



Close-Up

**Shooting Inside on a Rainy Day
Black and White Portraiture
Adjustment Layers in Photoshop
Member Profile: Jill Turyk
Sigma's Art Series Lenses
Introduction to Lighting
Beginners' Corner:
Design Elements II ...
and more**

Victoria Camera Club

"Eyes Speak" by Lois Burton

December 2017 Volume 70 Number 9



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Victoria Camera Club



"Victoria Harbour Full Moon" by Ian Faris

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.

Copyright ©, Victoria Camera Club, 2017, all rights reserved. Mailing address: PO Box 46035, RPO Quadra, Victoria, BC, V8T 5G7. Editor, Richard James, e-mail to editor@victoriacameraclub.ca for submissions or to advertise in **Close-Up**. Deadline for submissions for the January 2018 issue is November 28^h 2017.

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What's Inside

Club Calendar and President's Message	4
Shooting Inside on a Rainy Day	5
Black and White Portraiture	6
Adjustment Layers in Photoshop.....	9
Competition Info	10
Member Profile: Jill Turyk.....	17
Sigma's Art Series Lenses	19
Special Interest Groups	20
CAPA and PSA.....	21
How I Did It	22
Shoots Around Victoria	23
Introduction to Lighting.....	24
Beginners' Corner: Design Elements II	26

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December 2017

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.

December 7th 2017: Christmas Party

A social event for members and their guests.

January 4th 2018: Competition Night

The January theme competition is "Geometric Shapes." The deadline for submissions is January 4th.

January 11th 2018: Presentation Night

Tony Bounsall will suggest that we "Get Out of the Monkey Trap" by using Photo-Based Mixed Media. He has been working professionally as a commercial photographer/graphic designer for thirty years.

January 18th 2018: Members' Night

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

Field Trip Highlights

Butchart Gardens night shoot on Dec. 13th. See page 23.

Cover Image: "Eyes Speak" by Lois Burton. Two of my great passions are travel and photography. I have found that travel photography provides wonderful opportunities for portraits. The cover image is a portrait of a young boy from the tiny village of Mto Wa Mbu in Tanzania.

I have been fortunate to have travelled around the world meeting new and interesting people and experiencing the diversity of their cultures. Travel has also served as a reminder of my good fortune and how humbly others live.

I have always found photographing and engaging with people and their surroundings of great interest. Most people are flattered and happy to have their picture taken and sometimes all it takes is a smile from you to open that door of opportunity. You should be respectful of the people you wish to photograph and ask permission before pointing the lens at them. If they decline you need to accept their decision and their cultural beliefs.

In the article on page 6 you will find some of the unforgettable people I have had the pleasure of photographing.

President's Message

As I sit down to prepare this December's message, I am looking back at what filled this space one year ago. Much of it resonates as still valid today. In fact, I would even suggest that you re-open that issue of *Close-Up* or access it from the website's News page. That may provide further insight as to whether we are moving forward or in reverse on items of particular interest to you. I welcome your input now and throughout the year to assist your Board in shaping our ongoing programs.

One year later, the sun dips towards the winter solstice, just as it did last year. Scheduled events on the Club's calendar taper off, particularly at Norway House. Tradition lives on, with our seasonal social gathering early in the month. At the same time, various opportunities remain to pursue photography with fellow members.

Last month, I made references to the Bryan Peterson presentation and workshop which were then very fresh in my mind. One particular item kept coming back to the top: off-camera flash. That prompted me to purchase a flash with a built-in radio-frequency receiver coupled with an on-camera transmitter. No, I didn't spend the fortune required for dedicated system components, but rather, opted for a third-party manual setup at a very reasonable price. Now comes the challenge of learning how to use it.

Sometimes a new piece of equipment may languish in the box for a time as one continues along familiar paths, thinking, "I'll get to that new toy one of these days." Sometimes one is spurred into action by unfolding events and circumstances. In this case, I was provided with a most welcome example at the November meeting of the Nature SIG. Our most recently minted life member, Gordon Simpson, had begun experimentation with a flash system which he had purchased a couple of years before. Not only that, he was targeting hummingbirds in flight and dippers in a dimly lit Goldstream Park. How could I then justify any further delay? My hope, now, is that I will have something to show as the New Year rolls around.

As last year, my best wishes go out to you and yours, whatever your particular form of worship or celebration during these weeks surrounding the winter solstice. A familiar "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year" to all. To those who enrich our community from diverse faiths and cultures, I'd be pleased if you would interpret those sentiments in terms more directly meaningful and personal.

Garry Schaefer, President

Shooting Inside on a Rainy Day

by Ian Faris

I'm an outdoor photographer. I don't usually take pictures indoors. My rainy day photographic pursuits usually include: YouTube instructional videos; online photography courses; image file management; working on images in Lightroom; or scanning old slides.

But don't despair dear reader. All is not lost. A few fortuitous life events have converged for my wife and me. We are both recently retired, and we have acquired new smart phones. For me, an LG G5 with a decent built-in camera. For our purposes here, this camera has two rear facing lenses: a 16 MP normal view lens (f1.8) and an 8 MP wide angle lens (f2.4). Used in Auto mode, it can save JPEGs; in Manual mode, DNG format and JPEGs.

In the past I've lamented missing unique, sometimes "once-in-lifetime" shots, for want of a camera. The new smart phone has been very liberating. I carry it at all times but mostly to have a phone for emergencies.

The images in this article were indeed, taken indoors but not at home and not on a rainy day. They were both taken at local restaurants, under dimmed lighting, over dinner. The first thing you, as the photographer, need to do is overcome feeling self-conscious. Everyone is using their smart phones these days, even during dinner out. You have the "advantage" here, though, as you're making quality artistic images. Everyone else is



"A Beer at Moxie's"

just texting or surfing the 'net. It doesn't hurt if your dinner date is of like mind and tolerates your constant need to shoot. Still feeling self-conscious? Sit in a darker corner of the restaurant near the kitchen or go out alone. Similar images could also be created at home at your dining room table, on a rainy day.

Both images were captured in Auto mode. I disabled the camera flash, and used centre-weighted average metering. The first Image was taken at Moxie's restaurant. The point light source glowing through the delicious beverage is a small candle. The second image was taken at J Kitchen Korean & Japanese Restaurant in Sidney while having a quick and tasty bite before the Bryan Peterson presentation. The subject was a water carafe, lit primarily by the ambient light coming through the window behind it. The wavy lines in the water were a distorted reflection of the grooved pattern in the table top.



"Carafe, Water not Wine"

Both images are simple compositions of simple subjects taken on the spur of the moment with a modern easy-to-use, especially on "Auto", smart phone camera. I hope these images serve to inspire. Ratchet this idea up a notch or two at home, on a rainy day, perhaps, using a glass vessel, liquid, and uncomplicated available light. To give yourself more post-processing flexibility take your time and shoot RAW.

Look and find abstract images anywhere, anytime, and you can use whatever equipment you have at hand.

I adjusted shadows/highlights, contrast and cropped. I leave further rainy day post-processing suggestions in *Close-Up* to the gurus.

