

# Stockton Camera Club

The Shutter Tripper

May 2023



April's Imaging Workshop



## SCC Officers 2021

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Open

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## President's Message

May 2023

By Heide Stover

I was not able to attend the workshop that Wayne did for our club in April. I have heard great things about it and really appreciate the time and effort that Wayne's puts on for the camera club. His wife, Roxanne, also deserves a big thank you for the work she does for us.

Thank you, Wayne and Roxanne! You are both very much appreciated!

We are still doing dinner at the Bowling Alley diner before our meetings. Come join us.

Heide

## A Big Thank You to Our Sponsors!



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# 2023 Calendar of Events

Every 3rd Thursday (Except April & Aug) 6:30 PM	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	Membership Meeting Contact Heide Stover <a href="mailto:h1stover@aol.com">h1stover@aol.com</a>
Thursday May 18	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	May General Meeting Special Subject - Abstract
Thursday June 15	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	June General Meeting Prints Only (No Special Subject)
Thursday July 20	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	July General Meeting Special Subject - Silhouettes
August	Stockton, CA	Annual Pot Luck
Thursday September 21	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	September General Meeting Special Subject - Simplicity
Thursday October 19	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	October General Meeting Special Subject - Monochrome
Thursday November 16	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	November General Meeting Prints Only (No Special Subject)
Thursday December 21	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	December General Meeting Special Subject - Glass
January	Stockton, CA	Annual Banquet
Thursday February 15	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	February General Meeting Special Subject - Domestic Animals
Thursday March 21	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	March General Meeting Special Subject - Abandoned
April	TBA	April Workshop/Photo Opportunity
Thursday May 16	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	May General Meeting Special Subject - Graveyards
Thursday June 20	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	June General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only
Thursday July 18	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	July General Meeting Special Subject - Photo Journalism

**Stockton Camera Club**  
**March 2023 Competition Standings**  
**Congratulations to the winner!!!**

The March 2023 SCC competition meetings was held in person at the bowling Alley.

Now That's a Mouthful - Ron Wetherell - 1st place print  
 Looking at You Looking at Me - Ron Wetherell— 2nd place print  
 Blondie - Ron Wetherell - 3rd place print  
 Cactus Flower - Em McLaren - 1st place digital  
 The View from Behind - Em McLaren - 2nd place digital  
 Swirling Colors of Circles - Em McLaren's - 3rd place digital

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

Class AA Standing	TOTAL	OPEN	SS	FEB	MAR	MAY	JUN	JULY	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Ron Wetherell	78	59	19	39	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Debra Goins	67	50	17	35	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sheldon McCormick	66	50	16	33	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heide Stover	36	26	10	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trey Steinhart	36	26	10	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Joan Erreca	33	24	9	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Christine Blue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Karleen Gansberg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elizabeth Parrish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Darrell O'Sullivan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ren Wright	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lanny Brown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Class AAA Standing	TOTAL	OPEN	SS	FEB	MAR	MAY	JUN	JULY	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Em McLaren	74	55	19	37	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wayne Carlson	74	56	18	37	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doug Ridgway	73	55	18	37	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dean Taylor	73	55	18	38	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sharon McLemore	71	53	18	36	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Joanne Sogsti	71	54	17	38	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## 2023 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.



## How Taking Photography Lessons Could Benefit You

By [Joe Reardon](#)

I get asked frequently why should I take a Photography Workshop, so I thought I would put down my top 15 reasons to go and questions to ask of your workshop leader.

Photography workshops can be an invaluable tool for photographers of all levels. Here are 15 reasons why you should consider taking a photography workshop:

1. **Learn from industry experts:** Workshops are typically led by experienced photographers who have mastered their craft and are willing to share their knowledge and expertise.
2. **Improve your skills:** Workshops can help you improve your technical skills, creative thinking, and develop your own style.
3. **Hands-on learning:** Workshops often involve practical exercises and opportunities to practice new techniques under the guidance of the workshop leader.
4. **Access to new locations:** Workshops often take place in interesting and unique locations that may be difficult to access on your own.
5. **Networking:** Workshops provide an opportunity to connect with other photographers who share your passion for photography.
6. **Constructive feedback:** Workshop leaders and fellow participants can provide constructive criticism on your photographs, helping you to improve your skills.
7. **Portfolio building:** By attending a workshop, you can capture new and interesting images that can help to build your portfolio.
8. **Discover new equipment:** Many workshops offer the opportunity to try out new cameras, lenses, and other equipment.
9. **Develop your own style:** Workshops can help you to develop your own unique style and voice as a photographer.
10. **Improve your confidence:** By learning new techniques and practicing your skills, you can become more confident in your abilities as a photographer.
11. **Fun and enjoyable:** Photography workshops are a fun and enjoyable way to explore your creativity and meet new people who share your passion for photography.
12. **Expand your horizons:** Workshops can expose you to new styles, genres, and techniques that you may not have explored otherwise.
13. **Learn in a supportive environment:** Workshops provide a supportive environment where you can ask questions, receive feedback, and learn without fear of judgment.
14. **Personalized instruction:** Workshop leaders can tailor instruction to the skill level and interests of the participants, providing personalized instruction.
15. **Increase your marketability:** By attending workshops and improving your skills, you can become more marketable and stand out in a crowded field.

