



Close-Up

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Expressive Flower Images

**Winter is Here: Don't Put Your
Camera Away**

VCC 70th Anniversary

Santa's List

Street Photography á la Montréal

Beginners' Corner

Custom Filters: Part One

.....and more

"Yellowstone River in Paradise" by Suzanne Morphet. The setting sun colours the sky over the Yellowstone River in Paradise Valley, Montana.



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©Hannes Ludiner (South Africa) Curiosity and the cat

Victoria Camera Club



Close-Up is the magazine of the Victoria Camera Club,
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 Mailing address: 2642 Quadra Street, PO Box 46035, Victoria, BC, V8T 5G7.
 Deadline for submissions for the January 2014 issue is November 28th 2013.
 Editor, Richard James, e-mail to newsletter@victoriacameraclub.org
 for submissions or to advertise in *Close-Up*.

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

Events

We hold a number of events including:

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

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

Membership

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

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

For additional information: please contact the appropriate Committee Chair:

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

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



Calendar

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

Thursday, December 5th; Christmas Social Night

Join your fellow members for a “pot-luck” social evening at Norway House. Please contact Judy Taylor to select your hot or cold food item so that we all have a good selection.

January Meetings:

Please note that our meetings in January 2014 will be on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Thursdays of the month rather than their normal schedule.

Featured Workshops

Nature SIG, Wednesday 4th December.

Our full workshop and field trip program will resume in January after our normal Christmas break. Please check the calendar in mid-December to find out what has been scheduled.

To assist our workshop and field trip coordinators in scheduling events that meet members' needs, they would appreciate it if you would make suggestions for future sessions.

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: “Yellowstone River in Paradise” by Suzanne Morphet.

The setting sun colours the sky over the Yellowstone River in Paradise Valley, Montana, on a cold day in January. Camera: Nikon D40X, lens 36 mm, 1/100 second, f7.1 at ISO 1600.

Yellowstone National Park is just to the south and is open to winter visitors from mid-December to early March. Road access is only through the north entrance at Gardiner, MT. to the north-east entrance and Cooke City, MT. All other access in the park is by commercial sno-coaches. Limited services are available.

President's Message

As a photographer, I love the fact that Canada enjoys four distinct seasons; each one providing us inspiration for unique photo opportunities. The fall season has always been a personal favourite of mine and I am continually enthralled by the colours of autumn and the seasonal beauty that autumn has to offer with its gallery of fall foliage.

In the fall the world is painted by nature's palette and explodes in hues of yellows, oranges, reds and purple. Trees contrast vividly against a Prussian blue sky. The range and intensity of colour in the autumn landscape is striking, but the spectacular colours are short lived and we see a dramatic change as October fades into November.

Winter comes around, along with shortening days and cooler nights, misty rain and fog and sometimes frost. Trees that were so colourful, shake free from their autumn splendour, and the mountains and hills change to a more muted landscape with shades of greys and browns. The sky has turned to slate grey and the rain begins.

When the days turn overcast, dark and dreary for days on end, many of us find it challenging to get inspired about photography and put away our camera gear. If we do, we miss out on the opportunity to take some compelling photos, because winter too can tell its seasonal story.

Although the colours are dull and drab, stormy and rainy days present us with unique shooting experiences. Overcast days create a mood that you don't get on a sunny day, and fog and mist can add a surreal dimension to your images. Fog and mist, in the early morning or late evening, settling in low valleys and rising up from ponds and lakes, convey a certain sense of mystery. Interesting shapes and silhouettes emerge from the foggy background resulting in some stunning compositions.

Misty mornings are also wonderful opportunities for classic macro photography. Delicate spider webs glisten with pearls of water, raindrops and condensation create unique and beautiful patterns on flower petals and even a photograph of a single water drop can produce exciting and impressive photos.

If the perpetual rain in Victoria has you praying for mercy, you might consider the pictorial opportunities before, during and after rain: dark foreboding skies, interesting cloud formations, blurred reflections mirrored on wet surfaces, people dashing about under a sea of colourful umbrellas, and kids splashing about in puddles. Photographing the rainy season can be beautiful.

Lois Burton, President

by Penny Codding

Beyond the accurate documentation of flowers, it is an interesting challenge to find methods to show an emotional response to the blossom, to capture how the texture, colour and shape express the essence of a flower. This challenge requires time spent seeing. Georgia O'Keefe said it best: "*Nobody sees a flower really; it is so small. We haven't time and to see takes time.*" We have to take the time and think about why a flower, either singly or in a field of blooms, stops us, draws our eye and makes our shutter finger itch. The response will be personal. Beyond the usual aspects of colour, shape and light, I am drawn to the delicacy of a petal, how the petals are assembled, the curve of stem or leaf, the softness, the patterns in the veins or petals and, perhaps surprisingly, how flowers come undone as they age. Once identified, these aspects are the challenge; how can they best be expressed photographically?



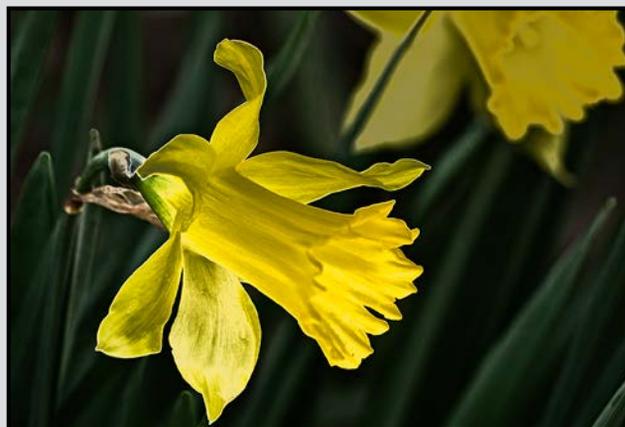
There are several in-camera approaches that make an expressive floral image; as seen in competition images, many club members use these. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination and the floral impression you wish to create.

You can find a new point of view for seeing the flower, perhaps from below, or with strong sidelight or back-lighting. Each point of view emphasizes the shape and structural elements of the flower or petals differently. The depth of field can be controlled to express the photographer's response to the scene. Careful choice of which elements, and how much of them, are in focus is a very effective method for creating a mood. A shallow depth of field simplifies the image allowing you to direct the viewer's eye. The placement of the focus point allows the image maker to draw the viewer's eye to the appealing part of the flower. Soft focus in much of the image conveys delicacy and the sensuous nature of shape and foliage.

Selective focus can also provide depth in an image by using a shallow depth of field and focusing on blossoms in the middle ground or background. This is particularly useful with groups or fields of blossoms. The out of focus blossoms surround the selected flower with soft bands or splotches of colour; out of focus foregrounds particularly give a sense of depth to the image. Good choices for communicating the joy and impact of fields of flowers are impressionistic images. These are made with a long exposure and either by moving the camera or letting the wind move the flowers while the camera is still. If your camera can do multiple exposures, another way to capture flowers is to move the camera between each of the multiple exposures, creating a pattern (line, spiral, circle) that reflects the shape of the flower or the rhythm of the scene. The multiple exposure effect can also be created in software as a montage of separate images.

