

Camera club Communiqué

March 2018 U3A ACT Australia

Have You Tried HDR?

HDR or *High Dynamic Range* photography is all the rage at the moment and is responsible for some very beautiful images and others which are garish and super-saturated to the point of psychedelia. Truth is, people love colour and believe the more of it the better. However, that is not usually so: subtleties of colour are usually more pleasing than its exaggeration.

The real aim of HDR is to capture a wider range of tones than is possible using ordinary photographic means. To do this, you set the camera to take several photos of the same subject, each being a different exposure value than the last. So, for a simple example, you might set the camera to take the first image at f5.6 and shutter speed of 1/125th sec., the next is f5.6 at 1/60th sec., a third at f5.6 at 1/30th sec and so on. In that case, the faster shutter speed would expose the highlights OK; the middle speed, the mid-to darker tones and the lowest shutter speed, the deeper shadow areas in which normally no detail would be recorded. The files are then stitched together to form a single image in which the highlights are correctly exposed but there is detail in the darker areas which except for this procedure, would not have been seen.

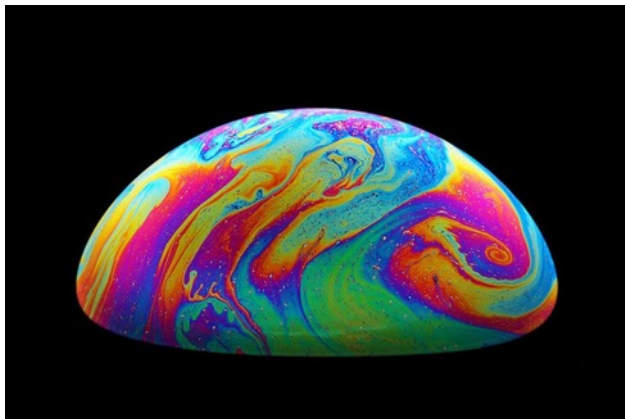
Combining the multiple images (“Stitching”) is done automatically in many cameras but if you wish – and certainly if you have a large number of images – then stitching can be done in *Photoshop* or *Lightroom*. There are many, many apps also available to help you boost the performance of your smart phone when doing HDR (eg. <http://www.appsdose.com/2015/09/5-best-hdr-camera-apps-for-iphone.html>).

There are a few tips to remember when doing HDR:

- You must use a tripod. It is virtually impossible to hand-hold a camera and change shutter speeds and hope to get exactly the same shot for several photos.
- If your camera allows it, set it to *Aperture Priority*. This allows you to control Depth of Field.

- Turn off all automatic settings if possible and use manual controls. It is best to set ISO and White Balance to suit the lighting conditions at the time of taking the photos and preferably, focus manually. This is not “focus stacking” so focus should not change throughout the procedure.
- You will need to decide what exposure range you wish to cover when bracketing your shots. On a bright sunny day outside a 5-stop range is probably OK while in the shade or under cloudy/overcast conditions, a 3-step range will most likely do the trick.

HDR is an especially valuable technique when doing B&W, allowing a much wider range of tones to be captured than is normally the case. One of the advantages of doing B&W of course, is that there is no risk of those kitsch over-saturated colours!



Photographing Bubbles

As kids we all enjoyed blowing bubbles but have you ever thought of photographing them? The following post on DPS provides a rather lengthy description how you can not only blow them but also capture their beauty permanently.

<https://digital-photography-school.com/how-photograph-sheer-beauty-of-soap-bubbles>

9 Lightroom Presets

I am not a fan of *presets* for any program because I like to feel in control when post-processing a photo. However, there are occasions when these automatic adjustments come in handy, especially when someone, cleverer than I, has worked out a complicated way of doing things which I probably could not do. Matt K, who is, in his own words, a “Lightroom, Photoshop and photography coach” has made available 9 of his presets which might be of interest to members. They have to be individually downloaded and installed, but he has a short video explaining how to do this. Go to:

<http://mattk.com/lightroom-presets/>

Understanding Shutter Speed

As Nasim Mansurov writes in his post on *Photography Life*, shutter speed is one of the pillars of photography, the other two being, of course, aperture and ISO. His post is a good insight into the role shutter speed plays in

making our photographs and his beautiful illustrations more than happily make the point. <https://photographylife.com/what-is-shutter-speed-in-photography?>



Image Sharpness with Hand-Held Camera

Camera Shake is a problem for most of us, particularly as we get older and certainly, if we don't know how to hold a camera properly. In another post on *Photography Life*, Nasim Mansurov explains the *Reciprocal Rule*. Although

there are many caveats to this so-called "rule", it says simply that *the shutter speed of your camera should be at least the reciprocal of the effective focal length of the lens*. Mansurov gives the example: "Say you are shooting with a zoom lens like the Nikkor 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6G VR ... All the rule is stating, is that if you are shooting at 80mm, your shutter speed should be set to at least 1/80th of a second, whereas if you zoom in to say 400mm, your shutter speed should be at least 1/400th of a second." But there are exceptions, as for example, when your camera has a smaller sensor than full-frame. To see these explained, go to <https://photographylife.com/what-is-reciprocal-rule-in-photography>



