

# THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



## The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Volume 9, Issue 11

November 2017

### Club Meetings and Other Bits of Information

The **Camera Club of Central Minnesota** will be meeting on the first Monday of each month with the second Monday of the month as back up starting in January 2017. We will meet at the Public Library in St. Cloud from 6:45 to 8:45 pm.

The club has monthly photo topics, image sharing and critique, hands on demonstrations of photographic gear and software, member online gallery links, discussions about photography, and is open to all.

#### Assignments

**Monday, November 6, 2017, Bremer Community Room 104.** The assignment is "Fall Colors".

**Monday, December 4, 2017, Bremer Community Room 104.** "Christmas Party", print and bring your best 5 photos from 2017.

Remember, all your photo assignments and meeting dates are online at:

<http://cameraclubmn.com>



### Making Photography Fun Again

You like photography, but find that sometimes it seems more like a chore than something fun to do.

Perhaps you get home a little late from work and just don't feel like doing anything but sitting on the couch.

Or maybe you have a day of shooting planned for the weekend, only for bad weather to hamper your plans.

In other words, there's a lot of things that can sideline your photography and make it not so fun.

But the only way to get better at photog-

raphy is to practice, and the more fun photography is, the more you'll want to practice!

With that in mind, here's a few ways that you can make photography fun again.

#### Make Time for Silliness

Sometimes it's hard not to be super serious when taking photos. After all, you don't want to just waste your time taking poor shots. Instead, you want to work on composition, framing, lighting, and so forth.

But overthinking photography can be quite a buzzkill, which is why making time to have fun and be silly is so important for photographers.

Instead of forcing your kids to sit nicely on the front steps for a portrait, work on capturing images of them as they play.

Instead of trying to get your dog to sit perfectly and look at the camera, flop yourself down on the floor next to your dog and take a selfie.

Instead of waiting for the "perfect" weather or the "perfect" lighting, try challenging yourself to think outside the box and work in more challenging conditions.

The point is that if you're always serious and only focused on using the right camera settings or having the white balance perfectly set, you'll begin to lose the spirit of spontaneity that can have such a positive impact on how you feel about the time you spend behind the lens.

#### How to Take Candid Portraits of Your Kids

I know many photographers that use their smartphone as their primary camera. But I also know many photographers that refuse to choose their smartphone over their big DSLR. The great thing about using a smartphone for photography, though, is that it's so small and mobile. That means you can be more mobile



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# The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

## Camera Club Photo Topics for 2018 (cont.)



DO YOU TRUDGE THROUGH TRYING TO TAKE SERIOUS, POSED PORTRAITS OF YOUR KIDS, OR DO YOU SET THE CAMERA ON A TIMER AND TAKE PHOTOS AS YOU ALL RUN AROUND AND PLAY IN THE YARD?



and work on creating images that you might not otherwise take with your regular camera. So, leave your DSLR at home, head out with your phone, and see what kinds of fun you can have with mobile photography.

Get down low to the ground - heck, even lay down - and frame up a unique worm's eye view of a landscape. Head upward in a building and find a rooftop to capture bird's eye view shots of a cityscape. Grab a waterproof case and head to the lake or the beach for some fun in the sun and surf.

The point is that a mobile phone allows you to be so much more active and free than if you're carrying around your DSLR, a couple of lenses, your tripod, and a camera bag. The freedom that smartphones provide is a sure way to get back to having fun with photography and can do wonders for rejuvenating your creative spirit.

### Ditch the Traditional Means of Displaying Photos

First of all, I think far too many people today don't print out their photos. I understand why this is the case, given that we live in a digital world and all. But slapping your photos on Facebook or into a Flickr photo album just isn't the same as having actual

real photos hanging on the wall.

What's more, printing out regular old photos and putting them in a regular old frame just isn't that fun anymore, either.

That's where you can make photography fun again - by finding new and interesting ways to display your photos.

I recently came across one such way, *Memorywall*, and I have to say that if this is what the future of displaying photos looks like, I'm totally on board!

The great thing about *Memorywall* is that it allows you to create three-dimensional photo displays that bring your walls to life. And as you can imagine, you can even use *Memorywall* to create stunning art pieces as well.

And not only that, but *Memorywall* is modular, too, so you can combine individual units to create displays that are big, small, or somewhere in between.

