

In Camera

The Newsletter of the Hawkesbury Camera Club Inc.

FROM THE CHAIR

A SHINING EXAMPLE? – The talk I gave at our first meeting of 2009

In 2008 I embarked on a project that I set for myself, based on my photography and art. I got tired of Camera Club competition judges dismissing an image because of “blown out highlights” when it was an effect I had purposely set out to achieve. It is an effect that to me, communicates the essence of something other than physical reality: the glow of a figure bathed in light, amongst the trees. In my photo of my daughter Miriam, it gives an ethereal effect, which is what the whole scene suggested to me.

The loss of detail in a child's hair, backlit by morning sunlight, gives a golden halo that somehow matches the mystery of the bubble blowing magic in the scene. Another is the scene at a pond, a bird takes flight from a rock, the water shimmers and the feathers blur with the movement. No details in those highlights... that was a beautiful effect, telling something about the scene that didn't need details in every realm to communicate the effect of movement and shining shimmering water.

In the dark recesses of a forest, the loss of detail spells mystery and secrets, not a lack of skill of the photographer... it communicates something. The sunlight playing on leaves in a valley express the joy of light, no matter that each individual leaf is not outlined with a clear contrast... it's expressing the mood of the scene... To me, not everything needs to be seen or explained for me to enjoy it.

I crossed the boundary into art, or rather, returned to it. The technicalities are not as limiting in



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March 2009

- March 4** Lecture - Stepping Out (Calendar for the elderly)
- March 18** Competition - Macro / Close Up
- March 25** Meet the photographer – Australian Museum

terms of what is “acceptable” or not ... in art, you can do whatever you like... so I decided to do some artwork based on my photography.... Burnt out highlights, no problem; areas with no detail, totally acceptable. In fact, such things make a painted image more expressive. Standing

up close to a Monet painting in the AGNSW recently I saw this phenomenon: a blur of irregular daubs of paint looks like an abstract pattern, step back and it becomes a beautiful impression of a landscape.

So with my mixture of art materials and an idea in my mind, I have begun a journey of doing a series of work called Shining... using metallic art materials to apply this theme to my work, extending my photos, and other images, to express this interest in the understated blocks of shadows and highlights...

I like to think of another world that exists beyond what our eyes can see and our minds comprehend. Now I have the right to a grove of leaves with a shining silver aura alongside the dark tones of receding tree trunks that conceal a distance calling the viewer to look into a painting. Try to imagine what lies beyond. An image in a sunlit alcove in a forest with soft blur from movement would not be seen as worthy of A GRADE in photography, but when translated into paint and pastel, it is an evocative artwork, joyous in energy and activity.

I used a night photo of the city with burnt out highlights of streetlights with coloured hazes, washes of light, and dark recesses of street corners and alleys. How else can the city be depicted? Now I have permission with my paints and pastels to recreate these worlds to express and communicate my shining theme, through the filter of my mind's eye. In the city, areas of shadow without detail can exist because I want them to speak of unspoken aspects of a place we can only look at, acknowledging all the untold stories of those places. The clusters of buildings are defined by hazy lights glowing from unknown sources and shimmer to reveal nothing but colour under a veil of secrecy. Across the dark harbour of black

space is a multitude of ill-defined lights, as we wonder what stories might exist there.

In a sunlit bush scene, the leaves seem to glow with a light of their own, radiating a warmth that in photography goes under the heading of "no details in the shadows, and too many burnt out highlights", but in the hands of an artist, the scene can evoke the atmosphere of golden afternoon sunshine drenching the landscape without needing to make every detail clear and precise.

Miriam among the trees in what looks like a forest, lit by a shaft of light, shows a figure with "blown out highlights", on the face, neck and upper body... but that very blown out effect is what gives the otherworldly alien look of something spiritual happening, an awakening, a new beginning, perhaps. I see myself in the forest; yes, I'm crazy!

Translating it to paint gives it permission to exist as blown out highlights, because I the artist said so...

