

Stockton Camera Club

The Shutter Tripper

October 2020

September Image of the Month



**The Lone Cypress, 17 Mile Drive, Monterey Bay, 250 Years Old
Digital Image of the Month - Trey Steinhart**

September's 10's



End of the Road
Em McLaren



**Spiral Staircase Looking up at
Point Arena Lighthouse**
Trey Steinhart



When You Got An Itch-You Gotta Scratch It
Ron Wetherell



Heron in the Sunrise
Heide Stover



Cranes at Sunrise
Christine Blue



A Herd of Cranes
Em McLaren



Lacy Symmetry
Ron Wetherell



The Massive 11th Hole Fairway Bunker, Martis Camp Golf Course
Trey Steinhart



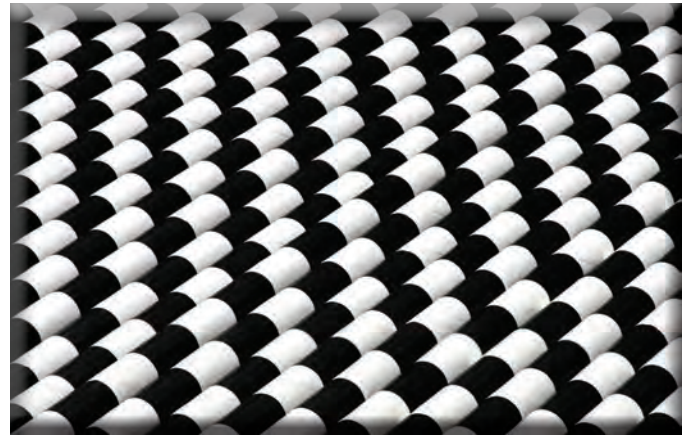
Day Of the Dead Katrina
Sharon McLemore



Gas Pump Crank
Dean Taylor



Some Like it Curly
Christine Blue



Straws #54
Wayne Carlson



**Red Winged Black-Bird
in Morning Light**
Heide Stover



Kim on the Beach
Sharon McLemore



Protecting his Family
Joanne Sogsti



Harvest Sunset
Christine Blue



Doe in High Key
Heide Stover



Columbine
Ron Wetherell

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President's Message

October 2020

By Heide Stover

I think the zoom meetings are going well. The judges don't have to travel so far this way so we don't need to worry about distance. Participation is still good and we have had a former member come back because we are doing zoom.

We had many very nice images at the last meeting. The judge has good comments so it was, I feel, a good learning experience. Always fun to see everyone too! Our next meeting is back to the normal meeting night, the third Thursday of the month. So, we will be meeting on October 15th at 6:30pm.

See you on zoom.

Heide

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2020 Calendar of Events

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Every 3rd Thursday (Except April, June & Aug) 6:30 PM | West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton | Membership Meeting Contact Heide Stover h1stover@aol.com |
| Thursday October 15 | Zoom Meeting | October General Meeting Special Subject - Monochrome |
| Thursday November 19 | West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton | November General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only (No Special Subject) |
| Thursday December 17 | West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton | December General Meeting Special Subject - On the Water |

2021 Calendar of Events

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| January 21 | TBA | Annual Banquet |
| Thursday February 18 | West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton | February General Meeting Special Subject - Long Exposure |
| Thursday March 18 | West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton | March General Meeting Special Subject - Fog |
| April | TBA | April Workshop/Photo Opportunity |
| Thursday May 20 | West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton | May General Meeting Special Subject - Macro/Close-up |
| Thursday June 17 | West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton | June General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only (No Special Subject) |
| July 15 | West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton | July General Meeting Special Subject - Creative |

Meeting Notes October 2020

Heide opened the meeting. There were 14 participants at the Zoom Mtg. Wayne said 15 people submitted images (43 Open images and 15 Special Subject which was Patterns this month). Heide welcomed back Karlene Gansberg who was with our club several years ago.

Dean introduced Mike Schumacher as this month's judge. Mike is from the Placer Camera Club and is also president of it and a Gold Rush Chapter President. He has judged for us the off and on for the last 5 years. He is a very active and excellent photographer.

He told us that his camera club focuses on education and does not give scores, just critiques but once a year they have a "fair style" competition. They do have a theme night and have judges who critique the images. The club acts as their own judge twice a year, which makes for good discussion and education. Mike also said that he has been a Ham Radio operator for the last 40 years.

The Digital of the month competition winner is:

**"Lone Pine (Cypress) on 17 Mile Drive at Monterey Bay is 250 years old" by
Trey Steinhart. Congratulations!!**

The next Stockton Camera Club meeting will be on Thursday October 15 at 6:30. Heide will send out the Zoom link for it as the time gets closer.

