

U3A(CANBERRA) CAMERA CLUB

Communiqué

May 2017

Click+Capture 2017

Our second exhibition at Strathnairn Heritage Galleries opens on 25th May at 4.00pm. On this occasion, the Club is delighted to announce that Helen McFadden, President, Canberra Photographic Society will officially open the exhibition in Gallery One. This celebrates the Camera Club's 3rd Birthday. Everyone is cordially invited to attend. If you cannot make it for the Opening, remember *Click+Capture 2017* at Strathnairn is open Thursday through Sunday until June 11th.



Already the submissions are all in and prints are being collected ready for hanging. As part of the publicity, the management of Strathnairn has prepared a postcard similar to last year's invitation but with three of the 2017 entries prominent on the front. The prints are, left to right, by Barrie Ridgeway (*The Golden Road*), Bob Hay (*Mt Fuji in Winter*) and Jan Gough-Watson (*Unbridled*).

Tutorial on using Guided Upright in *Lightroom*

Ever wondered how to correct leaning verticals and sloping horizontals in photos? This can be a particular problem when using a wide angle lens (as in your smart phone). A tutorial lasting only 60 seconds using the Guided Upright feature of *Lightroom* (*Keyboard Shortcut Shift+T*) tells you how to do so with just a couple of clicks. This can be seen at

http://lightroomkillertips.com/awesome-60-second-tutorial-using-guided-upright-lightroom/?trk_msg=2DQKA55IRUGKP272C80A650U48&trk_contact=0196DAHTIG90N6LR1VGS2QMVI4&trk_sid=2IE7AIH5BT8VDR0SV6RILV3U58&utm_source=listrak&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Awe

Keeping your Camera Dry



That cornucopia of photographic news, *Digital Photography Review Newsletter* (Thursday, April 20, 2017) announced the release of a patented device to

help keep your camera (and you) dry. Their headline read: *Keep your camera dry and look like a dork with this \$60 hands-free umbrella (or not)*. While admitting that more and more cameras have weather sealing these days, *DPR* suggested that this US\$60 contraption (left) could be better replaced by a \$10 one, a hat which served as both an umbrella which, with a silvered lining, might also be used as a reflector. Take your pick... The hat device might also appeal to the Cancer Council...

Improving Sharpness

These days most of us rely on our cameras to take the leg work (literally) out of taking photographs. In the pre-zoom lens days we had to walk closer to the subject to “fill the frame” or conversely, walk backwards to fit it all in. The same still applies when we use “prime” lenses which are fixed focus and require us to move to get the image we want. While prime lenses offer sharper and often more beautiful shots, zooms do help compose what we see in our viewfinders.

However, although helpful, zooms also have problems. One is that they do not operate equally well throughout their entire range. When focussed at the closest or farthest points of their range there can be a falling off in the sharpness with which they record the image. The problem is often attributed to light bouncing around within the barrel of the lens, reflected off its walls and other components. (Of course, with a telephoto lens, all camera shake is also magnified and so reduces over-all sharpness but that is not the subject here).

All zoom lenses have a so-called *sweet spot*. This is a position in their extension at which resolution is at its best and this is at neither of the extremes: it is in the middle of their extension that the *sweet spot* can be found. Sure, there are times when you will need the maximum or other

larger aperture to compensate for low light or to provide a good *bokeh* in the background, and certainly, sometimes you need a very small aperture to provide sufficient Depth of Field (DOF). But for the majority of photos, an extension somewhere in the middle range will provide the sharpest images.

So, the recipe for sharper photos is:

- Set your camera to Aperture Priority mode;
- Choose a mid-range aperture, somewhere from at least f5.6 and preferably f6.3 and no smaller than about f10; and perhaps most importantly, especially for those extra-sharp masterpieces,
- Use a tripod and a remote shutter release (or your camera's self-timer) to reduce camera shake

Sony world photo winners



The World Photography Awards are the largest in the world, and celebrates their 10th anniversary this year. The winners were selected and announced from over 227,000 entries. The overall prize went to Belgian photographer Frederik Buyckx, for his portfolio 'Whiteout'.

http://www.techradar.com/news/worlds-largest-photo-competition-announces-winners?utm_source=Aedstra&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=17634&utm_term=8376705&utm_content=316187

Assessing your Photos

At the beginning of the year I was asked to come up with a check list of points to be considered when judging a photo but instead the final version turned out to be a rather radical alternative. In place of a list of points I asked 12 questions any of us might ask ourselves when assessing our photos. Each of these questions can be worded in several ways but essentially come down to fairly simple considerations. Although you might not be able to ask (and answer) all 12 before you press the shutter, a word of advice: always ask the first question before you take that decisive step.