Photographic reproductions do not do justice to the images' shining textures and details, but the use of metallic media has given an extra glow and textural effect to the works.

As one of my University lecturers quoted in Fine Arts 1 at Sydney University in 1972 in trying to find definitions of What Is Art? – " Art is whatever you can get away with. " Photography has a different set of boundaries that are more limiting as art, and the boundary between art and photography remains. It is somewhat curious that an artist is applauded when she can depict a scene to look like a photograph, in its realism, and conversely, a photographer is seen a skilful when she can make a photograph look like a painting.

I keep taking photographs, painting with light, and I also keep painting, with paint.

Josephine

OUR HELP IS NEEDED

The Oldest Church in Australia turns 200

Ebenezer Church is the oldest church in Australia and it's celebrating its anniversary this coming June. To record the event the organizers would like some of our members to help by recording the event and the days leading up to it. I received the following email from Ted Brill on behalf of the organizing committee.

The main day for the Ebenezer Church Bicentenary celebrations is Saturday 20 June 2009. We wish to have a photographic recording of the activities on this historic day and so we would be delighted if members of the Hawkesbury Camera Club could attend.

The day includes a re-enactment that involves people dressed in period costume rowing to church (up to five boats) and pulling into the beach in the nearby reserve. They will then walk up to the church grounds and an outdoor service of 1808 will be re-enacted.

Should members wish to attend I would be happy to walk them around the grounds 2 or 3 weeks prior to the event and explain what is to take place.

Also, on Tuesday 2 June, five schools will be taking part in a school day at the church. This day will include a re-enactment from schooldays in the church, possibly a maypole dance and old-style children's games. Attendance on this day would also be appreciated.

Regards,

Ted Brill 4579 9235

WEDNESDAY MEETING

25th March

Meet the Photographer at the Australian Museum

Carl Bento is the Manager of Photographic Services at the Australian Museum after last week's outing to that museum I

contacted him to see if he would show us his facilities and work procedures. To this end he agreed and invited us to meet him at the museum.

We will travel as usual by train leaving Richmond on 9.31am train, alight at Town Hall Station and walk across Hyde Park or meet at the Australian Museum 6 College Street Sydney at 12 noon.

The Australian Museum is located at 6 College Street Sydney

We will meet Carl after we have had lunch in the Cafeteria there.

MACRO DEFINITION

After a great deal of intellectual discussion, over lunch at our last Wednesday Group Outing, trying to define the term macro in the new digital age it was decided to call the next competition "close-up". As terms like nature, photo-journalism and macro have rules to limit the scope of such subjects; macro in terms of film cameras is defined as an image that is at least life size on the negative or bigger. Now that most people have pensioned off the trusty FE2 or Pentax K what does macro mean in terms of a digital camera?

To expand on the problem if we just say the size of the subject refers to the size in relation to the print size then if the image is projected as a digital image then obviously the size of the subject is easier to make larger than the original. However if the image is printed as a 6"x4" mini-print then the same subject may now be actually smaller than the original.

However gallant Ian has saved us all from nights of lost sleep, he has a book "Digital Macro Photography" by Ross Hoddinott who has saved us all.

Ross suggests that, *It's worth while clarifying a few terms, the reproduction ratio is the size of the subject in relationship to the size it appears in the sensor (or film in a film camera) in other words, if an object an inch wide (25mm) appears an ¼ inch wide (6mm) on the sensor the reproduction ratio is 1:4. if it appears the same size it has a life*

size reproduction of 1:1. This can also be called the magnification factor. A ratio of 5:1 equates to a subject, which appears five times its size on the camera's image-sensor or is 5x life size. A lens will have its maximum magnification listed amongst its features and a macro lens will normally boast a 1x (life-size) maximum magnification. Note that the reproduction ratio and the maximum magnification refer to the image on the sensor not the size to which the image is subsequently reproduced or when printed.

As can be gleaned from the above definition the word macro is often misused technically. A reproduction ratio of 1:1 or a magnification of 1x (life-size) is classed as macro but the word has come to mean general close-up work. To complicate the issue many zoom lenses have a macro setting, however in reality the likely reproduction ratio of these lenses is usually around 1:4 or quarter life-size.

