

Advanced Tips for Taking Your Images to a New Level:

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*** The single most important factor in a photograph is to create an image that causes a major IMPACT to the viewer. Photo contests will give the most points to images possessing the following:

- Images that elicit emotion: laughter, humor, sadness, anger
- Compelling portraits that depict innocence, intensity, passion
- Nature/Wildlife images illustrating pride, wonder, unique activities
- Landscapes that create drama as a result of cloud formations, weather, storms, fog

*** Remember “An ordinary image is not an extraordinary image”

*** THE PHOTOGRAPHER MUST BE IN CONTROL, NOT THE CAMERA.
Lose the attitude: if I can't make a good image, I can fix it via software.

* Pam's Rule of Thirds:

1. Photograph in the Manual Mode to increase flexibility & creativity.
(lessons available)
2. Visualize the composition before you make it.
3. Give yourself “self imposed” projects using the techniques from this lecture to practice.

* Shoot RAW files in the Manual Mode:

- These settings will insure the best rendering of images before any editing is done.

* Take time standing in front of the composition/background and visualize how you want the image to look before you hit the shutter button.

- Carefully examine the depth of field, change the f/stop accordingly, move closer, farther, or at different angles from the subject.

* Utilize techniques taught in art school: For Adding DEPTH:

- By manipulating:

Atmosphere, Color, Linear Perspective, Light, & Movement.

- These can also be used for drawing, painting, photography, cinematography & interior design.

1. Atmosphere: Using a foggy or cloudy backdrop suggests infinity.
2. Color: Use warm color in the foreground , cool colors in the background.
3. Linear Lines: Linear lines draw the view directly into the image from front to back.
4. Light : Dark foreground, light background moves viewers' eyes into the image.
5. Movement: Create an out of focus background by using a long exposure. It will isolate the subject and create depth.

* Bokeh:

- Defined as the blurred area behind the point of focus.

- Not the same depth of field, but a shallow DOF is a tool for creating bokeh.

- Type of lens can influence depending on how many aperture blades the lens is comprised of and if the lens is used wide open.

- Distance between the camera, subject and the background are the determining factors of how the bokeh will look.

* Utilize bokeh and selective backgrounds for subjects

- Background will make or break your image. Minimize chaotic clutter in backgrounds.

- Isolate the subject with a minimalistic out of focus backdrop by setting the lens to a large aperture, (low f/stop number).

* Use of Portals:

- In photography, the technique is basically framing to draw the viewer into the image.

- Can be achieved by creating a opening foreground that leads to a more expansive background.

- Most effective using the a wide angle lens no wider than 35mm, f/16 or f/22 and focusing 1/3 into the composition.

- In software: a very vogue technique which requires knowledge of Photoshop, by making composites of several images.

- * Focus is critical and is the issue that causes most problems for photographers:
 - Autofocus can be used in most cases, manual focus for macro and night photography.
 - When shooting wildlife, use continuous autofocus. Single focus or group focus if the subjects are flying, focus set to the eye. Refrain from using auto/autofocus unless you are shooting fast moving objects like race cars.
 - Become fluent with your camera's focusing system.
- * Experiment with unusual lens :
 - Such as fisheye, or macro, macro + extension rings

- * Add a high key or low key effect:
 - Tricky effects; the in camera histogram must be monitored , shooting in manual mode with RAW files will render best results. Flash is very useful.

 - High Key, gives the image a white or bright background. Mid tones to white. The histogram will run to the right.
 - Low Key, black or dark background. Mid tones to black. The histogram will run to the left.

 - Both have been effective in film making and portraiture but my signature style is to use them with wildlife.
 - Both can provoke emotion
 - For high key, white overcast skies work best that are slightly bright, not skies that are gray with flat light.

 - It is my signature style used to isolate wildlife and create dramatic effects.
 - Read my article in Outdoor Photographer Magazine: November 2018
<https://www.outdoorphotographer.com/tips-techniques/wildlife-techniques/high-key-and-low-key-light-for-wildlife/>

- * Use other sources light:
 - On/off camera flashes, flash extenders, flashlights for light painting.

