

Topic 028

Things to remember

Following are the important things which you need to remember in the art of photography:

1. Light

Without light, there is no illumination. In a room without illumination, everything is pitch black. You can't see a thing. Taking a shot – assuming your camera allows you to – produces a solid black photograph. You switch on a lamp, and you send light across the room, and everything is illuminated. Now you can take a photograph and show something in the picture. You realize that your eye and the camera both need light and illumination to work. Photography is about capturing light and recording it, whether on paper, or more frequently now, in a digital format. As a photographer, you control the amount, intensity and duration of light required to create the picture. The apparatus used to draw with light is called the camera, which comes from camera obscura, a box with a hole for light to pass through and strike the backwall of it. The name “camera obscura” actually means dark chamber, and indeed, the word “camera” is still used in some languages such as Italian to mean “room” or “chamber”. The camera and our eyes work in pretty much the same way. The difference between the two is that our eyes are better able to handle wide differences in light intensity. For example, if you take a photograph from inside a room with an open window, you may get the room properly exposed but the window is too bright, or the window looks right but the room too dark. Yet our eyes don't have such a problem: they can see everything inside the room and outside the window properly exposed. The reason is, our eyes can compensate for the wide difference in light whereas the camera cannot. Secondly, our eye is more sensitive to light than most of the amateur/prosumer cameras. In a dark environment, such as inside a movie theatre, our eyes can still adjust to the lack of light and allow us to see the rows of chairs and people. Most cameras would have difficulty focusing under such a demanding condition.

2. Quantity of light passing through aperture

Aperture refers to the opening of a lens's diaphragm through which light passes. It is calibrated in f/stops and is generally written as numbers such as 1.4, 2, 2.8, 4, 5.6, 8, 11 and 16. The lower

f/stops give more exposure because they represent the larger apertures, while the higher f/stops give less exposure because they represent smaller apertures.

3. Shutter speed

Shutter speed, also known as “exposure time”, stands for the **length of time** a camera shutter is open to expose light into the camera sensor. If the shutter speed is fast, it can help to freeze action completely, as seen in the above photo of the dolphin. If the shutter speed is slow, it can create an effect called “motion blur”, where moving objects appear blurred along the direction of the motion. This effect is used quite a bit in advertisements of cars and motorbikes, where a sense of speed and motion is communicated to the viewer by intentionally blurring the moving wheels.

4. Composition (retention of interest)

In essence, composition is all about putting together objects in your viewfinder in such a way as to emphasize the bits you want to, making them stand out in just the right way. These objects include anything in the foreground, the background, those that "frame" the picture, and most importantly light.

The truth of the matter is that most successful photographic compositions are in fact quite simple, there may be numerous objects but there is never any doubt as to what the subject actually is.

Another great truth is that no matter how expensive your camera equipment is, that without knowledge of composition, you'll never be able to "capture" the essence of the image you see. Worse still, someone with a cheaper set up, and who knows about composition, will more than likely be producing better photographs.

Annoyingly, some people seem to have the knack for creating well composed images, while others have to shoot and shoot whilst they hone their composition skills. The important thing to remember is that wherever you start, you will only get better with practice.

With landscapes the challenge is to capture an image so that the subject is presented in the way

that you want it to be, which for many means learning new ways of seeing what is in front of you.

Besides the subject, there is of course "light", it can make all the difference between a fantastic picture and a dull and uninteresting one. Make sure you note the lights direction, intensity and color (yes the color of light changes quite dramatically, e.g. at the beginning and end of the day).

Besides the color of the light, the position of the sun in the sky also has a major impact on a photograph, as when the sun is low it produces marvelous shadows that enhance the subjects shape and give it that important 3d effect.

There is another thing about taking photographs when the sun is low in the sky, as this means that it is either early or late in the day and thus its intensity is not at its height, which in turn means that the range of contrast (the difference between the deep shadows and highlights) is low, something that really helps capturing the details in both (especially with digital cameras).

The viewpoint is the next vital ingredient, but just what is the best? Here only you can tell, you just have to move around the subject, looking at it from different angles and from different heights, not to mention different focal lengths from the very wide to the telephoto. All of these will have dramatic impact on the image you capture and there is no real formula to follow, except perhaps one.

This composition "formula" center on something called the "thirds". Take any image and divide it into three equal part both lengthwise and height wise and you end up with 2 vertical and 2 horizontal lines, placing anything on these vertical lines can really emphasize them, whilst placing anything on the intersections can be really powerful. Bearing these "thirds" in mind when composing your photograph could make all the difference.

To sum up, when taking your photographs, decide what your subject is, from which viewpoint and angle it looks the best, decide where to place it, and most importantly, make sure that the light is right, after all with landscapes there is normally always another day.

5. Optics (lens)

The most important part of a camera is its lens since the quality of an image is so dependent upon it. The most basic camera body fitted with a good lens can make a good picture, but the best camera body in the world cannot make a good picture if its lens is of poor quality - if the image or parts of it are not in focus or if an inadequate amount of light for proper exposure reaches the film or the sensor in a digital camera.