I: Is there a clear centre of interest?

You might also ask:

- When you look at the photo, what is the first thing you see?
- What holds your attention the longest?
- Do other elements in the image compete with the subject for attention?

II. How quickly does it speak to you —

that is, how clearly is the story told in the photo?

You might also ask:

- What kind of emotional response does the photo create?
- How easily can you relate to the image?
- What could have been done to facilitate this/make this stronger?

III. How has the lighting been handled?

Photography is “painting with light” and the use of light is crucial to the success of the image. You might also ask:

- Ask how well the light has been used to create modelling (“plasticity” or “3D” effect).
- Is the light too constrasty or too flat?
- Are there unfortunate shadows or highlights which distract?
- Is there detail in the shadows (eg., hiding the eyes in a portrait)?
- How accurate is the colour balance?
- Would the image have been improved if flash infill or a reflector had been used?

IV. How is the focus?

You can also ask:

- Check the eyes, hair etc in a portrait (animal as well as human).
- Accurate focus is important but “soft focus” is applicable on occasion.
- Differential Focus is also a tool in composition to direct the viewer’s gaze.

V. How is the Exposure?

- Most importantly, is it accurate? If not, why not? Check areas such as clouds in landscapes where some parts might be overexposed.
- Is the photo “low-key” or “high key”?
- Is exposure used to hide or eliminate unnecessary elements (ie, highlights tell the story)?
- Although not always necessary, are the corners darkened to stop the eye travelling out of the photo?

VI. Is the image well composed? Under this heading there are three main points to be considered:

- (a) **How well does the image fill the frame** — Filling the frame establishes centre of interest and excludes distracting elements — when taking the photo, could the photographer have moved closer or zoomed in, maybe used a lens of a different focal length?

.....or in post-processing, CROP!

- (b) **How well are the elements of the photo organized within the frame?**

You can also ask:

- Are the elements in the image arranged in an aesthetically pleasing way?
- Are they well balanced? Does the arrangement optimize the story/make it clearer, stronger.

- Is this the best orientation — would it be better rotated?

(c) How well has the background been controlled:

You can also ask:

- Is the background intrusive?
- How well has DOF been used to help emphasise the subject?
- Is the *bokeh* attractive?

VII. The KISS Principle: The old *Keep It Simple Stupid* principle applies in photography as elsewhere.

- Are there too many elements crowded into the photo — or maybe it is a “rich tapestry”?
- Is there a sense of order and balance?
- Are there irrelevant elements included?
- Is there a clear pathway for the eye to follow to tell the story?

VIII. How creative is the photo?

A hard idea to articulate but the best definition I have seen is that a photo which is “creative” is one which *goes beyond predictable techniques and treatments*.

That includes showing the reality of the situation in unusual or novel ways, in ways which “lift” the image out of the mundane or “record shot” category, which “shock” or delight and which allow the viewer to a significant degree to share the photographer’s emotion or perspective at the time the photo was made.

IX. DMax for Prints?: There is a further consideration for prints: Is the DMax sufficient? This is the measure of the thickness of the ink on the paper surface. It is generally higher with Glossy papers and lower on Matt papers. Sometimes printers do not deposit enough ink to make the blacks (in particular) satisfying but colours also can be too thin and the whole print look a bit “washed out” or “transparent”.¹

And finally, over-riding all else,

“I think there are many important aspects to make a good photograph but the most important would have to be: interesting and engaging subject matter. Even if certain technical aspects are not well executed such as focus and composition, there can still be a reason for finding the photo meaningful. Ideally, engaging subject matter, lighting, composition and a sharp focal point are the most important aspects, collaboratively. Interesting lighting in photography is most fundamental, composition contributes in giving impact and aesthetic merit, and a part of the photo in good focus to draw our attention to the subject are very important. But an uninteresting subject matter for me will still leave a photo with little appeal even if all the other technical aspects mentioned are well executed”. **David Lazar:**²

Bob Hay

Course leader

U3A Canberra Camera Club

¹ This is more likely to happen with dye-based inks on prints from commercial print shops. It is not such a problem with modern fine art printers which use pigment ink: indeed, a latest Epson more or less doubles the DMax for black inks on Matt papers.

² David Lazar: winner of the 2012 Smithsonian Photography Competition (Travel Category) from Brisbane