



Incoming Storm

by Simon Henson

The original image, looking through a window, was shot with a Canon (G1X, f5.6, 1/250 sec, ISO 200, evaluative metering, in aperture priority). I really liked the overall composition, the lighting and “feel” of the subject, which reminded me of European still-life paintings. The weak point was the view through the window so I considered replacing it with a more dynamic one to create a stronger story. The direction, colour and intensity of the light coming through the window provides a sense of reality.

The second image of an approaching storm not only synchronized with the overall tonal mood, but created a greater dramatic narrative. Shot with a Nikon D7000, (f4.2, 1/5 sec, ISO 320, matrix metering, manual exposure), proved to be a very difficult technical challenge. I tried various exposures to compensate for the rapidly changing light, to keep digital noise to a minimum, and to coincide with the lightening flashes. The resulting image was one of the few that I found acceptable.

The glass areas of the window were removed in Photoshop and the second image scaled to replace the original landscape on a separate layer. Some minor adjustments to both layers in tonal value and saturation gave the final effect. Although the finished image is somewhat dark, I wanted to create the ominous feeling of the incoming storm.



The Cappuccino Incident

by Brian Asmussen

I got the idea for this photo after watching my dog searching and stealing food off the kitchen counter. I chose an espresso machine as the item of her desire and quickly staged the machine, beans, cup, etc. on the counter.

I used a 17-40 mm lens on a tripod-mounted Canon 5D Mark II with two flashes. One remote flash was located above and pointed down at the espresso machine and cup, and the other was pointed where I want my dog to go. I played around with the lights until I was happy with the setting.

My camera was in manual mode with the following settings: f5.6, 1/200 sec, ISO 200, and the lens was at 19 mm. This set-up gave me a fast enough shutter speed to eliminate all natural light from the photo and allowed the flash to freeze the dog.

I whipped up a mug full of whipping cream and made sure I had my remote trigger in my hand to trip the camera. My dog, Charlie, sat willingly and enjoyed me smearing whipping cream on her face. I moved out of the photo and tapped the counter. Her natural curiosity took over, and she jumped up to investigate.

I took no more than 10-15 photos and eventually I captured her when she appeared to have a “caught in the act” look on her face.

Charlie happily removed the whipping cream from her face once her work was done. I imported the file into Lightroom, where I cropped it. Then in Photoshop I adjusted the contrast, levels, saturation, and sharpness until I had a photo I was happy with.



Tuesday Shoots

by Garry Schaefer

March 11th: Doesn't Quite Belong. "Birds of a feather flock together," goes the time-honoured saying. But what if one of the birds is not like the others. That's the challenge of today's theme. Find a target scene in which the elements fall neatly into a class, except for that one which stands out in its own distinctive way.

Much depends on that middle word, "quite." Close, yet lying just outside the bounds of the class, can produce that moment of surprise and that smile of satisfaction. Perhaps you will come upon a row of Coke bottles, but with one Pepsi along the way. A keen eye and mind will be called for as we search for prime examples of subjects which don't quite belong.

March 25th: Inside Looking Out: Outside Looking In. Our theme invites the prospect of taking images in pairs. Although not essential, that could be the strongest approach. What first comes to mind is shooting from the inside and outside of a building, hopefully one with plenty of glass doors and windows.

Shooting from the inside might require the permission of a tolerant merchant. Joining up with a shooting partner might be just the way to accomplish the desired image pairs. With planning or plain luck, just as you are looking in, your subject will be looking out. Like all Tuesday shoots, the main goal is to have fun!



Weekend Shoots

by Donna Robertson and Dave McLean

B.C. Maritime Museum: We intend to meet at the museum entrance (28 Bastion Square) at 10:00 am on Sunday, March 9. The museum offers 3 floors of interesting nautical exhibits and architecture. Lighting will be a challenge at the museum. While we are not allowed to use flash, we are permitted to use tripods. Entrance fees are \$12 for adults and \$10 for students/seniors. If we have enough people registered in advance for this event we may qualify for a group rate.

