

Wildlife and Landscape Photography

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Equipment : Camera and Lenses

What gear should I buy?

- Camera

- Wildlife and Sports, 7fps (Canon 7d, Nikon D300s)
- Landscape, all

- Lenses

- Wildlife and Sports : 300mm, 400mm or greater
- Landscape: Wide angle 17-35mm
- Macro, Portraits: 100mm

- Don't Collect Lenses!

- Wait until you have a demand for it

Composition:

- Simplicity
- Strong Lines (that add, not detract!)
- Contrast - Use to your advantage
 - Avoid burn out (Can't always get it all)
- Balance - Some photographs are best on 1/3s
 - Others favour the centre
 - Often, when you place subject off centre, balance the photograph with another object (think Plot – Subplot)

Now let's look at some examples...

Simplicity



Simplicity Image

- I have cropped the Squirrel at a point where I think the image is balanced, not quiet on a line of thirds.
- Note the lack of distractions in the background
- To get the background out of focus, I set max aperture

Before moving on, here is an example where there is no simplicity in the background and the image is just too fussy ...

Too Fussy



Strong Lines



Strong Lines, Notes

- Strong Diagonal
- Strong Tick Mark Shape
- Stream leads you off into the sunset
- Note !!! The Horizon must be level !!!

Contrast



Balance



Landscape, Notes

- Nearly always require foreground interest
- Try to lead viewer to the focal point with either:
 - Lines (the contour of the land)
 - Light (Sun)
 - Reflections
 - Frame the image (with an arch, building etc.)
- Remove distractions (cars, telegraph poles etc.)
 - Move Higher/Lower, Left/Right
- Get there at the right time of day/year
 - Golden Hour
 - Dawn/Dusk
- Try shooting into the sun
- Find Unusual Angles

Foreground



Foreground, Notes

Although not a great picture, note the following ...

- Foreground interest, the rock, adds something, even if not obvious
- The land leads the eyes around the image
- I was not here at the right time of day
 - Golden Hour
 - Dawn/Dusk
- Finally, there is too much grass in foreground. This because I wanted to include the snowy mountains. It would have been better to remove these mountains and get down lower and remove some of the grass.

Foreground Critique



Eyes

Foreground

Anchor

Dawn/Dusk

- Its hard to beat the light at Dawn and Dusk
- Plan your photograph before hand, checking for East with a compass to see where the sun will come up
- Remember, in winter you don't have to get up at 3am to see the sunrise!

The Golden Hour

- This is the first and last hour of sunlight in the day
- The light is warmer and kinder to the image
- This is because more of the image is illumination by light reflected from the sky as well as the sun (which has not generated much intensity at this time)

Dawn



Dawn with Water



Dawn/Dusk and the Golden Hour

Notes

- In the sea image, a long exposure was used to highlight the water's movement
- I do this by setting a small aperture
- This also means that I have a greater depth of field!
- Find nice silhouettes for your sunrise

The Golden Hour Notes

- See the Baltray shipwreck, but you probably already know that was taken in the golden hour

Frame the Image



Shoot Into the Sun

- There is a myth that you never shoot into the sun...Rubbish
- Try shooting into the Sun
- You'll have to over expose (Use the +/- Button, it's easy)
- Careful not to look at the Sun, it can blind you!

Shooting Into the Sun



Unusual Angles

- There can be a certain image fatigue in us all. I'm sure the first images of the Eiffel tower were stunning, however when someone shows me a photo of a person pretending to lift the Eiffel tower, well...I've seen it so many times that I'm just not impressed.
- Its nice to see something in a different light, so find that new interesting angle and give your photograph a new perspective.
- Often when people get the chance to get up high, like in a hot air balloon, or a high building, they get an interesting view or perspective that not many people have seen.

Unusual Angles



Reflections



Landscapes - Snow

You will have to tell your camera to “Overexpose” a little, when photographing snow.

Why? Because the snow makes the camera think its actually brighter than it is.

How? Easy, Use the +/- Button to select +1 or +1.5 (depending on how Bright it is)

How do I know how bright it is?

