Creative Photography

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# About this Paper

Welcome to anyone who wishes to make better use of their camera and take some creative, high quality images. This paper outlines some tips, tricks and methods you can use to lift your photography beyond the snapshot.

# Choosing the right Camera

An important part to creating great images that you will be happy to enlarge and hang on your wall is to have a camera that can perform the task.

The kind of camera we are talking about is most likely going to be an SLR (Single Lens Reflex) or a “System” camera that can have interchangeable lenses. Both these cameras allow full control over exposure and a host of other creative settings.

The added advantage of an SLR camera is that you can see optically through the lens via an eye piece (not only via a screen on the back). This will actually aid composition, save battery power and allow you to compose images in bright sunlight where you would normally struggle to see a back lit screen.

# Choosing your Lenses

When you have an SLR or System camera you have the advantage of being able to change lenses to those of various focal lengths. Some advantages of this is you can use lenses that can take in wide vistas through to zooming in on a bird in a tree 50m away (telephoto). There is also the possibility of using other creative lenses such as Tilt/Shift and Fish Eye.

If you have the resources here is a nice kit of lenses for an enthusiastic beginner:

## 50mm fixed focal length (standard lens)

This can often be a relatively cheap lens that can produce crisp, high quality images and is great to have in your kit. It is great for portraits and general photography.

## Mid-Range Zoom 35-105mm (General Purpose)

This “zoom” lens can vary its focal length from a moderate wide angle to a moderate telephoto and is a very practical lens to have as a general purpose default.

## Zoom 200mm (telephoto)

If the budget will allow, you can have a lot of fun with this lens. It will give you the ability to bring far away objects closer. It is also great for taking portraits where you want the subject to be in focus but the background nicely blurred.

## Other Lenses

Of course the list of lenses is seemingly endless. Many people get the lens bug which leads to bigger and bigger kit bags to lug all of them around.

# Choosing a Flash

There are good chances that if you are buying an “entry level” SLR or system camera then it may already come with a built in flash. This is great right! Well not really. The built in flash on most cameras is rarely powerful enough for serious photography. This means that you may end up buying an on camera (hot shoe) flash which will provide you with far greater power and flexibility.

# Working in Full Auto

For the start of the creative photography journey it is best if we set the camera to fully automatic exposure. The reason for this is we wish to focus on composition tips and tricks first. It is best to initially do this without the distraction of exposure.

## Benefits of working in Full Automatic Mode

* You can focus solely on the subject and composition
* Leaving your camera on full auto when you are not shooting is a cool idea because if you have to whip your camera out in a hurry to capture that split second image you won’t have time to muck around with exposure

## Disadvantages of Full Automatic Mode

* The camera does not always know best. Even the best professional models can be fooled by difficult lighting situations.
* You may not get the desired effect that you can get by bending the rules and playing with exposure to get that moody or dynamic image

# Creative Composition

So while we have our cameras on automatic let’s focus on composition. Instead of always placing your subject in the middle of the image, there are some simple points about how to compose an image in a more interesting way. Here are some of the standards.

## Off Centre Subject

A simple concept, when photographing people, if there is something interesting in the background then offset the person in the frame slightly to make some of it visible. This often creates a more interesting image.

## The Rule of Thirds

This is one of the simplest and best known rules of composition. Instead of always centering your subjects, imagine the image you are composing divided into thirds and try and place something of interest in each third. It should be noted that even empty spaces can be considered interesting when placed in the 3rd‘s rule.

## Foreground Interest

When photographing landscapes, look for something interesting in the foreground as well as in the distance.

## Wide and Weird

If you have a wide angle lens (28mm or smaller) then get in close to your subject. The wide angle lens will create a slightly distorted perspective which can create a more dynamic image.

## Forget all the above

Well not completely. The rules above a great guidelines for starting to create interesting images. Having said that once you get your eye in you will develop a gut instinct for what works and looks good. For example sometimes, centering the image is exactly the right thing to do, if that is the effect you are trying to create.