Black and White Portraiture

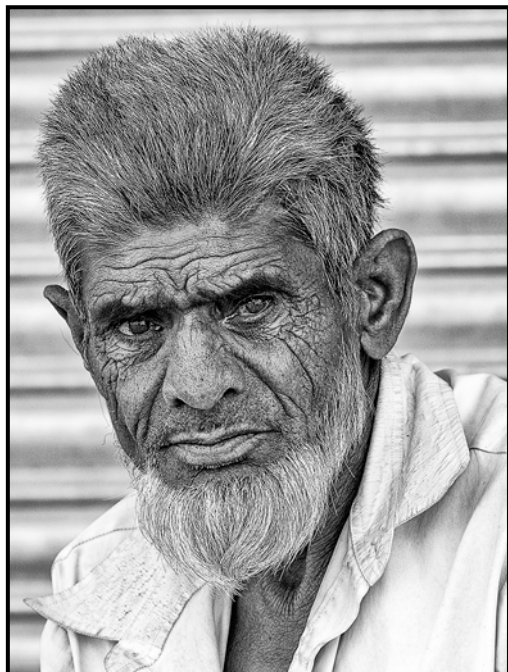
by Lois Burton

For me there is something rewarding about capturing the beauty and spirit of human emotion in a photograph. Every face can tell a story. Sometimes that story is found in the wrinkled and time-worn skin of the elderly, sometimes in the big eyes, chubby cheeks and soft skin of a baby.

I enjoy photographing people in general but children and the aged are my favourite subjects. Children have a curiosity and imagination about them. They are innocent and honest and have not yet learned to hide their feelings.



The elderly bring a completely different quality to an image. Their faces express detail and depth of character and their life's untold stories are reflected in their dominant wrinkles.



In my experience most people are happy to have their picture taken when approached. Some cultures expect a small remuneration, but it is a small price to pay to get a great shot, and for some, the amount can be life altering.

Photographic great opportunities often happen unannounced and candid moments allow you to capture compelling images that go beyond being just a reflection of a face. Depicting emotion reveals the human side of your subject. Photograph them in their own environment and try to capture their cultural landscape.



You need to get close to your subjects so that they are the centre of interest. Engage with them, make eye con-



tact and shoot at their eye level. Wherever possible use natural light, avoiding direct sunlight which causes harsh details. My preferred lens is a Canon 100-400 mm lens that provides the flexibility to shoot close to your subject or at a distance. Photographing at a distance without activity and expression being inhibited by the camera, often results in poignant moments in your images.

The most important aspect of portraits are the eyes. They are the focal point of the image and depict the response of your subject, whether it be happiness, sadness, hope, fear, disappointment etc. A catch-light in the eyes is important and has a strong effect on a portrait. The sparkle adds dimension and showcases life and spirit in your subject.

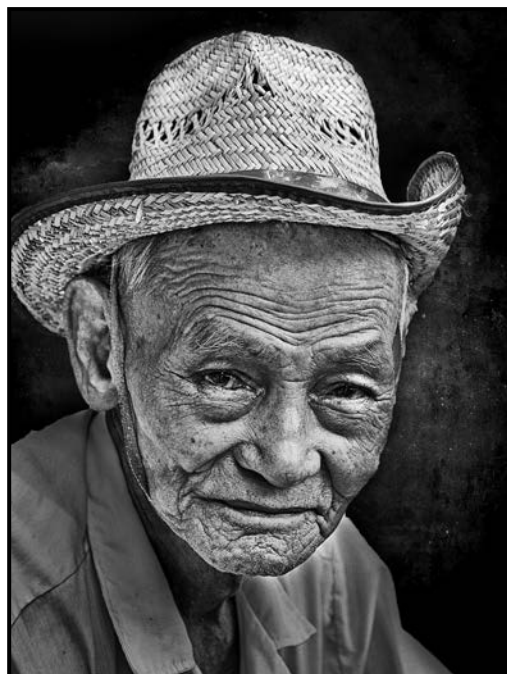


Portraiture lends itself to black and white processing because of its timeless quality and fine art appeal. Shoot in colour to get a more complete tonal range and then render to black and white during post-processing. My



conversions are done using NIK Silver Efex, which is a plug-in that works with both Lightroom and Photoshop. The Nik software has now been acquired by DxO who are incorporating it their editing software DxO PhotoLab (formerly DXO Optics Pro). It comes with a range of presets that are the starting point from which you can make global adjustments to brightness, contrast and structure, as well as use control points to modify specific areas of your image.

In the words of Ted Grant, the father of Canadian photo-journalism, "When you photograph people in colour, you photograph their clothes. But when you photograph people in black and white, you photograph their souls!"





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Adjustment Layers in Photoshop

by Richard James

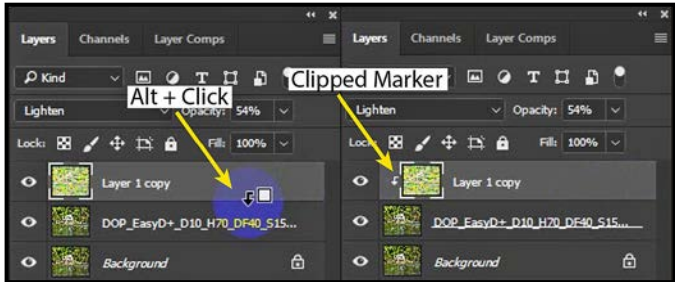
If you've been reading *Close-Up* for a few years you will have seen frequent references to adjustment layers (35 issues with 103 instances). They were first mentioned in the November 2008 issue, which coincidentally was my first issue as editor, nine years ago.

So, what are they, why should you use them and where do you find them? As the name implies they are a layer that adjusts something in the image.

The best reason to use them is that adjustment layers are non-destructive, so rather than changing an underlying image layer, they apply a modification that can be removed or changed later. If you directly modify an image layer then once you leave that layer it is very difficult to go back and modify your changes. You can use the history panel but you will lose everything you did after it.

There are 16 different adjustment layers available either from the layers/adjustment layers drop-down in the main menu or from the adjustment layers panel. Since I use them a lot I prefer to work from the panel which is selected from the window drop-down in the menu bar. Since I have many panels open I use a custom workspace to load them every time I start up Photoshop.

Like all layers in Photoshop, the adjustment is applied to all layers below the current layer unless you "clip" the adjustment layer to the layer or group of layers immediately below it. In that case it only applies to that layer/group. "Clip" thus restricts the extent of the adjustment. You clip two (or more) layers together by holding the Alt key down while clicking on the division between the two layers resulting in a downward pointing arrow.



"Clipped Layers"

Another way to modify the effect of an adjustment layer is to use masks. This restricts the change to that part of the mask that is not fully opaque. Any part of a mask can be fully or partially transparent allowing you further control of how the changes in that layer blend into the layer below.

So what are the adjustments that are available? This table lists them, reading across in the order that they are shown in Photoshop. The grey shaded adjustment layers are the ones that I use most often, darker ones most often, lighter ones less often

Brightness/Contrast	Levels	Curves	Exposure
Vibrance	HSL	Colour Balance	Black-And-White
Photo Filter	Channel Mixer	Colour Look-Up	Invert
Posterise	Threshold	Selective Colour	Gradient Map

When should you use adjustment layers? Normally you would make as many adjustments to the RAW images as possible during RAW conversion. This minimizes artifacts and is generally the most flexible and accurate way of converting the image to an editable form. Adjustment layers are then used to fine-tune specific areas of the image. In this context an "area" could be a particular colour range (using the HSL adjustment, or rarely colour balance) or a particular part of the image that you want to emphasize.

Let's look at some specific examples that I use:

- Levels: This adjusts the black and white points in the image and gamma (slope of the transition between the two). You really should have got this right in the RAW conversion but there may be instances where you want to change it selectively within the image.
- Curves: This adjusts the contrast. This is very useful for selected areas where you want to emphasize, or deemphasize, a part of the image.
- Exposure: Adjusts the overall brightness of the image. This really should have been done in the RAW conversion but you may need to adjust specific areas.
- HSL: Adjusts the hue, saturation and luminance and is a powerful way of making selective colour changes.
- Colour balance: Get the overall balance right in the RAW conversion and then use this adjustment layer to deal with issues such as overly blue shadows.
- Black-and-white: This is a powerful way of doing the black-and-white conversion and allows you to adjust the mixture between colours to achieve a better greyscale toning.
- Photo filter: This adjustment layer emulates the classic glass filters used on a camera lens when shooting film. It changes the overall colour balance in a subtly different way by emphasizing certain colours. For example, a yellow filter will make blues (the sky) darker and the yellow component of leaves relative lighter.

