

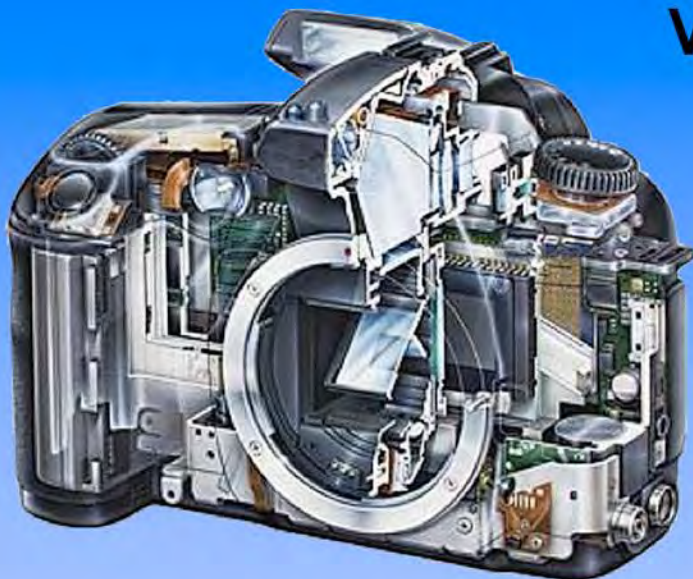


Close-Up

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the New Moon
and more...

"Inviting" by Carrie Cole



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Victoria Camera Club

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 Mailing address: PO Box 46035, RPO Quadra, Victoria, BC, V8T 5G7.
 Deadline for submissions for the April 2015 issue is March 5th 2015.
 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 Lloyd Houghton, President at 250-580-7154.

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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 5th; Competition Night

The February competition results will be presented. One of the judges will review selected images. The March theme is "In Flight."

Thursday, March 12th; Presentation Night

Join us for a feature presentation by an invited guest speaker. Please visit the website for details, victoriacameraclub.org/pages/kalendar.php.

Thursday, March 19th; Members' Night

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

Featured Workshops in March

Basic Lighting Review

Photographing Figures in the Studio

Image Stacking

Featured Field Trips in March

Mt Wells: Satin Flowers and more...

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: "Inviting" by Carrie Cole. This image was shot at Lake O'Hara in Yoho National Park. While researching a Canadian Rockies road trip for my family, I started reading and seeing photos of Lake O'Hara. The pristine beauty drew me in and I knew we just had to go. Lake O'Hara's serene beauty makes for a memorable place to hike, and I can wholly recommend it to nature lovers! This inviting scene welcomed us along the shoreline trail and these brightly coloured canoes seemed perfectly placed. In the fall the larch trees show off their amazing golden colour for a few weeks.

This image was an "Honourable Mention" in the November 2014 Advanced Open Digital Competition. Sony NEX-7, 10-18 mm UWA lens at 18 mm, ISO 100, 1/40 sec. at f11.

President's Message

Our club has an award-winning website (PSA Large Club category, 1st place in 2013, 2nd place in 2012 and 3rd place in 2011). While the website has met our needs over the years, it has been cobbled together from a number of available resources, both its construction and the way it operates is largely undocumented. Our current Webmaster, Garry Schaeffer, plans to hand over his duties to Steve Jakes this spring. The lack of documentation makes the website very difficult to maintain by a new Webmaster.

Steve is currently the Webmaster for the Esquimalt Photography Club. They use the Visual Pursuits website package, developed specifically for website development and image management for photography and arts organizations. The package enables very quick website development by non-technical users and allows easy customization to suit a club's individual "look and feel" tastes. Have a look at www.esquimaltphotoclub.org and then check out some of the 100 organizations that use the package and watch some explanatory videos from the links at www.visualpursuits.com.

We will be able to use the website to manage our membership list, events calendar, news, documents, and competitions. Our judges will use the Image Competition Manager module for judging and entering their comments. The results will then be downloaded for viewing at our Competitions Night. We won't need Wi-Fi access to show our results anymore. Each member will have their own private Image Library into which they upload and manage their own images. Those images can then be added to the Home Page Gallery, to their personal Members Gallery and entered into competitions. Members will be able to add topics to a Discussion Forum, including the ability to post an image and discuss it.

We are planning to have the website fully operational by September 2015. We will have workshops to supplement the Visual Pursuits tutorials well before then so that next seasons' competitions are able to use the website.

Don't forget the special discount from the Royal BC Museum for all our members to join with the Esquimalt Photography Club and Sidney Shutterbugs to visit the Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2014 exhibition on Saturday 7th March. The three clubs are joining together to promote photography in Victoria. We will have a display to capture people's attention and enable our members to promote the benefits of joining a club.

Lloyd Houghton, President.

by Anne Lei-Yeung So

For the past year, I have been working on illustrations for children's stories. I have experimented with quite a few art forms and started producing needle-felted characters to use as models to help me draw or paint characters in different poses and actions. Along the way, I improved at making 3-D wool characters and preferred some of them to the drawings or paintings I was coming up with. I started to photograph scenes using characters and props that I had made or found, combining two of my strengths, 3-D art and photography, to produce illustrations.

The characters themselves are hand sculpted using a barbed needle and wool roving. They are 10-15 cm tall and the props are usually in proportion to them. Building each character takes 1-3 hours, with modifications later as needed. Using wire armatures in the characters makes them more versatile and adjustable for each scene.



Depending on the scene, I build props or scavenge for suitable items around the house or in the neighbourhood. I have a small collection of little props that I now can go to and use to design different settings.

All the good photographic principles of exposure, design, lighting, and processing are involved in producing the best quality image for an illustration. I make each image using a Canon 5D full-frame camera and a 50 mm f1.8 lens. I prefer to shoot hand held so I adjust the ISO to the lowest setting possible where I can avoid handshake. During the day, 100 to 400 ISO are commonly used. I tend to shoot wide open at f1.8 to get sharp focus on the characters and a nice shallow depth of field when suited to the scene.

At first I prepared the scenes on my dining table next to a window. I photographed during the day using the available natural light and would use the window shade as necessary. The set up was usually quite simple.



As I developed more complicated scenes, I took the characters outdoors and set them up in the natural environment. These scenes look more interactive and I try to utilize the natural setting as much as possible. This means selecting appropriate locations where the characters and props are not overtaken by large objects in the setting. It also involves moving unwanted items such as branches, leaves, rubbish, or other distracting objects out of the way. Since the characters and props are tiny, and sometimes set up on the ground, I have often found myself crouched or lying down on the ground to take the images. Although this can cause confusion or conversation with passersby, it is necessary to get the right angle for the image and view of the characters.

Shooting outside means that you have to take advantage of different lighting and weather. Mid-mornings work quite well when the light is not as direct or intense as at mid-day. I have also had success on overcast days or even during the rain. On several occasions I have been able to use the weather conditions to my advantage. In late November last year, I was excited to photograph the characters in the snow. The snow was not only delightful, it helped add interest to the story telling, and was also very useful for propping up the characters.



Taking images from different angles helps provide perspective and dimension in the illustrations. A bird's-eye view, a direct view, or a panoramic add to the dimension and story telling. By tilting the camera angle it also adds to the scene. Varying the distances to the characters also helps add to the drama and helps provide illusions of size or proportion, movement, mood and contrast.



