Dapto Camera Club Newsletter

Viewfinder.

September 2017

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Master the art of constructive criticism:

Have you ever seen a photographer share an image on social media, saying how much they love this particular image, only to have some random person comment with criticism? Sometimes the comments may be constructive criticism, other times they're just plain criticism like, 'This photo sucks, and you're a terrible photographer." We don't need to get into the dynamics of what might cause someone to leave the latter sort of comment because that's just not worth any of our time.

One thing that we should spend a bit of time thinking about is whether the person you're responding to is actually asking for constructive criticism. There are a lot of great Facebook groups for new photographers to give and receive constructive criticism. That's an appropriate place to offer thoughtful feedback about another person's image. However, a photographer's personal Facebook page may not be an appropriate place for that sort of feedback. You obviously have the freedom to say whatever you'd like, but I'd argue that offering criticism (even if it is constructive) when it hasn't been asked for is very rarely helpful.

Use a Compliment Sandwich

Most of us have heard about the concept of a compliment sandwich before. This idea isn't new or ground breaking, but I want to reiterate just how effective it can be in terms of providing constructive criticism that is actually heard by the recipient.

Straight Criticism: Your composition sucks. The baby should be either in the centre or following the rule of thirds.

Constructive Criticism: The photo would be stronger if you composed it differently. I would have put the baby in the centre of the frame so that there was the same amount of greenery on either side.

Compliment Sandwich: The vibrant colours of the flowers are a really unique and fun contrast to the usual neutrals you see in newborn photos, I like it a lot! One thing that could make the image stronger would be to adjust your composition so that the baby is in the centre of the frame. Or, you could adjust the other direction so that the baby is more off-centre, following the rule of thirds, which would make your composition look more intentional instead of accidental. Overall though, good job on exposure, focus, and colouring!

As you can see, the essential criticism is the same in all three examples. However, when you use a compliment sandwich, that same criticism is framed in a way that serves to build the recipient up which will make it more likely that they are able to hear and internalize your feedback.

Understanding light

Understanding light is the core theoretical skill of the photographer. The ability to manage and control what is shown in an image is a planned way all stems from this.

This tip is sponsored by Kent Dufault's comprehensive guide to Understanding Light [http://clicks.aweber.com/y/ct/?l=td9p7.&m=3dtvER402fwhQL9&b=HRQZd6RTW0DFTJCrjrtmqw] - a guide for advanced photographers.

Diffusing light, in many different instances, is going to be one of the bread and butter skills of most photographers - especially if they photography people, but also in other types of photography.

Diffused light tends to present subjects in a far more visually satisfying way than harsh light.

Here are the **three main ways** to soften light to get those more attractive images.

Diffuse It - This basically means putting something between the harsh light source and your subject. This might be a professionally made diffuser, but can also be as simple as a window curtain, a sheet or even by placing the white sheet reflector in your camera bag between the sun and your model. This doesn't need to be complicated, but for most people photography in harsh conditions (which does include flash), it does need to be done.

Place Your Subject Near Bounced Light - Taking your subject out of the direct light of the sun or a flash (etc) is very common. If you can find an area in which you can place them that allows bounced light to fall on them, then you will end up with a more desirable picture. Typically this is a wall or ceiling in the case of flash photography (you will notice that many wedding photographers point their flash at a wall or the ceiling).

Use a Reflector - Reflectors are usually used to "fill in the shadows" when harsh light fall across your subject. They are one of the most effective pieces of cheap kit that you can carry so strongly consider getting one for your camera bag.

Now understanding and controlling light is a topic that is far too large for a quick email like this so check out Kent's guide if you get a chance.
https://www.lightstalking.com/

Links of Interest:

Viewbug - http://www.viewbug.com/

ePHOTOzine - http://www.ephotozine.com/

Federation of Camera Clubs [NSW] - http://www.photographynsw.org.au/

Australian Photographic Society - http://www.a-p-s.org.au/

Gurushots - https://gurushots.com/

Free Lessons with Serge Ramelli - http://photoserge.com/free-lessons/all

The Best Method For Fireworks

By Levi Sim

Making a good fireworks picture is satisfying and difficult. So here are two tips for making great fireworks photos.

f/8, 3 Seconds, ISO 400 on a Tripod

Use a tripod for this technique. It doesn't have to be fancy.

Try those settings (f/8, 3 Seconds, ISO 400) and you can't go wrong. To adjust how bright the fireworks streams are, change the aperture. A smaller aperture, like f/11, will make the fireworks darker, f/5.6 will make them brighter. f/8 is a good starting point. If you make them too bright, you'll lose colour intensity.