February Theme: Monochrome Landscape

by Lorna Zaback

February's theme is "Monochrome Landscape." This gives us a chance to challenge our photography skills by putting a different "spin" on the colour landscape photography many of us are so passionate about. Landscape can depict almost anything: land forms, bodies of water, vegetation, human elements and different forms of land use, buildings and other structures, and elements such as lighting and weather conditions.

Here are a few tips that most monochrome landscape photographers seem to agree on:

1. Without colour, it becomes more important to focus on some of the other elements of composition, such as leading lines, shapes, patterns, tonal contrast and texture to separate elements for maximum impact.
2. Outstanding black and white landscapes tend to be composed of a wide range of grey tones between pure black and pure white. Ansel Adams dubbed this the "Zone" system. Shooting in RAW with the correct exposure (learn to check your histogram) are practices that help achieve the greatest range of tones. VCC member Richard Webber, says: "When I am shooting I visualize how I want a scene to look before I take the shot. As a first step in post-production I develop the very best colour image for tonality and, most importantly, dynamic range. After converting to black and white I again enhance the image's dynamic range (i.e. try to develop near-pure blacks and whites), its texture qualities, shapes, forms and contrast through dodging and burning."
3. Try slow shutter speeds and neutral density filters to get those almost minimalist monochrome images of heavily textured rocks surrounded by soft, misty water and sky, shot using slow shutter speeds. Neutral density filters work particularly well in monochrome landscapes to enhance tonal and textural contrast.

Looking for further inspiration? Check out Ansel Adams' images of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Yosemite National Park, and Northern New Mexico, the work of Canadian photographer Bruce Smith, and others such as Cole Thompson, Rob Dweck and Thibault Roland.

We hope that you will have fun, experiment and that many of you will feel excited about meeting this challenge!

Reference: techradar.com/how-to/photography-video-capture/cameras/black-and-white-photography-how-to-make-monochrome-stunning-1320967.

October Competition Judges

We extend our sincere thanks to the external judges for the October Intermediate and Advanced competitions: David Laronde, Nancy Ricker, Karen Stoyles, and Kelsey Goodwin. We would also like to thank our in-house Novice judges: Normand Marcotte, Steve Lustig, Anne McCarthy, Lorna Zaback, Martin Wright and Caspar Davis. All images and judges' comments are available at: victoriacameraclub.ca/Competitions/CompetitionResults.aspx.

David Laronde: Wildlife & Natural World. David is an active member of the North Shore Photographic Society. His interests in photography are varied, but he has a passion for studio, travel and landscape photography. In professional photography he is designated as a Master Professional Photographer by the Professional Photographers of America (PPA). In amateur photography he has distinctions that include FCAPA from CAPA; APSA, SPSA, and EPSA from PSA; ARPS from the Royal Photographic Society; and EFIAP from the Federation Internationale de l'Art Photographique. Most recently he won Argentina's international competition. He also judges international competitions. heartworksphoto.ca.

Nancy Ricker: Open & Theme. Nancy has been a member of the North Shore Photographic Society for a number of years during which time she served as President, Vice-President and Field Trip Coordinator as well as a member of other committees. She has been involved in photography for many years and has exhibited in numerous galleries and coffee shops. Her favourite photography deals with abstracts, textures and tapestries of nature.

Karen Stoyles: Altered Reality. Karen lives in Brantford, Ontario where she is an active member of the Brant Camera Club. Her main photographic interests are wildflower, macro and creative photography. She likes to travel the back roads of Ontario where she finds many varieties of wild flowers. You may be surprised what she finds hiding in ditches and woodlands. Karen has been judging photography for over 10 years for camera clubs, local organizations and fairs. You can find some of her beautiful images on Flickr at flickr.com/photos/kabstoyles.

Kelsey Goodwin: Advanced Prints. Kelsey is a professional photographer in Victoria. For the past six years she has specialized in wedding photography. She has been working professionally with photography since she was 16 and shot her first wedding at 18. She has won numerous awards for her work and was chosen as one of the 30 Most Inspiring Canadian Wedding Photographers in 2015. kgoodphoto.com.

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Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
"Lone Tree" by Jacqui James

Judge's comments: Great impact and composition. Good choice of mat colour. Perfectly straight horizon, light and exposure retention in the shadows/highlights.



Advanced Digital Natural World - 1st
"Bokeh Bouquet-Okay" by Rene Pauze

Judge's comments: This is a beautiful image. The flower is isolated from the background, which helps to draw attention toward the plant and in particular the curves of the stem and the lines of the head. While the background has some colour, that colour it is not enough to compete for attention with the subject.



Advanced Digital Open - 1st
"Beauty and Strength" by Lois Burton

Judge's comments: Lovely image using silhouette lighting. Vertical format with position of model very effective. No need to see the face of the model.



Advanced Digital Wildlife - 2nd
"Cedar Waxwing" by Elaine Freedman

Judge's comments: Beautiful subtle colours in the bird and the background. Detail in the bird is excellent.

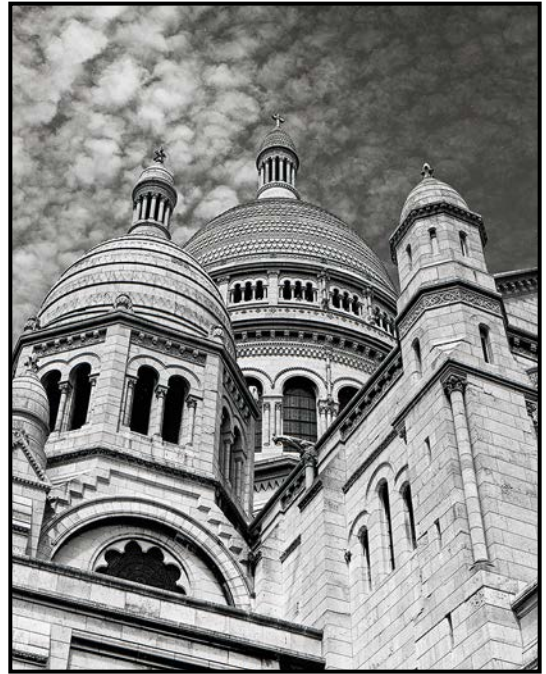


Advanced Nature Print - 1st

"American White Pelican

(Pelecanus erythrorhynchos)" by Richard James

Judge's comments: Great impact, timing and exposure. Nice use of contrast and paper choice.



Advanced Open Print - 1st

"Sacre Coeur" by Karl Schoepp

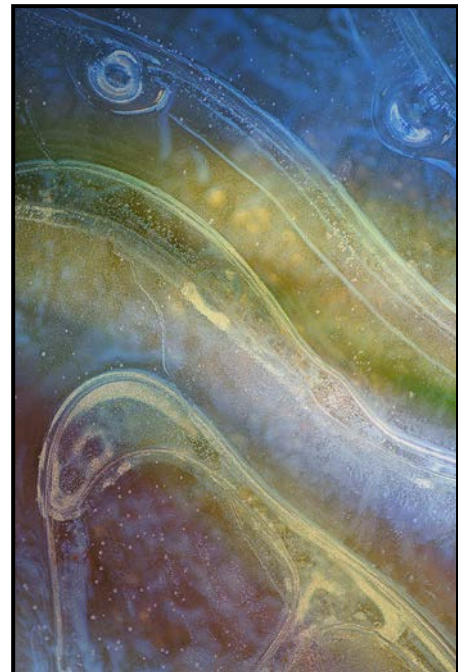
Judge's comments: Great impact. The perfect amount of contrast and sharpening. Great exposure and tonal range. Good job on sky masking.