I still use the felt characters as models to illustrate or to draw. They are easy to set up and help me understand what they should look like in different activities or orientations. Even the tilt of a head or having an object in one of the hands helps with drawing characters. I am able to look at the characters from above, behind, the side, and next to other objects which I find useful in creating believable and comfortable renderings when I sketch, draw or paint. Photographing the characters has also



helped me learn to pose them and has given me a connection to how they would look in two dimensions when drawn or painted. There are times where I prefer the photograph and others where I prefer the drawn illustration. In children's book illustrations, I would like to be able to alternate between the photographs and drawings or use a mixed media approach.

From the images produced, I select the ones that best suit the story that is being told. I use Adobe Lightroom to do minor adjustments on exposure, lighting, cropping, colour balance, and vignetting when preferred. I try my best to do my image production in camera, but do appreciate the basic edits available in Lightroom.

If you choose to do your own photo-based illustrations, start by collecting a variety of meaningful objects or make some. Find a place with good natural lighting inside or outside. Set up a little scene with your objects using elements of design that you may look for when shooting a regular image. Remove any unwanted or distracting objects from the area. Use good photographic principles of exposure, lighting, and composition. Shooting at a wide aperture is often useful. Change the angle and perspectives for a variety of images. Edit with software of your choice. Warning, this can be both enjoyable and addictive.

It has been a wonderful journey learning to hybridize art, illustration, and photography. I have learned that this type of illustration or tactile design has been used in the art and design industry for a long time. With the growth of digital-based graphic design and illustration, the use of hand-built tactile models has declined. However, there seems to be a resurgence of companies and publishers embracing the hand-built designs which have been skillfully photographed for illustration. It is a wonderful way of telling and illustrating children's stories and I hope to continue to make illustrations this way.

by Cindy Stephenson

This is a continuation of the Develop Module article in February's *Close-Up*. I'll cover some additional Adjustment Brush applications, using the HSL panel to adjust colour, and Sync to apply edits to groups of photos.

To briefly recap, adjusting sliders in the Basic Panel enables you to make global changes to your photo such as changing the overall exposure. The adjustment brush restricts changes to an area of your photo. It resembles a paint brush and sits in the tool drawer in the Basic Panel. By clicking on it, the adjustment brush panel with a series of sliders pops open.

Brighten and Whiten Teeth: Zoom into the image, click on the adjustment brush, double click on the word "Effect" to reset all the sliders, and adjust the size of the brush. Use positive exposure for general brightening; guess the amount, and then click and drag to paint the teeth and whiten them. If you have made them too white, you can adjust the slider for a smaller change. It often helps to zoom out and look at your work to see the effect. You can also take some of the yellow out of teeth using negative saturation. To make fine adjustments to the sliders, type in the amount rather than using the slider. Click on the backslash arrow to see before and after versions. When doing these types of adjustments, make them incrementally so that you don't overdo it.

Soften Skin and Get Rid of Wrinkles: The secret to this is negative clarity. It smooths things out, and gets rid of wrinkles. (Positive clarity adds detail and makes things more three dimensional, not exactly what you want to do!)

Blurring out Background: You can use negative sharpness to blur the background in a photo. After brushing, if it is not blurry enough, click on "new," double click on "effect," and repeat. It will continue to get blurry. You can also use negative clarity to get rid of fine detail in a photo.

The HSL Panel: The purpose of the HSL panel is to control colours in your photo, not areas. It works well if your colours are in defined areas of a photo. As Laura Shoe notes in her *Lightroom Fundamentals and Beyond* video, if your image has a blue sky and a blue car, lightening or darkening the blue sky will also lighten or darken the blue car. You can't isolate the blue sky with the HSL panel. To use this, go to the HSL/Colour/Black and White panel and click on HSL (an acronym for Hue, Saturation and Luminance).

Luminance refers to how bright or dark a colour is. You can control the brightness and darkness of all the poten-

tial colours in your photo with this tool. If you're not sure what the colours are that you want to brighten or darken, click on the targeted adjustment tool (a little circle in the top left corner of the panel). Sliding it down the photo will darken the colours and you can watch the sliders to see which ones darken. Sliding up has the opposite effect.

Saturation allows you to modify the intensity of colours. You can do this with the sliders or the targeted adjustment tool (the little circle). Clicking and dragging up will add saturation; clicking and dragging down will reduce it.

Hue allows you to shift colours towards the colours that are next to it in the sliders panel. For example, if you slide the yellow slider to the right, the yellows in your photo shift towards green. Slide it left and the yellows shift towards orange.

Working with Groups of Photos Using Sync: This feature, which you access through the Library module, allows you to copy the edits you have done on one photo to other photos. It works for any changes, such as white balance, exposure or lens corrections, that are not image specific.

Take a photo you've already worked on where you've taken many more photos of the same subject, shot under basically the same conditions. Sync helps you avoid having to change all of your other photos, one at a time. A good example would be adjusting overall exposure for jpeg files or white balance for raw files. Within the Library Module highlight the folder which contains the images you want to work with. They should then appear in the centre panel in Grid view. Select all of the photos you want to change and click inside the thumbnail of the photo with the correct exposure (or white balance). That will make it the active one. Now hit the Sync button.

A "synchronize settings" box will appear and it's going to ask you, of all the changes you made to the first photo, which ones do you want to apply to the others. Check "exposure" and any others that apply. (Some, such as spot removal probably wouldn't make sense because the spots may not be in the same place. Also, cropping may be very image specific. Don't check anything that could be image specific.) Then click "apply." The new white balance setting will be applied to all of the photos you have selected. Using sync will save you time.

The club offers introductory and advanced Lightroom workshops. For more information please email Cindy at cindystephenson@telus.net.



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by Richard James

So you think black is black on your monitor (projector) or print? Well, the real answer is “it might not be.” In photography there are two ways of making something black. But first, let’s look at the definition of “black.” If we start with the statement “black is the absence of light” then we have two issues to consider. How black is black and what does black as a colour consist of?

How black is black? A certain amount of light is reflected (or emitted) from any surface. So we need to consider the relative values of this light. Let us suppose we are outside in daylight. In this case black is anything so dark that we perceive no colour to it; anything lighter than that is a shade of grey (unless it has a colour cast) until we get to pure white. Now consider your computer monitor or camera LCD panel. In this case there is clearly some light reflected from the surface of the screen so anything that is black (no light emitted by the screen itself) clearly is not as black as it could be.

Black as a colour? White light is made up of all the colours of the spectrum from deep red to deep violet. However our computer monitors, LCD panels and projectors only work with three colours, red, green and blue (RGB). When added together in appropriate proportions, our eyes interpret them as (almost) the full spectrum. When they are added together in exactly even proportions, then they are shades of grey from black ($R=G=B=0$), through any number of greys (for example, $R=G=B=128$) to white ($R=G=B=255$). This is pretty simple. If a pixel on your LCD panel is not emitting any light, it is black.

The complication arises when we want to make a print from our digital negative. Red, green and blue are known as the additive primary colours (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primary_color). You add them together to make white. This works for anything that emits light. However our prints on paper do not emit light! So for printing we have to use “colours” that absorb light and only reflect those colours in the spectrum that we wish to use. This set of colours is cyan, yellow and magenta (CYM). However, if we simply mix these three colours, we end up with “muddy black.” The solution is to add black (K) ink to give us the CYMK colour space.

But is it really this simple? Our colour negative, or processed digital file, is encoded in the RGB colour space. To print it on paper it has to be converted to CYMK. With our desktop inkjet printers we normally leave this to the printer software. Most of the time this works very

well and we don’t have any issues with colour casts. However, some inkjet printers have specific “black and white printing” settings which do modify the way the images are printed to minimize colour casts.