All of these suggestions may prove useful to you when flowers are blooming or when using your home studio, but what does a flower photographer do once driven indoors by bad weather and a lack of blossoms? That is the time to turn to post-processing as a way to increase the expressiveness of flower images taken during the blooming season. Post-processing choices should be made mindfully so that the end result expresses the impression the flower made on you and is not simply an effect that detracts from the subject matter. Software provides ways to blur backgrounds, to change the relationship between flower and background, to express what is seen in the flower and even to create images beyond what is seen.

Artistic filters in Photoshop provide myriad possibilities for eloquent portrayals. The example illustrated here is a sedum, a fleshy plant that is quite colourful in the spring. When this sedum was photographed in March, the petals/leaves were so fleshy and lush that they called out to be stroked. The image is processed



using the Liquify filter (Filter>Liquify) to gently soften and smooth each petal, mixing the colours slightly and increasing the sense of lush thickness. NIK software provides layers that change images in beautiful (and sometimes bizarre) ways. For example, these daffodils have wonderful shapes both in the fluting around the centre and in the petals arrayed out from the centre. The image was taken with shallow depth of field so that the background blossom is out of focus and provides context and balance. Solarize treatments, whether in the dark room or with software, produce a partial reversal of tones and accentuate differences in tonal qualities. Color Efex Pro 4 provides a polarized treatment that creates the desired qualities in the image; the glow of the daffodils creates a sense of transparency and delicacy in the image. There are many more painterly filters to explore in various software programs; they can be used to transform your image to better express your response to the original blossoms.



Montages are effective in creating mood in an image. A favourite montage for flowers uses two copies of the same image, one in focus and one out of focus, to create a dreamy quality communicating softness and heightening colour; this is known as the Orton effect. A different kind of montage that uses the second layer to add texture to the image can help express the emotional content of a subject. Typically a layer mask is used to remove texture from the flowers themselves. The example here started with a dying tulip that caught the light beautifully; aging tulips remain beautiful even though their petals soften and lose their taut folded shapes. This tulip stayed magnificent until the bitter end, something to which we can all aspire. The image is created to emphasize the shape of the petals and how proudly the flower stood in the light. Texture from frost on jagged rocks was added in a separate layer. The texture was desaturated to create the impression of old

lace, and a vignette was added with Nik Color Efex Pro 4 to draw the eye to the wonderful lasting beauty.

Moving further from representational images to explore fundamental relationships between shape and colour is another way to express the artistic nature of flowers. Fawn lilies, for example, are elegant because of the shape of their stems, the graceful droop of the unopened flower and the delicate veins in the flower petals. To dramatize these relationships, the shape may be emphasized by softening the background and by outlining the flowers and veins. This image is created in several steps. Inversion (Image>Adjustment>Invert, or Ctrl+I) changes the colour relationships in the image, heightening the shape of the flower and reducing the visual importance of the background. The veins and outlines of these flowers were produced using the Photocopy filter (Filter Gallery>Photocopy) after changing the colour palette to blue and white rather than black and white. The result is quite a departure from the original image and depicts only one possible artistic interpretation of the scene.

The few examples here only provide a small sample of the possibilities to explore as you discover how best to express the feelings evoked by your favourite flower. Ask yourself "Why is this flower or scene so appealing?" or "What is the specific quality that attracted me?" and experiment with different ways to create the image both with your camera and with post-processing so that your image communicates what you saw and experienced.





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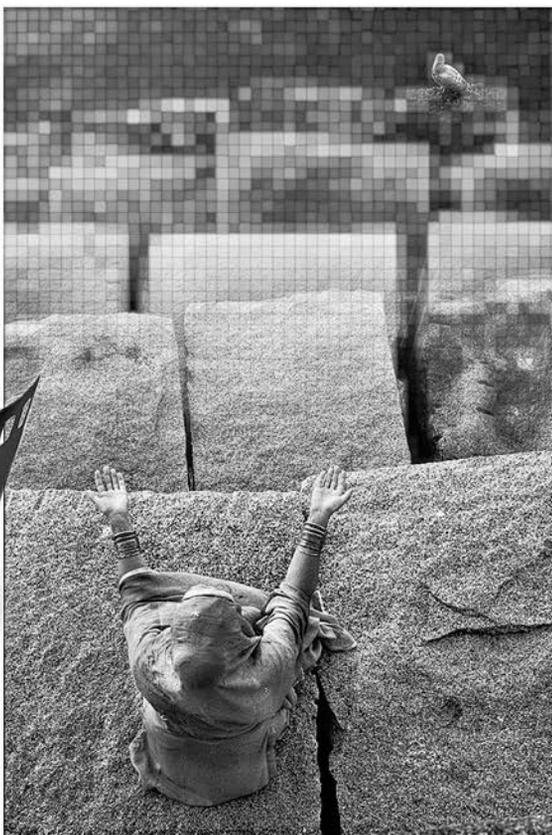
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Bridging Photo Technologies

by I. M. Shutterbug

Fall is past and winter is here. Many people pack their camera gear away in the closet until spring; however, there are still a lot of shooting opportunities. While travelling south for the winter is simply out of the question (the best you'll likely be able to do this year is a long weekend at the Super 8 Motel in Port Angeles), because you purchased the latest 35 mega-pixel camera, or the 500 mm+ lens, there's a lot to shoot around your home.

Use an eye-dropper filled with water and a couple of drops of food colouring and photograph water droplets. If you don't have an eye dropper, you can purchase one from a pharmacy for about \$0.53. Get a clear shallow dish and almost fill it with water. You can also add food colouring to this water, or place colourful wrapping paper below it and use the same paper for a background.

Consider using your macro lens and photograph bugs and insects. The next time you have to relocate a spider from your bathtub or sink, don't immediately toss it outside. Save it in a jar (with holes so it can breathe), and take pictures of it on various surfaces.

Take pictures of fruit and vegetables you've purchased. Beef, chicken and pork don't photograph well; you likely aren't buying much of it anyway since your budget was blown on the latest photo-related purchase.

Try walking through your house and take ten pictures in each room. You might be amazed at the opportunities that present themselves while viewing your home through a lens. You may even wish to try this the next time you visit the in-laws. You'll be amazed how fast the time passes. The in-laws will be impressed by how serious you've become about photography and proud that you find their house and possessions so interesting (a win-win situation).

While you may not have spent much time in your workshop since you became photographically obsessed, you'll likely observe a lot of photo potential. Look at the cobwebs on the equipment and in the windows made by the different species of spiders. Look at the rust on your tools (the ones you haven't pawned to support your photo habit: Gear Acquisition Syndrome, "GAS") and the way the rust looks under different lighting.

If you can see a reflection from any of your tools, (February's competition theme is reflections) use it to create stunning pictures. Set your camera up on a

tripod and shoot pictures of sparks flying as you touch scrap metal to your electric grinder.