Advanced Digital Theme - 2nd

"Alone in a Crowd" by Normand Marcotte

Judge's comments: Very effective capture of a street scene. Composition strong, homeless individual holding sign in B/W and other pedestrians in colour. Sadness conveyed by pedestrians in soft focus and totally ignoring the subject of the picture.



Advanced Altered Reality - 2nd

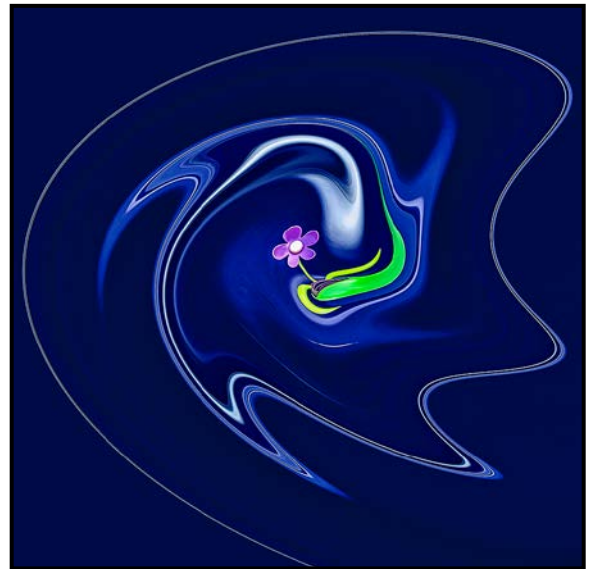
"Frozen in Time" by Rick Shapka

Judge's comments: Lovely colour and movement in this image with lines and shapes. Very nicely done.



Intermediate Digital Natural World - 1st
"Golden Hour" by Jill Turyk

Judge's comments: This is very pleasing image that creates the mood of a lazy late afternoon. Given the subject matter I am not distracted by the reflective highlights near the top of the image although they are noticeable.



Intermediate Altered Reality - 1st
"Eye of the Storm" by Graham Budd

Judge's comments: Lovely colour and movement in the image. The purple flower adds a colourful pop in the centre of the image.



Intermediate Digital Open - 2nd
"Soul Mates" by Mohammadali Khashei

Judge's comments: A great image! Wonderful contrast between the modern and erotic. Nose of dog barely cut off. One lady focused on her cell phone or tablet while other is interacting with animals.



Intermediate Digital Wildlife - 1st
"Focused" by Evan Guengerich

Judge's comments: There is a lot going on in this image that has been well captured. The sharpness of the image, the lighting and the handling of the background are all working well to make this a striking photograph.



Intermediate Digital Theme - 1st
"Cub - Solitude in a Tree" by Nicci Tyndall

Judge's comments: Lovely image. Format suits composition. Cat focused on someone or something!



Intermediate/Novice Open Print - 1st
"Luscious in Pink" by Richard Letourneau

Judge's comments: Luscious choice of paper to bring out the intensity and detail of the pinks and the black background. This is a great shot.



Novice Digital Natural World - 1st
"Giant Cedar" by Teri VanWell

Judge's comments: The darker detailed area in the bottom left corner is interesting. Use of monochrome to bring out the texture and contrast works well. It isn't easy to get a good upward shot of BC's huge trees. The flanking trees also work well to drive the eye upward.



Novice Digital Wildlife - 1st
"Polar Bear on Ice" by Malcom Macaulay

Judge's comments: Lucky you to have seen a polar bear in the wild from a place of safety. Focus, exposure and colour are all excellent. You can be proud of this capture. Worth a place on your wall!



Novice Digital Open - 2nd

"Decommissioned Rail Bridge" by Deb Thurlbeck

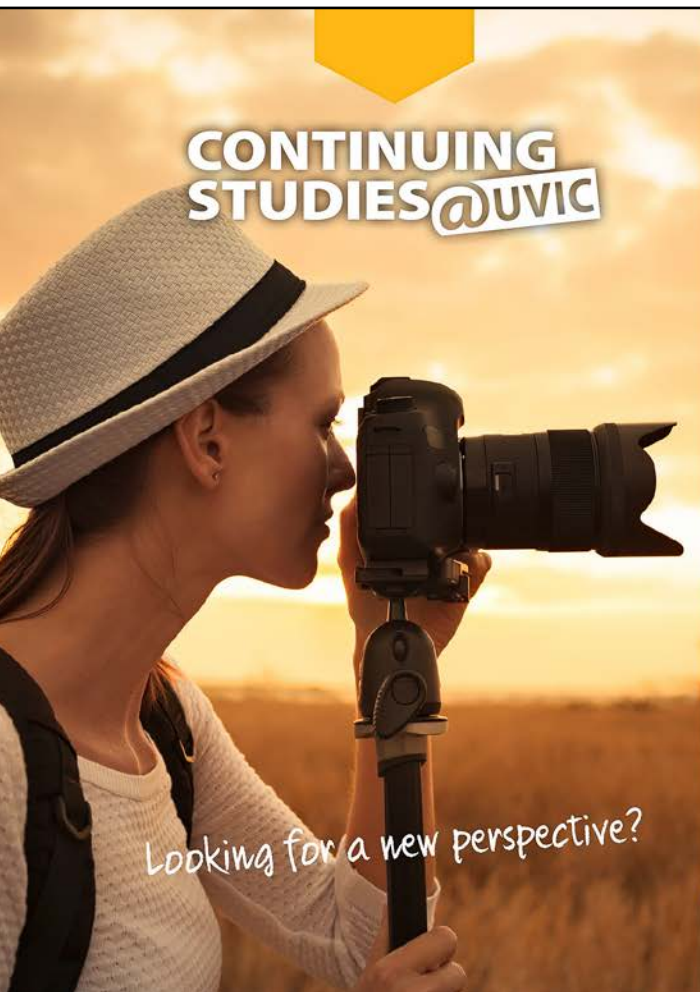
Judge's comments: Good choice of monochrome to highlight the leading lines and the dramatic sky. The light on the water works well. A really good image.



Novice Digital Theme - 1st

"Icelandic Einangrun" by Kim Smith

Judge's comments: Beautiful capture of the solitude theme (we wondered how much this cabin rents for). Wonderful detail, colour and texture. Well done!



Spring 2018 Photography and Visual Arts Courses

Image Transfer

Saturday, March 10 and Sunday, March 11, 10 am to 5 pm

Natural Light Portraiture Made Easy

Friday, April 6, 7 to 9 pm and Saturday, April 7, 2 to 6 pm

Photography Plus

Wednesdays, Feb. 7 to March 28, 6:30 to 9 pm

The History of Photography as Art

Tuesdays, Jan. 30 to March 20, 7 to 9 pm

Modern German Photography: A New Objectivity

Thursdays, Feb. 8 to March 8, 7 to 9 pm

Collage – Value, Colour and Design

Mondays, Jan. 29 to April 2, 6:30 to 9 pm

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Member Profile: Jill Turyk

I spent much time with Kodak Instamatic cameras in my early years. In 1981, as a consolation for having relocated to Dawson Creek from Victoria, I got a Chinon 35 mm camera. I took a few shots and wondered "What now?" So, I challenged myself to make a documentary slide show. It took a year to create and I chose unforgiving slide film to learn with. That began my interest in photography.