If you are doing offset printing, which is used for *Close-Up*, then the process is rather different. You may be asked to send the file to the printer in the CYMK colour space, or they may do the conversion. You may have noticed that since we started printing colour images in *Close-Up* and using a grey background behind the columns, the grey on the colour pages did not match that on the black and white pages. Moreover, it varied from issue to issue.

The solution to this problem lies buried in the way that “black” is defined in digital image files. If you use the colour sampler tool in Photoshop and look at a “black” part of the image, you will find the RGB values are very low and approximately equal; ideally they should be equal. But if you look at the equivalent CYMK values you will see that although the K value may be quite high, there is also some cyan, yellow and magenta mixed in, and this is the cause of the problem.

So how do we solve it so that grey prints as grey? Once you understand the problem (the image encoding is not “all-black”), the solution is simple; get rid of the colour! If you’re dealing with one specific colour (the grey background in *Close-Up*), you can simply move the sliders in the CYMK colour space to get rid of the offending components. With an image in Photoshop it is a little more difficult.

There are many ways of converting an image to black and white in Photoshop. Assuming that you are starting with a colour image, the first step is to make a black and white version where all the colours are adequately separated into distinct grey tones. There are many ways of doing this, but avoid image/mode/greyscale as this gives you absolutely no control over the conversion. A better choice is to use the black-and-white adjustment layer and then use the sliders to adjust the way that each colour is represented. On a complex image you may have to do this more than once using masks.

Now you have to get rid of the colour. A simple way of doing this is to create a new file of the correct size in the CYMK colour space, turn off the cyan, yellow and magenta channels and then copy and paste your image into this file. You may then have to adjust the overall brightness to make it match the RGB version when printed.

Theme: Motion Blur

by Marla Zarelli and Don Peterson

Motion blur can be used to create stunning photographs in everything from landscapes to sports to nature photography. Mastering the basics of motion blur for different situations adds an extra tool in your box of photography techniques that can be applied in an almost limitless number of photographic situations.

Most of us encounter motion blur inadvertently when photographing sports, birds in flight or other fast moving subjects. This effect can be used deliberately to add interest to your photos or to make creative and abstract images of all kinds. Some common techniques to create motion blur are panning, long exposure and zooming.

To create motion blur you must slow the shutter speed so your camera's image sensor will record movement of your subject. The longer you leave your shutter open, the more blurred any movement within the frame will appear in the final shot. For this reason, using Shutter Priority or Manual Mode is recommended so that you have control over the movement effect that you are after.

Perhaps the most common problem in attempting motion blur is too much light which prevents you from slowing the shutter speed enough to create the effect without overexposing the image. A few options to consider are to use a smaller aperture, decrease the ISO, or use a neutral density filter. Or, simply wait for the light to change, dawn and dusk are perfect times to capture motion blur.

There are essentially three ways of capturing motion blur:

1. A blurred subject with the background in focus; for example creating light trails from vehicles as they pass down a city street at night with a very long exposure and your camera on a tripod.
2. A blurred background with the subject in focus; for example panning a speeding cyclist while using a slow shutter speed will blur the background.
3. Blurring the entire image: for example moving your camera or zooming the lens with the shutter open. With the right shutter speed you don't need to move your camera much. Small movements will result in a soft and very pleasing look.

Motion blur may look easy but it takes practice and a lot of trial and error. You are encouraged to use Google to find out more information on how to go about creating motion blur photos.

January 2015 Competition Judges

We would like to thank our external judges for January's Intermediate and Advanced categories, Frank Pali, Judy Higham and Christina Craft. We also wish to thank Pam Irvine, Paul Ross, Caspar Davis and Willie Waddell, our in-house judges for the Novice Category. All images and judges' comments are available here: victoriacameraclub.org/vcccompetitions.

Frank Pali: Frank is a photographer who shoots a wide range of images from contemporary portraiture through commercial imagery, landscapes and wildlife. His attention to detail is evident in all of his photos, many of which are represented by some of the world's largest stock agencies. Frank Pali Photography is also a source for real estate photos in Vancouver and the surrounding area. Frank is a certified photography judge and member of CAPA (Canadian Association of Photographic Art). An important aspect of Frank's work is shooting for his stock portfolio, where images are sold under a royalty free and rights managed license.

Judith Higham: Judith has been photographing seriously since the late 1990s and is a Canadian Association for Photographic Arts (CAPA) judge. She enjoys portraiture, macro (especially flowers), wildlife and abstracts as well as using a traditional Black and White darkroom. Judith and her husband started the "Darkroom Group" in 2009 which is now a CAPA club with 17 members focusing on analogue photography and alternative photography methods from the 1800s. Judith is an American Orchid Society Awards photographer for five BC orchid societies and her images are published monthly in newsletters of orchid societies in the US and Canada.

Christina Craft: Christina is a portrait and wedding photographer serving three areas: Victoria, BC, Canmore, AB, and Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica. She is an award-winning photographer placing three times in the top 10 with the International Society of Professional Wedding Photographers and in 2012 was ranked #2 in Canada by the Professional Wedding Photographers of Canada. She has a master's degree in journalism from Carleton University and a diploma in photography from the Western Academy of Photography where she won the award for best overall student. In addition to people photography, Christina also enjoys travel and nature photography. In 2014 some of her images placed as finalists in the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition and the Nature's Best Photography Contest. Her nature galleries received more than three million visits last year: <http://www.naturestocklibrary.com>.

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Advanced Nature Print - 1st

“Northern Gannet - Juvenile” by Don Peterson

Judge's comments: I can't stop looking at this image. It's perfect. I love the negative space and your choice of composition. It's extremely difficult to have a tack sharp image of a bird in flight. Well done!! The print quality and colours are really spectacular. Excellent.



Advanced Digital Creative - 2nd

“Kate Among the Roses” by Gail Takahashi

Judge's comments: Excellent composition and lighting as well as artistic measures.



Advanced Digital Open - 1st (Tie)

“Starlet” by Barbara Burns

Judge's You did a great job with the light on the model, the darks are just dark enough to see detail, and your highlights as well. Nice positioning of the model, excellent work!



Advanced Open Print - 1st

“Ready to Play” by Gordon Griffiths

Judge's comments: This is such a fun image and I loved that you could hang it up or down or left or right. The negative space is well used and the digital treatment works well with this light and subject. Very well done!



Advanced Digital Nature - 1st (Tie)
"Double Double" by Rene Pauze

Judge's comments: The freezing of the water, your focusing, and exposure are all handled with perfection. The frame is nicely broken up leaving room for the duck to move into it.



Advanced Monochrome Print - 1st
"Corn Field Before the Storm" by Doug McLean

Judge's comments: Excellent print quality, excellent dodging and burning and post production. Great blacks and whites (and greys). Excellent use of sharp, long depth of field. Composition is absolutely excellent. I love the layering. Great use of foreground. I even love the little extra tree in the viewer's left corner. It adds to the overall balance of the image.



Advanced Digital Theme - 1st
"A Mandir Temple Entrance" by Dan Takahashi

Judge's comments: Intricate details on the walls and the coloured door hold the viewer's eye. Extremely well photographed from an angle. Excellent lighting.



Intermediate Nature Print - 1st
"Leopard" by George Skelton

Judge's comments: Beautiful. I love that you did a more high-key treatment with this and it lends perfectly with the colours in the scene. I like that you put some bokeh/circles of confusion in the foreground as well. It frames things beautifully. Overall, beautiful capture and very well done!