Interview Questions for Workshop Leader:

1. What is your photography background and how did you get started?
2. What inspired you to start leading photography workshops?
3. What is the focus of your workshop and what can participants expect to learn?
4. What is your teaching style and how do you adapt to different skill levels?
5. How do you incorporate feedback and critique into your workshops?
6. Do you shoot alongside of your clients.
7. How many students will be attending the workshop
8. Do you have references and reviews from past workshops?
9. How do you balance providing instruction with allowing participants to explore their own creativity?
10. Do you have any special equipment requirements for your workshop?
11. How do you handle difficult participants or situations during your workshops?
12. What advice would you give to someone considering attending your workshop?
13. How do you ensure that all participants receive personalized instruction?
14. What are some of the challenges you've faced while leading photography workshops and how have you overcome them?
15. Can you provide some tips for participants to get the most out of your workshop?

[2023 Workshops](#)

[About Joe](#)

[My Instruction Method](#)



## Abstract Photography: 9 Tips for Capturing Stunning Abstract Images

Written by Adorama

TAGS: [abstract](#), [abstract photography](#), [beginners](#), [photography tips](#)



Getting into [abstract photography](#) is one of the best ways that any aspiring photographer can start out in photography. Compared to more popular [types of photography](#) like product, outdoor, and wedding photography, abstract photography goes against many photography rules. It gives you the freedom to take a photo of anything that grabs your attention and allows you to express your artistic nature.

### What Is Abstract Photography?

Formally speaking, abstract photography is a method of expressing ideas and emotions with photographed image elements without the intention of creating a traditional or realistic image. By avoiding and going beyond the usual representations of an object, scene, or any particular element, it reveals details that are normally ignored and triggers the viewer's imagination.

### What Inspired Abstract Photography?

As abstract photography draws away from the objective image of reality, it blends in the extraordinary and unusual of concepts, mediums, and photographic techniques. The first approaches of abstract photography appeared in the 19th century as technical experiments and were focused on capturing the unseen part of the world.

But the main inspiration came from the abstract art of the beginning of the 20th century. The radical visions of Picasso, Kandinsky, Braque, and others determined the fate of abstract photography. Whether it was loved or hated, Cubist, Futurist, and Surrealist art was making a point, and avant-garde photographers wanted to be part of the movement. Jaroslav Rössler, Man Ray, André Kertész, and László Moholy-Nagy were among the first to experiment with the abstraction of light, perspective, natural world elements, and conventional imagery. Their abstract photos became part of the history of photography and inspired others to create abstract pictures too.

As Moholy-Nagy said, photographers “must learn to seek, not the ‘picture,’ not the esthetic of tradition, but the ideal instrument of expression, the self-sufficient vehicle for education.”

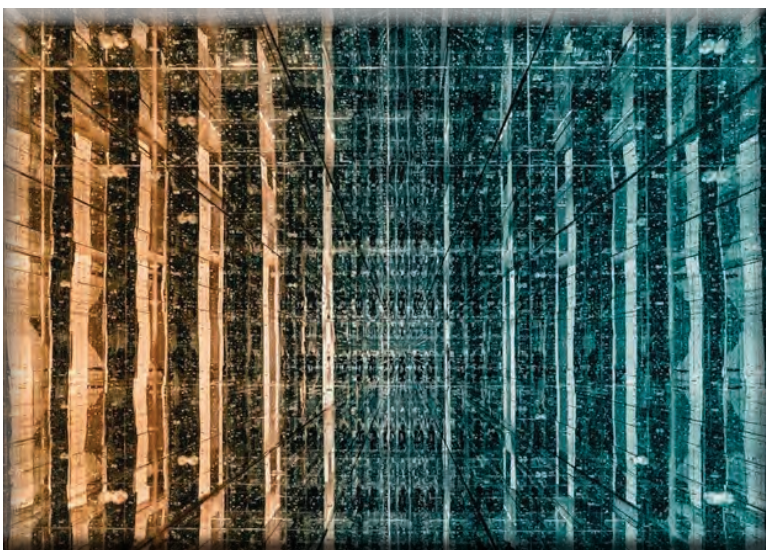


Photo by Clay Banks on Unsplash

### What is Abstract Composition in Photography?

Abstract composition means focusing on basic elements instead of realistic representations of the scenery in front of you. However, the result must be a visually appealing image with strong focal points, wisely chosen [leading lines](#), and balance. While you can break some of the standard composition rules, you still have to look after the aesthetics.