The October Special Subject is: Monochrome (includes Black & White)

Please let me know if there are any corrections or additions to the notes.

Thanks, em

Stockton Camera Club
September 2020 Competition Standings
Congratulations to the winner!!!

Due to COVID-19 July's meeting was held via Zoom.

SEPTEMBER DIGITAL OF THE MONTH WINNER - "Stay Away From My Girls" by Ron Wetherell

Please check out the website <http://www.stockton-cameraclub.com/home.html>"

| Class A Standings | TOTAL | OPEN | SS | FEB | MAR | MAY | JUN | JULY | SEPT | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|--------------------|-------|------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| Joan Erreca | 163 | 119 | 44 | 37 | 26 | 0 | 32 | 33 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ron Wetherell | 142 | 115 | 27 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 38 | 37 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Karleen Gansberg | 35 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Reginald Lee | 26 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lanny Brown | 18 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Susanne Nichols | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Charlene Martin | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Brenda DeRoos | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Adrian Ferreya | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ricky Ortiz | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Albert Rivas | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Jackie Berryessa | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| David Wireback | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Doug Ridgway | 187 | 139 | 48 | 38 | 36 | 0 | 37 | 38 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wayne Carlson | 181 | 133 | 48 | 38 | 35 | 0 | 33 | 39 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Elizabeth Parrish | 174 | 132 | 42 | 36 | 36 | 0 | 32 | 34 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sheldon McCormick | 171 | 127 | 44 | 37 | 35 | 0 | 33 | 33 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Christine Blue | 145 | 109 | 36 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 37 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Darrell O'Sullivan | 70 | 53 | 17 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Class AAA Standing | TOTAL | OPEN | SS | FEB | MAR | MAY | JUN | JULY | SEP | OCT | Nov | DEC |
| Dean Taylor | 192 | 145 | 47 | 39 | 38 | 0 | 38 | 40 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Trey Steinhart | 191 | 141 | 50 | 40 | 39 | 0 | 35 | 39 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Em McLaren | 190 | 143 | 47 | 38 | 39 | 0 | 37 | 38 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Heide Stover | 189 | 143 | 46 | 38 | 39 | 0 | 36 | 38 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sharon McLemore | 187 | 143 | 44 | 38 | 38 | 0 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Joanne Sogsti | 186 | 139 | 47 | 38 | 38 | 0 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

2020 Competition Policy

A. GENERAL RULES

1. Only paid-up members may enter club competition.
2. Regular print and digital image competition period: Once each month except January. A competition year is February through December. Current regular meetings are February, March, May, July, September, October and December. The number of meetings may change from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Directors and approval of the general membership as facilities permit. The Annual Awards Dinner will be held in January.
3. A total of four (4) images (all prints, all digital or a combination of both) may be entered each competition month. A total of three (3) images may be entered in the Open Division and a total of one (1) in the Special Subject Division. The number of entries may change from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Directors and the approval of the general membership.
4. Each image will be scored from 6 to 10 points. All prints or digital images receiving 9 or 10 points will be classed as an honor image. The title of each print or digital image entered will be read before being evaluated. The name of the maker will be read for 9-point honor winners. Maker's names will be announced for the 10 point images after the Print & Digital Image-of-the-Month winners are chosen.
5. A print or digital image that does not receive an honor score, may be re-entered one more time in the same division.
6. A print or digital image may be entered in all divisions for which it qualifies; i.e., an honor image in Open may also be entered in the Special Subject Division at another competition. A print or digital image that receives an honor score may not be re-entered in the same division.
7. Any print or digital image that appears to be ineligible for competition or not qualified for a specific division could expect to be challenged. The Competition Vice-President shall decide whether or not the image is acceptable.
8. The exhibitor must have exposed each negative, slide or digital image entered. All images submitted for judging must be the work of the photographer/maker including the taking of the images and any digital enhancements and/or manipulation of the image. This does not apply to the processing of film or printing by a commercial processor.
9. The same image should not be entered both as a print and a projected digital image in the same competition.
10. In the event of absence or barring unforeseen circumstances, a member may submit make-up prints or digital images for one competition night per competition year; and whenever possible must submit all make-up prints or digital images at the meeting immediately following the month a member failed or was unable to submit the prints or digital images. Make-ups in the Special Subject Division must be the same subject as the month missed. Also, in case of absence a member may assign the responsibility of submitting his or her prints and/or digital images for competition to another member.
11. A club member who serves as judge cannot enter his or her own prints or digital images in the same competition. The judge's make-up prints or digital images can then be entered in another competition during that competition year. This is in addition to the once-a-year make-up provision already

allowed.