Intermediate Digital Open - 2nd (Tie)
"The Red Pail" by Bobbie Carey

Judge's comments: Excellent street photo, great job in catching her in action, you did a superb job in capturing the light on her clothing and bucket.



Intermediate Digital Theme - 1st
"Ancient Pathway" by Jonathan Adams

Judge's comments: Good detail in most of the shadows, at least the important areas. Lightened pathway defines the route of the viewer's eye. A well processed image with saturated colours. Well done.



Intermediate Open Print - 1st (Tie)
"Rust, Stone and Tiny Blossoms" by Steve Lustig

Judge's comments: This is a perfect still-life study. I love the natural composition and I can also tell that you've ensured there are no distracting specks or flakes in the picture to distract. I really love the little plants peeking out from behind the rock too. Beautiful work!!



Intermediate Digital Nature - 1st
"Pacific Golden Plover" by Cindy Stephenson

Judge's comments: Excellent photo. The colours work well with the bird. You have no distractions in this image. It's all about the Plover. I love it! Keep up the great work.



Intermediate Digital Creative - 1st
"A Bubble" by Nicci Tyndall

Judge's comments: Excellent composition. Very creative on several levels, an image which does not look like a photograph. Placing a colour image on what looks like a monochrome background serves to enhance the colour sphere. The same shapes and textures run through both the sphere and the background. A reflection seems to exit the image. Very clever.



Novice Digital Nature - 1st
"Steller's Jay Rain" by Robb Landsdowne

Judge's comments: Excellent image of this beautiful, cheeky fellow. Great use of slow shutter speed to turn the rain drops into streaks.



Intermediate Monochrome Print - 1st
"Aloha Sweet Shop" by Normand Marcotte

Judge's comments: It is important to ensure details in both the highlights and shadows. In a scene like this where there is a huge contrast between light and dark it is probably the trickiest you can find. I love that the storefront is so flat and yet it has so much depth because of the light. I also like that you toned down the light in the viewer's top right corner to match the same intensity of light in the bottom, it makes for a balanced amount of light and dark between the top and bottom of the image. A fantastic print and a great competition piece. Well done!



Novice Digital Open - 1st
"Fishing for Gold" by Mary Weir

Judge's comments: This is a gorgeous painterly image. Exposure is correct giving rich colours. Lovely line of the net leading the eye through the image. The gulls are looking down to where the action is, creating an implied line. You caught this image at just the right moment.



Novice Digital Theme - 1st
"Gateway to Nowhere" by Jeff Irwin

Judge's comments: Beautiful landscape with the gate perfectly positioned. Taken at a good time of day. The road moves the viewer's eye into the image and then the "S" curve of the distant cliffs moves the eye through the image.



Novice Open Print - High Score
"Lighthouse" by Merlyn Maleschuk

Judge's comments: Good exposure and focus. Excellent example of a long exposure image. Lovely blurred water and the moving clouds create the beautiful streaked sky giving the impression of the motion. It was nice of the seagull to sit still for the whole exposure. When doing seascapes it is very important to have your horizon straight.



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I'm Terry Zlot, owner of The PRINT Lab. I have been proudly printing for Vancouver Island's photographic community for over 15 years.

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I started in photography as a teenager when I finally managed to buy my first camera, a Konica Autoreflex T SLR, with the help of my father (he took pity on me as the newspaper run I had at that time was only bringing in \$3.00 a week!) Over the years I have owned a number of film and digital cameras, amongst others a Konica Autoreflex T3 (damaged during a fall from a float plane near Hornby Island! Ask me about that misadventure during coffee break at a club meeting). Cameras number 2 and 3 were identical Canon Elans. The first one and all my brand new gear was stolen during a trip to Vancouver. Who said that photography is not a dangerous hobby? Eventually the Canon Elan broke and instead of paying for the repair of an "old" film camera I decided that it was time to switch to the digital world. So I purchased a Canon 30D in 2006 and recently upgraded to a full-frame Canon 6D in 2013. I am currently considering getting the 30D modified for Infra-red photography.



Sometime in the mid-1980s I took a class in darkroom processing at a community college. I was hooked and soon purchased a black and white darkroom set-up and started to process my film and print at home. Unfortunately, I never had the space for a dedicated darkroom which proved to be problematic when the family grew. Once we had children, having a darkroom set-up in the only bathroom of the house proved to be quite a challenge. Even if I waited to set up well after my kids were in bed, I invariably would be interrupted by one or two "urgent" requests! When I joined the digital world I donated all the equipment to a high school student who was eager to try film processing.

I moved to Victoria in 1997 and joined the Victoria Camera Club soon after picking up a copy of Close-Up at Lens & Shutter. I liked the club activities from the start, but it took me a few years to gather enough courage to submit

images to the monthly competitions. In those days the competitions were not divided into the novice, intermediate and advanced categories that we have today. I was intimidated by the beautiful black and white prints and images being submitted. Finally I realized that in order to get feedback on my photos I had to enter the competitions.

I have always been more interested in graphic images, architectural subjects, and landscape photography. I recently started to do more street photography, thanks to the bi-weekly Tuesday morning Field Trips. In the last few years, I also became very interested in Night and Long-Exposure photography; the Club offers excellent workshops and field trips on those subjects. I started to enter black and white prints in the club competitions in the fall of 2013 and it is an area where I wish to improve. I particularly enjoy the British *Black+White Photography* magazine which, as the name implies, is dedicated to the art of black and white photography.



The first computer program I used for digital post-processing is Corel Paintshop Pro; although I liked it I found there was a lack of reference material on the internet and in magazine/book format. I eventually switched to Adobe Lightroom when the club started to offer workshops for that inexpensive option to Photoshop. I recently purchased the NIK Google Collection, specifically for the Sliver Efx Pro 2 and HDR Efx Pro 2 components. I am desperately trying to develop a workflow for Lightroom using these two plug-ins, suggestions anyone?

Keep Calm and Carry a Canon!

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Joel Friesen "Very well presented. Took the fear of using the camera away especially using different features and settings." –JS

■ Nature Photography WEEKEND – May 8-10

NEW

Mitch Stringer

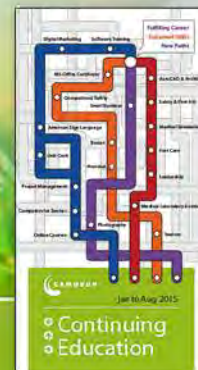
■ iPhone/iPad Artography – May 9

Tony Bounsall "Outstanding instruction and presentations." –MF
"Excellent instruction. Obvious that Tony really knows a lot about photography and art." –JW

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Pixel-shifting Sensors

by John Roberts

By now, some of you may have heard the term, “Pixel Shift” or “Sensor Shift”, and are curious about this new feature. Will it be in a camera that you can afford, and do you actually think that it will be a useful camera for you?

At the time of writing, only the Hasselblad H5D-200c MS, and the newly announced Olympus OM-D E-M5 II have pixel-shifting sensors. The Hasselblad has a “medium format” 6200 x 8272 50 MP sensor with dimensions of 32.9 x 43.8 mm. The Olympus has a 4/3 format 4608 x 3456 16 MP sensor with dimensions of 17x13 mm.

In my opinion, it is only a matter of time before other camera manufacturers start putting them into their cameras but, for the moment, just these cameras have it.