If you want to adjust how long the streams are, change the shutter speed. Longer speeds, like 5 seconds, will make longer trails, but it will also make bunches of bursts brighter. That is to say, when many rockets go up at the same time, a longer shutter speed will record all those launches and they will be recorded on top of each other and you'll end up with a really bright spot where they overlap, as in this picture.

If you want to lift the brightness of the whole picture, you can turn up the ISO. Don't be shy about it, either. High ISO is your friend, and I doubt you'll need to go above 1600. If you raise the ISO, you may want to close the aperture a little more to darken the streams of sparks back to where they were.

Please remember: you're shooting a black sky and un-lit foreground at night time. It's supposed to be dark. This picture will look mostly black with highlights of fireworks. Your histogram will look terrible, like a U with an empty centre. It's fine. It's night time.

Shoot a Time-lapse

A time-lapse video speeds up time and shows change very quickly. In this case, you should just shoot the frames for a time-lapse, not a video. Many Nikons have this ability, but you should choose Interval Shooting, not Time-lapse (this setting makes the video only). All Lumix cameras can shoot a time-lapse sequence and leave you with all the individual pictures, and your camera may have a built-in intervalometer, too.

Set your interval to the minimum, which is usually 1 second. That means it will take pictures with a 1-second space between frames. Set the number of shots to something very high, like 9999 so that you don't have to worry about it stopping in the middle of the show.

If you don't have a built-in setting, you can buy and external intervalometer to control your camera and make pictures over time. You can buy an expensive branded one or an inexpensive off-brand tool. I'd go with the off-brand tool, just make sure you buy the one designed to mate with your camera model so it's got the right kind of plug.

The benefit to using an intervalometer to shoot a time-lapse sequence is that you won't miss any shots and you can just sit back and enjoy the show with your friends and family while your camera is working away making great pictures.

Frame, Focus, Format, Let 'er Rip

To get setup, just frame your shot how you like. If it's already dark outside, you can turn the ISO up as high as possible and make a picture at a faster shutter speed, like 1/20th of a second, to see what your composition looks like. Once you've got the correct framing, drop the settings back down to f/8, 3 seconds, ISO 400.

You'll need to switch to manual focus so the camera doesn't have trouble hunting for focus while shooting your interval. First, use autofocus to focus on something about the same distance away as the fireworks will be. If it's dark, use the center-most focus point and focus on a light source.

You'll be making a lot of pictures, so be sure to format your memory card before starting. Try to use a fast card, too. If your card is too slow, the camera won't be able to record more pictures until some are written to the card and you'll miss a few pictures here and there.

Now just start the interval and enjoy the show. Best of all, you can use the pictures to make a time-lapse video if you like.

How To Take A 'WOW' Photo

by David Peterson 21 comments

Some pictures are simply impossible to describe. They yank us right out of our seats and force us to pay attention. The only thing we have left to say is "Wow! I didn't think you could do that." It is the photographer's dream and ultimate goal to produce pictures like this, and even the best photographers will tell you it isn't something that happens every day. While luck is definitely a factor, there are ways to increase your odds of creating a stunning image whenever you go out and shoot. Here are a few tips that will help you knock people to the floor with your photography.

You will notice that the picture above is not perfectly cantered. This actually makes it much more visually appealing. The eye is forced to follow the outline of the trees across the photo, giving it more of a feeling of flow. Consider the rule of thirds. If you divide your photo into thirds and do your best to put the interesting subject matter somewhere along the thirds lines, you will often end up with a nice composition. Notice how the sun in the above picture occurs at the top third, a point of interest. Even though the rule of thirds doesn't apply all the time, it's a good bet. And good bets are all we can hope for when it comes to crafting an amazing image.