12. Prints or digital images may be projected/viewed briefly before the judging of each division if the judge indicates he/she would like a preview.

B. PRINT ENTRY RULES

1. Each print entered must have a completed label attached to the back of the print including; name of maker, title, date entered and Division (Open or Special Subject). The writing or printing on the form must be legible. Labels must be attached on the back of the print in the upper left-hand corner for correct viewing of the print.
2. All prints must be matted or mounted with a total size (including mat board) of no larger than 18" X 24" and no smaller than 8" X 10". Exception: One side of a Panorama Print may be no larger than 36". Prints that are smaller than 5" X 7" will not be accepted. The maker's name must not appear on the viewing surface of the image. Framed prints shall not be entered.
3. Prints accompanied by entry forms should be submitted no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the regular monthly meeting.
4. Prints receiving a score of 10 points, in each class, will be regrouped and judged for selection for the Print-of-the-Month honors. Print-of-the-Month honors will be given in Class A, AA & AAA.

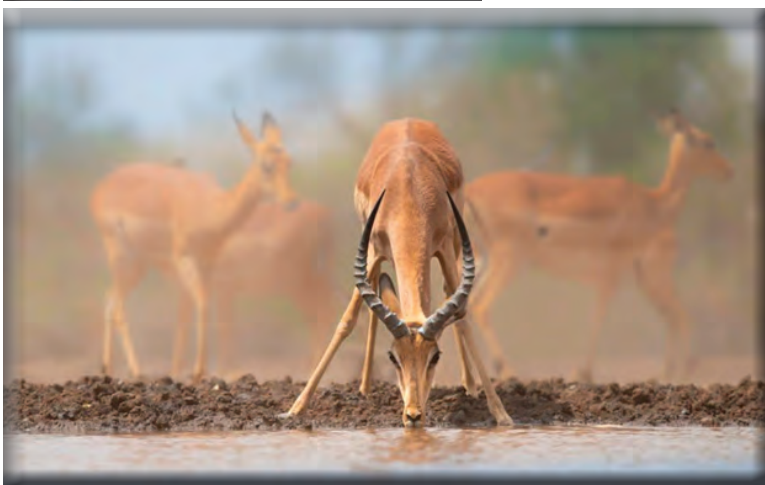
C. DIGITAL IMAGE ENTRY RULES

1. Digital images must be submitted in a format and by the deadline specified by the Competition Vice-President. Digital images may be submitted by email, mailed (CD) or delivered (CD) to the Competition Vice-President. Definition of Digital Image: An image taken with a digital camera, a negative, slide or print scanned into the computer and processed digitally.
2. Images must be in a format compatible with the projector. The key thing to keep in mind when formatting photos for submission is that the projector we use in the competition has a (maximum) resolution of 1400 x 1050 pixels. This means that any photo that exceeds this size in either dimension, could end-up being cropped by the projector. In other words: the image width cannot be more than 1400 pixels and the image height cannot be more than 1050 pixels. If your image is horizontal, only change the width to 1400, if your image is vertical, only change the height to 1050. Do not change both. Down-sizing the image from the "native" resolution coming out of your camera also significantly reduces the file size. This helps when emailing the files and takes-up less space on our hard-drives.
3. The maker's name, title of image, date entered and division (Open or Special Subject) must be included as the title of the image. When you have finished re-sizing your image save your image with a new title. For example do a Save as: Smith Sunrise Splendor 05-15 O.jpeg. (O-Open or SS-Special Subject). Specify whether you're Beginner, Advanced or Very Advanced.
4. Digital Images receiving a score of 10 points, in each class, will be regrouped and judged for selection for the Digital Image-of-the-Month honors. Digital Image-of-the-Month honors will be given in Class A, AA & AAA.



Twenty-Five Questions to Think like a Photo Competition Judge

By Donna Brok



Impala Drinking. This image has a feeling of tranquility. The lighting and soft focus background of the impalas reinforce the feeling of a peaceful scene. The subject pops and helps create story.
© Donna Brok



Photo of a lilac-breasted roller. The action of the wings adds interest. A low perspective gives a unique view on this subject. DOF and lighting increase visual appeal. © Donna Brok

Camera clubs offer members some great opportunities to learn and practice their craft, one of which is regular photo competitions. In addition to whatever points members earn toward year-end recognition, seeing other members' images and getting critiques on your own is one good way to improve your photography. Thinking like a photo contest judge is an even more powerful way to rapidly improve the quality of your entries. In this article, I will explain my thinking as a photo contest judge and the 25 questions I ask about every photo I evaluate.