So what is a pixel-shifting sensor? Why should we care about this? I have been thinking the same questions myself for the last few days. A pixel-shift sensor, is quite an ingenious use of the camera’s movable sensor. Since many cameras are starting to have an in-camera stabilizer, some whiz-kid thought that since the sensor can move anyway, why not use that in controlled movements. Allowing the camera to take multiple photos with a full or half-pixel shift each time you take a photo, increases the resolution of the image. So, by allowing a small controlled movement, it will give the user the equivalent of using a much higher resolution camera to the one you are using. The half-pixel shift fills in the gaps that are normally between the pixels. This in turn technically will give a little bit more colour accuracy as well.

In the case of the Hasselblad, it takes the 50 MP sensor back and produces the equivalent of 200 MP when the camera is told to take a six-frame pixel shift image. Yes, you read that right, two hundred megapixels!

Ok, so let us bring this back down to the realm of reality, since there are not many of us that can afford the \$60,000 price tag for the Hasselblad body and digital back that does this. Oh, and that does not include lenses; so add another \$10,000 for some lenses.

Enter the new Olympus OM-D E-M5 II, with a 16 MP pixel-shifting sensor. It will take a series of eight images that gives you a 40 MP image. There we go, that is more like it!

Unless you are using your images to create billboards full size at 300 dpi, I am not sure why one would want a 200 MP image. From the samples I have seen, this new Olympus takes on the 36 MP powerhouse cameras and gives them a run for their money. The Olympus price is \$1,100 for the body only.

So let's take this one step further, for the sake conversation only. Let's take one of the newer cameras with a 24 MP full frame sensor and an in-camera stabilizer. Then with some voodoo of the upcoming firmware version 8.0.1.23X, the pixel shift feature will be added in.

Again, for the sake of conversation only, it should give us somewhere in the neighbourhood of an 80 MP final image. My math might be a little off here, but in theory it is possible. A subtle movement in the sensor and you will have eight images that overlap by half a pixel. This will give you a huge boost in resolution.

So is a pixel-shifting sensor right for you? To answer that, you need to answer this for me, is your subject moving, or stationary?

If you are a landscape or still life photographer, then pixel shift is right for you! If you are a portrait or action photographer, then no, a pixel-shifting camera is not right for you, for the simple reason that your subject may have moved during the separate exposures for the shifting.

In some of the sample images available for the new Olympus, you can see that this has happened with the tail lights of some cars in motion.

If you are a hand-held photographer, then again pixel shifting will not work for you. A pixel-shifting camera should be mounted on a tripod, so that all the images are perfectly aligned in half-pixel increments. I even read that lenses with the stabilizer built in will have to have that turned off, because the movement it compensates for may negate the pixel shift image.

So while not ideal for all situations, for many of us, this will be a great feature to allow us to increase the resolution of our images, without having to spend a small fortune to get similar results. So if there are more cameras in the future that do this pixel shifting for us, then these are very exciting times for photographers, and for those that will start in the near future.

I am looking forward to seeing what happens with this new technology during the next year or so.

by Judy Bandsmer and Bryan Kemper

Speedlights, also called speedlites, are small portable flashes which are very versatile tools for any photographer. Nature, portrait, product and fine art photographers can all benefit at some point in time. You don't have to memorize exacting lighting setups, or invest in more than one for many purposes. One flash can add fill light or subtle highlights to your nature subject, fix a less-than-ideal direction of light on an outdoor subject, help you capture family photos indoors, freeze motion, or help you shoot some indoor studies such as those involving water drops or flowers. Good light is absolutely crucial to us as photographers, and speedlights are a great way to help us create and shape our ideal light.

TTL: The choices in purchasing speedlights seem to be endless. One thing to consider before you purchase a speedlight is whether or not to invest in a system that has "TTL," Through-The-Lens metering, which is also called E-TTL (Canon) or i-TTL (Nikon). This is a very versatile system very popular with speedlights, and is great for beginners in lighting. It takes out most of the work in choosing what power to set the light output at to get the correct exposure. Before TTL, photographers needed to calculate the power output they needed to get the right exposure, and every time the light or the subject moved, the photographer would have to change the light output manually. Now, TTL cameras and speedlights can do that automatically, freeing the photographer to concentrate on other aspects of their art.

How does TTL work? Simply, the camera fires an unnoticeable pre-flash, measures the light hitting the camera sensor, and then automatically adjusts the output of the speedlight to give the correct exposure. Amazing! And if the system is not working exactly how you want, you can usually add flash compensation to adjust for the effect you want. TTL speedlights will also work in Manual mode, so you can always ditch the TTL system and go to manual. I (Judy) tend to work in manual mode when I am doing studies such as water drops or splash- es, and work in TTL when I am working with models.

Beyond the TTL/manual decision, it is also good to think about what sort of triggering mechanism might work best for you before you invest. Once you get it off camera, there are several ways to connect the flash to your camera and control it. These include cords, the built-in infrared (IR) system that comes with many flashes, and radio triggers.

Flash Cords: TTL cords are available from several sources (FlashZebra.com and OCFgear.com) and

come in lengths from 1 to 8 meters. They have a five-pin connector which gives the same functionality as the flash sitting on top of your camera. Neither the flash nor the camera knows that the flash is not there. You can vary the flash power, the mode, and the power ratio if the flashes have been placed in "groups." Newer cameras allow you to manage all of these flash functions with the menus on the back of your camera which is wonderful compared to the old way of doing things when you had to struggle programming the flash on its own body.

Built-in infrared (IR) flash control: Each camera manufacturer has a proprietary system which allows its flashes to communicate with each other and with the camera. Canon flashes with this feature are in the EX series, Nikon's are labeled SB. The limitation of these systems is that because they use light to communicate, the flashes must be placed in such a way that they can see each other. Depending upon the camera that you have, a pop-up flash may be used to control the remote flashes, or with older cameras you will have to mount one flash on top of the camera to control the other remote flashes. These IR systems allow you to control most of the flash functions and they work over distances of about 3 to 10 meters.

Radio Triggers: Radio triggers come in two forms; simple ones which only fire the flash with previously set functions and power, and more expensive ones which allow you to vary flash functions such as power; but adding this feature significantly increases the cost. Radio triggers work over very long distances and are not limited to the line-of-sight, which the IR units are limited to.

More Specifics - Nikon: The Nikon system features a wireless TTL/manual system they call their "Creative Lighting System (CLS)." The best thing I (Judy) find about this is that the power of your speedlights can be controlled from your camera (manually or TTL) if you have a built-in commander mode, or by the separate SU-800 Speedlight Commander if your camera does not have a commander mode (D50, D40(x), D60, D3000/3100, D5000/5100). Most camera models with pop-up flashes, except the ones I just mentioned, can act as a "commander" so you don't have to buy more than one speedlight and don't have to buy the separate Commander.

Not the right amount of power? Easy, just go to your commander menu, select the right channel and group, and change the output. The SB series of flashes are all compatible with the CLS (SB-500/600/700/800/900/910 and the remote speedlight SB-R200). There are no cables involved; it is infrared triggered. Your flashes

need to be able to detect your camera's infrared signal via line-of-sight, especially in an outdoor situation. Be aware that the oldest Nikon DSLRs are not CLS- or TTL-compatible (the D1-series and the D100). Nikon speedlights are not cheap, they start new at around \$300 for the SB-700; used they aren't much cheaper. There are cheaper speedlights of other brand names that will work with Nikon CLS, but do your homework first.

Auto FP, Nikon's High Speed Flash Sync mode, is available with the SB-600/700/800/900/910 and SB-R200 speedlights. This is a way of circumventing the X-sync shutter speed limitation that lets you take flash photos at any shutter speed you like. It works by pulsing the flash tube at an extremely high rate, but lower effective power. This activates at shutter speeds above 1/250 sec. if you have chosen this option on your camera menu (find it under Bracketing/Flash menu, Flash sync speed).