North of the 49th parallel, the nights are long. As your electricity was cut off months ago, the darkness is a great time to practice with your camera. Learn where all the buttons are and what they do. Be able to change your camera settings without even having to look at the camera. This exercise will also help to ward off frostbite to your fingers and keep them nimble and in shape for the spring. Consider also practising long exposures; with 14 hours of darkness each day, you won't even have to purchase a 10-stop neutral density filter (this will make your spouse happy).

The next time you come home after a camera-related purchase, bring your spouse some flowers. It is very important to make sure that the flowers have good photographic potential as well. Purchase the flowers at a flower shop, rather than a grocery store, as they are generally better quality and will likely last for two weeks, rather than one. The ones at the flower shop are only 10-20% more expensive but will last twice as long.

Your wife will notice the better quality flowers, and if she doesn't realize that it's better value for money, then tell her, so she'll realize that you're learning about budgeting. You can then spend the next two weeks with your regular, or macro, lens taking shots of the entire bouquet, or parts of an individual flower. Many orchids don't cost much more than a bouquet of flowers and will last for months, again great value for money.

If flowers aren't sufficient, offer to cook dinner: how hard can Kraft Dinner, or Hamburger Helper, be anyway. For a change of taste and to spice things up a bit, consider adding the vegetables you bought, once you've finished taking pictures of them. This will not only provide a change in the dinner menu but will save more money for camera gear.

Spend time learning Photoshop. Brush the dust off the Photoshop Manual you purchased, and learn how to use each of the functions this very powerful software has.

After you've mastered each function, then learn how to do each function in 5 different ways. When people ask you how to do something, show them a different method of doing it each time they ask. You'll then have a lineup of confused individuals waiting to talk to you at each meeting, and you'll look like the most popular person in the club.

Santa's List

by the Chief Elf

The elves have been working hard once again to produce more photographic goodies. Once again, they haven't forgotten the little things that will be useful to pad out the stocking that will be hanging by your fireplace this year. A useful list of gadgets would include:

Camera straps: from the simple neck strap to various front and side hanging straps or more comprehensive harness support systems. Look for neoprene padding, quick release features, and, if appropriate, straps to restrain the camera so it doesn't bounce around as you walk. Make sure that they fit your body shape; our female members will be pleased to know that some are designed especially for them. There are several manufacturers including Joby, LowePro, BlackRapid and Cotton Carrier.

Flash bounce and modifier kits for SpeedLights are useful to control the light. There are many types, and manufacturers include Rogue, HoniPhoto and Garry Fong.

Since we live on the "wet coast," there are camera raincoats that vary from the simple throwaway polythene sleeve to component systems that will cover any lens, body and flash combination you can think of. For under \$10 you can get a pack of 2 polythene raincoats.

If you shoot at sunrise or sunset, flashlights are really useful. Many varieties are available although LED lights with lower power consumption are preferred. Pelican make a "camera bag" flashlight with a clip to secure it while searching inside your bag. Headlights are much more practical when you are shooting. Lights with a red filter are of particular interest to photographers since red light is preferable for maintaining better night vision.

A useful gadget to attach something to a tripod leg or light stand is the "remote transceiver caddy" made by Hildozine. Designed for Pocket Wizards, they can probably be adapted to other devices that have a standard (1/4"-20) tripod screw mount. They attach to the light stand or tripod leg with 2 straps for stability and security.

The Chief Elf also says "remember to support your local retailers since that is where you can see the products that you're about to buy. And, if you don't, then when you really need them, they may no longer be here."

The use of brand names in this article is for illustration only and does not imply endorsement by Santa, the Chief Elf, or the VCC.

VCC's 70th Anniversary in 2014

The Victoria Camera Club was formed in 1944 by the amalgamation of the Victoria Photographic Society and the Civil Service Camera Club. In celebration of this anniversary, we are actively planning a number of events for 2014. The following events are scheduled for the spring with more to come in the fall.

April 3-16 th	Spring Print Show at the Cedar Hill Gallery
April 4 th	Print Show Opening with André Gallant
April 4 th	All Day Shoot with André Gallant
April 5 th	All day Presentation by André Gallant

André Gallant returns to Victoria after his successful presentation in April 2010 with an extended all-day presentation and separate shoot. This is part of André's Western Canada tour which includes stops in Vancouver and Calgary, Alberta.

The André Gallant presentation and shoot in Victoria are jointly sponsored by the Canadian Association of Photographic Art (CAPA) and the Victoria Camera Club.

be inspired by Canada's André Gallant in VICTORIA



CAPA and VCC bring to you renowned fine art photographer and popular presenter André Gallant. André will be presenting imagery and concepts from his latest book "Inspiration: Creative Photography Projects", as well as material from his book "Photographing People at Home." Gallant will be providing a public presentation and a small group photography workshop.

Friday April 4 – Shoot with André Gallant
Saturday April 5 – Public presentation



capacanada.ca/presentingandregallant/

Reflections

by *Hanna Cowpe*

January's theme is reflections; we are all captivated by reflections as they feature frequently in daily life. Capturing them through photographic images can be fun and inspire us to pay more attention to our environment. The more aware we become the more we will notice.

One of the enduring features of reflections is that they can be found in any surface which is smooth, whether it has a highly polished surface or a more subtly smooth finish. Reflections are ever changing and can be elusive when we attempt to photograph them. This can depend on the movement of the reflected subject, the angle of viewing and the movement in the surface itself, such as in water.

A colourful subject enables the photographer to capture unlimited abstract variations in a moving surface such as water. Using manual focus on the reflection rather than its reflected source will help to locate the focus point for the sharpest image. Rippling water reflecting a landscape gives a more impressionistic image. It is fun to experiment with shutter speed here as it will affect the result. The longer the shutter speed the more removed from reality the image will become. One can photograph the reflection alone or the subject and its reflection.

Shiny, extremely smooth or glossy surfaces such as glass, polished chrome, mirrors or very still water, render clearer reflections. These can give a sharp reflection that can sometimes be flipped horizontally to trick the viewer as to which way is up. Watch for graphic and abstract designs appearing in glass buildings as they mirror other urban structures.

Photographing passersby in shop windows and commercial buildings renders illusive creatures with unusual characteristics or appearances. Multidimensional surfaces such as concave, convex, wavy or textured can further distort a reflection photograph and add artistic effect.

In photographing reflections take time to study the subject as it moves, as you change your position, or as elements move into and out of the scene. Composition should be considered just as in any image. If possible, ensure the surface is clean so as not to introduce debris that will mar the image. Be aware of your own reflection creeping into the scene when not intended, and remember that using a flash will spoil your picture.

And most importantly, enjoy yourself!

October 2013 Competition Judges

We would like to thank our October judges: Greg Eligh, Dana Haldrett, and Karen Stoyles, as well as our dedicated in-house judges for the Novice Category this month, Pam Irvine and Caspar Davis. Thank you!