What judges look for

It is important to note that different judges will see an image through different eyes. One may score a photo differently than another. While judges follow guidelines and seek objective criteria to evaluate, there is also a certain level of personal opinion involved.

A photo competition judge considers all the factors that go into the presentation of the subject. It's more than just the subject of the photo. The judge looks at the form and feel of the image, the techniques that were used, the presentation, and the composition. A judge observes the work as a whole, without breaking it down into parts. Technical considerations, composition, lighting, and impact are key considerations. But even more importantly, a judge should examine how a photograph makes one feel.

Images can communicate meaning through composition, focus, focal length, tone, and light. A good image also conveys a mood that helps viewers find a meaning in what

the photographer is trying to say. Denotation is the literal meaning in an image. Connotation, on the other hand, refers to the implied meaning within the photo. Connotation leads to art. Done well, it's why some photos evoke strong feelings in a viewer.

I'm not necessarily interested in the special subjects as much as I am in the moments you capture. Too much of the photography I see in camera club judging is merely documentary, lacking any feeling or emotion (denotation, not connotation). I suspect that is true in a lot of competitions. Including the subject, the moment, and the feeling will kick your image up a notch.

When I look at work of others, I look for a personal handprint, something that makes an image unique, powerful, or interesting. I look for emotion, intensity, passion, and purpose in the image. It is how you get impactful images.

How your choices create impact

Why do your choices as a photographer matter? Because when you snap the shutter, you create something no one else has captured in quite the way you have.

First and foremost, you made that image for yourself. It was a moment of connection, where the moment met the emotion within you. You felt something that excited you. No excitement, no great photo. If you look really hard for these moments, your images will improve and start grabbing the attention of judges.

Okay, so it grabbed your emotions. Now, is it something that will move your viewer, especially if the viewer is a judge? You succeed when others see and then feel things as you intended. Even if they see it differently, you may have stirred their curiosity, or helped them imagine a new meaning. You are then on the way to forming a personal style and following.

When selecting photos to enter into a competition, ask yourself, “Did I create an image of which I am truly proud? Did I engage my viewers?”

The technical craft of photography matters

Technical excellence does and will always matter. A badly composed, out-of-focus image won't stir emotions or win any prizes. But technical prowess is not the end. It's really the beginning. A necessary but not sufficient condition for a winning photo. A contest winner needs good lighting, posing, contrast, emotion, story, and expression.

Ask yourself, “Is the shot well focused, sharp and well exposed?” Those should be a given if you view yourself as photographer. That's as basic as it gets.

In nature photography competitions, judges will also want to know that photos were taken ethically and without harming or stressing animals or environments. [NANPA's Principles of Ethical Field Practices](#) and [Truth in Captioning Statement](#) are good sources of guidance.



Elephants Drinking. When do you choose to go black and white?

Many times it is when the subject has texture and interesting form. This image shows how contrast moves the eye through the image. It creates balance, through a light and dark rhythm, which gives movement and impact. For instance, this is a dark subject on a lighter background. Many tonal values alternate, keep the eye moving through the space. © Donna Brok

Elephants Drinking. Here, I've simplified how this works. If you change an image to B&W you can readily see the changing tonal values. Go to the top of this image and see the same thing happening. © Donna Brok

A judge's feedback

The job of a photo competition judge is, of course, to provide expert feedback. The first and most basic level of feedback is scoring, based on the judge's analysis of the work. Ideally, the judge will also give a second level of feedback with helpful advice for improvement or explanations of why an image was or was not successful. If your club's competitions do not have this level of analysis, it's a missed opportunity that leaves the photographer with little to no guidance for getting better. And it won't take full advantage of a judge's knowledge and skills

A judge should be a communicator whose remarks have both substance and guidance. The score or award is secondary. If a judge does their job well, photographers will learn, improve, and enjoy the process.

When I judge, I give feedback on what works (or doesn't), similar to the captions on the photos that illustrate this article. I also try to ensure that people will start asking themselves questions so they can learn. Questions only they can answer. Questions that will lead to images with direction, purpose and feeling.

In a way, judging is answering questions the maker should have asked before taking the shot!



Twenty-five questions to ask yourself

These are some of the questions I ask, as a judge, when evaluating a photograph. These are questions you could be asking yourself, either in the field before you press the shutter button or at your computer as you consider entering a photo in a competition.