I took courses and had brief flashes of passion for it, but due to time restrictions I was unable to commit to photography. I was also trying my hand at watercolour painting. Photography won out and, in the years prior to my retirement in 2010, I took many courses. I stayed with using Canon "point-and-shoots" for a long time because I wanted to understand the technical features of digital cameras before choosing a DSLR camera. Most of my photo shoots took the form of assignments, whether from the instructors or from myself. My photography was not great at all and didn't have a style or specific interest. I started a group with interested friends similar to the Club's Image Review evenings. This helped a bit, but not enough.

In 2012 I purchased my first DSLR, a Canon 60D. This represented my commitment to photography, and I made a five-year plan for development that I have followed. I continued to take available courses and to shoot from time to time. I had a big turning point when I understood that although I had basic technical knowledge, I would need some help in putting it into practice. I had taken so many courses which, although very constructive, did not really develop me as a photographer.

In 2014 I joined the Victoria Camera Club and spent my first year watching the action. I was too intimidated to enter competitions. I began with the Novice Image Review evenings for which I am very grateful. They gave me the confidence to start to compete. As well, the various workshops and field trips that I was able to attend have been invaluable in my evolution.

My first travel photography experience was to Iceland in 2015 with trip leader, Mitch Stringer. I learned much about the practical side of photography rather than just the technical. The best advice that I have been given was from Mitch, "Don't just spray and pray," his way of encouraging students to be intentional.

Despite my connection with nature, it came as a surprise to me that my interest was in landscapes. I had an 18 mm lens but with the crop factor it was effect-



"West Coast Morning"

ively a 29 mm lens (1.6 crop factor). I would have to have a full-frame camera in order to get the shots that I wanted.

This year I got my Canon 5D Mark III with three lenses that range from 16-300 mm. The full frame and quality lenses have benefited my work. I am trying various types of photography and this year I tried wildlife shots. I have a deep and abiding respect for wildlife photographers. Their knowledge and patience is limitless but mine isn't! However, I think that everything I learn about one type of photography will benefit the others.



"Mama Bear"

My five-year plan is ending and it is time to set some new goals. I have begun to learn Photoshop and intend to become proficient. I also plan to become well acquainted with my new camera and lenses. My hope is to do some photo trips next year, to the Palouse, and either Ireland or the Maritimes.

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Sigma's Art Series Lenses

by Lindsey Blane and Matt Speight

When it comes to choosing the perfect lens for your camera body, it's no easy decision. On top of the many offerings produced by your camera's manufacturer, there are also fantastic third-party lens options out there. In the last five years especially, the camera industry has seen a dramatic shift away from using brand-specific lenses, and has wholeheartedly embraced some of the unique, stellar options that exist from other brands.

Sigma has been leading the charge with their latest offerings over the last half-decade. Back in 2012 at the Photokina trade show, the company first announced its intentions to redesign and reinvent the wheel, starting by breaking down their lenses into three distinct lines: Contemporary, Art, and Sport. Out of these three, their Art series of lenses has piqued the interest of professionals and hobbyists alike, pushing the envelope with premium lenses boasting high optical performance that often beats out Canon and Nikon equivalent lenses on performance and price.

The first Art series lens to be released was the 35 mm f1.4, back in 2013. Since then, Sigma has released quite the collection, with the Art series now totalling 16 lenses altogether. Some of the most popular Art series lenses are the: 20 mm f1.4 DG, the original 35 mm f1.4 DG, 50 mm f1.4 DG, 85 mm f1.4 DG and 18-35 mm f1.8 DC. With the variety of offerings available, Sigma aims to have something for everyone and continues to produce more innovative lens offerings each year since the initial launch of the series.

The lenses boast a smooth matte finish and sleek design and have a nice weight to them. The lenses are designed to resolve beautifully with the latest high-megapixel sensors such as those in the 30 MP Canon 5D Mark IV, 46 MP Nikon D850 and 42 MP Sony A7R III. Due to the large apertures, they can be on the heavy side, especially when compared to their Canon or Nikon counterparts. However, the thing that makes the Art series shine is the number of innovative and unique lenses that have no rivals. The 18-35 mm f1.8 DC and 50-100 mm f1.8 DC Art lenses designed for APS-C sensor cameras are unique, no manufacturer makes anything quite like this pair. Having that fast an aperture with this kind of zoom range is unheard of and the 18-35 mm lens continues to be a favourite of photographers and videographers alike due to its versatility and wide aperture. More recently, Sigma has released a stunning 14 mm f1.8 DG lens for full frame cameras. This lens is perfect

for any wide-angle landscapes or architectural photography and knocks it out of the park for astrophotographers with the fast aperture.

Sigma uses Hyper-Sonic Motors (HSM) in their Art series lenses to provide a fast, quiet and reliable auto-focus system. The lenses use low dispersion glass elements (SLD) to help reduce chromatic aberration (colour fringing), with little to none showing in any of the lenses. These elements also help to produce the creamy-looking bokeh that users have come to love and expect from these lenses. In the case of their award-winning 85 mm f1.4 DG Art lens, the lens has 14 elements in 12 groups, with nine aperture blades, to give a rounded aperture opening, helping achieve the smooth bokeh look even when the aperture is stopped down several f-stops. The other thing about these lenses is that the optics are so good, you can shoot them at their widest apertures, even at f1.4, without worrying about your target focus point (such as an eye, in portrait shooting) appearing soft or out of focus.

Another huge plus of Sigma lenses is the ability to connect to their USB Dock. This allows you to connect the lens to your computer and adjust parameters such as the lens calibration or auto-focus. Sometimes, a certain lens and camera may not be a perfect match right out of the box and require some adjustments or calibration to perfect the focus. Rather than having to send the lens back to the manufacturer for servicing, or pay a professional for their calibration service, the USB Dock gives you the option to do it yourself at home!

With the rise in mirrorless technology from manufacturers such as Sony, Olympus and Panasonic, Sigma has also created Art lenses specifically to fit these cameras. The 19 mm f2.8 DN, 30 mm f2.8 DN and 30 mm f1.4 DN have all been popular because of their small size and are a fantastic option for any crop sensor mirrorless shooters. Sigma also came out with their MC-11 Mount Adapter, which allows Sony shooters (both full frame and APS-C) to adapt any of the Canon EF Mount lenses from the Art, Contemporary or Sport lines onto a Sony mirrorless body while maintaining auto-focus speed and accuracy as much as possible. For those of you who are curious a full compatibility list can be found on Sigma's website.

Sigma has achieved well-deserved cult status with their Art lenses, with many awards to back up that status. The 85 mm f1.4 Art lens was recently crowned one of, if not the sharpest lens on the market right now by Lenztip and DxOMark. The 35 mm f1.4, 50 mm f1.4 and 24-35 mm f2 have received rave reviews and various awards from industry leaders around the world due to their innovation and superb quality. With 16+ lenses to choose from there is truly something for everyone.

Special Interest Groups

Nature SIG: by Dan and Gail Takahashi. For most meetings we have an interesting guest speaker covering topics from photographing the stars, birds around the world, African safaris, icebergs, bats, to Antarctic climate change, etc.

This year we have introduced a “Critique Corner” for those who would like some advice on how to improve a photo (or photos). The group will comment and make suggestions at the meeting. Up to five jpg images can be e-mailed to the Nature SIG coordinator. The photographer can ask for them either to be shown anonymously or can identify them as theirs.

We finish the evening off with Show and Tell. Bring some images you would like to share with the group.

We usually plan several field trips during the year. These may include how to photograph dragonflies, panning birds, moving water, twilight, light painting and macro.