Many abstract photos have a structural design and imply working with geometrical features and creative depths of field. Therefore, balancing proportions, shapes, and colors is essential.

Abstract photography requires mesmerizing compositions to capture the viewer's attention for a longer time than realistic images. They should slowly reveal their elements and raise questions each step of the way. In abstract pictures, nothing is what it seems.

Some of the most acclaimed—and expensive—pieces of art include odd yet visually interesting photos of things that don't seem to tell a specific story but still mystify and engage viewers on a deeper level.

Find out what makes abstract photos intriguing below.

## What are the key elements of a good abstract photo?

- Simplicity
- Composition
- Angle of View
- Lighting
- Harmony
- Mystery

While abstract photography doesn't bind one to follow strict photography rules like other niches do, there are a couple of elements that give an abstract photo more depth and increase its appeal. You'll want to include these elements in your photos if you want to create a meaningful abstract photo that can speak volumes to your viewers.

### Simplicity

At first glance, abstract photos may seem a little confusing and cluttered. However, once you understand what "abstraction" does, you'll realize that a lot of subtraction actually goes into the process. Distracting and useless elements that don't trigger emotions and may confuse viewers are eliminated from the image, especially since what is included in the image won't be easily recognizable, thus resulting in a cleaner abstract image that is visually lighter and easier to interpret.

### Composition

While many commonly observed [photography composition rules](#) don't apply, a good abstract photo always has a clear, structural design. A lot of thought goes into the order, placement, and balance between shapes, patterns, textures, and even colors within an abstract image. These factors greatly affect the visual weight of the photo, establish and complement the point of interest, and influence how viewers look at it. A well-composed photo uses these visual elements to achieve a common goal and output.

### Angle of View

Like composition, the angle of view determines how the subject will be represented in an abstract image. Choosing the right angle of view involves looking for the best vantage point that will complement your subject and keep distractions out of the frame. Aside from shooting at an unusual angle, some abstract images are even flipped or rotated during post-processing to come up with different views and orientations.

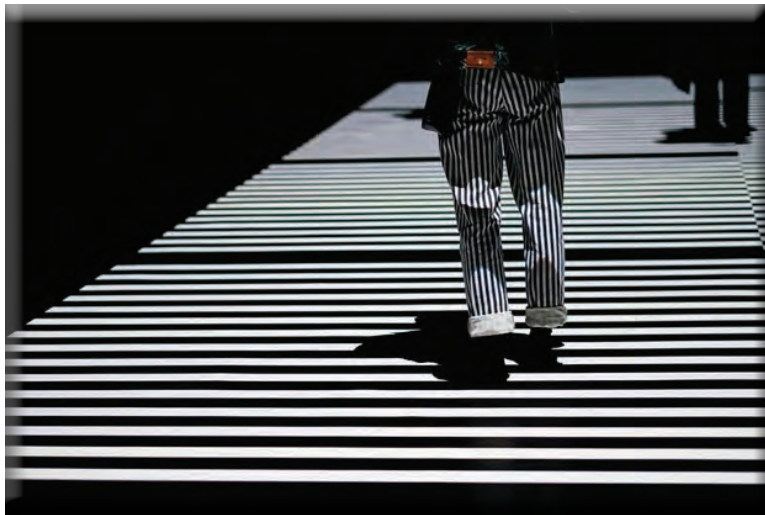


Photo by Brandon Wong on Unsplash

### Lighting

Lighting is a major element in virtually any photography style. Depending on how it is used, it can emphasize, dramatize, or give prominence to subject forms, details, or areas within an image. The direction and power of the light source can also play a huge part in directing the presentation of the subject and setting the tone for the shot. You'll find that many of the most mysterious and intriguing abstract images have silhouettes, [backlighting](#), and interesting shadows.

### Harmony

Photographic elements in an abstract image tend to be limited, but they usually work together by creating [visual balance](#) and proportion. When there are strong colors in an image, for example, they are usually balanced out by other muted colors. This way, they don't fight for visual attention or confuse viewers. They co-exist harmoniously

by relating to each other and complementing the focal point, thus creating a cohesive abstract photo.

### Mystery

Abstract images trigger emotional responses and imaginations by including an element of mystery and intrigue. This is how abstract art gives viewers a sense of wonder. This, in turn engages and encourages them to appreciate even the most complex but inviting pieces of art.



