

THE CAMERA CLUB OF CENTRAL MINNESOTA



The Newsletter of the Camera Club of Central Minnesota

Volume 10, Issue 1

January 2018

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, January 8, 2018, Bremer Community Room 104. Night — Shoot street light, star light, Christmas lights, lighted buildings, etc.

Monday, February 5, 2018, Bremer Community Room 104. Architecture — New or old building that are local or from your travels, inside or outside, details or the entire structure.

Monday, March 5, 2018, Bremer Community Room 104. Rural — Could be fields, animals, harvesting, country landscapes, etc.

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

<http://cameraclubmn.com>

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### Landscape Photography

If I were to ask you what the most important element of a landscape photo is, what would you say?

I'm guessing that most responses would be the subject of the shot...

And while the subject is certainly an important element, I'd argue that it's the foreground that is the key to an improved land-

scape photo.

Why?

The primary reason is because the foreground is like the introduction to the image - it sets the stage for the story you tell.

Working a nice foreground into the shot gives it depth and dimension, and helps viewers feel more connected to the landscape because they feel as though they're standing right there.

So, the question is, how do you successfully use the foreground in landscape photography? Here's a few tips...

#### Manipulate the Aperture

If you're new to photography, the aperture of your camera's lens determines (in part, anyway) the depth of field of the shot. That is, the smaller the f-stop you use, the shallower the depth of field and the less of the scene that will be sharply in focus.

On the other hand, the larger the f-stop you use, the larger the depth of field and the more of the scene that's in focus.

Naturally, the latter is the preferred option in landscape photography because it allows you to keep everything from foreground to background in focus. Start out with something like f/8 or f/11, and work your way up from there.

#### Incorporate Interesting Elements

Maximizing the impact of the foreground of a landscape photo means that you need to incorporate something that's eye-catching.

In other words, it's not enough to frame up a shot with a foreground — you need to seek out features that enhance the overall value of the image.



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## Landscape Photography (continued)

### Two top choices are leading lines and textures.

As for leading lines, they serve to help connect the foreground to the background, literally serving as a visual roadmap for viewers to follow as they inspect the image. And they don't have to be straight lines to be effective, either.

Texture is an excellent component to include in a landscape as well, as it gives the image a greater depth.

### Using a Wide Angle Lens

Another quick tip is this: when you want to include more foreground, try shooting in vertical aspect or with a wide-angle lens. That will allow you to incorporate more foreground into the shot.

### Use a Tripod for a Low-Angle Shot

If you don't have a wide-angle lens handy (or even if you do), taking a landscape photo from a low perspective will help you maximize the amount of foreground that you can squeeze into a shot.

The low perspective allows the photographer to highlight all the incredible textures go-

ing on in the foreground. In fact, it's these textures in the mud that become the highlight of the photo!

To get this type of low-angle shot, it's helpful to have a tripod.

At first, you might wonder why you'd need a tripod to get a low-angle shot. After all, it's easy to simply kneel down or bend down to get your camera closer to the ground.

The trouble is that that's a body position that's not exactly the easiest to hold. That means your camera is more likely to be moving, which increases the chances that you'll have blurry photos.

However, if you have a tripod with an articulating center column like the one found on the Vanguard Alta Pro 263AP, you can frame up those low-angle shots knowing that your camera has the ultimate in support for sharply focused images. This tripod's Multi-Angle Central Column gives you 180-degrees of movement so you can snap low-angle photos with ease.

The central column articu-

lates on the vertical and horizontal axes as well, opening up even more unique photography opportunities.

The tripod holds up to 11 pounds of gear, and includes a pan head with quick release so when you want to shoot hand held, it's a matter of a couple of seconds to detach your camera.

With four built-in bubble levels, this is a landscape photographer's dream tripod, because there's no excuse for getting shots with a wonky horizon!

Additionally, it's got three leg sections, each of which has three leg angles for adjusting the height of the tripod.

Add in grippy rubber feet with retractable metal spikes for stability, a maximum height of 70-inches, and a folded length of just 28.5-inches, you've got a recipe for a great tripod that helps you take all kinds of landscape photos.