### Memorywall solves another problem, too.

Since each unit houses four photos, you can display many more photos in the same space. That means fewer prints loitering in your desk drawers and more

photos on the wall to enjoy.

Not only that, you can easily swap out the images in the *Memorywall* unit. That allows you to customize your photo display even more. How fun is that?!

Check Out *Memorywall* on Indiegogo

### Photo Display Ideas That Bring Your Images to Life

At the end of the day, having more fun with photography really comes down to the choices you make.

Do you trudge through trying to take serious, posed portraits of your kids, or do you set the camera on a timer and take photos as you all run around and play in the yard?

Do you lug around your big DSLR everywhere you go and get tired of doing so, or do you opt to shoot with your mobile phone for a while to have a little more freedom?

And do you only upload your photos to Facebook, or do you actually print them out and make fun and funky wall displays with gizmos like *Memorywall*?

When looking at photography through those lenses, it's a no-brainer how to have fun with your photography!

## Make Your Photos Standout

One of the greatest things about being a photographer today is that there are so many tools at our disposal for creating beautiful images.

In fact, I'd argue that there's never been a better time to pick up a camera and see what you can create.

Of course, with all the technologies, products, and services at our disposal, that also means that there are more photos out there to

command the attention of the masses.

That means you need to find ways to stand out amongst the crowd so that more people see the photos you take.

With the step-by-step process I've outlined below, you can do just that!

## Step 1: Challenge Convention

One of my biggest pet peeves about photographers is that so many of us settle for the "conventional" shots. By that, I mean that there's too much of a focus on the "postcard shot" or on the images that other people have already made famous.

Ansel Adams took a photo of the Tetons and the Snake River. That's why so many photographers like to take photos there.

But guess what? No one is going to match the photo that Ansel Adams took. Now, that doesn't mean that when you come upon an iconic scene that you can't take a photo from the most famous point of view.

But if you want your photos to stand out, you need to challenge convention and find a way to make that all-too-familiar subject shine in a new and interesting way.

For example, the Tetons can be viewed from a lesser seen perspective than what Ansel Adams did. You could take a much lower shooting position; that way you could incorporate the wildflowers into the foreground.

You can also create a more compelling image by finding your way around the subject.

For example, one could shoot the image of the Grand Teton

from the opposite side, a perspective that visitors to the region seldom see.

So, the next time you're out taking photos, don't just stand there and photograph the subject from your eye level or from the same spot all the other photographers are taking their photos.

Look for opportunities to offer viewers a different point of view, and your images will be more memorable.

## Step 2: Tell a Story

If you ask me, the vast majority of photos that people take are just that - photos.

They're snapshots of a moment that do little more than immortalizing what was going on at that exact second.

That's why so many of us have so many photos on our phones and memory cards and in Dropbox that never see the light of day — they just aren't that compelling or special.

A great way to make your images special, though, is to tell a story with them. The question is, how do you do that?

One way to tell a story with your images is to strive to capture organic, authentic moments.

The interaction between a parent and a child comes to mind.

The inclusion of a person in a landscape photo comes to mind as well.

Imagine an image of a ledge that over looks a deep dropoff into a valley. In picturing the image, imagine it without anyone perched precariously on the ledge. It would just be another pretty landscape photo, wouldn't it?

But by including a woman in the image, it immediately becomes more compelling, leading us to

wonder why she's sitting there, what she's thinking, and if she's got any safety gear to protect against a fall.

The purpose of doing such things is to help viewers relate to the shot in some way. That is, we like things that are familiar to us, so by helping people see themselves (or see a relationship or feel an emotion) in the photos we take, those images become much more than just a pretty picture. They become a story that grabs their attention and draws them in.

## Step 3: Get a Print

Earlier, I mentioned that one of my pet peeves is that so many photographers just take the iconic shots that everyone else does and call it a day.

One of my other pet peeves is that in the digital age, it seems that a lot of photographers have forgotten that how you present an image impacts its visual appeal.

Putting your photos on Facebook and Instagram is great, and I recognize that it's a necessity in the modern world. But if you want your photos to really stand out, you've got to have a few of them printed for display.

And I don't mean an 8x10 from Walgreens, either.

If you're going to go through the process of challenging convention and creating images that tell a compelling story, you need a compelling way to display those images as well.



A GREAT WAY TO  
MAKE YOUR IMAGES  
SPECIAL, THOUGH, IS  
TO TELL A STORY  
WITH THEM.