## Abstract Photography Tips for Beginners

1. Start with everyday objects
2. Use elements of design to your advantage
3. Go macro
4. Shoot through objects
5. Capture motion
6. Practice the art of subtraction
7. Customize your lighting
8. Experiment with different shooting styles
9. Post-process your images

Contrary to popular belief, it's not difficult to capture abstract images. It's just a matter of gaining a better understanding of what abstract photography really is, what makes a good abstract photo, and letting your creative juices flow. Grab your favorite camera — like the [Sony a7IV](#), [Canon EOS R5](#), or [Nikon Z 7II](#) — and start creating. Here are a few easy tips that can help you take your abstract photos to the next level.

### 1. Start with everyday objects

Abstract photography involves a lot of looking at things in a different way. It can help if you start with things that you already have at home to practice. Once you get used to seeing mundane, everyday things beyond their usual framework, you'll be able to think and see things abstractly wherever you are.

Believe it or not, literally anything can be a subject in your abstract photos. Choose a random object or set of things, such as kitchenware or a single light bulb, and try to figure out how you can photograph it in a different yet appealing way. Step outside and look at the morning dew or building angles in your neighborhood. All of these can be sources and inspirations for abstract images.

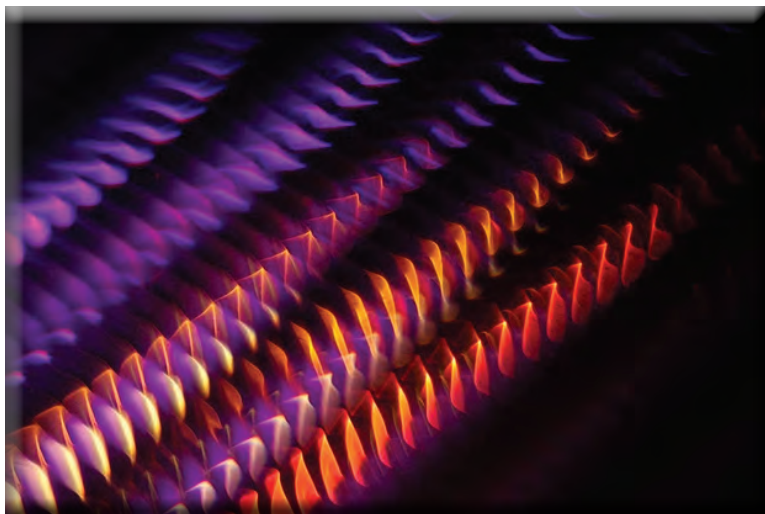


Photo by Meagan Carsience on Unsplash

### 2. Use elements of design to your advantage

The composition of different photographic elements—line, shape, form, texture, pattern, and color—can influence your viewers to appreciate and look at your photos in many different ways. Lines and curves, for example, add interest by leading your viewer's eyes across an image, perhaps towards the focal point in the shot. Some of the principles of architecture photography apply here, as well, and you can utilize the buildings around you as inspiration for abstract photography.

Patterns and textures are always interesting to look at. You can blow your viewers' minds if you include a zoomed out shot of what it really is and where it came from. Similarly, you can use colors to highlight the point of interest or just to add visual impact to your image. Seek out these elements around you and use them to create compelling abstract images.

### 3. Go macro

One of the most common methods of capturing abstract photos is to move in closer. You can do this either by zooming in or going macro. While it's perfectly fine to use zoom lenses, they only make distant objects look closer up to a certain extent. To achieve a much closer focus that can magnify tiny objects or details and capture a life-sized (or even bigger) image, you'll need to use your camera's Macro mode or [get a good macro lens](#).

This will allow you to get an extra close look at the often missed elements around you. Small insects, flowers, and jewelry are often subjects of macro photography, but when you bring abstract elements into the fold, you can see a whole new side of these objects.

### 4. Shoot through objects

Using a makeshift lens “filter” can help you achieve truly unique and abstract images. [Colored filters](#) and gels, for example, can save you from having to edit your photos just to give it an interesting color tinge. Shooting through translucent glass, water, or even a car window on a rainy day can result in distortions and light diffractions that will create unusual but visually interesting images. Don't hesitate to experiment with other kinds of things you can shoot through. You can then find out how they can affect your image.

## 5. Capture motion

Many photographers frown upon subject [motion blurring](#)—but not abstract photographers. By simply moving your camera at the moment of taking the shot, you end up with a mix of different colors, lines, and patterns. This looks similar to painting brushwork, depending on the direction of movement. Start with one direction, then left to right. Experiment with circular movements and wiggles. Understand how it affects your images and see what kind of patterns you end up with.

Remember to use a slower [shutter speed](#) of 1/10th of a second or slower to successfully capture motion blur. If your shot ends up overexposed, you can go on Shutter Priority mode or use a lower ISO level and/or a tighter aperture.