- Does the image have a message, purpose or feeling?
- Is the subject presented in an effective way?
- Is the photo unique?
- Is there a fresh or creative approach or is this image merely documentary or a snapshot?
- Does the image tell a story? Can you say it is compelling?
- Does the image focus on the subject or interaction of subjects?
- Are the colors used pleasant and harmonious?
- Was it taken in good lighting?
- Was the best angle or point of view chosen?
- Is the depth of field appropriate or adequate?
- Is the image noisy?
- Are there distracting elements or mergers?
- Would a different aspect ratio improve the image presentation?
- Is the image lacking visual interest?
- How are the tones in the image? Is there depth to the image?
- Is there implied movement?
- Does the subject have room to move in the direction of travel?
- Is the subject doing something interesting?
- Is the background pleasing, working with the subject, and appropriate?
- Is the horizon line level? Was it intentionally skewed?
- Is the image sharp?
- Was selective focus used?
- Is the subject in focus?
- Is the subject properly exposed?
- Is there contrast? Or is the image flat?

Baboons Papio. This image exhibits emotion. When you look at the photo, you might note the eyes, the face and, if you are very observant, the hand. They are darker, more vibrant, and sharper than the surroundings. What you might not notice is the alternating light and dark areas which create tonal contrast and visual interest. The strength of figure/ground to make the subject stand out. The direction of gaze into the negative space works with implied converging lines. © Donna Brok

Yes, it's great to win or score highly, but competitions are supposed to be an incentive for photographers to excel in, or advance their craft. The end result isn't really the winning, but rather gaining a better understanding of your own photographic strengths and weaknesses, your vision and passion and your path to improve.

My best advice, as a judge, is to enter camera club competitions and look for other opportunities to have your work juried or critiqued. Some friendly expert feedback is the best way to improve your craft.

And, when you're asking and answering those 25 questions, you are on a path to thinking like a judge. Your photos will thank you.



Photo of Donna Brok Donna Brok has been an artist and wildlife photographer for many years. She is also a judge for local camera clubs as well as professional competitions. She is also the Judging Coordinator for the Niagara Frontier Regional Camera Clubs, an organization of 20 clubs in the US and Canada. Her job is to help guide the Judging Committee as it create judging guidelines, determines ways to interest and attract new judges, and creates a curriculum to instruct and educate judges using the guidelines developed.



A Season For All Conditions: Explore the Beauty of Autumn... In Any Type of Light

By F.M. Kearney



“Bear Mountain State Park Autumn Scene in Direct Sunlight,”
© F.M. Kearney

As nature photographers, we’re always searching for the best light in which to capture our subjects. What looks good in direct sunlight probably won’t look its best in flat light, and vice versa. It’s not often you find a single subject that will shine equally in any type of lighting condition, but that’s precisely the case when it comes to the colors of autumn.

Direct sunlight

The photo above is probably one of the most common type of scenes you might envision when you think of fall foliage. Direct sunlight doesn’t usually bring out the best in many subjects, in fact, it’s often widely avoided due to the high-contrast accompanied with it. I shot this image on a sunny day in Bear Mountain State Park—part of Harriman State Park in Upstate New York. Instead of producing an excessive amount of contrast, the harsh lighting did wonders to bring out the crisp, clean colors of the foliage. As an added bonus, the blue sky added even more color to the scene.

Blue skies and colorful fall foliage are always a winning combination. Try looking straight up through a canopy of leaves. I captured this fisheye view (below) in the middle of the forest area of the New York Botanical Garden.

While you’re looking up, try isolating a single leaf or a small cluster of leaves with the sun peeking through small openings (below).

This type of shot is a little tricky to expose (and somewhat dangerous to execute). Auto-exposure will most likely yield disappointing images. Even on the calmest of days, the leaves will constantly sway back and forth, playing peek-a-boo with the sun—generating extreme changes in exposure and inconsistent results. It’s best to shoot on manual and spot-meter a clear portion of the sky next to the leaves. Your exposure will remain constant no matter how much the leaves dance around. Also, unless you want to create a silhouette, use a flash or a reflector to retain color and detail in the leaves. As far as the danger is concerned ... you’re looking directly at the sun. A slight shift in the position of the leaves will transform a tiny sliver of light into a full, shotgun blast of sunlight directly into your eye. To minimize this risk, use a heavy ND filter and select an area of the leaves where this is less likely to happen.