9 Good Apps for your Smartphone

Even the newest smart phones don't do everything a photographer might want. Apps can augment your smartphone to allow you, the photographer, much greater control over capturing an image or even altering it in clever ways. This post on the *Digital Photography School* outlines nine new ones. You might not wish to use some of them (eg., the "grunge filter") but one or two might be just what you need to improve your "phonography":

<https://digital-photography-school.com/9-more-great-apps-you-need-smartphone>

Tips on Properly Holding a Camera

Nasim Mansurov, quoted in the two preceding items, is the Denver CO., based founder and author of *Photography Life* (<https://photographylife.com>). His

articles are always worth noting, particularly if you are relatively new to photography. In this post he and a colleague explain how best to hold a camera to avoid camera shake, that phenomenon which spoils many of our best photos. (Incidentally, *Camera shake* is not the same as *Motion blur*, but both can reduce the sharpness of an image). To read and see the illustrations go to: <https://photographylife.com/how-to-hold-a-camera>

Focus and Re-compose

For those who don't know it, there is a handy tip for ensuring that your photos are both in focus and well-composed. It works on most modern dSLRs and CMCs and maybe on some "bridge cameras", that is, cameras with fixed lenses but which probably cost under the \$1000 mark.

First, you have to make sure your camera is set to AF-S, that is single frame auto-focus. Then you point your camera at the scene or subject you want to photograph making sure that the most important part of the subject is in the centre of the viewfinder frame. As it happens, the centre is where there is the most light and the focus is always the sharpest. And here's the tip: now press the shutter button *half-way down* and hold it there. This locks the focus to that distance. Now, with the focus established and the shutter button still held down, you can move the camera around to re-compose the shot. Once you have the composition to your liking, finish pressing the shutter button all the way down. Squeeze, don't jab! For a more detailed explanation, go to:

<https://photographylife.com/focus-and-recompose-technique>



Chair Tripod? Crazy or not...?

The Japanese tripod manufacturer *Velbon* has come up with a new idea, a tripod you can sit on when taking a photo. This is a hybrid between a tripod and a folding three-legged chair and is expected to be released in Japan sometime early this year. The expected cost is about US\$180.

The chair itself is already available in Australia (see *Mobility Matters* at Fyshwick - www.mobilitymatters.com.au/). I looked at this 3-legged, very portable product because these days, with my disability, I need a portable seat of some kind. I did not buy one: the danger of falling on this rather precarious stool suggests it might be suitable for able-bodied, young people but not for me at my age and condition!

How Suitable is Your Monitor for Image Editing?

According to the estimable Margaret Brown of *PhotoReview*, a monitor suitable for editing photographs should be able to:



1. Display hues and tones accurately enough to allow the image to be printed as closely as possible to the picture you see on the screen.
2. Have a wide enough gamut (range) to reproduce all the hues and tones in the image file.
3. Provide even illumination and colour reproduction across all of the screen with no 'hot spots'.
4. Maintain the same quality of reproduction with consistency between calibrations.
5. Support hardware calibration (which is more reliable than software tweaking).

The article, which can be read on-line at

<http://www.photoreview.com.au/tips/editing/is-your-monitor-up-to-scratch>

goes into perhaps more technical detail than many of us would require, but it also provides three interesting links. The first is an on-line test for your monitor provided by the Belgian manufacturer of *Eizo* monitors, probably the best you can buy, is at <https://www.eizo.be/monitor-test/>.

This runs you through a very comprehensive series of tests that show up defective pixels, uniformity, colour gamma and separations, sharpness, viewing angle and response time. The second link is to a source of test images you can download and use to check your printer. This is at: www.bit.ly/ColorWiki-test. The third is at www.photodisc.com. This, which Margaret Brown particularly recommends, includes the Gretag-Macbeth colour patches plus a range of human skin tones. The whole article is an extract from *Photo Review Issue 74* .

Portable Storage

How do you store your precious images? And how do you save them when travelling? These are two questions which, in a long article in *PhotoReview* #74, Margaret Brown addresses in her usual very readable way.



First, she mentions the cardinal rule for storage, the '3-2-1' rule: *make three copies, store two on different types of media and one in a different location*. Then

she goes into considerable detail about the pros and cons of the different media available. This is too long to repeat here but you can access the whole article at:

<http://www.photoreview.com.au/tips/storage/portable-storage-round-up>

Why one photographer takes only an iPhone to Nepal

Carey Rose (<http://careyrosem.com/>) is an editorial writer for *DPreview*, that invaluable on-line resource for photographers. In an article brimming with beautiful photos he writes about his dad, Robert Rose, a now-retired professional photographer who runs a charity for people with disabilities in Nepal. The photos here are all by Robert whose choice of camera on his annual visits to Nepal is now his iPhone8.

