

U3A (CANBERRA) CAMERA CLUB

Communiqué

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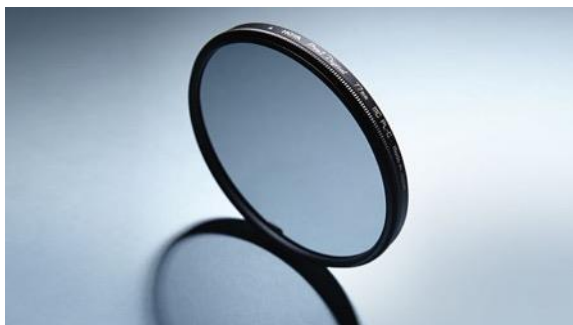
Sydney International Photographic Exhibition

I have been notified by the Australian Photographic Society that the 2017 Sydney International Exhibition of Photography closes on 28th of August but the notice does not say if that is when entries close or the exhibition closes (I suspect it is the closing date for entries). Either way, keep an eye out for this most important event in any amateur photographer's calendar. The web page is at <http://www.siep.org.au/>.

Rotating Polarizing Filters Review

Polarizing filters are used in photography to reduce glare. By admitting only those light rays coming in one plane, they filter out awkward reflections, for example, from water, glass and other reflective surfaces. If you have polarizing sun glasses you know how well they reduce the glare from the road surface when driving towards the sun.

Reducing glare is not their only feature: they also do a great job increasing both saturation and contrast, particularly in landscape photography where they deepen the blue of the sky and show clouds to much more dramatic effect.



There are many polarizing filters on the market. Some require a frame which is attached to the front of the lens. The filter is then slipped into the frame (this system is also employed by Neutral Density filters used, for example when you want to produce those creamy seascapes now so fashionable).

Others — and probably the most useful — are circular and built so they rotate in the mount which screws into the thread on the front of the lens. They work by rotating them until you get the desired amount of glare reduction. A review of 5 such polarizing filters is available at

http://www.techradar.com/how-to/photography-video-capture/cameras/best-circular-polarizer-filter-5-top-models-tested-and-rated-1320842?utm_source=Adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=18032&utm_term=8376705&utm_content=322944

Three features are desirable: one is ease of use, including facility of attachment to the lens; another is metal construction of the mount, including some way of preventing reflection of light from the mount itself; and the third, and most important, is the quality of the glass from which the filter is made: it must be thin, optically flat and without blemishes. You would not want to spend a lot of money on a lens only to degrade it with the filter.

Good, rotating polarizing filters are expensive. You must have a need for one, otherwise put the money towards an even better lens.

Resizing Your Images

Keith sent in a suggestion of an on-line site which does your resizing for you – you enter a few details and the file itself and the file is returned to you at the required dimensions. You don't need to have it on your computer, just the link: <http://resizeimage.net/> Keep it in your Bookmarks/Favourites

Henri Cartier-Bresson Award 2017

Last month the prestigious HCB Award for 2017 was announced in Paris. The winner of the 35,000 Euros award was Guy Tillim who

has already photographed the streets of Johannesburg, Maputo, Lunada, Harare, Libreville, Addis Ababa and Nairobi. Thanks to the Henri Cartier-Bresson Award, Guy Tillim plans to continue his project in Dakkar, Accra, Kampala and Lagos in order to complete and document these urban landscapes located in the midst of the realities of an African capital and inevitably referring to the prism of an African colonial past. (HCB release, translated)

Tillim's project is called *Museum of the Revolution* and will be exhibited at the HCB Foundation in Paris in 2019. A book of the artwork will also be published that year. If you plan to be in Paris year after next, check the exhibition out.

Extender Lenses

When I bought my 300mm telephoto I paid a bit extra for an extension which took the focal length up to 420mm. In theory, this should give me a closer look at birds and so forth... But there are some disadvantages to using a lens extender:

- Light loss: remember your high school physics – “Light Intensity = the inverse of the square of the distance”. This means that by say, increasing the focal length by 1.4 (a common extender value) you halve the light reaching the sensor (that is for a 35mm full frame sensor) which amounts to losing the equivalent of a full f-stop; if you use a 2x converter, only a quarter of the light reaches the sensor.
- Because less light is reaching the sensor, focussing speed can be slowed down or made difficult in low-light conditions;
- Depending on the camera+lens combination, some cameras might not be able to focus at all.
- If your camera has an optical viewfinder, the view you get in it might be dimmer; if you are using an EVF you can usually turn the brightness up.
- Extending the focal length increases the liability of camera shake.
- Adding more glass between the light source and the camera sensor automatically means a loss of image quality. Faults in the lens which might not be a problem used normally, with a lens extended will be magnified.

For these reasons, it is a good idea to test your camera+lens combo with the proposed extender before you buy. And no matter how seductive the offer, a 3x converter is almost guaranteed to cause problems.

“Record Shots”

This is a term used universally in photographic circles to indicate that the photograph records an event, scene or subject relatively objectively. That is, it shows things pretty much as they were at some point in space and time but does not elaborate, interpret, distort or modify the subject. At one end of the scale are those photos taken by police forensic photographers to be submitted as evidence in court cases. Further up that scale would be the majority of travel pics, wedding photos, pictures of the latest grandchild and so on. These latter have an emotional or sentimental value only to people connected to the subject but are not all that inspiring to strangers. So, for a critic to say that someone’s photo is a “record shot” is to say that it documents something – maybe with varying degrees of technical success – but does not rise to a higher aesthetic level or have more universal appeal.

Camera clubs are devoted to helping people whose interest is in what is sometimes called *photography as a fine art*. Here, the object is to express your own creativity in such a way that it is communicated even to strangers. That means the image must have a universal appeal, that it must “speak” to other people because it communicates something we all understand. This notion is difficult to explain but, when we look at photos, we can all tell a photo that transcends the “record shot” and excites a form of empathy within us. Great examples are, say that iconic photo of the naked Vietnamese girl fleeing down the road in the chaos of war or, on a happier level, the magnificent photos in the 1950s exhibition, *The Family of Man*. I am not saying we are all expected to produce photos at that level (they are only one in billions) but we can and must all aim as high as we possibly can.

We spend a lot of time teaching “tools of the trade”: e.g., *Lightroom*, composition etc The more familiar an artist is with the tools of the trade, the freer he or she is to communicate. In digital photography, by setting your camera on *auto* you can pretty well guarantee your pictures will “turn out” as they used to say way back last century. However, “auto” won’t guarantee the image will be of interest to others. That is achieved only by optimising the communication – even a rather ordinary subject can be made interesting by proper placement, colour rendition, contrast and the rest of those “tools”. I am reminded of those magnificent photos by Edward Weston of what he called “peppers” and we call “capsicums”.

At the very heart of every camera club are two features: first, meeting fellow enthusiasts and sharing knowledge and experience; and second, sharing one’s photos and receiving criticism from more experienced photographers. For many beginners, it is scary to show their work – their “babies” - to other members of the club and hear what they have to say. But, unless they find the courage to share, they miss out on the best help to progress from “record shot” to something more meaningful in this great hobby. That said, at the same time, they must be prepared to learn from criticism and (to re-phrase an old saying) to thrive in the “heat of the kitchen”.

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