Greg Eligh (Intermediate and Advanced Prints): Greg has worked as a professional photographer for 35 years in Vancouver, Toronto and Victoria specializing in commercial and corporate photography. His images have been featured in magazines, corporate reports, books, advertising and on CD/album covers. His career has taken him to exotic locations including resorts in the Caribbean, off-shore oil rigs in Hudson's Bay and office towers in downtown Toronto. Greg is an instructor at the Western Academy of Photography and Camosun College and gives workshops at locations such as Photographers at Painter's (Lodge).

Greg is also a respected photographic judge and a good friend of the Victoria Camera Club. Please take the time to visit Greg's website at www.elighphoto.com.

Dana Naldrett (Intermediate and Advanced Digital Open and Creative): Dana Naldrett is the senior partner in Calgary-based Mountain Laddie Photography. He has been involved in photography for over 40 years. As a child, his father gave him a Kodak Instamatic camera and promised that when he could properly compose pictures, he would receive a better camera. Dana soon earned a Nikkormat FTn SLR camera and has gone full speed ahead with photography since then.

Dana has worked in the Caribbean, Western Europe and North America. He shoots a wide variety of subjects from western/rodeo through nature to macro and landscapes with the occasional abstract as well as commercial photography of architecture, landscaping and interiors. Dana's photography skills are applied to producing fine-art prints, stock images, teaching photography courses, and conducting photographic tours. He has judged a variety of competitions in the past eight years and recently became a CAPA accredited judge. Please visit his website: mountainladdiephoto.com.

Karen Stoyles (Intermediate and Advanced Digital Nature and Theme): Karen comes from a family of photographers. She tends to lean towards nature photography, flowers and insects in particular. Digital has opened up a new world of post-processing that is tugging at her creative side. You can view some of her beautiful images at: www.flickr.com/photos/kabstoyles.



Advanced Digital Theme - 1st
"Camellia" by Caspar Davis

Judge's comments: The Orton technique has given the image a very soft, dreamy look. The flower is placed well within the frame, the background is well handled, even the lighter areas add subtle enhancement to the image. A very well done photograph.



Advanced Digital Open - 2nd
"After the Dance" by Barbara Burns

Judge's comments: Excellent lighting, good composition and very good mood.



Advanced Open Print - 1st
"Orange Simplicity" by Lois Burton

Judge's comments: Excellent design and composition. Wonderful saturated colour. Beautiful focus and detail. A sensual and sensitive study.



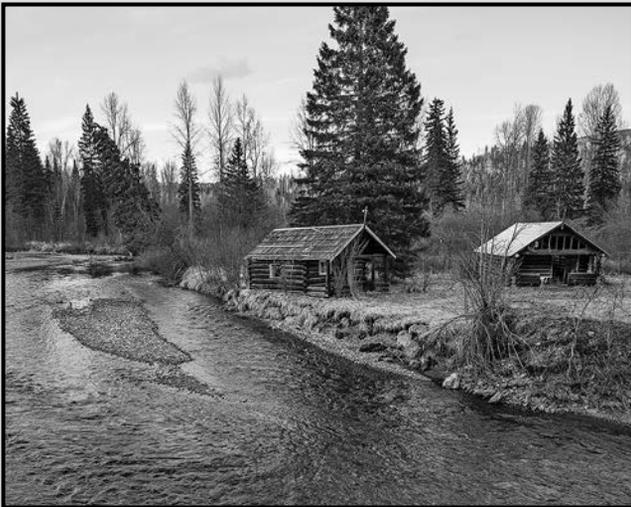
Advanced Digital Creative - 1st
"The Girl in the Moon" by Gail Takahashi

Judge's comments: Excellent combination of elements and smooth transition from one to another. Well done!



Intermediate Digital Open - 2nd
"Trinidad Hombre" by Steve Lustig

Judge's comments: Great composition and use of colour with good interaction with the subject.



Intermediate Monochrome Print - 1st
"Wells Grey Homestead" by Don Peterson

Judge's comments: Excellent framing and composition, I like that it's not crowded in the frame. Very good grey scale & tonal values.



Intermediate Digital Nature - 2nd
"Wood Duck Couple" by David McLean

Judge's comments: Exquisite capture of the wood ducks. Nice and crisp in the sharpness of the ducks and reflection. The ducks have room to move in the frame and are placed well for the composition.



Intermediate Open Print - 2nd
"Just Bagged" by Steve Jakes

Judge's comments: Whoever said that photographers have run out of subject ideas and are simply shooting the same ideas over and over? This was caught by a creative "eye". A bit whimsical and fun. Well framed and composed.



Novice Digital Nature - 1st
“Ocotillo After Spring Rain”
by John Schilling

Judge’s comments: Beautiful composition, near perfect focus and exposure. The color of the blurred background complements the shapes and colors of the Ocotillo and has just enough variety to be interesting.



Novice Digital Open - 1st
“Mesquite Dunes in Death Valley”
by Ove Christensen

Judge’s comments: Gripping image. The great depth of field and the strongly contrasting textures grabbed the attention. What a great find, the brittle skeletons of shrubs, the sensuous dune, and the hard rock of the mountain that create a wonderful contrast despite the subdued and similar colors. Well Done!



Novice Digital Theme - 3rd
“The Quiet Cafe” by Judy Bandsmer

Judge’s comments: Beautiful soft Orton effect although over-exposed. Lovely colours and great composition.



Novice Open Print - 2nd
“Abandoned Buses in Alert Bay”
by Carol Christensen

Judge’s comments: Vibrant colours make this picture captivating.



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Lens & Shutter

Multi-Coated vs. non-Multi-Coated Filters

by John Roberts

In today's digital world, many filters that we used in the days of film have fallen out of favour; like the colour correcting filters for instance. Today, we set the white balance in the camera, and have no need for a FLD filter to allow us to photograph under fluorescent lights.

The three most common filters used right now are the: UV/Protector, Circular Polarizer and Neutral Density. Many of us still have a bunch from our days of shooting on film; does this mean that we can just use these and carry on like nothing has changed? Yes, and no.

Many of the filters used in the days of film, have only a single coating, or if it is multi-coated, it is on only one side of the filter. I can see you asking, "Why would both sides of the filter need to be coated?" Let me tell you why.

In the days of film, the emulsion side of the film, was a matte finish; when light came into the lens, it would hit the film, and not reflect. But in digital cameras, the sensor is very reflective. When a point source of light comes through the lens, and hits the sensor, it can reflect off of the sensor, back through the lens, hit the non-multi-coated filter, and reflect back through the lens onto the sensor. If it is a strong point source (e.g. the sun) this process will repeat itself, until the level of light is no longer strong enough to do so. This is what we call "Ghosting."

I am sure we have all seen it watching the evening news. The camera does a pan of a street scene, and the headlights of a passing vehicle have green twins in a mirrored position opposite of them.

Think about your photos for a minute; you know that photo taken at the birthday party, when the lights were out, and the candles on the cake had greenish orbs above them, right on the persons face. Yes that is ghosting!