The museum has a collection of over 400 model boats, which span several hundred years of technology, from the old sailing vessels to more modern ships. It also exhibits old engines, an early twentieth century diving suit, the *Trekka*, which in 1959 was the smallest vessel to circumnavigate the world, a dugout canoe from 1901 with an interesting figure-head on it, and many other artifacts.

The building, both outside and in, offers great examples of 19th century architecture and fine woodworking detail. The restored courtroom from 1910 and a birdcage elevator (circa. 1899, that is the oldest operating elevator of its kind in North America) provides a lot of shooting opportunities. The Maritime Museum web site states that "this elevator ranked #2 in National Geographic's book *Journeys of a Lifetime*, in the section Top 10 Elevator Rides."

With challenging lighting conditions and no flash, use of tripods will almost be a necessity. This is a perfect venue to practice, or perfect HDR techniques, from taking the series of pictures, to processing them later.

Be warned, though, that this field trip may not be for the faint of heart, as the Museum is rumoured to be haunted. The building used to be Victoria's jail and housed the execution chamber. The courtroom was presided over by Sir Matthew Begbie, known as the "Hanging Judge." The spirits of those that were condemned are said to still reside in the building. Challenge yourself to capture the ghosts in pixels, if you dare.

Two other field trips are planned for March, weather permitting. We will revisit Esquimalt Lagoon and hopefully have better weather to photograph the winter migrants that call the lagoon home. This will be our last opportunity to see some of these birds until next winter. The second trip is to Beacon Hill Park. The Garry Oak woodlands and meadows filled with spring flowers will provide a great deal of variety and opportunity for each of us.

The Influence of Colour

by Nancy MacNab

Composition requires you to consider so many elements: lines, shapes, the “rule” of thirds, and the position of the various parts that draw those elements into a harmonious whole. One element that will often take a back seat (or be forgotten altogether) is colour.

Colour can influence your perception of a photo in many ways. Soft, muted pastel shades give an impression of delicacy or fragility to a flower or tranquillity and peace to a landscape, while the strong, vibrant colours of a brilliant sunset can suggest energy or excitement. Dark colours can bring a sense of strength on the one hand, or brooding mystery or impending doom on the other.

The individual colours can also influence your reaction to the same subject. Consider how you feel when you see a bouquet of red roses as compared to a bouquet of white roses. Or how you would feel if you painted your bedroom purple, or bright orange.

Colours have been used since time immemorial to represent specific things. White is worn at weddings throughout much of the world to represent purity and innocence. In India, however, white is worn at funerals, not weddings, when red is worn to represent joy and happiness. In much the same way, red roses represent true love or romance in our society.

The same colour can invoke very different, and completely opposite, reactions. A yellow-bellied coward or a gold medal? Red for romance or red with anger? Feeling blue and depressed, or bright blue skies? In these cases, the actual subject will influence the reaction.

Colours can be influenced by the time of day, as the landscape you would pass by at noon can become a competition winner in the warm, rich colours of dawn or sunset. Colours can also be altered by the time of year, as the cool, crisp white of snow blankets the ground and transforms the trees into ice sculptures after the blazing autumn colours.

You'll remember the artist's colour wheel from your school days, that is used when discussing colour for art. Those primary colours were red, yellow, and blue. In photography the primary colours are red, green and blue, which when added together in equal proportions give white or any neutral grey.

An image is monochromatic when it is composed en-

tirely of items of the same colour, whatever that colour is. A photograph that isolates the green leaves on a tree, or one of the ocean stretching out to meet the blue sky, are both monochromatic colours. A close-up shot of a single flower can be monochromatic if the petals and everything in the image are all one colour.

The addition of a second colour can create either harmony or tension, depending on how the two colours are related on the colour wheel. Your reaction to the image will also depend on the space occupied by each colour. A red jacket in a forest of green will stand out vividly, while a yellow jacket will blend in much more.

Take a look at your photos and think about the colours in them, and how you are reacting to them. How would your reactions be different if some elements were a different colour? Of course, in today's age of computers, you don't have to settle for just imagining that a colour is different as you can easily change the colour (remember to back up your original first!). Experiment with giving your partner a different coloured shirt, or changing the colour of the wall in the background. Make the colour darker or lighter, softer or stronger.