Some field trips are multi-day out-of-town trips. Last season we had two trips to Hornby Island and we have some exciting plans in the works for the new year.

We meet on the 1st Wednesday of the month. We are an informal group that likes to share our love of nature photography. All are welcome from the most advanced nature photographer to the novice. Within the group we have members who are really good at landscape, bird, macro, twilight and wildlife photography. These photographers are very generous with sharing their knowledge with other members.

It promises to be a very exciting season with the Nature SIG and we hope to see you there!

Creative SIG: by Penny Coddington. Members of the Creative Special Interest Group (SIG) are interested in exploring creative digital imaging as a way to express their artistic vision. Initially this may involve creative use of in-camera methods such as camera motion, infrared, inventive lighting or multiple exposure. However, with digital imaging, the photographic capture is only the beginning.

Subsequent digital development of the image, or elements of the image, offers the opportunity to transform the original. The goal of the transformation is to produce a work that transcends both technique and the original subject to become something expressive and unique, something that communicates the artist's in-

tention in creating the image, and/or something that may be “altered reality” in a VCC competition.

There are numerous ways to alter or create an image to achieve a mood, emotion or effect. The SIG is interested in exploring and assessing the expressiveness of these forms of image manipulation (e.g. compositing, masking, addition of textures, painterly effects, the list is limitless) and encourages members to experiment and invent.

The main activity of our meetings is viewing and discussing images created by members' experimentation. The discussions are wide-ranging and cover what the artist wanted to express, how the digital imaging techniques contribute to that vision and other experiments that might be explored. We hope that seeing the work and experimentation of others will inspire everyone's creativity.

As we view images we sometimes identify topics that generate a follow-up demonstration or tutorial at a subsequent meeting or a posting of articles in the Creative SIG Forum. The Forum already contains a number of interesting postings from past meetings that VCC members may find useful.

We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. We work on a casual drop-in basis and encourage those who are experimenting with creative images or alteration to bring their work for sharing.

Lighting SIG: by Steve Smith. This year the Lighting SIG meetings are a mix of member's presentations, interactive demonstrations and lighting set-ups. Members will be introduced to hands-on use of speed lights, studio strobes, video lights, continuous lighting, light meters, reflectors, soft boxes, grids, cookies, coloured gels etc.

Our October meeting was an introduction to portraits using a single speed light.

Our November meeting started with a member's interactive presentation on continuous lighting. This introduced various pieces of equipment and some do-it-yourself construction of continuous lighting equipment. Following this, we had two table-top lighting set-ups where SIG members used their own cameras to get shots. One set-up was lighting plated food with speed lights. The other was continuous lighting of found objects including some shed snake skins and a barn swallow nest.

We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

All SIG meetings are at CDI from 7 to 9 pm. Please subscribe to the SIG forums on the website as information relevant to each SIG is posted there.

CAPA and PSA

by Rick Shapka, FCAPA.

The Club and some individual members belong to the Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA) and the Photographic Society of America (PSA). Although we are one of the most active photography clubs in Canada, there are many benefits from these national photographic club umbrella organizations.

Watch for the next issue of CAPA's Canadian Camera magazine, that will feature articles "All About The Gear" we use, or might wish to use. The magazine will be available to CAPA members in early December.

The deadline for the next issue is January 10th, 2018. The theme is *Photographers as Journalists and Conservationists: Photography Changing the World*. You are encouraged to submit an article to our national publication.

The next CAPA competitions are Digital Black and White, and Digital Altered Realty, with deadlines of January 16th and February 14th. Please submit your images through the VCC website. Mike Wooding, with the external comps committee, is organizing the Digital Black & White competition for CAPA. CAPA's website is at capacanada.ca.

One of the many benefits of PSA membership is being able to participate in numerous competitions and contests. VCC has received some significant recognition in the Website and Newsletter competitions.

For the first time in many years the VCC external competition committee entered images into a PSA competition. Images submitted to Round 1 of the PSA Inter-club Digital Nature Competition did very well! VCC was placed into Group B (Class B) as all first-time clubs are, and placed 4th out of 38 clubs.

PSA organizes an annual conference. Next year's event will be held in October 2018 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Check the PSA website for details. There is a great deal to photograph in, and around, Salt Lake City.

PSA's recognition of the photographic achievements of members is a significant ongoing endeavour (with members earning PSA Star Ratings, and other honours) that culminates in the presentation of the annual "Image of the Year" awards. PSA's website is at psa-photo.org/index.php?home.

If you have any questions about either 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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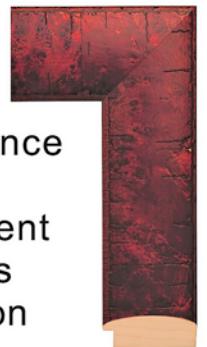
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How I Did It

Shipwright's Tools

by *Bobbie Carey*

We had decided to wander around the Brentwood Bay ferry terminal, hoping to discover a few good subjects to shoot. It was mid-morning, the day was sunny and warm, the water calm, and we realized that there really was a great deal on which to focus our cameras. Of course, there were boats in the marina and those always present numerous points of interest, but under the bridge/ramp to the ferry was also a real photographer's delight. Criss-crossed wooden supports sported years of barnacle accumulation, green seaweed stains and rust-covered metal plates, all brilliantly reflected in the water.

A surprise discovery on the land adjacent to the terminal was a shipwright's shop. A quick peek inside was enough to get my interest. Tools lined the walls, most of them looking like they had been used by boat builders for years. A particular grouping caught my eye and the photo was made.

I used a Panasonic Lumix FZ200. The photo was taken at 1/50 second, f2.8, ISO 800, at 55 mm. The result was good, though a little disappointing. Something was missing; it didn't have the real sense of age that I had experienced when I first saw the tools. So I did a little work in Photoshop.

I recently downloaded the Nik Collection that provided me with a wide range of additional photo editing capabilities. Using plug-ins is something new for me. I opened the Nik filter collection, Color Efex Pro 4, and applied the "Dark Contrast" filter to "age" the photo. I then adjusted brightness and saturation levels slightly and used Curves to arrive at the "old tools" result I was looking for. With the Nik Collection I have taken a small step into a whole new editing world! The Nik suite has been acquired by DxO and is being incorporated into DxOPhotoLab.



Nostalgia

by *Martin Wright*

This image was one of three images of the Palouse that were accepted for the Sooke fine art show in 2016. Alas, none sold. The location for the image was 100 km south-west of Spokane, Washington, on a quiet side road. I had three weeks of joy and anticipation. Camper van, equipment, faculties on high, ready to shoot. If you have been in the Palouse at the top of Steptoe Butte at 4 am during the last week of June with the sun just rising you will know what I mean.



The light was what you might call delicate. Sun behind clouds, late afternoon. A quiet, tranquil scene, still a few miles from the heady light show at Steptoe Butte. I stopped with a sense that I was witnessing something timeless, something of another era. Not a soul around and the dust from the gravel road had settled. One man's rotting barn is another man's timeless moment. No need to unpack equipment, I had been shooting all day. I used a Nikon D90, hand held, with the original 18-105 mm lens. I used my tripod frequently during the trip, but the ground surface was too uneven for this shot.

Looking back at the metadata, this image was shot in June 2015. The exposure was 1/400th sec. at f11, and ISO 200. At that time I would describe my Lightroom skills as advanced beginner. So the "history" shows lots of cropping and adjustments for the clouds and working with the hay bale and grasses to get the colours right.

Compositionally, I feel that this image works because of the placement of the various elements. The telegraph poles in the distance are (almost) straight. The visual balance between the barn, tree and windmill is complemented by the small hay stack, so the visual strength (and pleasure) in viewing this image is that the eye never strays outside the frame. Finally, there is the mood of the image which, as the title suggests, I experienced as the passage of time and my witnessing the silent ghosts of the many hands that have worked these wheat fields.