That's especially true if you work the aperture you're using and frame up shots with interesting features in the foreground.



ADD IN GRIPPY RUBBER FEET WITH RETRACTABLE METAL SPIKES FOR STABILITY...



## Monetize Your Service

To make money from photography, my suggestions:

Monetize your services (service of shooting pictures for your client like shooting commercial or weddings, or a service of consulting like education in photography, or the service of helping empower

photographers). Sell your photographic products (selling your pictures, selling photography books, or selling photography equipment like bags, straps).

### Services

Since the time of Herodotus,

humans have mostly made our living selling our services and labor.

For example, we will sell our labor to till the land, to maintain things, or to sell the products of others. Nowadays, the service industry is huge — consider the huge

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demand for waiters, waitresses, coffee shop baristas, and runners for Amazon warehouses.

The sad thing about selling your labor: it is not “scalable”. Which means, you can only theoretically work 12-14 hours a day maximum. If you have a fixed wage, you have an upper limit of how much money you can earn from selling your time.

## Selling Products

Selling products is more “scalable”— because in theory, you can sell a million photo books. You cannot sell a million of your hours in life — there is an upper limit with your time and life, but no upper limit to how many products you can sell.

But the problem is — it is very hard to sell products on the internet, or to sell products in general. It is very hard to build up a sense of trust with your follower, to have them actually pay real money for your products.

For example, Cindy built HAPTIC INDUSTRIES: a platform for selling empowering tools for photographers, which include books, straps, and other photographic tools. Even if we sell one product a day, we are very happy.

Also, there is this myth of “passive income”— selling products online is very hard and requires a lot of labor as well. For example, if we want to sell any products, I need to heavily market and promote the products.

The saying, “Build it and they will come” is false. And in today’s world, just because you have your own photographic book or product, you cannot sell it without heavy

marketing or advertising.

Therefore to succeed as a modern photographer and entrepreneur, you must become a master marketer.

To monetize either your photographic services or products, you must charge money for it. You can use a simple platform like PayPal or Square to accept payments.

You also need to have faith in yourself, and your services. Don’t feel embarrassed or ashamed to sell yourself or your services. To make money from photography, first overcome this silly notion that if you’re making money from your passion, you’re “selling out”— the truth is, you must charge money for your photographic services, because your labor is not free.

In terms of selling yourself, put yourself in the shoes of your potential client or follower.

For example, when I designed my workshops, I made a workshop that I would love to attend myself:

- Fun
- Engaging
- Practical
- Philosophical
- Hands on
- Lots of time to shoot on the streets

I wanted less theory; more practice.

Even when we made HAPTIC PRODUCTS, I made products that I wanted to use on the streets, like Henri neck strap and Henri wrist strap for Leica/Fuji/mirrorless/film/rangefinders, and ERIC KIM STRAP for RICOH GR II.

It is impossible to please 100% of people out there, or even predict what others are going to want.

So once again my simple suggestion: Make products and services that you would like to use.

## 100% Guarantee

I don’t know about you, but I always get “buyers remorse” when I buy stuff. I often return stuff.

To sell yourself and monetize your photography, I recommend giving and offering a 100% money back guarantee. This will clip the risk of your client. They are more likely to book you, because they know they have very little downside.

To me the idea of a money back guarantee is good — because you had more skin in the game. If I teach a workshop, I’m going to hustle my ass off, to make sure the student has the best possible experience— because of course, I don’t want them to be dissatisfied and ask for their money back.

To monetize your photography, you must have an audience. You need potential clients.

The mistake a lot photographers make is this: They don’t have an audience yet, and try to immediately start monetizing their photography.

For me, I had to blog and build an audience for at least a year, before I had people interested .

For HAPTIC INDUSTRIES, we had to build up a following for around 5-6 years, before we were able to have a substantial following of street photographers who trusted us, before buying our products.



**DON'T FEEL EMBARRASSED OR ASHAMED TO SELL YOURSELF OR YOUR SERVICES.**



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## Monatize Your Service (continued)



Therefore if you want to monetize your photography, first build an audience, then sell yourself, your products, and services.