“Upshot of the Sky and Foliage,” © F.M. Kearney



“Sun Shining through Oak Leaves,” © F.M. Kearney



“Central Park Autumn Scene in Overcast Light,” © F.M. Kearney



“Quiet lake in Wolfe’s Pond Park,” Staten Island, NY (left)
and “Stream in Croton Dam Park,” Croton-On-Hudson, NY
© F.M. Kearney



“Sunrise at The Lake in Central Park,” © F.M. Kearney

Overcast

The light is just as good on an overcast day—some might even argue it’s better. The even lighting enhances the purity of the colors with no distracting, shadowy areas. A polarizing filter should be used in either lighting condition, but it really makes the colors pop on a cloudy day. One thing to keep in mind is the amount of sky to include in the shot. I prefer to come in much tighter to exclude as much of a boring, white sky as possible. I shot the photo below on a cloudy day in New York’s Central Park at 70mm. Besides the autumn colors, I was attracted by the heavy concentration of duckweed that formed an interesting pattern on the surface of the lake. Had I pulled back a bit on my focal length, I would have included a blank sky (as well as the surrounding buildings).

Overcast light offers the opportunity to capture a variety intimate landscapes. I shot the images below under such conditions. I’m sure they would have worked just as well in direct sunlight, but the heavy buildup of contrast in certain areas may have been a bit overwhelming.

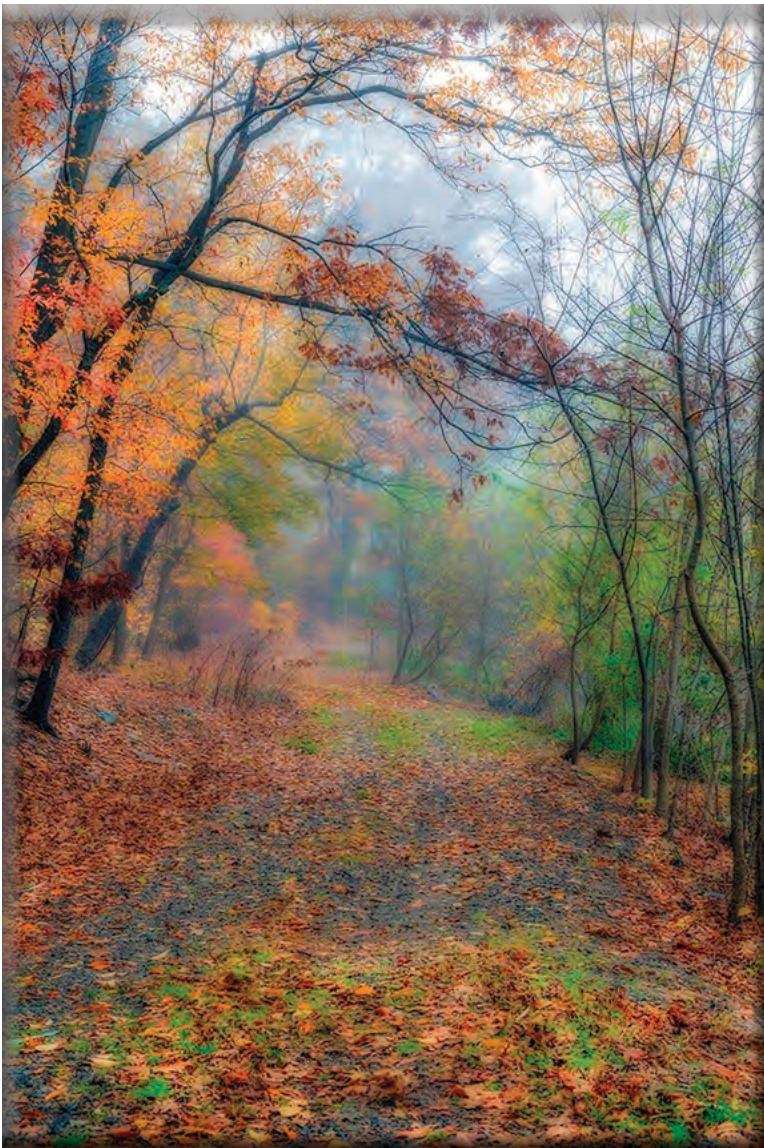
Early morning

The first light of the day is always special. This holds true for any season, but it’s especially beautiful in the fall. The warm colors of autumn are further enhanced by the warm tones of the light at this “magical” time of day. The photo below is a view of the sun rising above The Lake in Central Park. On the left is Bow Bridge—a popular spot for romantic wedding photos. I used the Gaussian Blur filter in Photoshop to give the image a soft glow.



“Dreary Morning in Wolfe’s Pond Park,” © F.M. Kearney

Fall foliage looks great even when the morning light is less than perfect. I shot the scene below in Wolfe’s Pond Park. Although it may not appear so, this park is actually within New York City. Located on Staten Island, it’s one of the least accessible parks in the city (unless, of course, you happen to live on Staten Island). Much of the park is wilderness with very few roads or paths. The sun was visible on my way to the park, but it was eventually overtaken by a thick cover of clouds by the time I was able to make my way through the heavy brush and get into position. Nevertheless, the colorful foliage livened up the scene quite a bit.