By using the appropriate multi-coated filters, this can be easily remedied. Many of today's filters say "Digital" on them, but you have to check if they are truly multi-coated.

Some brands are better than others, and some certainly cost more; but it is not always the most expensive that are the best. Sure they may be built better, using brass or titanium rings, versus aluminium. So yes, multi-coated filters do make a difference.

Why Use Filters?

The question really is, "why use camera filters vs. doing it in Photoshop?" There are a couple of answers to this so let's start with the easy one.

Neutral density and polarizing filters: these have to be used on camera: you can't fix this later. These filters alter the image in ways that you cannot replicate in digital editing. Neutral density filters allow you to change the shutter speed (or aperture) to achieve a specific effect, usually with moving objects such as vehicles, water (smooth, misty water) skies or other image components. Similarly, polarizing filters change the transmission of light through the filter to significantly reduce glare from reflective objects that include water, skylight, and vegetation (see article on page 20).

Graduated Neutral Density Filters: these are generally low density on one edge and reduced to clear on the other edge, or in the middle. They are used to reduce the exposure of typically the upper portion of the image which is often "bright sky." They have been used in photography for many years but the effect can be easily replicated in digital editing with much more flexibility providing that the image is not overexposed in the highlights. This may mean using HDR techniques and merging the images to produce a very natural interpretation of the scene.

Colour Correction Filters: these were used with film where colour film was balanced for either daylight or tungsten (artificial) light. These are now redundant providing you set the appropriate colour balance in-camera if shooting only JPEGs, or make the appropriate colour balance adjustment in your RAW file.

Special Effects Filters: these can take many forms but the fundamental question is, "can the effect be replicated in digital editing?" If the answer to this question is yes, then doing it in editing gives you much more flexibility to make the effect exactly match your vision. However, if it can't be done in editing then you need to use the filter on the lens.

Photoshop Filters and Plug-Ins: these terms are sometimes used interchangeably to reference small programs that can be used within Photoshop. There are many filters available on the Internet, or, if you can't find what you need, you might be able to develop it yourself. FilterForge is one well-known tool for creating custom filters.

by Don Peterson

Subject matter for street photography is found in and around cities and towns in the built environment. The subjects of greatest interest to street photographers are, for good reason, people. Candid images of people going about their everyday lives convey a sense of our shared humanity and provides an emotional content to images that distinguishes street photographs from other types of photography.

But the pursuit of street photography is not for the faint of heart. It is challenging to approach and photograph strangers, or even to photograph people who are completely unaware of your presence. It can also be an exhilarating experience particularly when using a wide-angle lens that requires the photographer to be "in the scene."

The street photographer in me seems to emerge whenever I visit a strange city. I recently had a chance to visit Montréal and hoped to spend the better part of two days walking the older neighbourhoods, shopping districts and other public areas in search of interesting street scenes.

However, I learned that Québec is the only Province (or State) in North America where photographers are required to get permission from the subjects for photographs that will be presented to the public. There are no laws against taking photographs, only against publishing them without permission.



"Wait"

The only situation where such permission is not needed is when the photo is of a crowd, if it's considered legitimate news, or considered to be in the public interest. I recognized that for any images taken in Montréal that I may want to share publicly, I would need to seek out the person's permission. This has limited the images I can share in *Close-Up*.

In "Wait!" the gentleman was sighted singing Sinatra in front of a department store on Rue St. Catherine. After listening and watching for a few minutes, I approached and pressed the shutter at the moment he realized that he was being photographed. While he was actually happy to have his picture taken, he really wanted to pose for me, which he did later. However, his spontaneous reaction captured in this first image is worth more than a hundred posed images of the same subject. Street performers are usually very open to having their photographs taken, as in the subject of "Blues."



"Blues"

There are specific techniques that I use in photographing street subjects at close range. I ensure the auto-off setting on my camera is disabled; there is nothing more frustrating than missing a photo because your camera has timed out!

I always check that I have the exposure correctly set for the immediate area where I am walking and then regularly re-check the exposure as I walk along a street. This way, exposure is not a concern when I encounter a potential subject.

I typically have my lens aperture set close to wide open on my wide-angle lens so a reasonable shutter speed can be maintained and there is some depth of field

separation between my subject and the background.

I sometimes have my camera set on manual focus mode and use hyper-focal distance to ensure my subjects will be in focus if I am within a certain distance. At other times I use the auto-focus feature on my camera.

I always use a wide angle lens in an attempt to capture the intimacy that is so desirable in a street photograph. Longer lenses can provide technically acceptable street photographs, but the results will usually feel emotionally detached by comparison.

Once a subject is spotted, the speed at which you act is paramount. In this way I find street photography similar to shooting birds in flight; often your subjects are in constant motion so you must be ready at all times. When I notice a subject from a distance and decide to approach, I choose a distance from which I want to shoot and make any adjustments before I reach shooting range. In that way any final changes to the camera are minor and can be made quickly.



"Bouquet"

"Bouquet" was taken in Jean Talon public market and is an example of a "lucky accident" that sometimes happens when photographing on the street. I was watching the street musician in the foreground and, while taking his picture I unintentionally captured a second man with his head buried in a huge bouquet of flowers. This added a second layer of interest to the image. As one of the fathers of street photography,

Henri Cartier Bresson said: *"It's always luck. It's luck that matters. You have to be receptive, that's all."*

Backgrounds in street photography can be a real challenge, so a common technique is to find an interesting background and then wait for an appropriate subject to arrive and complete the scene. In "Note to Self" the subject had already placed himself in front of a background that brought a sense of irony to the scene.



"Note to Self"

City streets are a great place to take photographs. Even mediocre shots can capture something of the energy, the romance and the humour of everyday life. There are many appealing things about street photography. There is no need for fancy equipment, just an unobtrusive camera, a practiced eye and clothing that will help you fit in.

It is a very rewarding way to spend your time particularly when visiting a new city like I did in Montréal. By the way, the people of Montréal turned out to be amongst the friendliest we have had the pleasure of meeting, anywhere. As for the stringent Québec laws governing public photography, they proved to be of little hindrance to an amateur photographer like me.

[Ed. Please see the previous article on Street Photography by Don Peterson in the December 2010 Close-Up, and an article by Tom Gore on the History of Street Photography to be published in the January 2014 issue.]

How to Peel a Cucumber

by John Ducker

This project was intended to use the power of the lens coupled with electronic flash to catch an ordinary moment of everyday life in an unusual way.

A tripod couldn't be positioned to work properly inside a kitchen sink so the faithful "hands of man" method was employed. A stainless steel sink presented a poor backdrop in relation to a green cucumber and a stainless vegetable peeler. This was overcome by simply using a white plastic garbage bag as a white look gave a "kitcheny" feel to the shot.



My Nikon D7000 was set to manual control for this project. The 28-300 mm f3.5-4.5 lens was adjusted to 90 mm to provide some optical compression in a confined working space. ISO was set just above minimum to 200 to try and balance the requirements of shutter speed to freeze the water drops while maintaining high image quality. Spot focus mode kept the focus directed on the centre area where the tap water was impacting the cucumber.