Shoot when the light is right

The most interesting photos are oftentimes very colourful. The light just after sunrise and just before sunset is the best for capturing real photographic drama. You're much more likely to find something interesting to shoot when your subjects are illuminated by less harsh light. Change your daily exercise routine so you're out at sunrise and sunset every day with your camera. Bring a tripod along to keep your camera still for longer exposures (it's weight will help your running too!). Less light is available in the early morning and at dusk, so this is very important.
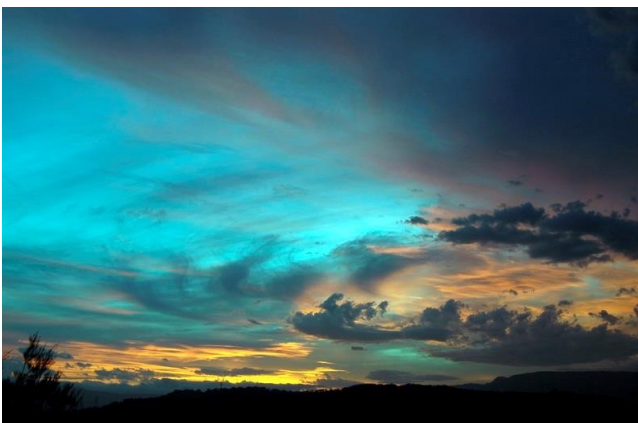
If you have an external flash, bring it along. The light in the early morning and at dusk shines to the sides of things. This means about half of your subjects will be in the shadows. You might need to throw some extra light on them in order to get the shot you want.

Try to find the right subjects at the right moments with the right weather

This is the part that constitutes most of the "luck" in photography. Nevertheless, you still have some degree of control. Look for things that stick out on their own. Finding an interesting subject in an interesting situation is one of the biggest challenges a photographer will face, and I only have one piece of advice. Go on a lot of walks and pay attention. Notice how the light hits a subject at 7:00 A.M., then at 7:15 A.M., and again at 7:30 A.M. Wait until the perfect moment, and take your shot.

Five Tips For Great Sunset Photos

Sunsets and sunrises are inspirational subjects for any photographer. In fact, a good sunset photo is often the reason people become interested in nature photography. You don't need to have a great camera or professional training; almost anyone with a camera can take great sunset photos.

The great news is that good sunset photos are surprisingly easy to take. In my gallery, I don't actually display many sunset photographs. You see, they are hard to sell, because almost everybody has a few great sunsets they have photographed themselves. Rather than buy mine, they are more likely to grab their camera and show me the picture they took the night before!

Photo by Aikawa Ke.

As a result, I am often asked to evaluate sunset photos by amateur photographers (occupational hazard for a nature photographer!), and I have learned to quickly identify where most people go wrong. It is not hard to expose a sunset photo; in many cases you can leave your camera on auto and it will do the work for you. The trouble people have is in making an interesting composition. It is not good enough just to photograph a good sky. The real challenge lies in turning a spectacular sky into a compelling photograph.

Here are my five tips for taking great sunset (and sunrise) photos.

Sunset Photography Tip #1: Prediction

Learn to predict a good sunset before it happens. Have you ever seen a perfect sky, only to realize you didn't have your camera handy? In the five minutes it takes to get your camera and set up for the photo, the moment has passed. As brilliant as a sunset can be, the effect may last for only a few minutes, so you need to be able to choose your location, set up your camera, and be waiting for the show to start.

Sunset Photography Tip #2: Patience

Be patient to get the best colours. The few minutes as the sun is crossing the horizon can be spectacular, but that's not the whole story of a sunset. As the sinking sun lights the clouds from below, often the richest colours appear up to half an hour later. By this time it will be getting quite dark, so be prepared with your tripod. You may be shooting exposures of half a second or more to bring out the best in your sunset photograph.

Photo by Matej Duzel; ISO 200, 1/2500-second exposure.

Sunset Photography Tip #3: Foreground

Find a good foreground subject. This may be the most important tip of all. Time after time when people show me their sunset photos, and all I can think is, "Great sky…pity you didn't make a better photo out of it." We have all seen and photographed spectacular skies, so that alone is not enough to create your work of art. Try to identify some object that stands well above the horizon (trees, windmills, buildings, power-lines) and has a shape that will create a good silhouette. It doesn't have to fill up your picture. In fact, it may only take up a small area–that will only make the sky seem even more impressive. The important thing is to give your picture a focal point, so that your viewer has something more interesting to look at than just a great sky. Think back to tip #1. To get a great photo you need to be prepared in advance, so scout your location for a good foreground well before the razzle-dazzle gets underway.

Sunset Photography Tip #4: Colour

Fill your photo with colour. You have probably heard of the rule of thirds in landscape photography. In simple terms, this rule suggests your horizon should be a third of the way from the top, or from the bottom, of your photo to create a balanced composition. The trouble is, when you are photographing into the sunset, everything in the foreground will be in silhouette. This means if you follow the rule of thirds, a big part of your composition will be totally black. This is one situation where you can ignore the rule of thirds. By allowing your sky to dominate the composition, you fill your picture with colour and draw even more attention to the richness of the sunset.