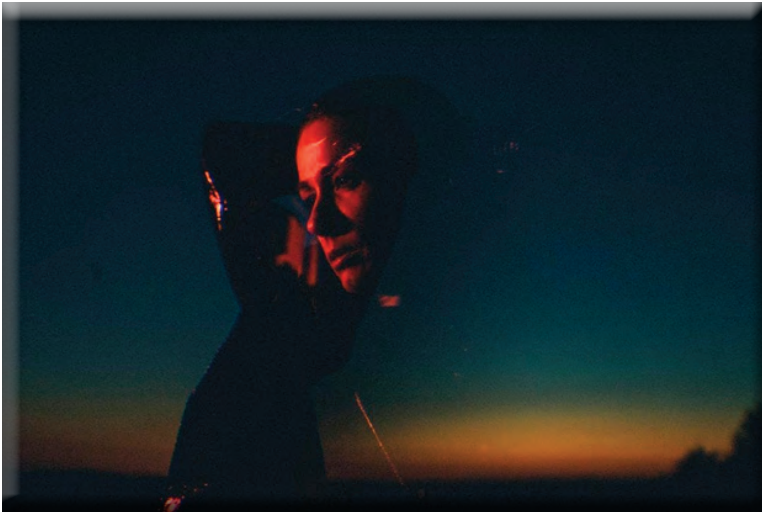


Photo by pawel szvmanski on Unsplash

## 6. Practice the art of subtraction

To keep your images simple, you need to get used to literally removing or keeping elements out of the frame. You may need to experiment and think about which ones you will remove. But it's equally important that you remember why you're doing it. Sometimes, simply taking out a second object from the equation can make your viewers focus on and contemplate the remaining object. Thus, you're adding more mystery to your photo.

## 7. Customize your lighting

Changing the direction and adjusting the power of your light source can provide different effects that yield unique images. Focused lighting on your subject, for example, can emphasize and make it the focal point of your photo. Placing a strong light source on one side can create shadows that will accentuate textures. Even and diffused lighting lessens the drama but can make your viewers linger and really look at different parts of the image, as opposed to just one specific area. You can try backlighting and silhouetting, which partly involves placing the light source behind the subject.

These are just some of the many ways that you can manipulate your lighting to create shadows or highlights that add depth, mystery, and interest to your images.

## 8. Experiment with different shooting styles

A prerequisite for this step is to first understand how your camera works. Once you've gotten a good idea about how different camera settings can affect your output, you can manipulate your results to your own liking. Be willing to shoot out of focus, play with your [depth of field](#), or shoot from very weird angles. You can also rotate your photos, or even change the white balance of your images. Try out methods used in product, outdoor, and even [sports photography](#) to create abstract results. This is the part where “anything goes,” and you're encouraged to exercise your artistic freedom.

## 9. Post-process your images

Aside from exercising your freedom to manipulate your results and create your very own abstract imagery, feel free to go crazy with the post-processing. When it comes to editing abstract photos, there's no such thing as “too much”. Abstract photographers are encouraged to digitally improve their work later on. You can do this through recoloring, cropping, reshaping, distorting, or flipping images.



### [Adorama](#)

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## Why Discovering Abstraction Is Essential for Your Photography

By [Ivor Rackham](#)

Are you not into abstract photography? It's one of those things you'll either love or hate. But it's important, and there is much more to it than you might know.

### What Is Abstract Photography?

It's probably easiest to describe abstract photography by starting with what it isn't. Objective photography is the opposite of subjective. It tries to be matter of fact and not influenced by feelings or personal interpretations of the photographer or viewer. In contrast, abstract photography is intended to be entirely subjective, with the viewer interpreting it according to their personal experience. A catalog photo of a bird on a stick is pretty much as close to objective as you can get, whereas a picture of its distorted shadow on a wall would be abstract. But it is not as simple as that.



All photos fall somewhere within the spectrum of these two extremes. Even a bird photo is subject to personal interpretations and can evoke emotions. That blurred background is an abstraction. It's not what you saw behind the bird, but that bright smudge is an idea that is open to personal interpretation.