More Specifics - Canon: Since 2004, Canon cameras have used E-TTL II, a through-the-lens metering system which incorporates reflectivity and distance to properly assign flash power; this assumes the flash is on-camera and not bounced. The 1Ds mk II, 1D mk III, 1Ds mk III, 1D mk IV, 5D, 5D mk II, 30D, 40D, 50D, 7D and more recent versions of these models plus the 5D mk III all support E-TTL II. All EX series Speedlites: 220/270/380/420/430/430-II/550/580/580-II/MR-14 and MT-24 support this format. If you are buying used or new speedlights made by Canon I (Bryan) suggest you work within the EX series.

With the introduction of E-TTL, Canon also released an electronic FP flash mode, High Speed Sync, (HSS) which operates in a similar way to Nikon's Auto FP mode.

Canon's E-TTL and Nikon's CLS system both employ low-intensity digitally-encoded pulses of light (either visible or infrared, depending on the master unit used) to transmit commands from a master flash unit to a slave unit or multiple slaves; it's ideal for quick, portable and flexible flash setups in smaller spaces. Wireless systems require at least two wireless-capable flash units in order to work, a master and a slave. A pop-up flash (most Nikons or the Canon 7D), or a master flash unit attached to the camera's hot shoe (either directly or using an Off-Camera Cord) will be the master. The remote units will be the slave flash unit(s) set up to illuminate the scene as desired. If you plan to use multiple flashes off camera, we strongly advise that you buy one Canon 580 EX II, or a Nikon SB 700/800/900/910 flash which allow you to access the on-board camera flash menus, a great stress reliever!

Modifying the Light Quality: Once you've got your speedlight hooked up and functioning, one last thing to think about is if you will need a light modifier. Since speedlights are a relatively small point source, the light quality can be quite harsh on their own (very strong shadows). There are many choices for light modifiers and shapers for your speedlights, so pick those which work best for what you want to do and fit your budget. You can start experimenting by bouncing your light off of nearby neutral surfaces. If you are capturing family photos, try twisting and tilting your on-camera speedlight to bounce light off of a wall or ceiling to diffuse and change the direction of the light onto your subject. The best light is often from a direction other than straight-on, so mounting speedlights on light stands or setting it on a nearby surface often works well, even holding your light and using a remote shutter release can do the trick. Another small trick: if you have the choice, you can set your speedlight's zoom factor to its minimum to make the light source as large (soft) as possible, and vice versa.

The choices in light modifiers are even more varied than your speedlight choices, so think what you might need before you buy. Sometimes you can get away with a small reflector, or even a piece of paper held out at arm's length; there are whole websites devoted to DIY light modifiers! If you have money to spend, there is no shortage of places to buy small inches-long softboxes for small subjects, speedlight-compatible softboxes for portrait lighting, "Flashbenders" that strap onto your flash to diffuse the light for mobile situations, flash extenders to add highlights to your nature subjects which are tens of meters away, shoot-through or reflective umbrellas, beauty dishes, ring lights, light spheres and domes, and more.

Now What? There may be many things to consider, but creating the perfect light with speedlights is very rewarding and gets much easier with practice. Off-camera flash gives us huge versatility in the possibilities of what we can create, our imaginations can run freely. Nature photographers use wired flash to provide accent lighting to their setups for attracting birds. Studio photographers can use multiple banks of synchronized flashes to light complex scenes and subjects. Landscape and portrait photographers also use light from speedlights to light parts of their subjects in artistic ways.

Still feeling a bit overwhelmed? The Lighting Special Interest Group (SIG) at Victoria Camera Club has many lighting enthusiasts, and many beginners as well. Come and join us for help, discussion, and inspiration! Join our email list and come to our monthly meetings by contacting lightingsig@victoriacameraclub.org.

Havana Games

by Clive Townley

This photograph was taken in the back streets of Havana, Cuba. Initially, it was the way the shadows were bouncing on the street that attracted my attention. I felt that taking the image from behind the “goal posts” would put the viewer more in touch with the game. No one seemed concerned with me taking photographs; they were more intent on the action. For individuals, I usually ask permission, but for street scenes such as this I don't bother.

I chose to convert the image to black and white because it seemed that time in Havana had stopped still about fifty years ago, and I felt that black and white better reflected today's Cuba, certainly in that part of Havana.

I took the image hand-held with a Nikon D800 and my favourite travel lens, a 28-300 mm zoom. The lens was set at 28 mm and the camera at ISO 400, 1/500 sec. and f8. My standard travel kit is the D800, 28-300 mm f3.5+, 20mm f2.8, polarizing and ND filters, mini-tripod, and charger/spare battery. I also carry a P&S camera for those situations where the big camera is too intrusive.

Post-capture processing was done primarily in Nikon Capture NX. I converted the image from colour to black and white, cropped about 25% off the initial image to get rid of some superfluous buildings, increased the contrast on the shadows slightly and sharpened the figures a touch. I printed test strips and the final image on a Canon Pro 9000 II on Ilford Smooth Pearl paper.

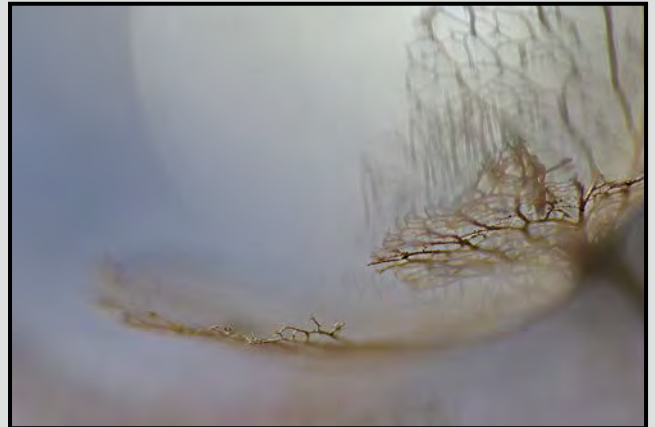
Taking photographs in Cuba is an absolute delight. The Cubans we encountered were naturally friendly, helpful and were willing to share the Cuban experience. We felt quite secure everywhere we went. Cuba is a must place to visit, and I suspect sooner is better than later considering recent developments.



Ethereal

by Pam Irvine

In July 2014 I took a week-long course taught by local photographer Allan Mandell at the Metchosin International Summer School of the Arts (MISSA) held at Pearson College in Metchosin. The focus was on flower photography so we spent two days working on macro techniques. I fell in love with the abstract feel that can be created when working with such simple subjects close up.



I found this piece of dried plant in my garden, I think it is the “bones” of a hydrangea flower. The photos were taken in my sunroom with plenty of natural light. For macro, I use an older Pentax K200 with a Tamron 90 mm f2.8 macro lens. The light meter in the camera does not work with this lens but that is no problem, I just shoot a few trial images and use the histogram to get the right exposure. This image was shot at 1/640 sec. at f2.8. The Depth of Field (DoF) was probably around a millimetre.

I took multiple images with the focus point at various spots on the plant. The bokeh effect (the “moon” in the background) is caused by a shallow DoF and a point of light in the background. I cannot remember how I got the blue background, it may be other flowers. I sometimes use crumpled tissue paper in the background to introduce a soft coloured background.

For post-production, I used Photoshop Elements to soften some of the detail at the bottom and removed another stem that was slightly visible near my primary stem. Because of the shallow DoF, only the very front edge of the plant was in focus, so I overlaid another image with a slightly deeper focal point to give a bit more definition to the plant structure.