Sunset Photography Tip #5: Water

If you're near water, use it to enhance the effect. People often see a sunset at the beach or by a river and stand a long way back to get their shot. This approach fails to take advantage of the reflections on the water, so instead of a rich foreground there will be too much empty black space.

Get right down to the water's edge or to the wet sand on the beach. By capturing the reflections, your foreground will echo the colour of the sky. Not only will your photo be more colourful, but you will start to spot opportunities for much more interesting compositions.

So there you have my simple tips on sunset photography. Notice that I have concentrated on creativity, not technology. As I said at the beginning, exposing a good sunset photo is not difficult; the challenge is to make your photo stand out from the rest. Like all good nature photography, your sensitivity to nature is far more important than technical expertise. Allow nature to inspire you, think creatively, and great results are sure to follow. Good luck!

https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/sunset-photos-tips-techniques/

How to Use Converging Lines to Enhance Your Photography

By Steve Coleman

When framing a landscape shot one of the types of environmental features that many photographers look for and like to incorporate in their shots is converging lines.

We've talked previously about how lines have the potential to add interest to an image – but multiple lines that converge together (or come close to one another) can be a great technique to lead your viewers eye into a shot.

Perhaps the classic example (and one that's probably been overdone) of converging lines are railway tracks.

Position yourself in the middle of two tracks (after taking a look at what might be coming from behind of course) and you'll see the two tracks on either side of you appear to get closer and closer together as they go into the distance.

Note: we don't really recommend taking shots on tracks in this way. Safety first!

Take this shot and the natural reaction for those looking at the scene will be for them to follow the lines off into the distance. In a sense the two lines act like a funnel which directs the gaze of those entering them in a certain direction.

The same effect can be achieved with roads or pathways, converging fence lines, a set of stairs, power lines or virtually any other lines that run parallel into the distance or that actually converge at some point.

4 Tips Regarding Converging Lines

1. Experiment with Positioning – the classic railway line/road shot described above has many possibilities. One is to position the tracks dead center and symmetrically in the shot.

Another positioning would be to step to one side of the tracks and let them run diagonally through your frame from a lower corner to the opposite upper corner. The beauty of this is that you'll end up with a more dynamic shot. Symmetrical and vertical placement of the lines can be powerful but diagonal lines tend to convey movement. Alternatively stepping away from the start of the lines can give another perspective – as can holding your camera on an angle to give another diagonal framing of the lines.

2. Wide Angle Lenses – different lenses can totally change the impact of a shot with converging lines. I find that a wide angle lens can be particularly useful – especially when positioning yourself between the two lines.

This will help to give the perception that the distance between the lines at the starting point of the

image is wider than it is. This exaggeration of the width of your lines can have a powerful impact upon your shot.

As you're framing your shot ask yourself – 'where is the most effective position to frame this?"

3. Positioning the 'convergence' – one thing to consider when you have converging lines in an image is that they draw the eye into a shot – towards the point that they converge – this becomes one of the most important parts of this image – a focal point.

Keep in mind rules like the Rule of Thirds that says that the intersecting points of imaginary lines a third of the way into an image are key points for positioning points of interest. This can be a good place to let your converging lines lead (although breaking this rule can be powerful too)

Also know that if the point of convergence is outside the frame of the shot that you are leading the eye out of your shot. This could leave a shot unbalanced and with tension – alternatively it could enhance the shot and leave your viewers wondering about the place that they converge.

4. Adding Interest at the Point of Convergence – Sometimes it is worth enhancing the point of convergence with something of interest (for example waiting until a train appears in the distance on the tracks – or positioning a person at the top of stairs) – on other occasions the composition of the shot is strong enough without adding an extra subject.
https://digital-photography-school.com/converging-lines/

An Introduction To Splash Water Photography

by Yahya Kisana

Water splash photography is one the coolest and most elegant types of photography. And it's not as difficult as you may think. The process is actually quite simple, you just need the right equipment and a little practice to create a simple yet perfect water splash photo.

Taking a photo of a water splash is quite a fun little project, and it will definitely improve your photography skills.

Here's what you'll need:

High quality camera

Camera timer (built-in is fine)

Glass of water

Item to drop in the water (fruit, rock, more Water)

External flash

Black backdrop/surface

Light reflectors (aluminium foils works great)

Dark Location

Tripod (optional, recommended)

Towel (optional, recommended)

The Setup

The setup is probably the most important part in taking a water splash photo. The first thing to do is get your backdrop and surface ready. Once you found your surface make sure the backdrop right behind it. Setup up your camera. What you want to do at this point is make sure all the camera sees is black (don't forget to take your lens cap off).