Tuesday Shoots

by Daniel A. Roy

The holiday season will soon be upon us and many of us will schedule more time for family and other traditional endeavours. This may include travel to beaches in the sun or vacation with family in other parts of the country. As a result, there are only two Tuesday Shoot events planned for December.

December 5th: Moon Under Water Brewery and Pub. “They are particular about their drinking vessels at “The Moon Under Water” and never, for example, make the mistake of serving a pint of beer in a handle-less glass”, excerpt from George Orwell’s “The Moon Under Water” essay published in 1946 describing his ideal fictional city pub. Orwell listed ten key points and I fully expect the Victoria pub to follow his suggestions to the letter. (I have the list and will check it twice.)

Situated at 350B Bay Street, we will begin with a brewery tour, followed by a tasting, and then lunch in the pub. Registration is a must for this event. See further details on the Club’s website.

December 12th: All That Glitters. The downtown core will be decked out for the holiday season, providing an abundance of glitter for creative images filled with sparkle. A macro lens may be a good choice for this shoot.



Looking into next year, the January 9th field trip presents a challenge like none I have seen before. We will hop onto a city bus of our choosing and photograph anything of interest, either on the bus or through the window. For January 23rd the theme is “Portrait of a Person Working in their Environment,” which is the March Comp theme.

Some events require registration and a fee may apply. Please check the Club calendar for details related to each field trip.

December 2017

Weekend Shoots

by Teri VanWell and Vanessa MacDonald

There is one field trip scheduled for the month of December and some fun places to go for other photographic opportunities.

December 13th: The Magic of Christmas at Butchart Gardens. Stroll along the paths of the gardens and take in The Twelve Days of Christmas, with beautiful holiday light displays, while listening to the Festive Brass or the Traditional Carollers. This is a night photography field trip so remember to bring your tripod, back-up battery, shutter remote and warm clothes.

If you are unable to make this field trip be sure to visit the gardens while the displays are up, December 1st to January 4th.

Other Photographic Opportunities:

November 15th to January 2nd: Festival of Trees. The trees will be located at The Bay Centre.

November 18th to January 2nd: Canada’s National Gingerbread Showcase. Visit the Parkside Hotel (810 Humbolt Street) as they play host to the annual gingerbread showcase. This year’s theme is Celebrating Canada and all proceeds go to Habitat Victoria.

December 1st to January 4th: Butchart Gardens. Visit the gardens to take in the Twelve Days of Christmas placed throughout the gardens while listening to The Festive Brass and Traditional Carollers.

December 2nd: Lighted Truck Convoy. Starting at Ogden Point at 6:30 pm, see various sized trucks decorated in Christmas lights and the Lighted Boat parade in the harbour after the trucks pass by. Don’t forget your donation to the Food Bank.

December 7th: Christmas Lights Across Canada. The annual Christmas Lights Across Canada event will take place at 7:00 pm on the front steps of the Provincial Parliament Buildings..The large provincial tree will be lit up with over 3,000 lights.

Coming in January: The Field Trip Committee is working on a few indoor field trips for January. We will be looking into visiting the Butterfly Gardens in Central Saanich one weekend to try to capture some of the beautiful colours of the butterflies. Further details will be announced when available.

Introduction to Lighting

by Karl Schoepp

Lighting is at the heart of every image. Quality lighting in a photograph in many cases truly separates an excellent image from an average one. Lighting sources can consist of natural, practical (existing artificial), flash, and continuous artificial sources. Although surprising to some, there is little to no math involved in lighting for photography. There are simply terms, recommended techniques, and ratios, which one should only consider as starting points. Lighting is, furthermore, both a technical skill and an art combined (as is photography). The technical art of lighting is something that takes years to master, and is a subject in which you are always learning and improving your skills. The most effective method of gaining and maintaining your lighting knowledge is hands-on experimentation with your choice of lighting equipment.

First of all, every photographer who is interested in lighting should know that there is no correct way to light something! The way in which the lighting is created for our final image is dependent on a number of factors. These factors can include: your subject, personal choice/style, end product, medium, camera, dynamic range, lighting equipment available, desired contrast, desired colours, and desired mood. Having the latest and greatest gear in the field of lighting is not really necessary as gear is simply a tool that must be used correctly. Furthermore, every subject and human being that you photograph is unique and, therefore one cannot apply a generic lighting set-up to each subject. Every subject and human being that you photograph deserves proper light modeling to create the best image. The greatest compliment any photographer can receive is "Wow! You didn't even have to light anything," when, in fact you did, as the lighting is not noticeable.

There are a few general lighting theories that every photographer should comprehend. #1. "The larger the source the softer the light." For example, a speed light bounced off the ceiling or wall will give you a much softer and larger source than a speed light pointed directly at your subject. #2. When you diffuse light (spread it out) you lose intensity. If the speed light was bounced off the ceiling, we would lose a considerable amount of intensity from the speed light, than if we were to use the speed light directly. #3. Get your lights up high! Lighting is both an art of illumination and shadows. In many circumstances one desires to be rid of shadows. Placing your lights above the subject and to one side may allow the shadows to fall on the floor or on the wall out of the shot. #4. Women tend to photograph

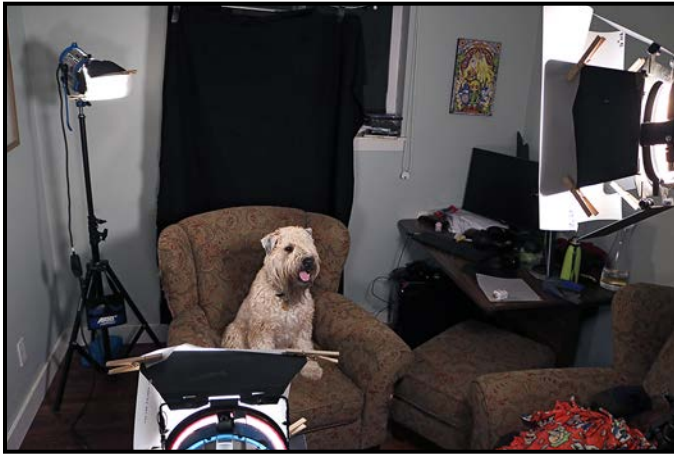
better with soft light and men may be photographed with either hard or soft light. #5. Cameras need a lot of light. It is always better to shoot at a lower ISO than a higher one. Although modern cameras are capable of shooting in very low light, it doesn't mean you should. Some photographers may argue that you don't need lights anymore but this is simply untrue. Although you can now take a photograph in darker places, the light is rarely flattering. It forces you to boost your ISO and, typically does not create the desired style.



"Large lighting source on Ollie and Emma, by Que Banh"

Three- and four-point lighting will be our next focus as these set-ups help us to understand some of the basic terms associated with lighting. While these lighting set-ups are a good place to begin your journey into the world of lighting experimentation, one must remember that they originate from broadcast interviews. Three-point lighting in my opinion, could be compared to teaching somebody how to paint using one average, bland style. You can begin your journey into becoming a painter while learning the basics through instruction but you must create your own style and experiment to be successful. Three-point lighting features three lighting sources, and is typically used in portrait photography, and as mentioned, broadcast interviews. Lighting sources in three-point lighting can consist of any type of equipment, whether the lighting comes from flash, continuous, or natural sources.

The first and only essential light in three-point lighting is the key light. The key light is the light that we set our camera's exposure to. The camera is set to the exposure of this light by using a hand-held meter to measure incident light falling on the subject, a flash meter, or by



“Three point lighting setup example”

using an in-camera meter. The key light is typically set at 45 degrees to the left or right of the subject and at a height that can strike the subject at a 45 degree downwards angle.