An SB 800 Speedlight was set to TTL because it's an area I'm weak in understanding, and needed all the help from the flash's brain I could muster. Shutter speed was set at the max sync speed of 1/250 sec. It's a slow shutter in relation to fast moving water, so it was important that the cuke was positioned in such a way to break the flow of the water over it while being peeled.

Cropping, sharpening and extra vibrancy were the only adjustments made using Apple's Aperture software.

The irony of the whole project is that I actually hate cukes.

Spirit Falls

by Richard Webber

This image is actually two identical images combined by reversing one onto the other, a technique referred to as a "Mirror Montage." To create the original base image it was necessary to bracket my images due to the wide dynamic range of the subject thus creating a HDR image. To create a silky look to the flowing water slow shutter speeds are required.

So, I took three bracketed images of upper Christie Falls. Specific camera settings with a Nikon D7000 included a focal length of 18 mm with an f16 aperture and shutter speeds of 1/5, 1/2 sec and 1.3 sec. I processed the HDR (high dynamic range) image using Nik HDR Pro 2.0 and completed the post-processing in Lightroom 4.

I then opened a monochrome version of my image in Photoshop CS6. The steps in Photoshop are easy. First, to create a "mirror" or copy of your image, go to the image tab and select "Duplicate." The next step involves rotating one of the images. To do so, go to the Image tab and select "rotate canvas." In this case I opted to "flip canvas horizontally."

The final step involves creating the montage by combining the two images. To do this use the move tool and then shift+drag one image onto the other. Both photos will appear as separate layers in the Layers window in Photoshop. I then selected "lighten" blend mode to combine the two images. I then applied a levels and curves adjustment to adjust the brightness and highlights.

This is a great technique for creating symmetrical and powerful graphic images.



Tuesday Shoots

by Alan Heartfield

December 3rd: Backlit Lighting. Today's challenge is to photograph under one of the most difficult lighting conditions we can encounter, backlighting. The subject can be a person or an object, lit by natural or artificial light. It will of course be easiest to render the subject as a silhouette, and this can create an effective photograph. Alternatively the subject can be revealed to provide details either by adjusting exposure settings or providing some light to the front. A reflector or a fill flash can be used to do this if there is not sufficient ambient light. The exercise will give us an opportunity to try different metering settings and to use our skills and equipment to minimize flare. Let's hope for a sunny day.

December 17th: Body Language. This challenge involves shooting things that move in an expressive manner. The shot can be made during the movement, giving us an opportunity to shoot in S mode rather than A (or P for you professionals in the group). Or the shot can be made after the movement is done, but with the body showing an expression or mood. This does not imply you can stand on the corner and snap people walking by, unless an adjective can be ascribed to the individual's walk. If John Cleese walks by, chances are more than one adjective will fit. For most of us, no adjectives fit unless we are in a specific mood such as anger or fear or we are drunk. Try and get as many adjectives in your shots today as you can.



Weekend Shoots

by Dave McLean

Esquimalt Lagoon: I believe that over the past several years, there have been more 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place images in our competitions shot at, and around, Esquimalt Lagoon than any other area in Victoria. One of the best times to shoot the lagoon is during the winter. Between November and February/March, many species of ducks over-winter in the lagoon. The birds at this time of year have also long finished their molting and are once again at their most colourful. There is also quite a variety of long legged wading birds along the shoreline.

The best time for shooting the birds on the inside of the lagoon is between sunrise and before noon, when the sun is behind you. Save the late afternoon and early evening for shooting the birds on the outside of the lagoon. If you notice a lot of bird activity off the waterfront of Royal Roads, then a short drive will take you to the parking area along the water. This is a great place to shoot in the later afternoon/early evening as the sun will again be behind you.

For the wading and other shore birds, it is often best to plan your visit for an incoming tide. These birds are very skittish and are often difficult to approach, so an outgoing tide makes it difficult, as you will be continuously trying to stalk them; however, if you spot a number of the birds on the small sandbars, get yourself set up closer to the last tideline and wait for the tide to come in and the birds will come right to you!

As with many wildlife shots, it is best to get at eye level with your subject. Bring knee pads or something to kneel on, as there is a lot of "goo" on the shore of the lagoon. Also try some panning shots: make sure you have a spare card, as you will likely take a large number of shots in the hope of that "perfect shot."

Birds that you might find here include: Mute and Trumpeter Swans, Canada Geese, many duck species (best in winter) including Mallard, Pintail, American Wigeon, Buffelhead, Hooded Merganser; Black Oystercatcher, Bald Eagle, Turkey Vulture, Kingfisher, Great Blue Heron, Sandpipers, assorted Gulls and seasonally Osprey, Caspian Terns (summer). On the outside, Surf Scoters, Common and Red-Necked Grebe. Harbour Seals and River Otters are sometimes found in the lagoon as well.

Watch the calendar for Esquimalt Lagoon field trips.

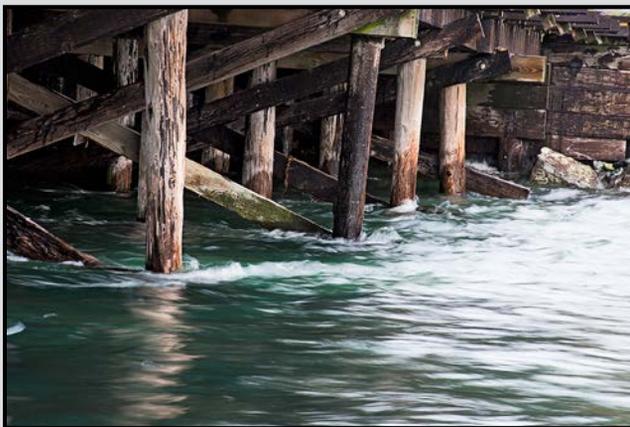
Reflected Light

by Nancy MacNab

Reflections make an interesting subject. By photographing your subject in front of a mirror, you can see both sides at the same time. Framing your photo so it shows only the reflection, on the other hand, can produce an interesting abstract result.

At other times, reflections can be a distraction from your actual subject. They seem to turn up in the strangest of places, too. You expect to see reflections in glass, mirrors, or water; however, who but a photographer would think of how light reflects off shiny leaves, on well-polished cars, or plastic?

Reflections turn up in photos not only as recognizable (and desirable) elements, but also as that dreaded white glare from which it is impossible to retrieve any detail (image below). Any time you combine bright light coming from one specific source, such as the sun or a flash, with a reflective surface that directs the light back up at the same angle it is hitting, you have the potential for a white patch of reflection. The result is light bouncing off an object at an angle that leaves only a brilliant white spot. First the unwanted reflection must be noticed, and then it must be controlled.



Perhaps the most obvious way to get rid of the unwanted reflection is to change your angle of view. Instead of that dramatic back lighting, perhaps have the light coming from behind and to the side of your subject. This is not always practical as there may be obstacles in your way that prevent you from moving (such as logs, lakes, walls, etc). Another impediment is that perhaps this is the only angle at which you can get the shot you want of your subject.