Carey (Rose *files*) writes about his dad's choice of camera and the pros and cons of a smart phone as an only camera when abroad. He concludes his post thus:

...it's really hard to argue with the convenience, the compactness, the ever-improving image quality and the overall capability of smartphones for the seasoned world traveler. In fact, it's not uncommon to go along on one of these trips and encounter someone who has just bought a camera for the purpose of this new venture, only to find that they mostly use their phone because they hadn't bothered to practice or read the manual for their new device.

<https://www.dpreview.com/articles/5210177117/the-iphone-8-plus-in-nepal>

Photographing Graffiti

Do you take photographs of graffiti? Many of us do while others, of course, see them only as an urban scourge. In many places, spray painting graffiti is illegal; in others, such as most famously, parts of Melbourne, it is legal and encouraged. Legal or illegal to do it, photographing graffiti and exhibiting the photo as your own work itself could be both ethically unacceptable and illegal.

Whether you like these works or not, graffiti are the intellectual property of the street artist who created the images. Photographing them and passing them off as your work infringes those intellectual property rights and could theoretically leave you open to breach of copyright and the costs and hassle that involves. "Theoretically", because it is unlikely the artist who created the work would sue, especially if the graffiti was done in a place where doing this kind of street art was illegal. Of course, you could ask permission from the artist but contacting the person might be difficult!

Margaret Kennedy, a Canberra photographer and writer, posted these considerations recently for the *Digital Photography School* at <https://digital-photography-school.com/basic-look-ethics-rules-photographing-graffiti/>

She writes that a good rule of thumb to follow is ... if the graffiti takes up more than half the photo, you are copying the graffiti, not creating a new composition. If you sell or display an image that is largely someone else's work, in some circumstances, this may amount to copyright infringement.

The 6 Most Important Things to Know about *Lightroom*

In a recent post on Picture Perfect, well-known photography teacher Andrew Gibson outlines the six things he considers the most important to know about Lightroom.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/the-6-most-important-things-you-need-to-know-in-lightroom/>

These are (1) How to back up your Catalog; (2) How to set up file-handling in Catalog Settings; (3) How to search for images; (4) How to use Profile Setting in the Develop module; (5) How to use lens corrections; and (6) How to use local adjustments wisely. There is not space here to go into the detail Gibson does in his post but it makes for interesting and informative reading. For example, I have never had to pay attention to “Color Profile” in “Camera Calibration” because my Olympus EM1ii, like many modern CMCs (Compact Mirrorless Cameras), has this feature already built in (they say “embedded”). However, if you are using an older camera or a dSLR which cannot automatically recognise the camera/lens combination, then this panel might be for you. I understand that profiles for a huge range of cameras/lenses can be downloaded from DxO (Search for “dxo camera profiles”).

Using Layers for Better Landscape Photography

Following last month's inspiring presentation on Landscape Photography by Phil McFadden, Club member Sue emailed me with a link to a very interesting and relevant post by Mark C. Hughes under the above title. It can be found at <https://digital-photography-school.com/using-layers-foreground-interest-better-landscape-photography>. The author describes how to use layers in landscape photography: that is, including the middle- and fore-ground as well as the distant vista in the shot. He also emphasises the importance of waiting for the best light and like Phil, stresses that landscape photos must be tack-sharp and that means always use a tripod.

How Much Memory Do We Really Need?

Memory storage specialist *Integral Memory* has just released the world's first half a Terabyte (512GB) micro SDXC memory card. Guaranteed to sustain a write speed of 10MB/sec with read speeds of about 80MB/sec, the new cards are guaranteed for 5 years. They are smaller than regular SD cards and, for use in most cameras require a special adaptor (one is provided with the card by the manufacturer) although it must be noted that some of the most recent CMCs use micro-cards as default. Memory on this scale is probably not of great interest at the moment to still photographers so these cards are more likely to appeal if your interest is in video.

However, if you are revving up your camera to make movies, it is warned that these newest cards are suitable only to HD, not 4K video. It seems such cards are being developed more with an eye on future smart phones than on still cameras. They are expected to sell at about US\$800 or so.

Although the *Integral 512GB* card is the first to be commercially released, others are in the pipeline: the better-known brand, *SanDisk Extreme*, also has a 512GB card ready to go.

<https://www.anandtech.com/show/12369/integral-launches-512-gb-microsdxc-card-uhci-u1-class-10>

Firmware Updates

The *Australian PhotoReview* has published the latest firmware updates. Check them out at <http://www.photoreview.com.au/information/latest-firmware-updates>

Finally, of interest to all “Beginners”

We are all “beginners” in the art of photography so the following *Ultimate Guide to Photography for Beginners* might be of interest to us all. It is well written with good illustrations and covers just about all we need to know to be reasonably proficient in taking photos. You can download a printable pdf copy from the estimable *Digital Photography School* at:

<https://digital-photography-school.com/dps-ultimate-guide-photography-beginners>

That's all, Folks!

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