Tuesday Shoots

by Wayne Swanson

March 10th: Blurred Images

You paid how much for the camera, and yet you don't have a sharp image? But not all images need to be sharp. You may want an image that is blurred to indicate speed or emphasize patterns or create a mood or even to blend colours. The result is a work of art that is somewhat abstract. It evokes emotion or joy in the viewer rather than presenting an accurate depiction of the subject. It gives you an opportunity to play with colour and design.

Just a reminder that "motion blur" is the theme of the final club competition of the season. Here is your opportunity to work towards getting a great shot to enter.



Cyclists in Motion by Blair Ross

March 24th: Flower Count

Time to be smug. The rest of Canada is starting to consider putting away their snow shovels, mitts and heavy coats while Victorians are busy counting flowers.

Instead of discovering how many blooms there are in the city, let's showcase the brilliant colours. True, the hanging baskets won't be adorning the street lamps yet, but there are many small flower beds throughout the downtown that will be festooned with bright blossoms. After all, it is spring and the trees will be displaying their splendour to attract pollinators. Just keep in mind that you can practice photography on individual blooms or capture the grandeur of a particular plant or display the beauty of a whole garden.

Maybe you want to practice HDR on a flowery landscape. Whatever you do, make it colourful.

Weekend Shoots

by David McLean and Donna Robertson

Spring Wild Flowers

In Victoria, the wildflower display is, for the most part, limited to March, April and May. There are a few early bloomers, though they are not necessarily native to the Island, including Japanese Cherry, Iris, and Snowdrop (all starting to bloom at the time of writing this article). Unlike other places in Canada, the flowering times for flowers is over a very brief period due primarily to the low amount of rainfall from June to August.

Field trips have been scheduled between March and May to a number of natural areas; see the website calendar for times and places. If you are not able to participate in any of the scheduled field trips, or if inclement weather happens to interfere with a scheduled trip, here is a brief summary of various flowers and time periods they are expected to bloom. Ref: *Nature Guide to the Victoria Region* by the Victoria Natural History Society, information provided by Richard James and personal notes. Please note that these are general times and will fluctuate due to temperature from year to year and the locality, this year may be earlier!

Skunk Cabbage	March	Calypso	April - May
Satinflower	Mar - April	Salmonberry	April - May
Shootingstar	Mar - April	Coralroot	May - June
Camas	April - May	Columbia Lily	May - June
Chocolate Lily	April - May	Cancer Root	June - July
Easter (Fawn) Lily	April - May	Phantom Orchid	June - July

When you take flower pictures, you generally want to get low, really low. That will generally mean either kneeling or lying down on the ground. This leads to two suggestions: first, you will want to either have knee pads, a plastic bag, or a tarp to kneel or lie on. Secondly, you will want a tripod that can get you low to the ground. Tripods with a centre column are great when you need the extra height; however they are generally an impediment when you want to get low to the ground. Some manufacturers have tripods that have a center column that can be removed so that you to get almost level to the ground. Whatever tripod you use, you will want to get it as low as possible.

A great reference for Wild Flowers and all plant species is the E-flora website at www.linnet.geog.ubc.ca.

by John Coenraads

Have you ever marvelled at the colours one sees when holding a compact disc up to the light “just so”? The tracks on the disc form a series of very fine parallel lines and because light is a wave, and therefore subject to interference, the colours in the light are separated into a brilliant spectrum. Technically known as a diffraction grating, if you own a newer Nikon camera you will find one tucked away in an obscure corner of your camera playing an obscure role. Positioned above the view finder, just underneath the hot shoe, sits a small sensor that “sees” what you see through the view finder. It only contains a thousand or so pixels unlike the main sensor with its multi megapixels. Its job is to analyze the scene and determine the correct exposure when using Matrix/Evaluative Metering. A small lens focuses light onto pixels sensitive to red, green and blue light arranged in parallel rows, see Figure 1. And this creates a problem: adjacent colours actually “see” slightly displaced parts of the image. To correct this, a diffraction grating is placed over the sensor which separates the (white) light coming from a given point into its red, green and blue components before it strikes the sensor. A clever solution to correct a subtle defect and a marvel of precision miniaturization.

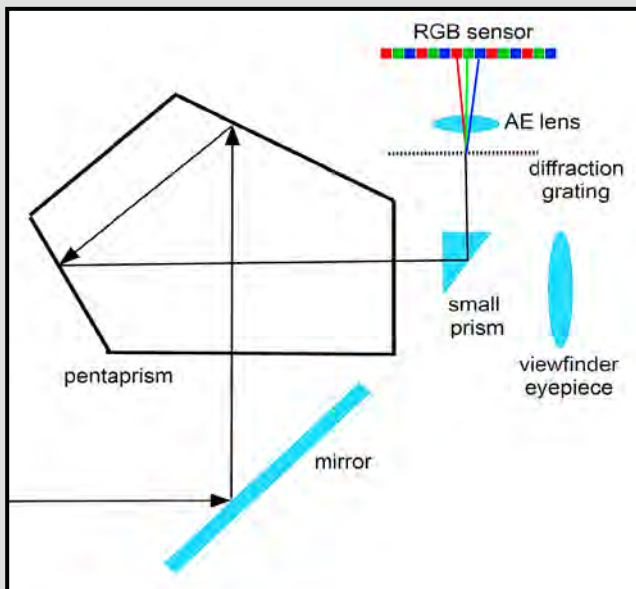


Figure 1: Using a prism, the exposure sensor “steals” a portion of the light passing through the viewfinder.

Exposure Sensors

What Nikon calls Matrix Metering, Canon refers to as Evaluative Metering. Both use a sophisticated scheme for analyzing the pattern of light and dark areas, for example, by giving emphasis to areas that have achieved

focus (probably the subject). The pattern serves as an index into a library of representative scenes with pre-determined exposure settings. Normally you would be hard pressed to improve on the exposure decisions made by these systems and it makes sense to almost always leave your camera in this mode.

Other exposure modes such as centre weighted may use sensors located elsewhere in the camera, e.g., in the base where autofocus resides. Centre-weighted metering is a throwback to earlier days when cameras were programmed to emphasize the centre part of the image, where the subject was presumably located, in determining exposure.

Partial and Spot metering (differing only in the size of the “sensitive” circle) are useful if you prefer to operate in Ansel Adams mode and use the zone system. By analyzing the scene you are about to photograph, locating that part which should come out as middle grey (zone 5) and metering on that, you are reasonably assured of a good exposure. Actually, they are useful anytime your subject is a small object in a larger scene.

When a DSLR operates in Live View mode, the mirror is up and the exposure sensors are all blinded. In that case, the main camera sensor takes over and serves as exposure sensor as well.

Determining “Correct” Exposure

I have placed “correct” in scare quotes because, in photography, the meaning of the term is somewhat ambiguous. When shooting JPG, for example, with little or no post-processing, then correct exposure is the one that yields a final product with the desired brightness. A glance at the LCD screen will give rough confirmation that you have captured what you wanted, although one can be misled by the ambient light and the settings on the LCD. Therefore it’s still wise to check the histogram to confirm that few pixels are mired in noise (on the left) or clipped (on the right). When shooting RAW, the brightness of the camera generated JPG as displayed on the LCD is irrelevant. Your goal is to fully make use of the dynamic range of the sensor and only the histogram will tell if you have succeeded by showing a pattern nicely “snugged up” to the right (exposing to the right). Turning on “the blinkies” ensures that, except for specular highlights, there is no clipping. It is during post-processing that the brightness is adjusted. Whereas the former has sometimes been compared to shooting slide film (get it right in camera), the latter

is more like shooting negative film where the objective is to always end up with a negative showing the full tonal range regardless of the brightness of the original scene; it is during printing that brightness is adjusted.