**“Foggy Trail in the New York Botanical Garden,”
© F.M. Kearney**

Fog

I think fog is one of the best conditions in which to shoot. Nothing creates a more mysterious or foreboding mood than seeing objects gradually disappear into the unknown abyss. Fog can work equally well in any season, but it lends a special appeal to fall foliage—probably because you don’t often see bright, cheerful colors under such gloomy conditions. I shot the photo below along a desolate trail in the New York Botanical Garden. I’d love to do more shots like this in the future ... only next time, I might add an ominous-looking figure in a fedora and a trench coat at the end of the trail to really up the “creep-factor!”

Clearly, it’s hard to go wrong with autumn. There’s no such thing as “bad light” when it comes to capturing the glory of this beautiful season.

F. M. Kearney began his photography career as a photojournalist for New York City newspapers. His focus soon shifted to capturing the beauty of the natural world. As an award-winning nature photographer, Kearney’s images have been widely published. A slight departure from photography, his recently published horror novel, “They Only Come Out at Night,” about supernatural happenings in the New York City subway (partially inspired by his travels as a photojournalist), is available on Amazon. To see more of Kearney’s work, visit <http://www.starlitecollection.com>.

Top 10 Tips for Black and White Photography and Portraits

by [Rohan Arora](#)



Black and white creates a strange dreamscape that color never can - Jack Antonoff

There is just something magical about black and white photography, isn't there? The timeless beauty of the photos, the emotion that they bring, the different lighting contrasts that come to life. For the longest time, black and white film photography was the only medium available in photography. While color photography has also been around for a long time (the first color photo was taken in 1861), it was not until the 1960s when color truly started to dominate the world, and it has been that way ever since. Some people might think that black and white photos are antiquated and have no use in the modern world. However, there is a reason why black and white photography is still popular.

Sure, shooting in color is great, but a black and white photo can bring a new perspective and aesthetic to your photos that can't be expressed through color. I've been shooting in black and white for a while, and here are some things I've discovered that can make your black and white photos even better.



Find a photo or a movie shot that attracts your eye. Why does it draw your eye? The contrast? The texture?
Find the reason why and take note.

Tip 1: Get Some Inspiration

Here is an obvious one that many people forget to do. If you want to be good with black and white photography, you must look at old black and white photos and movies for inspiration. Back when people were limited with their coloring, they had to create some fantastic shots to get people hooked. Look at some vintage films and photos for some ideas. You can look at contemporary photos in black and white as well.

Best of all, these black and white images and videos are readily available. Old movies can be found online without many hoops to jump through, and old photos are just a Google search away. There is no excuse not to look at past black and white media, and in the present to get some inspiration.

Tip 2: Emphasize the Contrast

Since black and white photography is all about playing with only black, white, and shades in-between, always emphasize the contrast in the photos you take. When taking a photo, think about how it will look like in black and white. A bright sky will look interesting when contrasted with a dark object. Having a silhouette of a person or object in front of a light background will create some stunning contrast. Contrasts are also used in black and white fashion photography; the options for creative experimentation are limitless. Take a few photos and look for the contrasting elements. This can help you figure out how you can take the perfect shot.



Tip 3: Shoot in RAW and Look at Your Camera Options

RAW should be your go-to format if you're a professional photographer, but it's especially important if you're shooting in black and white. With RAW, you can be able to tweak the photo to the best of your ability and be able to change it back to color should the image not work in black and white.

Tip: Your camera may have a black and white option as well, which can give you a good idea of what the photo will look like in black and white. If you are doing black and white flower photography and you want to understand the effect of light and the shape that is coming out, the black and white or monochrome option will help you better understand.

Tip 4: Experiment With Exposure

With photography in general, you don't want to stay on "normal" exposure forever; black and white portrait photography is a good area to experiment with exposure. Sometimes, over or underexposing, your photos can add some dramatic effects. This is especially important with black and white landscape photography.

Whenever I find a shot I want to use for a black and white photo potentially, I always experiment with various levels of exposure and see which one turns out the best. Also, look at the exposure of natural lighting. Flat light, where there isn't much exposure, can enhance your image by quite a bit. I recommend trying different levels of light.



Tip 5: Black Makes White Pop

When shooting black and white, the darks can never be too dark in most cases. If you shoot some dark darks (what a fun thing to say,) be it on your camera or editing them in post-production, you can be able to make the whites stick out more. In fact, the whites and the grays will pop even if they are weak.