Another way to experiment is to go out and take photographs that are entirely in shades of one colour. Then add a second colour and see how the scene changes. This can be a fun thing to do at home on a rainy day, using items from around the house. Bowls of various fruits or vegetables, stacks of blankets, towels or sweaters, or towers of soup cans are just some of the possibilities. Change the lighting, or cover the light with a piece of coloured translucent plastic (report covers are useful here) to give different results.

Have fun with your experiments with colour as there are no right or wrong results, only different results springing from the influence of the colour in your photograph.



by John Coenraads

Edwin H. Land (1909 – 1991), genius, visionary, scientist and prolific inventor, was the father of in-camera instant photography. The iconic SX-70 folding camera and its associated colour film, beloved by photographers for its unique “flaw” that allowed the emulsion to be manipulated after exposure, was Land's crowning achievement.



Figure 1: Land's iconic SX-70 instant camera represents the peak in the development of that technology.

However, now that images are captured and stored as bits and bytes, instant photography has gone the way of the Walkman. Still, Land's name will be remembered into perpetuity for inventing the technology for manufacturing inexpensive filters for polarizing light. Used not only in Polaroid™ sunglasses, this material gave us polarizing filters for cameras and the polarizing materials on which the operation of liquid crystal displays, such as the one you are probably using right now to read this article, is totally dependent.

Before the founding of the Polaroid Corporation in 1937, polarizing filters were constructed either by stacking glass plates at an angle or cutting thin slices from a dichroic crystal such as tourmaline. Land's brilliant insight occurred when he realized that a solid, and expensive, crystal was not needed but that one could instead substitute ultramicroscopic polarizing crystals with their optic axes all parallel. This alignment was achieved by stretching thin films of polyvinyl alcohol which were then impregnated with iodine. Sandwiched between two sheets of plastic, and with a characteristic greenish tint, this material was suitable for making

sunglasses. For photographic applications, a cobalt compound is substituted for the iodine and the film is instead placed between two pieces of optically flat glass. Such a filter may be recognized by its slightly bluish tint. Thus a polarizing filter for your camera is a piece of precision optics and it is worth spending the money to get the highest quality.

Light Loss: Since a vertically oriented polarizing filter stops all horizontally polarized light, it is clear that by definition half of the light will be stopped resulting in a light loss of one stop. In practice, depending on the quality, a polarizing filter may result in a light loss of up to two stops. This is an important consideration when adjusting exposure.

If a horizontally oriented filter is stacked in front of a vertically oriented filter, all light is stopped. Such a filter pair is said to be crossed. If one of the filters is now rotated slightly so that the pair becomes uncrossed, some light will start to sneak through and the amount of light transmitted will keep increasing until both filters have a parallel alignment.

If it sounds to you that such an arrangement would make an ideal variable neutral-density filter, you would be right. Such polarizing filter pairs are sold as variable ND filters but near their maximum settings, their performance often disappoints. The reason is simple: A slight unevenness in light transmission, that would normally not be noticeable, becomes quite evident as two filters approach being crossed. Should you be keen on doing long exposure photography during daylight hours, you would be much better off investing in a fixed, 10-stop neutral-density filter.

Colour Shift: Since a polarizing filter can have a slightly bluish cast, it will have a small cooling effect. In the days of film, this was often compensated for by combining such a filter with a slight warming filter. Nowadays, such an adjustment is easily made in post-processing. When using a polarizing filter it may seem that the resulting colours are intensified. Such is not the case. What really happens is that the filter removes the glare that reduces image contrast.

Much more pronounced colour shifts occur when photographing transparent optically active materials such as the rear window of a car, crumpled cellophane, sugar solutions or stressed plastics such as a ruler. Although the explanation is beyond the scope of this article, optical activity can be explored by placing

such materials between a pair of polarizing filters. Or better yet, the effects can be photographed by using a polarizing filter on your camera and placing the optically active material on a polarized light source such as a white screen on the liquid crystal display (LCD) of your computer.

