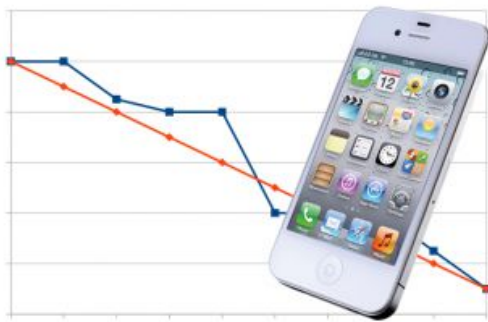


Camera club Communiqué

August 2019 U3A ACT Australia

The *Camera Club Communiqué* is part of a newsletter sent to members of the "Camera Club" and "PhotoGroup" which are year-long courses run by the University of the Third Age here in Canberra. For privacy reasons, class notices have been omitted from this public version. To contact either class, please email u3acanberracameraclub@gmail.com or u3acanberraphotogroup@gmail.com respectively.

Smartphone sales slump 22 million



Camera manufacturers have been lamenting this past year or so that their sales have dropped in the face of the onslaught by smartphones. Those small, compact cameras which launched millions of us into the age of digital photography have all but disappeared from the market and even dSLR sales have dropped appreciably.

Now however, it seems there might be a chance for camera manufacturers to strike back because smartphone sales have fallen by over 22 million world-wide. That is more than 6% of what had been a nice little earner for companies such as Apple, Google and Huawei and their ilk. Although it is reported that Apple sales are down by 13 million and Samsung by 5 million, the effect of the recent American blacklisting of Huawei is expected to be even more drastic.

Commentators are suggesting two main reasons: first, there is the general downturn in economies around the world and second, perhaps people are tired of upgrading every year at considerable cost. Maybe the bubble has burst?

<https://www.digitalcameraworld.com/news/smartphone-sales-slump-22-million-a-golden-chance-for-the-camera-market>

What is Saturation?

The introduction of digital cameras made it possible for everyone to take as many colour photos as they wish and to do so without it costing them a



small fortune as it once did with colour film such as Kodachrome and others.

Then along came software manipulation of digital photos in the home computer. This has led to a flood of over-saturated and garish rather than beautiful images. We need ask: “Why is this so?” and “What is saturation?”

In an article on *Photography Life*, Madhu Manikam examines the various factors *that affect saturation, including different approaches to obtain optimal saturation in post-processing (Photoshop) without making our image look unnatural.*

Manikam blames the plethora of what he calls “heavy-handed filters and presets in post-processing software and apps” for this tidal wave of tasteless and unnatural-looking images.

<https://photographylife.com/author/madhu-m>

Make Your Subject Really Stand Out.



It is good to see locals sharing their knowledge and experience on the on-line photo resource sites.

Andrew Goodall is a nature photographer based in Australia who shows several ways in which the subject of a photograph can be made to stand out. This duck, for example, was photographed using a wide-angle lens close-up.

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/emphasize-main-subjects-in-photos/>

Andrew also runs several training courses and photo-safaris which might be of interest to those looking for tuition coupled with travel.

<http://www.naturesimage.com.au>

Before You Part with Your Cash

Photo tours, safaris, workshops are a booming industry and for many of us, a great way to get not only exciting photos but also to improve our knowledge and skill. However, they all come at a cost and often that means lots of hard-earned cash. Peter West Carey writing for *Digital Photography*



School suggests 10 questions to ask the tour operator before you sign up and pay. These questions include whether or not there is insurance cover, what is the guest-to-instructor ratio, will there be daily opportunities to review the day's shoot, what is the cancellation and refund policy and more... All very sensible questions

and part of the *caveat emptor* drill we all learned at school.

<https://digital-photography-school.com/photography-tour-questions/>

One area not covered by Carey's 10 questions was the suitability of a proposed tour for the elderly and/or disabled. Very few operators mention age and suitability in their prospectus but it might mean the difference between a good and a very bad experience when you arrive at the scene, no matter how photogenic it might be.