Making your photos pop is essential. You want your viewer to eye a subject that pops out, and then look at the rest of the photo for any other details they may have missed. Black and white photos are really good at popping, but you need to take some extra care.



Tip 6: Look for Patterns

A good photo typically has some pattern to it. Something that makes the viewers' eyes follow the pattern and look for more patterns. Patterns can be rocks on the ground, blades of grass, cars going from left to right, and any other repeating object, texture, or design. For example, capturing patterns in black and white street photography can make your images distinct and make the main subject really grab attention. Patterns work really well in black and white photography because there are no colors to distract you.

When taking a shot, look for patterns. If your eye follows a pattern, this may be a good sign that you should take that shot. Give it a try and see what you come up with.

Tip 7: Experiment With Filters

Using filters, you can control the amount of light entering your camera. This can be a great asset to use in black and white landscape photography to make the picture a bit darker or add even more contrast. For example, I put a polarizer on my camera and shoot a black and white landscape photo, the brights will become a bit darker, and this can contrast even better. Partial filters on your camera can help out as well. If one corner of the frame is bright, try darkening it with a filter. Experiment with the filter on and without it. This will allow you to see what photos will look better with a filter and which don't. A photographer can't succeed without some experimentation, so make it happen.

Tip 8: Use Software to Enhance Your Photos

With black and white photography, you need to think about the post-production. Photoshop and Lightroom can definitely help make your black and white photos even better, but there are programs designed specifically for black and white photos. There is one program called Silver Effex Pro 2. This is a plugin for Photoshop and Lightroom that enhances your black and white photos. It streamlines your post-production photographic process and makes it much easier to make a good photo. It's a great little tool to have.

Smartphones today are also capable of handling an intensive photography workflow thanks to intuitive apps like [Instasize](#). [Instasize](#) can help you adjust the levels of light and shadows in your black and white photo while also sharpening important details. It also has a free BW filter. To access the complete set of filters for desaturated images, you can subscribe for only \$4.99/month. [Instasize](#) is available for download in both the [iOS](#) and [Android](#) app stores.



Tip 9: It's about expressing emotions, not just removing colors.

There are some photos that you may think will look great in black and white because they lack color to begin with. A photo of a black and white checkered floor. A close-up of a zebra. A dark, gray sky. You may think that these photos will benefit from a black and white filter, but the truth is that great black and white photography is all about telling a story, highlighting a subject and expressing emotions, without the distraction of colors. It is not about shooting subjects that lack color to start with.

“One sees differently with color photography than black-and-white... in short, visualization must be modified by the specific nature of the equipment and materials being used.”

Ansel Adams

Tip 10: Don't be Afraid to Use Flash

Flash is a bit of a taboo when shooting natural photos, isn't it? However, in black and white photography, a flash may be essential. See, flash creates varying shades of gray when you turn that photo into black and white. This allows for more contrast. You may not think much about it as you're shooting, but in post-production, that flash can add some contrast to your photo by showing off all the varying shades of gray. Give it a try and see what you can come up with.

In summary, black and white photography is all about searching for a new perspective and creating a visual that's better told without the use of colors.

Here are a few reasons why a black and white photo needs special attention:



No distracting colors.

Colors are great, but they can add some distractions to your photos. The magic of black and white photography is that it lacks those distracting colors and allows you to see contrast and patterns that you may not have seen in a color photo.

It can bring out emotion.

When you look at a black and white photo, you may think of timelessness. That photo could have been shot currently or 50 years ago. Also, black and white photos can make you feel many different emotions that a color photo may not be able to. Bleakness, happiness, awe, the list goes on.

It can require extra equipment.

Black and white photos do require some extra equipment

and care if you want to get a good shot. If you are starting out in photography and want to know which camera will be a perfect fit for you, check out the [best DSLR cameras for beginners](#).

More experimentation.

Filters, experimenting with exposure and lighting, and special tools in post-production may be needed. While you definitely want to experiment with color photos as well, black and white photos require even more experimentation.

“To see in color is a delight for the eye but to see in black and white is a delight for the soul”

Andri Cauldwell

Conclusion:

Black and white photography artists have created visuals that span various photography genres. Whether its black and white street photography, black and white erotic photography, black and white photography portraits, or even black and white animal photography - all of these photography genres have been enriched by photographers shooting from a different perspective and expressing their viewpoint without colors.

Black and white photography is here to stay. Have you tried your hands on this visually artistic and satisfying technique? If not, then do try to look beyond the colors and see the exquisite beauty of the world in black, white, and greys.