While getting the black backdrop and surface ready, make sure that you still have the room for the camera to be able to see a glass and water splashes. Place the almighty glass o' water into the setting, make sure every part is visible.

Get your external flash and reflector ready. You want the flash to be facing the side of the glass, not toward the camera nor the back drop. Then place the reflector on the other side. This allows great light, one side will have more focused light while the other has a medium light, this creates a great effect and is visible on both the glass and water. Make sure you have the item that you want to drop ready. For camera placement, you don't want the camera to be too close but not to far either. Make sure that you get the image but no water into your lens.

Moving onto the camera setup/settings. To begin use an aperture any where form f/4 to f/8. I found that f/5.6 works great. You don't want the image to be too bright nor too dark. As for shutter speed use 1/125s, it works great for a water splash. 1/250s worked great as well, this is something to experiment on. The ISO should be a low/medium ISO setting. Something like 300 ISO would do fine. You want the flash and reflector to do their jobs, if the settings on the camera do not allow that, you could end up with a blurry photo. Don't forget to use a RAW image over a JPEG.

It won't really make much of a difference if you use JPEG. If you are editing this in Photoshop I

would highly recommend that you use a RAW image. Auto-focus works great for this, just make sure you have focus via Auto-focus before you do anything. If you prefer Manual focus for every-thing, that is fine, as they both work great. Finally, get a timer on your camera ready. This is important because you need to work very efficiently and won't have the time to press the capture button. I would use anywhere from 5-10 seconds.

Taking the Photo

This is where patience comes in handy. Once the timer is initiated and the item is in your hand, get ready to drop the item. You want to make sure that there are one to two seconds left till the photo will be taken, when that happens drop your item. Timing is key. You turn on the flash as soon as there is a splash/when the picture is captured it brings a better effect rather than if you leave the flash on the whole time. Leaving the external flash on the whole time will also create a nice effect and it takes less time, but it is not as good as of an effect and turning it on as soon as the splash is initiated.

Taking the photo is a process that is filled with trial and error, as I said timing is key. Make sure that you don't drop it from a location that is too high, it will create a huge splash that the camera may not capture, along with that, it can create a mess. Keep on doing this until you get the perfect photo, after a little practice this can be done with quickly and easily.

Photoshop

This is an optional step, but highly, highly recommended. Once you have your not-yet perfect photo, open it in Photoshop. The first thing you want to do is check if there is a reflection of the glass or splash on the picture, you can add or remove one depending on your liking. Onto more important matters. Create two new duplicate layers, you should have three layers in total. Change the layer mode of the second layer to overlay and lower the opacity to around 60% percent.

As for the third layer first, lower the contrast. Mess around with the contrast, see what works best with the photo. Create a layer mask to the third layer. Now using the paintbrush tool (white, feathered at 10%) fill in the bottom 1/4 of the image. Duplicate the third layer and lower the opacity to 60%.

You now have an amazing looking photo, we still have some final touch-ups to do. The photo should have some tiny drop lets of water on the sides you want to remove some of them, only a few, and only the ones on the sides. To do this first, merge visible. Then use the same brush used before, and change the color to black. You probably will also need to scale the brush to a different size, the size should be relatively small. Begin removing the tiny droplets, only a few and only un-wanted ones. If you like the effect with the little droplets, keep em' you can also add more.

Adding more is a very simple task, To add more droplets use the square select tool and select a droplet, now copy and paste them. Every time you paste it, rotate it and scale it so that the photo won't look weird. Don't add too many, it looks better with just a few. You should be done now. In result of your hard work you get an elegant, cool looking, perfect splash photo. With a little practice, you can master this in no-time.

WEBSITE of the MONTH

creativelive.com

Learn how to take the kind of photograph you'll want to print and pass on to the next generation. Join a free online class with one of the top Photographers there is.

https://www.creativelive.com/catalog/photography

Spring Into Corrimal

10 September 2017

In it's 36th year, Spring into Corrimal is the largest one-day free family festival in the Illawarra and Regional NSW. Attracting crowds in excess of 60,000 from all over the region. With over 270 market stalls and heaps of family fun, Spring into Corrimal has something for everyone this year. Including three entertainment stages (Main, Community and Children's).

What a chance to get some top photos

For Info or Contact - dcc.newsletter.editor@gmail.com