Are Your Photos Safe in the Cloud?

Simon Ringsmuth is a frequent and respected writer for *Digital Photographic School*. In his article under this heading he explores the many Cloud-based storage services available and the pros and cons of using them. There are hidden costs for just about whatever service you choose.

<https://digital-photography-school.com/are-your-photos-safe-in-the-cloud>

Negative Space in Composition

There are many helpful on-line guides teaching the principles of composition but any mention of *negative space* is rare. Most articles reiterate the so-called "rules" such as "The Rule of Thirds", the "Rule of Threes" and so on, all of which emphasise the subject of the photo. When we recommend "crop" we also focus on the subject, the crop pruning away distracting elements of the image and so making it clearer to the viewer what it is they are meant to be looking at... The subject is always the *positive space*. Negative space is the rest of the image which is of only peripheral importance — or so it is generally assumed. However, as most

of us would guess, negative space can also contribute by setting the scene for the photo, maybe helping to clarify what the subject is, or what story the subject is telling.

Less obvious, however, is the role that negative space can play in creating the composition. No artist knows this better than sculptors for whom negative space is often a prominent part of their work.



Dame Barbara Hepworth: 'Oval Sculpture (No. 2)', 1943, cast 1958

Take for example this sculpture by the famous British sculptor, Dame Barbara Hepworth. Viewers can comprehend that the off-white material structures¹ within the over-all egg-shape are part of the subject of the work but we usually ignore the corresponding negative spaces, the holes, which create the form. It is as though we focus only on what is substance, what is visibly there, and ignore what is not there! If there were no “not there” in this beautiful work there would be just an egg-shaped form, beautiful in itself but not nearly as interesting to our imagination as the combination of positive and negative spaces.



Negative spaces, in the form of holes, contribute as much to an image as do the positive bits. Take for example, this photo by Harold Davis (*Nautilus in Black and White*). Here, not only does the black background help define the form of the shell but the shadows, signifying the depressions or holes in space, are also essential parts of the composition, combining with the highlights (positive space) to create the beautiful Fibonacci spiral.

Another example, this time showing how cropping part of the negative space alters the impact of the image, is the photo of a lioness cautiously

¹ This “off-white material” is probably plaster, the work here being the maquette for the final sculpture which was cast in bronze.



taking a drink by Isak Pretorius, the Wildlife Photographer of the Year in 2018.

Isak-Pretorius - Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2018

Here, the surrounding foliage frames the animal's head, putting her in context and, although her

eyes show that she is being wary, nonetheless creating a sense of relative peacefulness and relaxation.



But, if you crop off the sides of the image, her eyes are thrown much more into prominence and seem almost threatening. In other words, by removing the negative space, we have altered the story of the photo although, it must be said, both images are still winners.

Ron Bigelow's article *Negative Space in Photography Composition* in a recent issue of *Picture Correct*, while taking up the theme of

negative space, still leaves the issue requiring much more discussion:

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/negative-space-in-photography-composition/>

4 Tips for More Interesting Travel Photos

It is probably a sign of the times that many travel photos are more about someone standing in front of a famous landmark rather than of the landmark itself. If it is not the nearest and dearest blocking the view, it is also quite often the photographer who hogs the scene. Is this misplaced narcissism or rather a need to prove you were actually there?

Not only does this "me in front of the Eiffel Tower" kind of picture spoil the view for the viewers back home who are probably not all that interested to see what you looked like while on holiday (and you don't need to prove you were actually there anyway) but also, this "me in front of" practice makes it difficult for other photographers waiting to snap the view, *sans* stranger, for themselves.

He might have only 4 tips to offer us but Kevin Harries says it like it is when it comes to taking travel photos:

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/4-tips-for-more-interesting-travel-photos/>

What Makes Great Photos?

