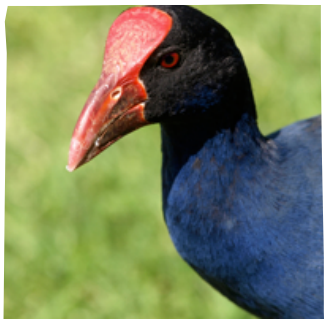
Auckland Photography Workshop

Have fun and learn how to use your camera in our fabulous city

THREE LITTLE WISHES PHOTOGRAPHY



Deborah m: 027 276 0809
Alan m: 021 750 265
threelittlewishes@gmail.com
w:www.threelittlewishes.co.nz

Composition

Rule of thirds

States that the main centre of interest in the picture should be positioned on or near an intersection of thirds. Apply this as in a high or low horizon line or with diagonal or linear subjects

Leading lines says that some other elements of the picture should lead the eye towards the main subject.A leading line will draw the eye around the picture and can consist of a number of configurations such as straight lines, curves or S shapes.ie a railway track curving the eye down the line to a train.

Framing the image with overhanging branches,a window,a doorway with clouds, leaning on a rail...all limit the field of view and call attention to the subject. This is one of the easiest ways to create perspective since it brings depth to the shot

Viewpoint: Change your point of view can simplify a composition. High up gives you more foreground and a birds eye perspective. Low down in relation to your subject increases the size and importance of any foreground matter and creates a more intimate feel to the shot. You may also be able to hide unwanted material.

Look again: Practise organising and including only important subject matter in the view finder You'll discover that you may need to move closer or farther back, to get down low or move up high,step to the left or right or change lenses

Selective Focus Involves using a large lens opening or a telephoto lens to throw the foreground out of focus, thereby placing greater emphasis on your subject. Selective focus works best in high contrast situations, so look for light and dark areas, sunlight and shadows.

Filling the frame Strong shots often have prime subjects dominating the picture area. When a subject is too small it gets lost in the composition. Telephoto lenses bring subjects closer to the film without you moving. Wide angles allow you to get close for a more intimate effect.

Vertical versus horizontal: Most cameras are more comfortable to hold in the horizontal position....however the opportunities for vertical compositions are just as numerous and shouldn't be overlooked. Certain subjects are custom made for this format.

Tilt: Skewing the point of view: Tilting the camera is a way to introduce a feeling of speed, movement and action to your composition. Diagonal lines tend to be dynamic and suggest movement.

Aperture

Aperture and shutter speed control your creative options.

Aperture is the hole in the lens through which light passes. Aperture does two things: it controls the amount of light to pass through to the film, and it controls the depth of field.

Aperture is most useful to achieve a shallow depth of field and to isolate a subject away from a distracting background. If you want a shot with everything sharp from foreground to background (great depth of field) then an aperture of say f/22 would be selected.If you want a shallow depth of field with the background blurred then an aperture off say f/ 2.8 would be selected.

Program and aperture priority mode this program will give you full creative control over depth of field. You can adjust the aperture and the camera will automatically select the shutter speed.(Many camera now have shutter speeds that range from 1/8000 of a second to 30 full seconds)

Shutter speed The speed of the shutter determines how much(if any) subject movements will be recorded.

Fast shutter speeds are selected when you wish to stop the action or when you have selected a wide aperture. They are also essential when holding long lenses to avoid blurred or soft shots

Slow shutter speeds are chosen when you want to create the impression of movement in moving subjects such as a waterfall or a runner. Slow shutter speeds are forced upon you if opting for a great depth of field. This occurs by selecting a greater aperture number or in photographic terms 'stopping down the lens'.A camera set in aperture priority mode correspondingly matches your selected aperture to a slower shutter speed in order to give the correct exposure. From these examples you can see that shutter speed and aperture are independent functions.
Camera shake in picture taking is the prime reason for soft or blurred pictures. Always ensure that the shutter speed is fast enough to avoid unintentional unsharp shots. To guarantee sharpness in hand held shots, select a shutter speed at least as fast as the focal length of the lens, faster still if you are close to the subject. But ultimately in order to ensure sharpness use a camera support such as a tripod, edge of a tree, bean bag on a car whatever is solid.

Depth of field The distance on either side of the subject that you have focused on that remains sharp. The overall extent of the depth of field is affected by three factors.