# The Camera Club of Central Minnesota

## Make Your Photos Standout (continued)



That's where Artbeat Studios comes in. If you want something that'll knock people's socks off, have an image or two printed in HD Acrylic 360. An HD Acrylic 360 Print transforms your photos into museum-quality pieces of art.

Printed on high-resolution archival metallic photo paper and face-mounted onto

a 1/4-inch sheet of acrylic, these prints will elevate your images to an entirely other level.

Even the back is acrylic -- a 1/8-inch sheet — and with diamond-polished edges that give the print a breathtaking look, you've got a recipe for prints that will stop people dead in their tracks to take a closer look.

Add in several mounting styles, a cleat hanger for easy hanging, and a wide range of sizing options, and you have a truly custom option for showing off your work.

An HD Acrylic 360 Print is a great way to make your images stand out!

## Into the Woods

The cool, crisp fall air beckons us to get outside and explore with our cameras this time of the year. I'd like to share some pointers you can put to use when exploring your favorite wooded trails, and the flora and fauna of the forest.

### Keep it Clean

The forest floor can be messy. Rather than rake the entire scene, find a section free from debris. Look for patterns in and amongst the trunks. Find sections of branches that frame other forest elements. Get creative and try some pan blurs. Use a neutral-density filter to obtain shutter speeds that last a few seconds. Slowly pan up or down the trunks to create a painterly effect. Another effect is to zoom the lens during the exposure so radial trunk lines converge at the center of the composition.

### Compress the Effect

The majority of forest and tree images are made with wide angles. These shots are iconic so go ahead and

make them, but realize everyone else does the same. To avoid the cliché, attach a telephoto to compress the distance between the trunks. Look for patterns, shapes and textures. Carefully compose your compositions. Moving just a few inches can mean the difference between a great shot and one with awkward mergers or background distractions.

### Isolate

Look for situations of opposing colors. This is especially true in autumn. In evergreen forests, a deciduous tree often finds its way in and amongst the rest of the forest. Because it's different, that tree stands out. Compose the image so that tree is positioned in the rule of thirds. Vary it up and try it in the center of the frame. Decide which one works better when you edit. It's better to have the image in your files than wish you would have photographed the scene a different way, but didn't. As I always say, "Exhaust All Possibilities" when you're in

the field.

### The Intimate Forest Image

Just because you're in a forest doesn't mean you have to photograph its entirety. At the base of a trunk, a gorgeous array of autumn leaves may appear. An isolated spring flower may emerge from the forest floor and live next to or in front of a pristine trunk. A field of greenery may surround a solitary tree. Highlight it and compose the image so just the trunk is placed in the rule of thirds and the greenery shows the environment. Shoot it wide, shoot it tight, shoot it vertically, shoot it horizontally—exhaust all possibilities.

### Polarize It

If the sun is out, glare appears on leaves—this is especially true if the leaves are wet or shiny. Glare can also appear on overcast days. Glare robs leaves of their saturation. The polarizer removes the glare so the saturated color of each leaf comes through. While it's im-

LOOK FOR  
PATTERNS, SHAPES,  
AND TEXTURES.  
CAREFULLY  
COMPOSE YOUR  
COMPOSITIONS.



perative to use a polarizer most of the time, it's especially true in the fall.

## Lines And Shapes

Incorporate the use of leading lines into your images. My favorite is the S curve. It al-

lows the viewer to course his or her eyes through the image as it follows the curve of the S shape. The S curve will more than likely be a trail, path, or dirt road that runs along the forest floor. Compose the image so the S

curve traverses through it or brings the viewer to a key element. It also allows the viewer to enter the image where the curve begins and exits out the other side.



## Straighten and Crop

Getting this right can be a photography game changer and some photographers will be shouting at their screen saying "if you can't learn to get in right in camera....." — you know the rest.

Post processing is a need-to-do process in photography and although some people believe it's "manipulating" or "faking" your photographs, more often than not it's just bringing out the real colors and details that are hidden in the raw file.

While post-processing, it's important to have a logical workflow that you work by to create the final image. Here's a simple workflow to get you started.

### Straighten and Crop the Image

Straighten the image if required to correct horizons in landscapes. Crop the image to get the right composition. For architectural images, get the horizontals and verticals corrected before cropping and straightening.