The next way to get rid of unwanted reflections is by using a circular polarizer filter (image below). To adjust it, you rotate the front ring until the reflections are minimized and the colours become more saturated. You will also notice that it can change the shade of greens and blues. Circular polarizers can also be used to enhance the blue of the sky, making the clouds “pop.”



You can use reflected light to your advantage when a part of your subject is in shade. While a flash pointed directly at your subject can make one part much brighter than the rest, reflected light is much softer and more subdued, adding just enough light to balance it with the light already on your subject.

Anything white or light-coloured can be used to bounce light into that spot, revealing details in what would otherwise be a dark area. A piece of white paper or fabric, tin foil that has been crumpled and then flattened, or a white wall have all been put to good use for this purpose – no need for a purpose-made collapsible reflector from a store – unless you want the convenience of the wire rim for holding it wherever it is needed.

The light from a flash, whether on the camera or off, can also be bounced or reflected off another surface. White walls or ceilings can be used for this when photographing inside buildings. Remember, though, that the light will take on the colour of the surface off which it is reflecting, so if it is a blue wall, the light will be bluish too.

The biggest challenge with reflections or reflected light is noticing it in the first place. Once you have spotted it, then you have to decide how to deal with it. “Getting it right” in the camera can save you a lot of time on the computer after your shoot.

by John Coenraads

If you have ever been tempted to try Photoshop's Custom filter (Filters>Other>Custom), you may have been frustrated by the cryptic interface, which gives little guidance as to how it ought to be used. Entering numbers randomly is unlikely to produce much of anything let alone something useful or even just interesting. Custom filter requires an understanding of its inner workings, and even then 95% of what you create can be done much more conveniently using one of Photoshop's canned filters. But the lure lies in the remaining 5% where you may create (and save) a unique filter of your own design. At the least, exploring Custom filter will give you new insight into the inner workings of Photoshop and help you while away an afternoon.

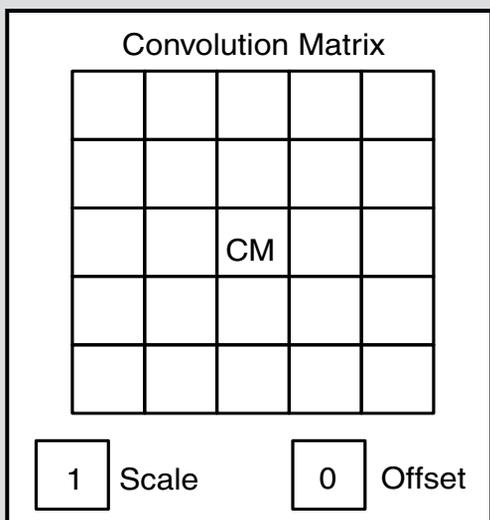


Figure 1: Key elements of the Custom filter interface.

It's Just Arithmetic

Most of what goes on inside Photoshop involves just simple arithmetic and Custom filter is no exception. This filter lets you specify directly the computation you want performed on the pixel values in your image. Figure 1 shows the key elements of the interface. The 5x5 matrix looks intimidating, but we'll begin our exploration by concentrating on the centre cell where we'll enter a number I'll refer to as the Central Multiplier (CM). The other two numbers involved in the computation are Scale and Offset whose default values are one and zero respectively.

Figure 2 specifies the computation. First of all, the original pixel value is multiplied by the CM. That result is divided by Scale and then Offset is added (or subtracted if negative). Although I will describe the

result in each step of our exploration, I recommend that you open Photoshop, load up a favourite image, and try out each step yourself.

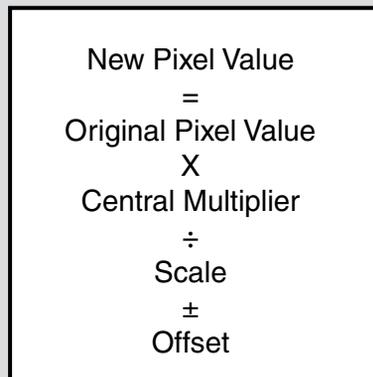


Figure 2: The basic computation performed by Custom filter.

Throughout, it is helpful to have the Histogram window visible. If the RGB channel is used, and with Preview checked, Photoshop lets you compare the original histogram with that of the new image as you experiment with different parameter values.

One: Leaving Scale and Offset at their default settings, enter CM = 1, and observe that multiplying the pixel values by one leaves your image unchanged. This then is the default value for CM.

Two: Now set CM = 2. Do not click on OK. The change shows up immediately, and, not surprisingly, the new image is horribly overexposed. The original pixel values ranging from 0 to 255 have been expanded to 0 to 510, and the out of range values appear as white. But the out of range values, despite what the histogram shows, have not been discarded. They are still there, and returning CM = 1 recovers the original image. By clicking on the small preview window, you can compare the new image with the original and examine any portion of the image at magnification. Note that should you click OK, the out of range values are discarded and the new image becomes the "new" original image.

Zero: With CM = 0, the new image is of course all black. At this point try setting the Offset = 128 or any other value. This yields a uniform grey field whose intensity depends on the Offset value chosen.

Negative One: With Offset = 0, set CM = -1. The values from 0 to 255 have now been inverted to 0 to -255 and the new image appears all black. To bring these values back into view, set Offset = 255. Adding 255

to the negative pixel values yields a new image with complementary colours. Observe how the histogram has been “flipped.”

One-half: If you try $CM = 0.5$ (hit enter), an error message reminds you that CM values are limited to integer values from -999 to 999. This is where Scale comes in. Setting $CM = 1$, $Offset = 0$ and $Scale = 2$ is equivalent, because of the division by two, to giving CM a value of one-half. The histogram shows the resulting compression.

Ninety-five per cent: If you wish to make subtle tonal adjustments to your image, I find it convenient to set $Scale = 100$ so that entering $CM = 95$ lets me treat the 95 as a per cent. Values greater than 100% are also allowed. For example, $CM = 110$ results in a subtle brightening of the image, but do check the histogram for clipping.

I use a rather simple mental picture when I try to visualize the effect changing the parameters in Custom filter will have. Imagine looking out on a harbour through a window at ships where the height of the flag on the mast corresponds to a pixel value. The flags on masts taller than 255 feet are out of view. Now imagine how changing the parameters changes the position of the original flag flying at a height of 150 feet.

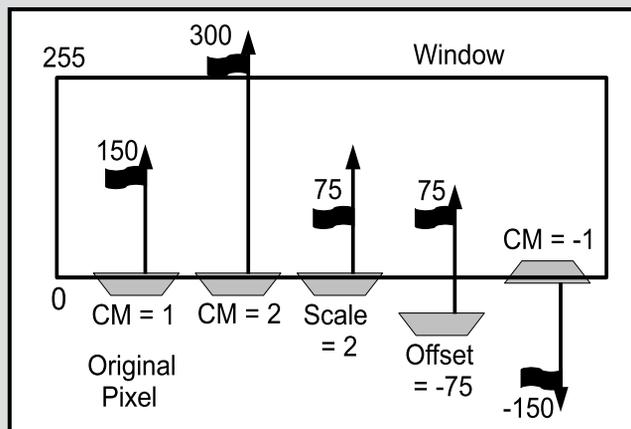


Figure 3: Flags, representing pixel values, change their heights as parameters are changed.