1. **The aperture selected** - a wide open lens with a low aperture number(say f4) gives a shallow depth of field. "Stopping the lens down" by selecting a greater aperture number (say f22) gives a greater depth of field
2. **The focal length of the lens** the longer the focal length of the lens (say 200 mm) the less the depth of field. The shorter the focal length of the lens (say 28 mm) the greater the depth of field.
3. **The distance of the subject to the camera** the closer the distance the less or shallower the depth of field. The farther away the camera is from the subject the greater the depth of field

Depth of field is one of the most creative tools which you the creator of the photograph can use. With a fully automated digital camera with a zoom lens you can manipulate your depth of field by exploiting the fact that at a wide angle lens setting you can get greater depth of field and by moving closer you can get a shallower depth of field

Light

Light is continually changing during the day and under different weather conditions,seasons and locations. All these factors determine how your subject will appear on the charged coupling device (CCD) of a digital camera-either as bold colours, cool tones, in three dimensional detail ,flat or contrasty and so on.
The important characteristics of light are brightness,colour and direction. Learning to recognize the different qualities of light and working with it expands one's visual awareness towards taking great photographs.

Shooting from Dawn to dusk - Early morning gives cool, blue tones with low contrast. At sunrise this light is replaced by a much warmer golden light which is excellent for front lit and side lit subjects or strong silhouettes. The harsh overhead and colourless light of midday light (ie tropics) is generally not good for shots but is great for tropical water scenes and strong reflected light in alleyways.

Front lighting occurs when light is on the subject. When the light is weak it is effective for wildlife and portrait photography.
Front lit landscapes can often look flat and boring. Be aware of a low angled sun at your back casting a long shadow of you across the landscape (especially when using a wide angled lens)

Back lighting occurs when the light source is behind the subject. Most backlit compositions create bold shapes and stark outlines. Back light gives increased contrast and a wonderful depth to the picture. Back lighting is well suited for portraiture using a reflector or fill flash.

Side lighting dramatically records detail and colour in your subjects and again helps to create a 3 D effect. Side lighting occurs naturally when you shoot at right angles to a low angled sun.

Diffused Light caused by rain,mist,fog or snow may create the best mood for capturing your subject .Try to create strong primary colours such as a yellow umbrella highlighted against duller tones. The soft light of a cloudy day is excellent for capturing special moods in nature and portraits. Faces often appear softer in diffused light.

Reflected light off the ground or water surfaces can be rich, diffused or neutral with the reflected light taking on the colour cast of the reflector. This is often unwanted as in green foliage or the brown / reddish hues of the earth casting its tints on faces. People wearing coloured clothing also creates problems, use a fill flash or a white / silver reflector to negate this.

Night Light or artificial light is rendered very effectively by digital cameras. Each spot of light is put into a digital format...the more pixels the camera has the finer the detailing of the shot. We recommend halogen or tungsten lamps as your artificial light source

Landscapes

Snapshots or works of art.....there is an outstanding difference between the ordinary postcard views and the finest creative landscape photographs. To lift a landscape photograph out of the ordinary requires perception and technique

Landscape Photographs - appear deceptively easy but are often carefully crafted capturing the best weather conditions,light,season and utilising effective composition.

Telephotos - are useful in flattening perspective bringing distant objects closer and isolating a small section of view.

Wide angle lenses - are best in uncluttered landscapes with interesting foregrounds. Expose for the highlights if the highlight area is strong enough to carry the shot

Side lighting and back lighting - to give three dimensional modeling of the elements . Flat,dull lighting is not good for landscapes except when the weather is inclement.

Polarizing Filter Increases colour saturation on sunny frontlit scenes (bluer skies, whiter clouds,greener leaves). Use a graduated filter to reduce the contrast between the sky and the land. Especially useful in the tropics

Learn the art of patience You may have to wait in a spot for days to capture the perfect sunrise. Maximise your chances by studying weather patterns and attuning yourself to the seasons.

A landscape photograph can be representational or abstract. A representational photograph attempts a faithful evocation of the subject that conveys a great deal of information. An abstract approach selects strong graphic elements from the landscape and tends to be more subjective.

Useful composition elements. The relationship of nearby objects to a distant scene, such as ripples in a sand dune to a dessert horizon can be accentuated by using a wide angled lens and a low view point. A telephoto lens can be used to isolate given elements and will compress perspective making distant features more dominant in relation to nearer objects. It can give a more remote detached feeling and is often excellent for selecting items to give abstract patterns and sticking to the adage “less is more”

The relationship between the land and sky is an important factor, the horizon is probably the strongest line dividing up the picture frame, and in interesting weather conditions it is worth experimenting with different proportions of sky to land. Usually you employ the rule of thirds technique with dynamic clouds or a sunset dominating the composition, over just a thin strip of land, an entirely different feel is created often more majestic. These sky land variations can also be applied to water and land and to water and sky.

Tripods are very useful as careful composition is central to landscape work. It is essential with a telephoto lens or in a wide field approach where obtaining maximum depth of field requires a slow shutter speed. More often than not sharpness is desirable across the whole filed especially in a representational photograph.

Twilight & Night shots

Twilight can be the best time to take photographs....

Use a tripod as this allows you to get sharp images. Avoiding blurred images with slow shutter speeds.