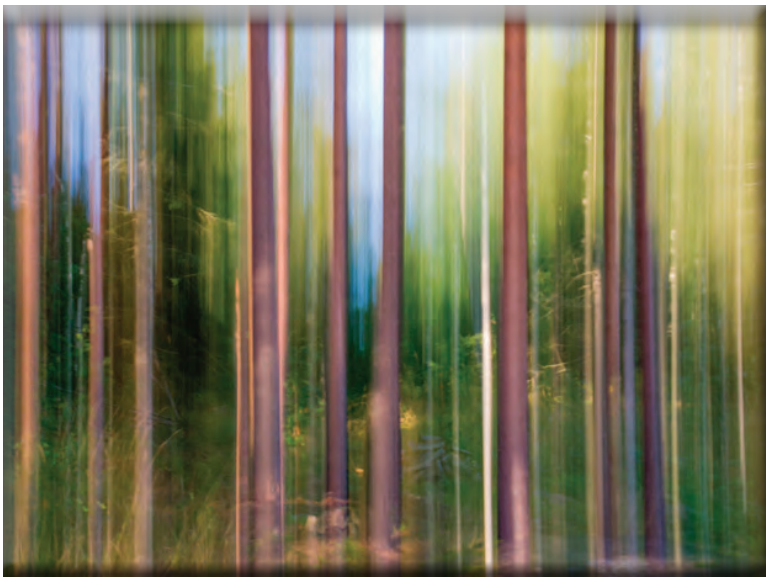
Abstraction is to do with thoughts and ideas rather than matter. Consequently, the abstract image can mean different things to different people. A great photographer sees and thinks about the world in a way that an ordinary person cannot. In abstract photography, this is taken to the extreme. The photographer finds a unique interpretation of reality. Then, importantly, they also allow the meaning of that image to be defined by the individual viewers; they enable the audience to understand the images how they want.



Intentional camera movement (ICM) is a great way of making the subject matter less obvious and enabling the viewer to find their own interpretation of the scene. This was shot over 10 years ago and will evoke very different feelings for me than it will for most viewers.

That personal interpretation requires intelligence and imagination both from the photographer and the viewer. Moreover, it gives the photographer a means of expressing themselves outside the confines of what they perceive as reality.

Like that blurred background behind the bird, in photography, abstraction is usually achieved by removing or changing our usual perception of a scene using different techniques. We represent the world using lines, shapes, form, marks, and colors that do not necessarily match what the eye would see.







Although this image of a solitary crepuscular ray can be considered as a purely objective subject, it can be considered an abstract too and open to personal interpretation by the viewer.



another's point of view. So, appreciating that abstract photography might not appeal to everyone is a good thing.



### A Criticism of Abstract Photography

Of course, the main criticism is that of the Emperor's New Clothes. Some random shape or squiggles in a photo could be defined as nothing more than that, without any extra meaning. I heard someone recently describe it as a hoax and a lot of "airy-fairy nonsense." There is a counterargument to that; the viewer lacks the capacity to extract any other meaning other than it being a set of squiggles.

Nevertheless, the abstract photographer should be okay with that rejection of their work; if a viewer sees their photo as a meaningless set of lines, then that is a valid interpretation. In other words, if you only see a squiggle, it doesn't matter. It's okay to construe it that way.

The idea of abstract photography is that the photographer and the viewers see beyond the objective reality; they will all interpret the images uniquely, depending upon their personal experiences.

Moreover, our two-dimensional images are just interpretations of our four-dimensional world. Just as we can change how the world looks to us by squinting, looking through frosted glass, or seeing it reflected from the back of a spoon, is it no less valid to change how it appears in our photos?

### The Philosophy of Abstraction

Like many art movements, abstraction is linked to philosophy. It is seen to have a moral, virtuous aspect. Honesty, integrity, simplicity, harmony, acceptance, spirituality, and so forth are all qualities associated with abstract art and photography. Some argue that no art has moral virtues; it's just art. However, it is both valuable and comforting to think otherwise. Useful because it gives us guidance on how to proceed with creating our images. Comforting because it rejects conflict. For example, how often have people become stressed and angry because they disagree with another's point of view yet fail to see that their opinion is just as invalid? An abstract photograph is open to whatever interpretation you like, and the photographer is likelier to accept and learn from

### It's Hard Breaking Free from Naïve Realism in Photography

Naïve Realism is the philosophy that the world around you is exactly as you perceive it. Photography and videography are intrinsically linked to visual reality more than any other art form because a photograph and a movie usually closely resemble what can be seen with the human eye.

Therefore, breaking free from that and creating an abstract image usually means deviating from the methods we typically employ to create a realistic image. Removing elements such as color, tone, the picture's background, or just placing the camera where our eye would not usually go can create an abstract image.