- * Walk softly and carry a large lens or two:
 - Buy the best lens for your budget. Good glass will provide for faster shutter speeds, better focus, and dreamy backgrounds.
 - For wildlife, I use a 300mm f.2.8, 500mm f/4, 200-500mm zoom Nikon, and cameras that can shoot many frames per second.

- * Contre -Jour / Silhouettes:
 - Take a bright background, place strong separated subjects/subject, in the foreground. Meter for the brightest area and let the foreground remain dark, use no flash.
 - Subjects with profound profiles make interesting subject matter.
 - Shapes, lines and subject characteristics will be emphasized.
 - Try to keep subjects separated, not merged.
 - For outdoors, early morning or early evening will work best.

- * Be aware of weather and unusual cloud formations:
 - Check weather predictions. Summer is not always the best for for landscapes because of extreme humidity. Winter renders fog, and clear evenings for night photography.
 - Both fall and winter will produce dynamic cloud filled skies.
 - Use an App such as the Photographer's Ephemeris to determine what angle natural light will fall; where it will fall and is specific to the time of day. It can be set to most locations

- * Utilize the capabilities of ultra fast and slow shutter speeds to create special effects:
 - For flying birds, use shutter speeds as fast as possible at least 1/1000th or more.
 - Use my "Pump & Bump Technique" for flying birds: pump up the body's adrenaline and bump up the camera to a fast shutter speed.
 - Neutral density filters allow for longer exposures and motion blur. I use 6 and 10 stop. Cover the viewfinder to eliminate light leak.
 - Long exposures can make moving people blurred or disappear.
 - Long exposures require a tripod and remote trigger of the shutter. Can use a 2 sec. self timer to minimize shake, if a remote is not available.

- Shut off vibration reduction/image stabilization.

* Panning:

- A technique which takes practice.
- Follow subjects with a smooth non jerky motion hand held or on a tripod. Take a series of images, results can vary intensely.
- Shutter speed is critical yet is relative to how fast the subject is moving.
- Especially effective with long exposures to create ethereal effects.

* Image Overlay:

- An in camera technique that can be found in Retouch Menu in Nikon.
- Can overlay one photo on top of another in camera on memory cards anytime before the card is formatted.
- Must shoot in RAW and keep the same orientation of the photos.
- Opacity can be somewhat changed in camera.
- Best to edit in software which allows for exposure and contrast changes.

* Multiple Exposures:

- Camera places one photo on top of another.
- For a soft appearance, move the camera slightly.
- The make of camera will determine the number of images that can be merged together.

* Zoom Blurs:

- Have camera set at a long exposure.
- Zoom the lens while the shutter is open.
- Can zoom in or out.
- Experiment with different zoom lenses, each zoom will render results.
- Put subject in the middle so blur streaks radiate from the subject. Can reposition the subject in post processing if desired.
- Can try this on stationary or moving objects.
- First practice on stationary subjects.

* Paint with Your Camera:

- Purposely make out of focus images, these can be used for backgrounds or image overlays.
- Enhances your creativity.
- Try long exposures while twisting or moving the camera.

* Using Software:

- Don't use software as a crutch; rather as a necessary digital darkroom for RAW images and for creating artistic effects.
- Don't use the same presets on images. It forces the photographer to get in a creative rut, and images will start to look the same.
- Experiment with Silver Efex, for black&white.
- Topaz Labs has great software,(topazlabs.com). Studio, Textures, and Impressions offer techniques that can be used instead of some layering used in Photoshop.
- Don't be fooled by photographers who create overly processed images while using the excuse, "this is how my eye saw it." How can people remember exactly what they saw from the time when the image was recorded until the time of the editing. The human eye is very sophisticated in terms of color and detail perception and people may view different color renderings of the same object yet, some HDR and supersaturated images are not natural.
- Software has become a very effective marketing tool for many on the Internet. Beware of those who are trying to sell teaching programs with outrageous prices, first snagging you by offering free tutorials. However, YouTube videos can be very helpful training.
- Software can intrigue the creative mind and can be wildly addictive.

See my work at the following:

www.pamelacohen.com

www.martingallerycharleston.com

- * Lessons are available
- * Private small workshops are available in Venice, Italy or destinations of your choice, contact immediately if interested