Shoot across water - Water reflects the light from the sky and minimizes the huge contrast in exposure between the a sunset/sunrise sky and a dark foreground landscape. Meter the sky and lock in that exposure with the exposure lock button or select manual camera settings

Shooting moving subjects such as tail lights of cars etc requires one to select a shutter speed of at least 5-10 seconds and to have the camera securely mounted on a tripod. Fairgrounds and ferries wheels make excellent subjects.

Flash and ambient light. Put the camera settings to shutter or aperture priority and then activate flash. The flash light will light up the subject within the range of the flash. Then still record the available light behind the subject. Get the people to stay still or use a faster lens or ISO to avoid ghosting or blurred images.

High Contrast of subject to the background.
Use exposure lock button or exposure compensation to correctly expose background/subject.
Create silhouettes by exposure locking on bright sky or using negative exposure compensation.
Starburst sun behind subjects using narrow aperture, careful as this will result in slower shutter speeds that may require a tripod.

Colour harmony/Contrast
Look to create shots that include harmonious or contrasting colour elements eg background that is a similar or contrasting colour to subjects clothes. Any cool colour placed next to a warm one will add interest. Impact will also be created when a shot is composed of one bold colour against a black,grey or white background.

Blurring /Freezing motion
Use fast shutter speed/flash to freeze motion.
Use slow shutter speed, no flash and a tripod to blur motion.
Slower shutter speeds are achieved by selecting narrow apertures(f22)
Faster shutter speeds are achieved by selecting wider apertures (f4)
Oblique angles and diagonal lines can be used as a compositional aid to enhance movement effect.

Conveying movement (panning)
Technique whereby the photographer follows / tracks the movement of the subject and takes shots when the subject is in the correct position in the frame, to freeze the subject and blur the background.
Conveys a strong sense of movement and focuses attention on the subject as the single area of sharpness.
As a compositional aid, frame the image so the direction of travel is implied.
(i.e.subject entering or leaving at the left or right of the frame rather than centrally placed)
Shots can be taken hand held,or using a tripod with a swivel head if the subject is going to travel along a pre determined path that is known in advance.

Shutter speed guide to create blur.

Waterfalls : 1/2 sec & less
Spinning wheel 1/15 sec
Freeze runners 1/1000 sec
Streak car lights at night 2 sec plus
Blur flowers in the wind 1/15 sec and less.

All shutter speeds relative to closeness of subject,speed of object and angle of subject to camera

FILTERS

Filtration is probably the least understood aspect of photography.

But it can add a new dimension to your pictures. Even though we can easily alter things like contrast and colour saturation on a digital file, it is preferable to use the appropriate filter than a post production manipulation which takes time and skill.

Many photographers resist filtration. However it is important to bear in mind that film is manufactured to operate consistently under ideal conditions, say midday sun on the equator and obviously therefore the majority of pictures are shot in less than ideal conditions. Filtration can correct these conditions, making it possible to better record the picture one hopes to see

All lenses should be protected with a U/V filter. A polarizing filter is most useful. You “dial in” as much polarization as you require. Use it to cut out unwanted reflections in water. It is only used in sunny conditions with the sun overhead the shoulders. Clouds become white skies bluer and greens (especially foliage) greener.

A graduated filter with the top half a sunset orange can rescue shots where there is a large difference in exposure between the land and the sky.

The most successful filtration should hardly be noticed. A competent photographer needs to be capable of using filtration to achieve what he wants when light conditions are bad or when its physically impossible to wait for ideal conditions

Polarising filters (essential) cuts out reflected light in the same way as polaroid sun glasses,except that the filter can be turned to “dial in” as much polarization as you require. By cutting down the amount of light reflecting off the subject it increases the colour saturation and the contrast of the picture.

In cold flat light such as a cloudy day polarizing filters simply increase the blueness of the light. The filter needs sunshine ideally from directly behind the camera especially if you are using a wide angle lens.

When the filter is being used to cut the reflections in windows or to see into water sunshine is not important. The polarising filter is good for clouds but it is also good for wet and dusty leaves cutting out the reflected light makes the leaves greener. The filter is useful around water but expose carefully. Also avoid making your sky dark inky black especially as a higher altitudes tend to go this way

Skylight and clear glass filters. Photojournalists often use clear glass or skylight filters to protect the front elements of their lenses(A skylight filter has a very slight warming affect but otherwise does not alter the image in any discernible way)The ultra violet(UV) filter also relatively clear has a minimal effect in eliminating aerial haze but it is really not a very helpful tool in practical use other than protecting the lens.

Split grad filter-useful for lessening the contrast between a bright sky and a darker landscape. Be sure to place the feathered graduation line between the clear bottom half and the smoked top half of the horizon so its not noticeable