### Are You Already Creating Abstract Photographs?

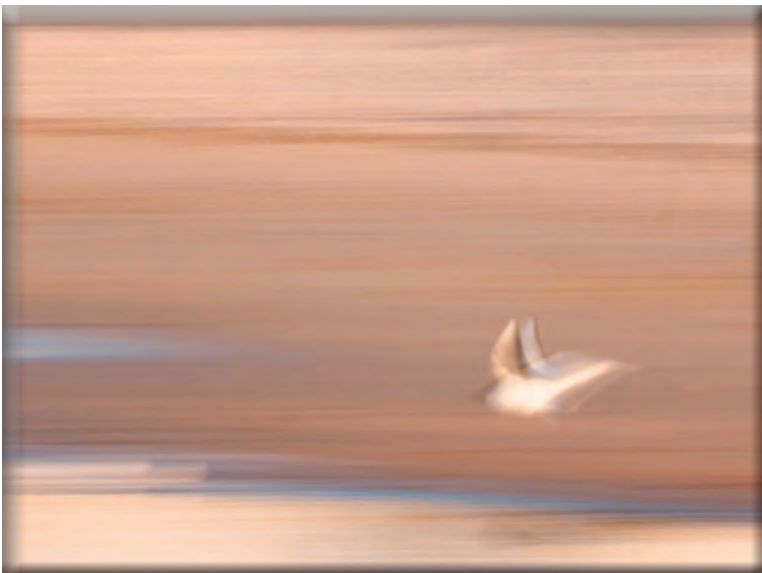
So, are you creating an abstract photograph if you use abstract techniques? Say you shoot a closeup of a bird to give a shallow depth of field, convert it to black and white, and emphasize its markings with contrast controls in processing. Is that an abstract image? Stroll along a boardwalk and place your camera at ground level. Are you then shooting an abstract image? If you want it to be, then yes, you are. If you intend the image to be purely objective, you have achieved that too. Just don't expect others always to interpret it the same way.



### Methods of Abstraction in Photography

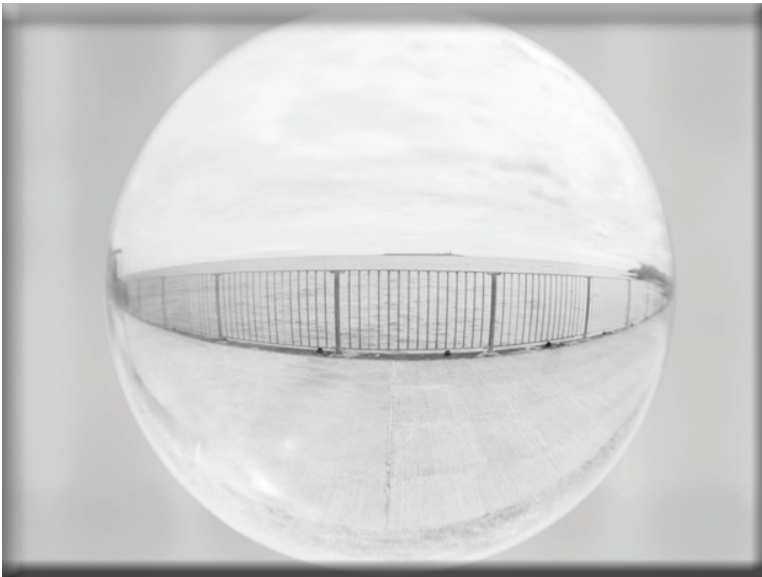
We usually try to be precise with our technical settings with photography. With abstract photography, we can abandon what we usually consider the right approach and do something entirely different instead. For instance, we are careful about where we place the focus point. On the other hand, with abstract, we can discard that idea and focus elsewhere on the subject or even in the space in front or behind it.

Much abstract work is related to camera or subject movement during exposure. I enjoy intentional camera movement photography, although it is becoming a too well-used technique now. Likewise, using low light or an ND filter to show movement is also something I love doing. Conversely, breakneck shutter speeds can be used to stop motion and show shapes and patterns that would otherwise be invisible to us.



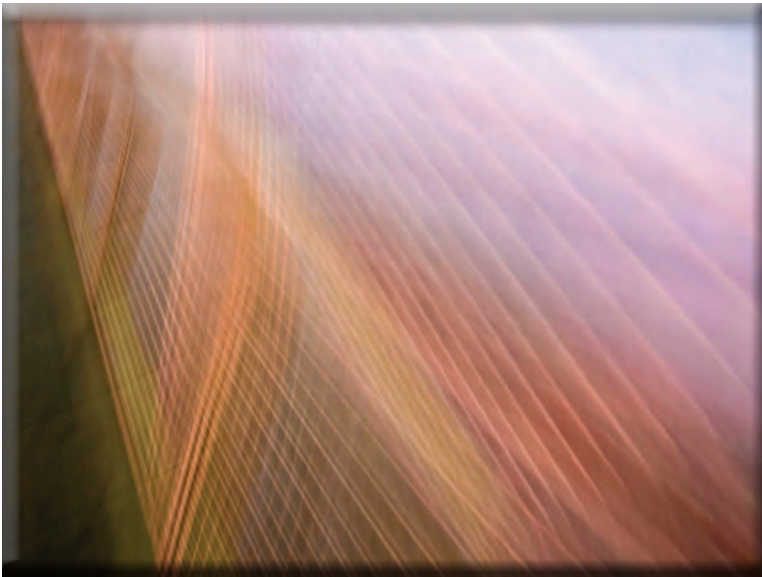
Another thing we are always trying to achieve is pin-sharp optics in objective photography. So, by employing the opposite of that, we can shun sharpness by using defective optics. We can place transparent obstacles in front of the lens to reduce the image quality or distort the light coming into the lens altogether.