This is the question addressed by Jacob Surland on *Digital Photography School*. He qualifies this by offering *5 Factors That Can Take Your Images from Good to Great*. The issue might be better defined as “5 factors that can take your images from poor to good” – his hyperbole is probably a bit excessive given that most of his readers will never produce anything to



compare with photographers like Ansel Adams, Bill Brandt, Henri Cartier-Bresson and the other “great” masters. Such language is usually used by Americans but Surland is Danish. He won a prize at the 2017 Florence Biennale so maybe he is describing his own photos, not those of us lesser mortals!

Hyperbole aside, however, his post is well worth reading and is beautifully illustrated. Note particularly his demonstration at the end of the article where he shows how a wedding photo taken in a rather cold and unsympathetic light was made more congenial for the happy couple.

<https://digital-photography-school.com/what-makes-great-photos-5-factors-good-to-great>

A Guide to Black and White Conversion Using Photoshop

Madhu Manickam is one of the best writers of on-line photo articles and *Photo Life*, where he posts, is one of the best of the on-line resources. So, as expected, this article is one of the best on the subject and will be of use even to those who do not use *Photoshop* which although now getting on in years, is still the industry standard.

At a recent Workshop on “Converting from Colour to B&W”, the question was asked “What makes a good B&W photo?” The answer of course is complicated because it can be approached from many angles. One which still seems to be worth considering dates from the days of film and darkrooms, hypo and safety lights... The term used back in that pre-digital era was “Print Quality” and by that was meant that the print included at least a bit of true black and preferably some “clean” white. By “clean” was meant basically a pure white, probably the white of the paper base coat.

But it went further than that: it also demanded that there be detail in the shadows, that they had not “blocked up” and equally importantly, where



there were highlights which were not of that “clean” variety, that they too showed some detail. Back in the darkroom days, those demands required exact exposure in the first place and in the darkroom, meticulous control over the developing and printing of the image.

These days we have perhaps a little more leeway with initial exposure and post-processing, but B&W is certainly more demanding than colour photography because colour can often distract the viewer from minor flaws in technique.

This photo by Madhu Manickam exemplifies “print quality” not only because there is plenty of black but more importantly in this case, there is detail in the snow fields at the top of the mountain. It probably helps get good mountain photos when you have the Himalayas in your backyard.

<https://photographylife.com/photoshop-black-and-white-conversion>

What is Low-Key Monochrome Photography?

Madhu Manickam, whose excellent article is mentioned above, also posted an equally excellent explanation of *low key monochrome* (which for most of us most of the time means low key B&W) at <https://photographylife.com/low-key-monochrome-photography>.

In this post, he not only explains what “low key” means but how to achieve



it and along the way, introduces that most useful tool for B&W photographers, the Ansel Adams/Fred Archer “Zone System” and shows how this can be used in low-key work. He also makes mention of “negative space”, showing how his characteristically black skies contribute to the over-all

composition.

Monochrome Photo Printing Tips

On much the same theme as the previous article, this one from *Photo Review* magazine (almost certainly by the admirable Margaret Brown) examines some of the mysteries of printing in monochrome and the kind of printers required to produce fine-art B&W. Essentially, the problem is that ordinary office printers with few inks, although they will have one true black, have to produce the greys by mixing the other colours. This often leads to greys with a greenish or other colour tinge to them. Printers with more colours — usually about 3 grades of “black” — can print true blacks and greys using only these dedicated inks, but those printers are much more expensive to buy and need more skill to operate.

<https://www.photoreview.com.au/tips/outputting/monochrome-photo-printing-tips/>

Posing Family Portraits



While we don’t usually consider family portraits as “fine art photography” and more like record shots, there is no reason they cannot be as attractive as possible and “speak” even to strangers. Of course, posing a number of people at the same time has all the problems associated with group photographs –

remember, all those awkward and stilted class photos from school?

Remember too how there was always someone whose eyes we shut when the shutter was released? Who wants their family pix to look like that?

Linnae Harris and Renee Laurin, both writing for *Picture Correct* have some

handy hints and guides for making your family group shots more than just record shots. Check them out at:

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/7-tips-for-posing-family-portraits/>

<https://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/tips-for-taking-family-portraits/>

Bob Hay
Presenter