When a thin coating of an optically active compound is applied to a polarizing filter, a filter is created that deliberately introduces very pronounced colour shifts in any areas of the picture reflecting polarized light. An example is a Blue-Yellow filter which introduces blue or yellow into your images depending on the orientation of the filter. The results can range from beautiful to ghastly, and therefore such a filter should be used with great discretion. Fortunately, what you see in the viewfinder is what you get so the desired effect can be adjusted before pressing the shutter. Be advised that a Blue-Yellow filter plays havoc with the white balance on your camera. It's best to shoot using the daylight setting. Being dependent on the absence or presence of polarized light, this is an effect that cannot be duplicated in Photoshop.

Circular Polarizers: Before the advent of automated cameras, simple linear polarizers functioned well with all cameras. Today's DSLR cameras typically employ prisms and partial mirrors in their metering and sometimes auto-focus mechanisms. These devices are sensitive to the polarization of the light and at certain orientations, your linear polarizer could literally leave your metering system in the dark. You can easily test for this by placing your camera on a tripod and aiming it at an overcast (unpolarized) sky. Rotate the (linear) filter and watch to see if the metering changes. To prevent such problems, circular polarizers were invented.

These filters are constructed by starting with a normal linear filter and attaching to it a thin layer of optically active material known as a quarter-wave plate. The name comes from the thickness of this plate's being one-quarter the wavelength of (green) light.

Let's say the linear (vertically oriented) filter selects for dolphins, to use last month's analogy where the vertically undulating dolphins represented vertically polarized light. What the quarter-wave plate does is to set the dolphin spinning in a corkscrew motion. This spinning motion allows the dolphins to slip through any polarizing filter no matter what its orientation, and thus they cannot be stopped by any polarizing optics in the metering path. Problem solved!

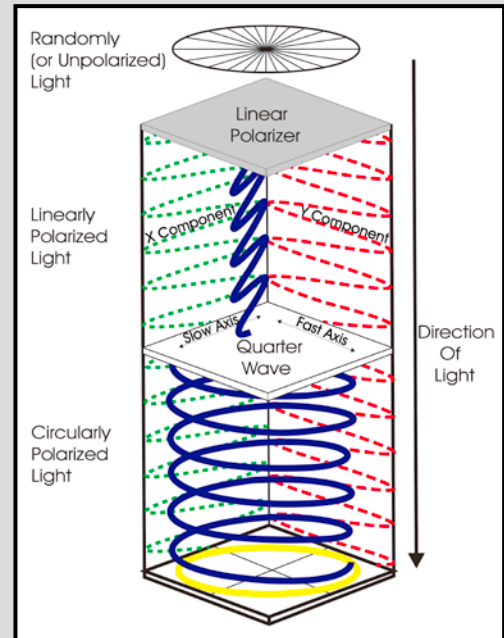


Figure 2: Unpolarized light arriving from the top passes through a linear polarizer. The polarization vector, to use physics speak, is set spinning by the quarter wave plate resulting in circularly polarized light. Image courtesy American Polarizers, Inc.

Unlike a linear polarizer, which continues to function normally even if mounted front to back on the camera lens, this is not the case for a circular polarizer. And this suggests a simple test to see if your filter is indeed a circular polarizer. Hold the filter in front of your eye as if you are the camera looking out through the lens and look at your computer screen. Rotate the filter about its axis and light from the computer screen should extinguish. Now flip the filter front to back and repeat. Since light coming from the computer screen now passes through the quarter-wave plate before passing through the linear filter, rotating the filter now results in no change in the light intensity. Note, however, that in this mode the circular polarizer begins to behave like a weak Blue-Yellow filter, which introduces a blue or yellow cast, depending on orientation.

While it is true that Photoshop has made a lot of once popular filters redundant, the exception to this is the polarizing filter. So make this the first, and possibly only, filter you buy.

For further reading and an interesting explanation of what happens when viewing a mirror through a circular polarizer see: <http://www.apioptics.com/circular-polarizers.html>.

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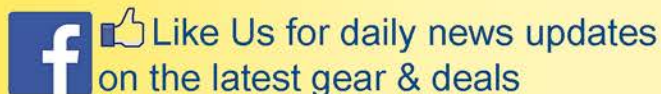
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