To build an audience, I think the easiest way is through “content marketing”— write blog posts, YouTube videos, and offer free information — then later charge premium prices for your paid services or products.

This is the “barbell” theory of pricing: Either give it away for free, or charge a lot of money.

If you charge “medium” prices for your services, you will go broke. In a world over saturated with photographers, you need to ap-

peal to the extremes. Make lots of free ebooks and information, to build an audience. And when it is time to monetize, don't sell yourself for cheap. My suggestion: charge 25% more for your services and products than you think you should (because we tend to under-value ourselves).

For example, if you're thinking of charging \$1,000 for your photographic services, quote your client \$1,250.

### It is hard

The last thing I wanna share with you — realize that monetizing your photography is very very hard. It ain't easy. You gotta hustle your ass off, and you need

some luck.

I am personally a huge fan of Tim Ferriss, and read the four-hour workweek like a bible. But the problem I had was this — I got suckered by the concept of “passive income”.

To make money, you must be ACTIVE! You must work non-stop, advertise yourself, your products, and push yourself 10x beyond what your limits are. You must keep shooting for the moon, constantly iterate, and evolve.

It isn't easy, but with enough hard work, persistence, and dedication — yes, you can monetize your photography.

**YOU SHOULD  
AVOID THE LINES  
THAT INTERSECT  
WITH YOUR  
SUBJECT'S HEAD  
AND BODY.**

## How to Fix Portrait Mistakes

We all make mistakes in the process of learning. But some mistakes are more common than the others, and there's probably no photographer who hasn't made them at some point. Sheldon Evans talks about three most common mistakes beginner portrait photographers make. What's more, they even slip from time to time even when you have more experience. But in addition to talking about the mistakes, Sheldon also talks about the ways to avoid them and improve your photography.

It's important to note that these aren't rules carved in stone. You're free to experiment and see what works for you since every photo is

different. These are mere guidelines, but in many cases, they could make your photos more visually appealing and balanced.

### Forgetting the Background Check

This doesn't apply to checking if your model has a criminal background (although you can do this as well). It's about checking the background before taking the shots. You should avoid the lines that intersect with your subject's head and body. They can be distracting and look like they're splitting the model.

I often forget about this when I take photos in a forest. So, I still sometimes end up with “trees growing out of

someone's head” before I realize what I'm doing:

To avoid this mistake, try moving around and finding a different angle. Another solution is to use a wide aperture and blur out the background. Or, you can use the lines to your advantage and incorporate them into the shots. They can become elements of composition, or create “a frame within a frame.”

### Not Enough “Breathing Room”

When your subject is facing one edge of the frame and they're placed too close to this edge, it can make the photo look “boxed in” and claustrophobic. Sheldon explains that this is because the viewers don't know what's



outside the frame, so the edge acts kind of like the barrier between the image and the exterior. Another problem is the opposite – leaving too much headroom for the subject.

Avoiding these mistakes calls for recomposing the shots. You should recompose them and give your subjects more space when they're facing the edge of the frame. Or if you left too much headspace, you can also recompose the shot or crop it in post to give the image more balance.

## Amputations

When photographing people, avoid cropping the frame at their joints. This sug-

gestion leans onto the previous one: the viewer doesn't know what's outside of the frame. So, for example, if you crop someone's hands at the joints, the viewer needs to conclude whether or not there are hands outside of the image. I made this mistake with one of my favorite portraits. My friend Milica Vujcic and I were taking photos of each other, and in the midst of playing and having fun, I didn't pay attention to proper composition. So, her hands ended up being cropped (I still love this image of her, though):

If you are cropping the images, you can play safe and crop in the areas between joints or mid-

abdomen. You can also shoot wider and include more of the subject within a frame. When taking headshots, include the subject's shoulders in the image, so the person doesn't look like a floating head. Also, don't crop too far down on their forehead.

Sheldon points out to take everything he said with a grain of salt, and just go out, shoot and practice. And although I'm always up for breaking the rules when it comes to art, remember – you need to know the rules before you start breaking them.