### Remove Sensor dust

Dust and other particles on the sensor become visible at a smaller aperture and in the brighter regions of the image. Use the spot healing brush or the spot removal tool to get rid of those distracting bits.

### Adjust Exposure and Contrast

Use the Levels adjustment and Brightness/Contrast tools to get the correct exposure and contrast. Keep your eyes on the histogram.

### Adjust Shadows and Highlights

Adjusting shadows and highlights helps you work with the dark and bright regions of the images effectively. Increasing shadows lightens up very dark regions and reducing highlights helps you darken very bright regions of the image.

### Adjusting the Clarity

The clarity tool adds contrast to the mid-range tones and sharpens the image

without adding noise.

### Saturation and Vibrance

Use the saturation and vibrance tools only if required. Increase the vibrance a bit and if not happy, pull up the saturation slider a bit. Note: Try using the HSL panels for beautiful colors in your images.

### Sharpen if Required and Remove Noise

If your image has noise, remove it using the noise reduction tool that is located in the sharpening tab.

While sharpening, drag the masking slider while holding down the alt key (for Lightroom) or option + command key (for Camera RAW) till you see areas that need to be sharpened. This lets you selectively sharpen regions in the image.



## Six Ways to Use Reflections

Have you stared longingly — and perhaps jealously — at those perfectly crafted reflection photos on Instagram or Flickr, and then failed to

achieve similar results when you tried one of those shots yourself? It's maddening, I know. Reflection photography can be slightly tricki-

er than it would seem, not so much in terms of the technical aspect of it, but from a creative perspective and what goes into crafting an interest-

**ADJUSTING SHADOWS AND HIGHLIGHTS HELPS YOU WORK WITH THE DARK AND BRIGHT REGIONS OF THE IMAGES EFFECTIVELY.**





CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA

Membership is \$25 per year. Members should provide: Email Address, Mailing Address, and Phone Number.

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The Camera Club of Central Minnesota publishes a monthly newsletter which is distributed via e-mail. The newsletter will contain information about up-coming meetings, summaries of previous meeting, recommendations for photographers, announcements of photographic workshops, and other material that seems appropriate.

If you would like to send suggestions, comments, or other communications concerning the club or newsletter, please send your e-mail to [rheath@tds.net](mailto:rheath@tds.net).

## Six Ways to Use Reflections (continued)

ing reflection shot.

Here are 6 tips and ideas that you can use to make more interesting reflection photos.



### Take A Minimalist Approach

Minimalism and reflection photography make a beautiful team. We often see photos in which reflections dominate the frame; the imposing presence of a mountain, for instance, can be quite breathtaking. But going the opposite route and reducing the physical space that a reflected object occupies can be equally striking.

### Look For Symmetry

This is probably the most commonly applied method of shooting reflections, which just goes to show that you don't always need to do something fancy to make a beautiful photo. You can play with composition or include a distinct foreground element to give your shot a little pizzazz.

### Use A Reflective Medium Other Than Water

Lakes, rivers, puddles, etc. all lend themselves to reflection photography. But the truth is any reflective surface is fair game: glass, metal, and wet asphalt are frequently used alternatives to water.

### Incorporate Textures

Reflections don't always have to be pristine and mirror-like. Look for imperfections on a reflective surface — uneven surfaces, protrusions, or ripples in water are just a few of the ways that you can incorporate texture to create a more dynamic reflection photo.

### Use Long Exposures

The use of long exposures can lead to dreamlike blurred reflections; this works especially well when the reflective surface is moving water and your subject is stationary.

### Experiment

As is the case with any type of photography, it always pays to experiment. Combine two or more of the ideas listed above; add a neutral density or polarizing filter into the mix; use unconventional surfaces; work with different lighting conditions. Of course you may not like every outcome but, by the same token, you may find yourself pleasantly surprised by the results of your experimentation with reflection photography.

### Final Thoughts On Making Interesting Reflections Photos

Clearly there's nothing too difficult about making good reflection photos; all you need is a reflective surface, the right angle (low/close to the reflective surface is a good place to start) and good light (avoid direct light falling on the reflective surface, as this will create glare). These are photos that you can make absolutely anywhere, whether you're in a bustling city surrounded by glass and metal (and probably puddles) or in a remote countryside with creeks and ponds scattered around or at a beach watching the sun set over the ocean. Reflection photog-