It is good practice to avoid “auto-everything” mode or any of the “cute icon” modes. Instead, of the aperture, shutter speed and ISO exposure triad, select two while letting the third “float” under control of the autoexposure system. If adequate depth of field is the main concern, then aperture priority is used; if the goal is to stop motion, then it's shutter priority. It also makes sense, in rapidly changing shooting circumstances, to preselect both aperture and shutter speed and let the ISO float. One professional who does this argues that although motion blur and inadequate depth of field cannot be corrected in post-processing, the effects of noise can to some degree be ameliorated.

When Autoexposure Fails

Scenario 1: You are about to take the shot of your life: a snowshoe hare, wolf and raven are sitting side by side in a snowy field. By all means, grab the shot but know that your camera will most likely get the exposure not quite right. Your camera believes that the world has the tonal value of an 18% grey card and that is how it will record the expanse of white snow. Detail in the hare and wolf can probably be recovered but in the raven it will be lost. The solution, of course, is to spot meter on the (grey) wolf, but good luck. In situations like this, it's best to be prepared by taking a few shots ahead of time to determine the correct exposure compensation for these snowy conditions. You'll know you have it right when the histogram's primary peak is all bunched up against the right side, but not touching, representing a large number of (almost) fully exposed pixels.

Alternatively, if you are shooting under overcast sky and lighting conditions remain constant, it would make sense to meter off a grey card, manually lock in the resulting settings and not change them for the duration of the shoot. In this totally manual mode, should you need to increase the shutter speed by one or more stops say, you can still do so as long as you compensate by opening the aperture, or increasing the ISO, by an equal number of stops thus leaving the overall exposure unchanged.

Another alternative is to use exposure bracketing. Here the camera, with one release of the shutter, takes a series of shots of varying exposures. This has a bit of the “I don't quite know what I'm doing, so I'll play it

safe” air about it, but in the hare, wolf, raven scenario it makes sense.

Scenario 2: You are shooting the interior of a barn but would like to include the view through a window as part of the scene. This combination of light and dark probably exceeds the dynamic range of the image sensor and autoexposure will settle for some compromise that will likely not match what you have in mind. Here you will want to take two exposures, one metered on the interior and one on the outside scene. The two can then be merged in Photoshop. This is what HDR does and that represents an alternative method for dealing with this situation.

Scenario 3: The scene consists of two subjects separated by some distance which lets bright sky shine through. Matrix (Evaluative) metering may or may not be able to handle this situation but if you are using centre-weighted metering it will expose for the bright sky and leave your subjects underexposed. In that case, point the camera at one of the subjects, push the shutter release halfway down to lock in the exposure, and then recompose and shoot. This is similar to the procedure used to lock in focus.

Scenario 4: If you are enamoured of the misty waterfalls and blurry clouds produced by long exposures, then you probably own a neutral density (ND) filter and have discovered that the amount of light it lets through is insufficient for the exposure meter to get a reading. Here you have no choice but to meter the scene with the filter off to obtain the shutter speed reading. Calculate the new exposure time by doubling this reading for each stop on the ND filter. For example, a ten stop filter requires multiplying the exposure by a factor of 1024. Making the shot will probably require using the shutter's bulb setting and a stop watch to count the seconds. Night time shooting presents a similar problem. At dusk you may be able to get a meter reading to use as starting point, but if it's darker than that, a few trial shots may be needed to inform your intuition as to the shutter speed needed.

And for those who believe that all of this doesn't matter much anymore because Lightroom and Photoshop provide such great latitude in correcting for exposure errors, all I can say is, “You are wrong, wrong, wrong!” Any exposure that doesn't utilize the full dynamic range of your sensor, and that is ultimately what we mean by “getting the exposure right,” will result in subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, degradation of your final image.

Photographing Black Wolves at the New Moon

by Nancy MacNab

How do you photograph a black wolf in a forest on the night of the new moon? Unless you have some source of light available to you, natural or artificial, the answer is: you don't. All photography requires some source of light, however dim it may be. It doesn't matter how high your camera's ISO can go, it still needs that tiny glimmer of light so your camera can distinguish your subject.

Light can be described by its direction, height, colour temperature, and strength. It can be natural or artificial in source, or a combination of both. You can try to control some or all of the light, or just use what is available. As all photography requires light, it is worth learning a bit about it.

The direction that the light comes from will influence how you see the subject. If you follow the old standard suggestion that was found in every box of film and have the light behind you, hitting the front of your subject, you have front lighting, bright colours, and a family or friend squinting in the sun. Front lighting may reveal the colours, but it gives a flat appearance to the subject as all of the shadows are behind it.

Having the light to one side of the subject throws the textures and shapes into relief, revealing and concealing at the same time. Keep an eye on where the shadows fall as they can exaggerate features in an unflattering way or they can be used to deemphasize less flattering attributes.

Back lighting gives a silhouette. Because no details are visible, it is important to have your subject clearly outlined with no interference from unnecessary elements that can confuse the image (unless that is your intention). Sunsets are a great time to try this kind of photo.

When your light, whether sun or artificial lights, is high above your subject, the shadows are much shorter than when they are lower down. Try photographing someone holding a candle or small flashlight (pointed at the ceiling) under their chin and you can have fun at Halloween.

Light can have a different colour cast, depending on its strength and source and whether it is bouncing off another surface. Sunrise and sunset gives a warm,

golden light while overcast skies and shadows create a bluish cast. When light reflects off a wall or other object, it will take the colour cast of that item. This can be useful to know when photographing so you'll try to have light reflecting off the white or yellow wall rather than a blue or green one. The latter would make your model look like she was seasick or had food poisoning!

A single source of bright light close to the subject gives a hard bright light that creates dramatic, hard-edged shadows and mercilessly reveals all it hits. Think of a bright flashlight held close to your subject, or the sun at high noon. Now add clouds between the sun and your subject and the light will spread out and soften as the clouds act as a natural softbox.

Your natural sources of light are the sun and moon, plus any light that's been reflected by water, walls, etc. Artificial light can be provided by candles, flashlights, house lights, flashes and studio lights. Reflectors, soft-boxes and umbrellas are just a few of the items that can be used to modify the light, softening it or bouncing it into areas that need a bit more.

Light modifiers don't need to be expensive. A piece of aluminum foil, crumpled, flattened and taped to a piece of cardboard is an effective small reflector. If you want a gold one, it's a good excuse to look for chocolate bars with gold wrappers. A piece of white paper or fabric stretched across a frame will also work. A natural-looking reflector when photographing family on holiday could be a map or newspaper. Tissue over your flash will soften its light.

Most important of all, pay attention to the light the next time you are out photographing. Which direction is it coming from? Is it golden (warm) or bluish? Hard or soft? Do the shadows obscure something you want to see? Do you have (or can you make) a reflector to "bounce back" some extra light into those areas? These are also questions you can ask when you are reviewing your photos. Do you have a preference for a specific kind of light? How about trying something different next time?

As you can see, you don't need a lot of expensive equipment to make a great improvement in your images. The key is to learn to visualize how the lighting will look in your finished image

To learn more about light and lighting, check out the two workshops offered by the camera club which are coming up in March.



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