## Your Photography Portfolio

### Here's What You Should Do For Your Photography Portfolio

After performing a pretty hardcore edit on my own portfolio, I have left myself with a much smaller selection of images that speak with a more powerful voice about my own vision and personal style. I have concluded that a portfolio cannot forever remain static and rigid; it has to undergo periodic reviews or market-driven changes to accomplish a specific goal. These are the lessons I have learned, portfolio-wise, this year after compiling the first decent version of my photography portfolio.

### Redefining a Portfolio

A portfolio is "a group of photos collected in a specific format". This definition now seems lazy to me, because it doesn't reflect the huge im-

portance a portfolio has in the life of a photographer. That's why I'd like to share a newer and richer vision of how I see the Photographer's Portfolio today: "*The Photographer's Portfolio* is the visual evidence that summarizes a photographer's work; it is similar to a CV, but with tangible results."

The ultimate goal is to create future work that will be worthy of becoming part of our portfolio, that exclusive club of moments that builds our voice as photographers. Each element that is incorporated into our portfolio should raise the bar for the quality of all the overall body of work in it.

### Consistency and Style

If you are a beginner, portfolio creation shouldn't be something to worry about. This task should be a mid-

term project for you. The reason we're telling you this is because a portfolio is not a random selection of images you have taken while discovering the niche you'll end up loving the most. A portfolio is a reflection of a somewhat solid style, and if it slightly manages to reflect your style, it will be built from a visually consistent group of images.

### Purpose and Orientation

Portfolios are considered to be not just a selection of a photographer's best works, but as an important asset for their career as a photographer. The main goal of building a portfolio is to obtain a benefit after showcasing it. From feedback to a job, from a wedding assignment to an academic requirement, every time a portfolio is built, it's because it has a specific

THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO CREATE FUTURE WORK THAT WILL BE WORTHY OF BECOMING PART OF YOUR PORTFOLIO...





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).

## Your Photography Portfolio (continued)



purpose. Imagine that you are willing to get a job as a sports photographer, but you arrive at the job interview with an inconsistent portfolio of 50 images in which 20% of them show sports from various points of view and focal lengths. Now imagine that, later on, an even less-experienced photographer arrives with a 12-image portfolio – but 100% of his images fulfill the agency’s need has for sports photography. Which photographer do you think will get the job?

### Quantity of work

You need to assume that the attention with which people will review your portfolio will be very weak, because these days, nobody has much time. Synthesizing all those gigabytes of images into a condensed selection of images will be hard, and the best way is to establish a fixed number. My previous portfolio had 50 images, which is too many. I decided to reduce the number to 25, and after a long afternoon, I accomplished it. Objectivity will be your best friend here, and setting certain parameters like intention, style, recurrent compositions, etc. will be extremely useful for building the selection of your most powerful and meaningful images.



### Order

It is said that the order of images can be hacked a little bit by following this pattern:

1 6 8 5 3 4 9 7 2.

First, you need to put all your selected images in chronological order, and then rearrange them in that numeric pattern. Of course, this is only an idea, and you can arrange your work in a much stronger way. The only thing you need to have in mind is that

your storytelling must be very strong.

All work must reflect a definable style

If it wasn't made clear above, yeah, all your work should and must reflect a specific style.

### It should be personal

Some disciplines (like illustration and graphic design) are keener on personalization when it comes to a portfolio, but still you can make your portfolio a personal thing by selecting the format and the layout. In photography, the most important thing is the photography itself, so don't go too crazy over design and stuff. A clean and straightforward approach should be enough.

### It must be adaptable

Every photography portfolio should be adaptable, because it should respond to a particular purpose. So if you've been experimenting with various styles of photography and have successfully accomplished consistency throughout them, your portfolio should be able to be adapted, whether if it is digital or printed for a showcase to the right audience.

### It must become part of your workflow

After setting up a strict and high-quality standard for your future photographs (think of your portfolio as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) or as a quality standard), only a limited few images will be granted the honor of becoming part of your portfolio and not just yet another image on all your social media platforms. This will be the ultimate output, and it will become a bulletproof technique for overcoming creative blocks.