The second light in three-point lighting is the fill light. It is important to note that the fill light is optional, and can consist simply of a bounce board (see the November 2017 *Close-Up*) to achieve the desired contrast ratio. The purpose of the fill light is to fill in any shadows on the subject’s face created by the key light. It is typical to set the fill light slightly off centre to the subject favouring the side opposite to the key light. The fill light is set at the same height as the subject (90 degrees to the subject) and is set at the same or less intensity than the key light. We can compare the fill light to key light to determine our contrast ratio. In a low contrast or “high key” situation, the fill light is near or equal in in-



“Three point lighting in action”

tensity to the key light. Typically, there would be an intensity difference between the two lights of 0-2 f-stops (1:1 to 1:4) in a high key situation. A “low key” lighting ratio produces a look with much higher contrast. Typical lighting differences in a low-key scenario would be 3-6 f-stops (1:8 to 1:64).

The final light in three-point lighting is the back-light (also referred to the rim or hair light). Once again, this light is optional. The back-light aids greatly in quality lighting by separating the subject from the background. The back-light is set at a 45-degree angle diagonally opposite to the key light, pointing back at the subject, and at a 45-degree angle downwards. The back-light is typically set at the same intensity or brighter than the key light.

Finally, four-point lighting simply adds the addition of a background light. The background light is used to illuminate the background if such a light is required. Once again this light is optional, and the background light is set at the same or less intensity as the key light.



“Three point lighting, close-up”

In conclusion, it is up to you to define your own unique lighting style. Start by learning with the sun which is the most affordable tool, and then venture into the world of artificial lighting at your own pace. Experiment with different types of lighting sources, diffusions, bounces, colours, and set-ups to determine your personal preferences. Remember that the technical art of lighting is a life-long journey and that you are always learning, improving, and mastering your skills. Lastly, do not be afraid to learn from others as they may offer a different point of view or technique that you would not have envisioned otherwise.

Beginners' Corner

Design Elements II

by Josée Ménard

After a month of integrating points, lines, shapes and forms into your photography, your eyes are far more open to new ways of seeing these key basic elements. Your photographs are taking on a new life. Enjoy the fruits of your observations. Ready, let's continue our journey with the next two elements: space and texture.

Space, you may think, is simply the area in which you find yourself or the one you are thinking of capturing with your camera. Then again, is it simply that? Space as a design element is intricate, yet flexible, as it allows the photographer to experiment with the placement of line, shape and form. These support the viewers' journey to your focus point as well as helping them see one of their own.

When space is discussed in photography you often hear the words: foreground, middle ground, and background. These divide the scene into three zones. The visual lines leading you to the horizon take you from the foreground to the background. Thinking of the Rule of Thirds, they represent the bottom, middle, and the top rows.



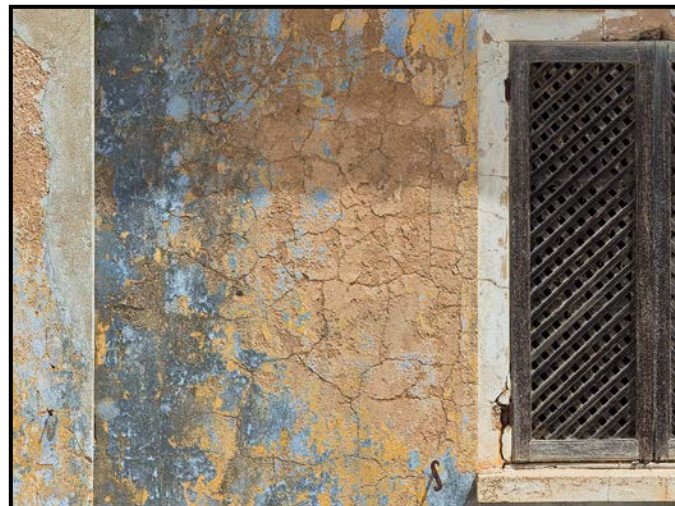
"Eastern Townships Fall Barn"

Space is also considered relative to the positive and negative portions of your image. Positive space is the part filled with lines, shapes and forms. In contrast, negative space is the empty area, be it around, above, under, through, or in between the positive portions.

In "Eastern Townships Fall Barn," the colourful leaves frame the sinuous line that naturally lets your eye flow from the foreground at the river's edge onto the old dock at the middle ground up to the old barn at the background. Positive space fills this image as even the calm river reflects the forms found in the other spatial zones. Full of information, yet very peaceful. It is a beautiful warm fall day to catch one last fish at end of the dock. You put your catch in the bucket.

Imagine a wintry image with white skies and a field covered with snow. All zones blend except for a few tree silhouettes providing you a reference point at one edge of the middle ground, a simple yet effective balance of little positive space vs. negative space. Winter's hardship and solitude. Even if you see this image in Summer, you still feel the cold. Space is not so much complex as it is multi-faceted. You can create depth, dimensions, distance, openness, etc. Use space to your advantage. Great techniques include filling in the frame, juxtaposing, symmetry, frame in a frame, selective focus, panoramas and more. Give it a go.

The second element, texture, qualifies the surfaces in your photograph. Through texture, you can virtually carry your viewer into your image. Light, angles and focus awaken your scene. They enhance the roughness of a wall, the smoothness of a rock, the bumpiness of a decorated coat. When you plan your image or look at your scene, see what natural textures are present to help enhance your image and captivate the eye. In the "Mediterranean Wall" image below, texture transports you immediately to sunshine, warmth, and travels. The peeling layers let you imagine how the sun weathered the walls with the passing years. Zoom in and you fill the frame. The colours are naturally perfect. Your imagination completes the rest. This time, you stretched the Rule of Thirds box. Simple, and it works.



"Mediterranean Wall"

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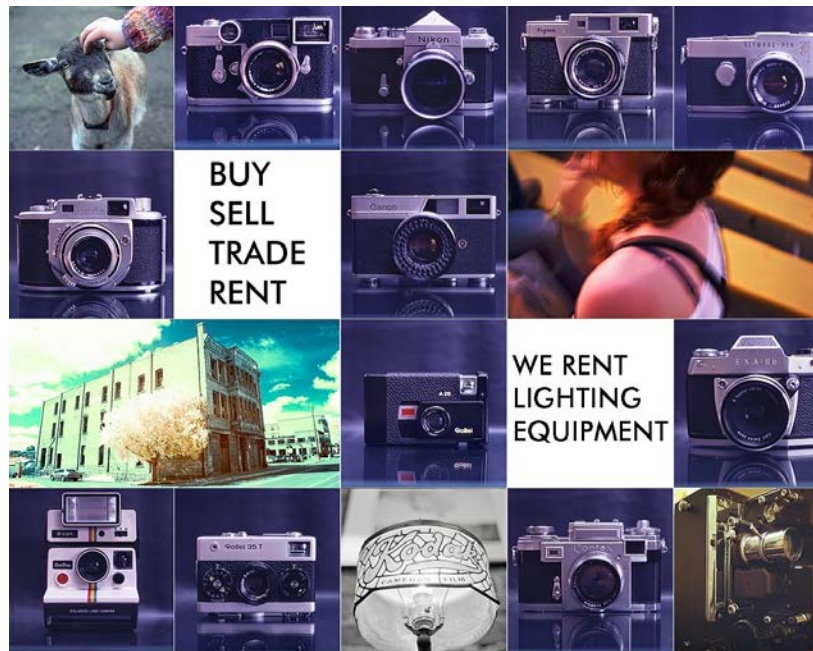
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