Easy, Look at the histogram, if it hits the right, it's too bright!

So LEARN two things

- How to view the Histogram
- How to use the +/- button

Snow, Exposure Set to +1.5



Landscapes - Waterfalls

When photographing moving water, you have two options

- Freeze the motion
- Enhance the flow with a slow shutter speed

Usually the second option creates the most pleasing image (but don't get obsessed with this, try both).

So how do we do this?

- Use a tripod or rest the camera on a rock (safely)
- Set your camera to “S” (Nikon) or Tv (most cameras)
- Choose a speed between 1 and 2 seconds, this will usually give us the motion we are looking for
- Use the timer release to take the image (2 sec)
- Adjust the +/- Exposure button if too bright/too dark

Note: You can also set the camera to Av and reduce the aperture until the shutter speed is between 1 and 2 seconds

Waterfall

- Fast



Waterfall

- Slow



Filters – ND Grad Filters

There are many types of filters, we will summarise them in class
For Landscapes, I find the ND Grad filter the most useful

Here is an image of a ND Grad Filter



Most often, the problem with landscapes is that the sky is too bright. If you look at the filter above, you can see that this filter is like your camera wearing sunglasses just where the sky will be, how clever!

The Grads come in three strengths, 0.3, 0.6 0.9
Additionally, the transition from black to clear may soft (as above) or Hard (very quick transition)

No Filter ND Grad



ND Grad 0.9



Filters

- The filters above come in coloured versions as well
- Additionally, they also come without the graduation, i.e. A warming filter is an Orange filter that effects the entire photograph and adds warmth to the image
- A very common filter that people use is a UV filter, to reduce haziness created by ultraviolet light
- Note: I would stress that people should use a UV filter to reduce haziness and not to protect their lens. They introduce flare, affect the contrast and the sharpness of an image

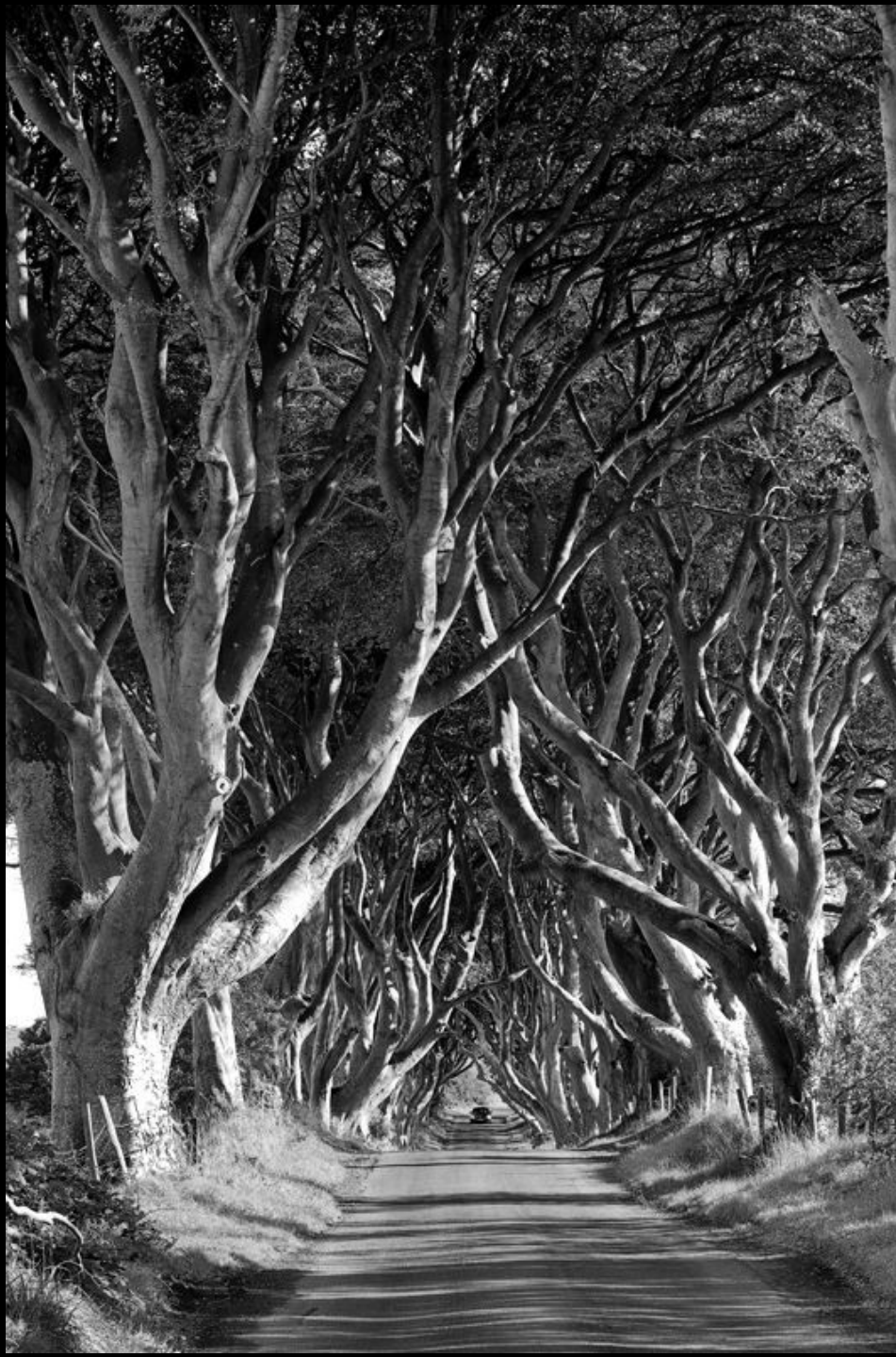
Note : HDR (High Dynamic Range) images can achieve similar results to some filters. We will discuss this in class briefly, but this is beyond the scope of this class.