If you want to take up macro-photography seriously a dedicated macro lens is by far the best choice, offering superior images at short focus distances. Some manufacturers now offer macro lenses with vibration reduction allowing the photographer to capture sharp images at up to four stops slower than otherwise considered possible.

LOOK AFTER YOUR CAMERA

Most digital cameras are constructed with a robust magnesium alloy body or high impact resistant composite plastic and are designed to withstand the rigors of professional use. However, heat, dust, high humidity, cold and neglect can all damage a digital SLR but taking a few precautions will ensure a long life for your camera.

Basic Camera Care

Using a blower to remove dust from the eyepiece, mirror and lens is ideal, but, due to its delicate nature, the CCD image-sensor requires extra caution. Never try to clean it with a blower brush, cloth, canned air or your fingers.

Don't touch the electrical contacts on the camera or lens, and the delicate shutter curtains. Keep a lens cap on when not in use. A skylight or UV filter should protect the front of your lens.

Once clean, keep the camera cool and dry at all times to prevent mould or mildew; do not store the camera with naphtha or camphor mothballs. If you are unlikely to use it for a month or more, remove the camera's battery pack, and occasionally trigger the shutter to keep the mechanics moving. Store it in a well-ventilated place away from the sun, radiators or any other source of heat. Avoid storing the camera where there are corrosive chemicals present, a darkroom for example. Finally, do not leave your camera near anything emitting a strong magnetic field, or strong radio waves - doing so may result in malfunction or loss of image data. When you take your camera out of storage, it is sensible to check each control in turn before taking it on an important shoot.

Photo-sensors are prone to dust and dirt attracted by the electromagnetic properties of the CCD. In most digital SLR cameras the sensor is covered a the low-pass filter, dust and foreign matter settling on the filter will appear as dark specks on your images. To prevent this from happening, it may be necessary to clean the area. This is best done by a trained technician but should you choose to do this yourself it is important to remember that the sensor and low-pass filter are extremely delicate components and should be treated with great care. To clean the sensor, first remove the lens then switch the camera on and select the mirror lock-up function from the set-up menu Fully depress the shutter-release button to raise the mirror and open the shutter curtain, revealing the low-pass filter. When performing this operation, it is advisable to use an adapter (if your camera has one) to prevent the camera from running out of power mid-clean. If you are using the camera's battery pack make sure that it is fully charged. If using non-rechargeable batteries make sure you have fresh ones. To clean the filter, hold the camera facing downward so the dust can fall out while using a

blower (not a brush). Be careful not to touch the low-pass filter.

Tips

When changing lenses, hold the camera so it is facing downwards. This will help prevent dust from entering the camera body and lodging on the low-pass filter. An alternative to having the low-pass filter cleaned is to manually remove the marks during post processing. This can be done quickly by using the clone tool or healing brush in software like Photoshop.

Digital cameras are precision instruments, and may malfunction if subjected to physical shock. In the unlikely event of the camera's casing splitting, due to being dropped from height, do not touch any of the internal workings - doing so may result in an electric shock.

COCKATOO ISLAND

Ian had organised next Saturday's Club Outing to Cockatoo Island with the following train and ferry times.

Train times are as follows:

From Richmond 8.46 at Central 10.13; from Rich 9.16 to Cent 10.43 & from Rich 9.46 to Cent 11.13

Another option is Penrith trains leave Blacktown 9.14 at Central 9.58; from Black 9.44 to Cent 10.31 & from Black 10.14 at Cent 10.58.

Return trips start at 4.06pm from Central & get to Richmond 5.28pm, then about every half hour. I will have a list with me on the day.

Ferries to Cockatoo Island leave Circular Quay at 10.50am; 11.50am & 12.50. The one-way trip is about 15 - 20 minutes. We will have to check out return times when we get there.

The preferred train for a days visit would be the 9.44 from Blacktown.

If you need it Ian's mobile is: 0410 457752