Lens balls images have become a bit of a cliché, but they are fun to experiment with.

Try using prisms, lens balls, scratched filters, filters with gloop applied, and angled glass in front of the lens.



Similarly, we try to get our colors accurate. Colored filters can add strange effects. We usually try to achieve a lack of noise, have the correct exposure, and use good lighting for our photos. In abstract photography, it doesn't have to be so. By combining different techniques, there are dozens of opportunities to create unique abstract images.



Are you a fan of abstraction, or is it something that turns you off? It would be great to hear your thought and even see some of your photos in the comments.

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About Ivor Rackham [Follow](#)  
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Earning a living as a photographer, website developer, and writer and Based in the North East of England, much of Ivor's work is training others; helping people become better photographers. He has a special interest in supporting people with their mental well-being through photography. In 2023 he became a brand ambassador for the OM System.



## Let's Get Vertical!

*By Joe Brady*



Slot Canyon Waterfall,  
Kannaraville, UT

After sharing with you last week about my “Creative Block”, I mentioned I went into my Lightroom Catalog to see which of my images had the most creativity, or perhaps more to the point, which ones had the most impact. While it doesn't come as much of a surprise, I consistently found that many of the most compelling images were either panoramic or tall, thin verticals. Both of these formats create a lot of movement for the viewer, but let's focus today on vertical compositions.

When you create a vertical composition, you force the viewer to look at the image from the bottom up. Because of this, it really pays off to have something for the eye to land on that provides an anchor point to then explore up through the image. The other obvious limitation of this shape is that you have to simplify the subject, but this restriction has the benefit of creating clarity and focus in the image.

When I say “vertical”, I'm not talking about 8x10's, which I in general really dislike.



Cattle Egret,  
St. Augustine Alligator Farm

My favorite aspect ratios for home-printed verticals are 16:9 and 14x8.5 - the latter which happens to be the size of legal paper, and there are some nice papers of this size for inkjet printers. Add a 12x18” matte with a 14x8” opening and you have a really nice size for both horizontal and vertical prints.



Lone Pine  
Grand Teton National Park

“You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.” - Maya Angelou

One of the benefits of vertical images is that they can be so beautiful hanging in your home. We all have lots of thin, tall wall space that is just begging you for a tall, vertical print, rather than some boring 8x10” prints (yuck!). If you are really into decorating with color, there are so many subjects that can fit in with any pallet you choose.

The subjects you choose are of course a matter of personal taste, and I favor peaceful scenes in my surroundings. While I like the image of the cattle egret shown here, it's not an image that I would usually hang on my walls.

I would go for the waterfalls, mountains, and related landscapes because those are the places that both inspire me and help me to relax while taking in the wonder, beauty and memories of visiting those places.

I bet that if you walked around your house and looked for those tall, thin wall spaces, you would find several that would be made more interesting, brighter and fun if you were to hang some vertical prints there. I have a handful of places and images waiting for them, but I want to do it right. Intense, colorful shots like Mealt Falls at top and the Mossy Cave section of Bryce Canyon will look best (in my opinion) as acrylic Prints - a treatment that really makes bright, colorful photographs “pop”.

My second choice for more subtle images are framed, canvas prints. These have the benefit of being much cheaper to have produced when you are going for large prints, and when I say large, I'm thinking about 30-40” tall on average.

My favorite lab for big, framed canvas prints is [preprints.com](http://preprints.com). Their quality and pricing is amazing! For example, a 24x48” floating frame mounted print is just



\$130.95, while a 20x30" is only \$87.95.

For acrylic prints, there are a handful of labs I would use, including ProPrints again (can't beat their pricing), Bay Photo Lab, and if money is no object, Whitewall Lab. As an example, a 20x30" Acrylic Print with backing is \$96.95 from ProPrints, vs \$183.80 for Bay Photo and \$295.95 from Whitewall.



**Merrick Butte  
Monument Valley Tribal Park**

Are there quality differences? I've never compared them side-by-side, but since I don't have an unlimited budget, I have been very happy with my acrylic prints from [ProPrints.com](http://ProPrints.com).

Wherever and whatever you choose, pick out some images that make you smile and get them displayed on your walls!



**Ranch on Last Dollar Road  
Ridgway, CO**



**Detail from "The Long Room"  
Trinity College, Dublin**



**Lower Yellowstone Falls  
Yellowstone, NP**