Black and White

We could run an entire course on Black and White, so I just want to mention the main techniques here.

- It is better to photograph in RAW and convert to black and white on the computer
- Colour JPGs can also be converted to black and white on the computer, we'll look at that next week
- Contrast is very important with B&W and there are several techniques for increasing contrast. However, you must not burn out your highlights.
- Other techniques like Dodge and Burn can be used, which we'll look at in the computer class

B&W



Flowers

- Put a small scissors/knife in your camera bag to cut grasses that are in the way
- Don't get obsessed with the "line of thirds rule", many flower images look best in the centre
- Flowers are usually best in the morning, after they open
- If there is no point of focus, try to find something that stands out and place it on a line of thirds

Standing Out



Standing Out, Difficult Point of Focus



Standing Out, 1/3's



Centre Image

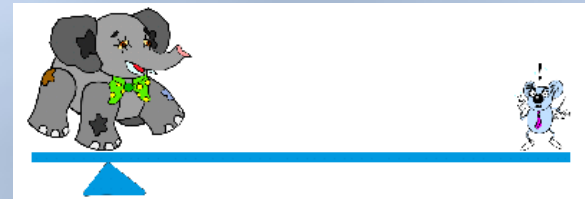


*Would it make sense to
put this on a line of thirds?*



Macro

- Macro lenses allow you to focus closer, usually up to 1:1 (Canon MP-E 65mm 5:1)
- Very shallow depth of field
- Need to use a tripod
- Macro is very sensitive to movement of lens (just like zoom lenses)
 - Like a See-Saw with fulcrum on one side
- Manual focus often better
- Lighting difficult, try using a sheet of paper to throw more light on the subject



Wildlife Final thoughts

- Sometimes flipping an image can make it more appealing, (reading left to right)
- Look for detail
- Use a tripod whenever possible
- It is important to get the eye in focus with wildlife
- Understand your subject and you will have a better chance of knowing what it will do
- Use the central focus point for fast focusing
- Look at Magazines/Internet for inspiration

We will now look at some wildlife images...

Thank you for listening

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