CM = 2: The mast extends to double its length; the flag is too high to be seen, and the pixel appears as white.

Scale = 2: This is equivalent to putting the flag at half mast. Note that the pixel values, although compressed, all remain visible.

Offset = -75: Offset controls the tide, and when the

tide goes out, the whole boat sinks lower. Small pixel values will turn black.

CM = -1: Here the boat turns turtle, and all pixel values yield black. Only by bringing in the tide, using a positive value for Offset, will the flags become visible again.

So you are now in a position to create and save any custom filter that modifies the pixel values through multiplication, division, addition and/or subtraction. Here is an example: Set $CM = 261$, $Scale = 255$ and $Offset = -3$. Click on OK, and then apply the filter repeatedly using $Ctrl+F$.

With each application, the contrast increases without altering the overall brightness. There is no prize for predicting what $CM = 249$, $Scale = 255$ and $Offset = 3$ does.

If you wish to start experimenting with other matrix elements, try the following. Set the central multiplier to zero, and set any one of the corner multipliers in the matrix to one. Click on OK, and now apply this filter repeatedly. This filter works especially well if your image has colourful edges. The result shows that at each point in the image, the central pixel is replaced by the pixel coming from the location you have chosen, and it answers the important question, “What happens at the edges?” Answer: At the edges of the image, the pixels are repeated and extended outward as needed. See figure 4.

These filters would be potentially useful were it not for the fact that Photoshop already has multiple ways of achieving the same effects more conveniently.

In the next issue of *Close-Up*, “*Custom Filters: Part Two*,” I will show you how to unleash the full power of *The Matrix*.



Figure 4: Edge elements are repeated when needed.



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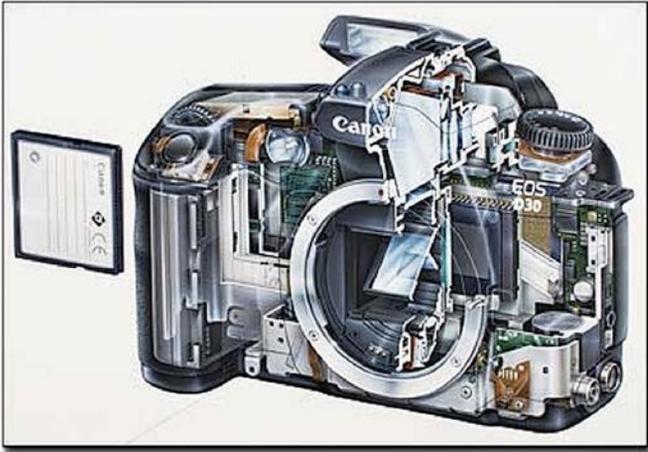
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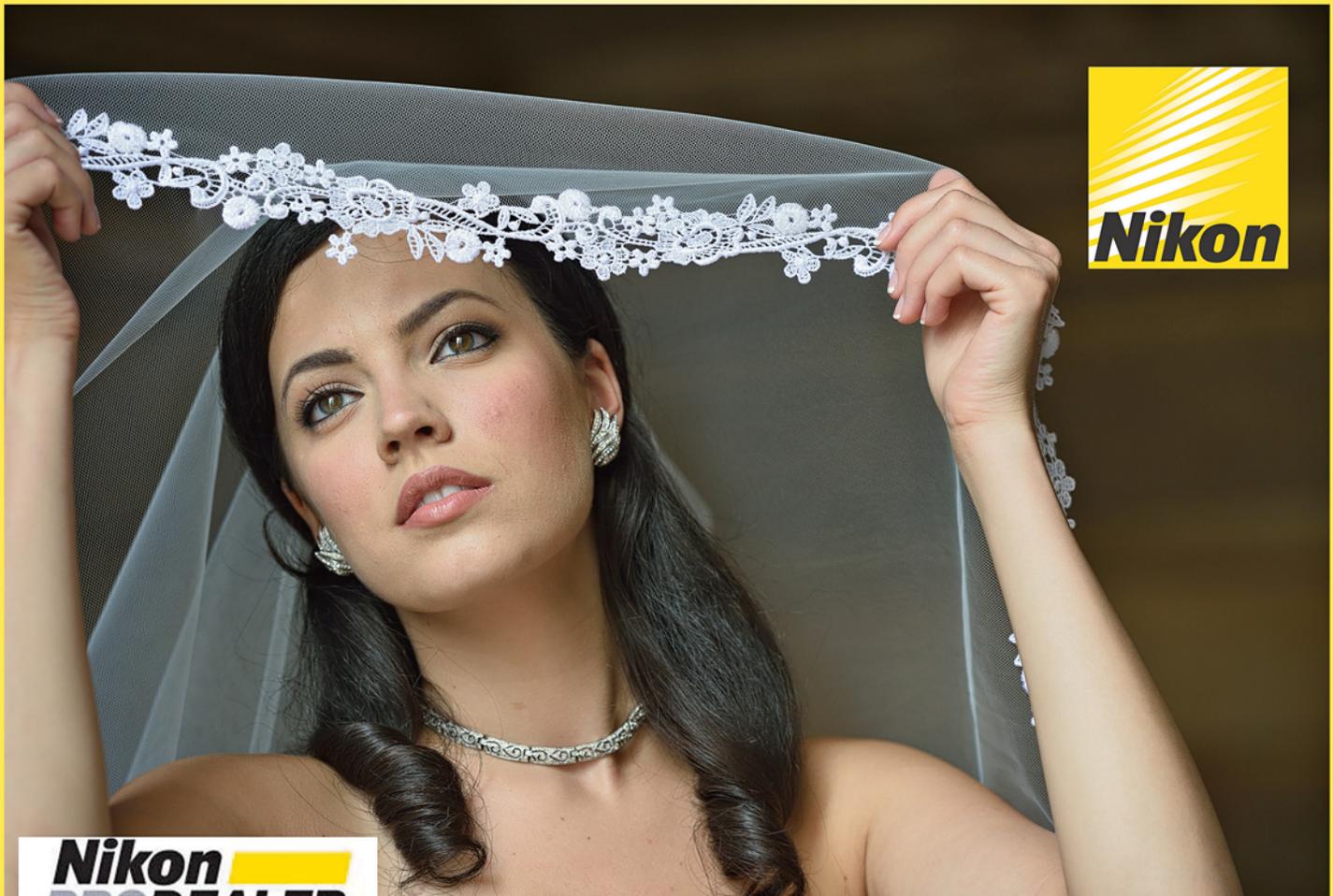
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