

TIPS & TRICKS

Photography



Old Tyme Radio
Photographer Jeff Tindall

Creating a Photo Book

Have you ever thought of producing a professional coffee table book. Try a this major project out along with some ideas to keep you on the right track.

Pages 3-8

Taking Sharper Images

Kurt provides a tutorial on different techniques to make your photos as sharp as possible.

Page 9-12

Pinhole Photography with a DSLR

Experiment with a new lens you make. This technique brings new school photography back to the old school ways.

Page 12-

Dreamscapes

Use photoshop to create soft dreamy type images using a few simple steps.

Page 15

Finally!

Well what can be said, life has some interesting twists. Things around my neck of the woods have been pretty hectic, hence the lack of issues coming out and sadly the lack of photographs being taken. I think things are starting to settle down and although it's been a long time since the last issue, we are still an active PDFCast. Just slow! The winter is over, the spring has sprung and I finally have some time to get out with the camera to enjoy new the outdoors and take some photos.

Once again I will make a shameless plug to you the readers. Send us your photos, send us your tips, send us photos from the tips you learned about here! The more input and content we get from you the faster the faster the issues will come out. For those also wanting exposure, consider this an opportunity to get your work seen by others.

tipsandtricksphotography@gmail.com

In this issue, we have yet another contribution from Kurt Kemling, Kurt is obviously a talented photographer, whose photos I consider to border on the line between surreal and delicate. Check out his website at <http://www.kemlingimages.com>





Creating a Photo Book

— *Written by Jeff Tindall*

Have you ever imagined having your photos professionally published, opening up a magazine to see your photos laced throughout an article or walking into your local bookstore and heading over to the art/photography section to find your book sitting on the shelf? The harsh reality of this is that very few photographers get the chance to have a coffee table book published. It's sad really, there are an overwhelming amount of photographers of all skill levels that take great shots, but the majority of photos stay on there hard drives and never see the light of day. Since photography has switched from film to digital despite the great advantages that digital has, there is one big disadvantage nobody ever displays there photos (aside from email, screen-savers or desktop backgrounds).

This article is aimed at getting your great photos off your hard drive and onto paper. So what is the big difference? Well in my opinion there is a dramatic difference between how photographs are viewed. If you're examining photos on a computer there are often numerous photos to look at. Think back or just observe when other people look at photos. If they receive an email with 20 photos, they will spend probably only about 2 seconds on each one,

however if they open up an email with only one or two photos they spend much longer examining it. By printing your photos you force the viewer to take a more in-depth look and have a better appreciation for your work. Publishing a well designed photo book can do this.



Now I'm not talking about uploading random photos to a big box store that will spiral bind them for a few extra dollars, I'm talking about a big undertaking of crafting an idea, developing a format and using text and photos to get your thoughts and ideas across. Essentially, I want to inspire you to begin a long and big project

that results in a piece of work that rivals professionally published coffee table books. Keep in mind this idea is not an evening or weekend project, I'm anticipating my own photo book will take roughly a year.

So how do I do it? That's what I asked myself once I decided to start one. When I did a search in Google to see what people have said on the matter, I was amazed at the lack of hits. There are lots of sites that are more than willing to take your money and bind your photos into a book, but not much information on techniques / guidelines on designing the book or presenting photos. After talking with a few photographers with experience in publishing I was able to come up with a few ideas to help creating a published work of art.

Develop a Theme

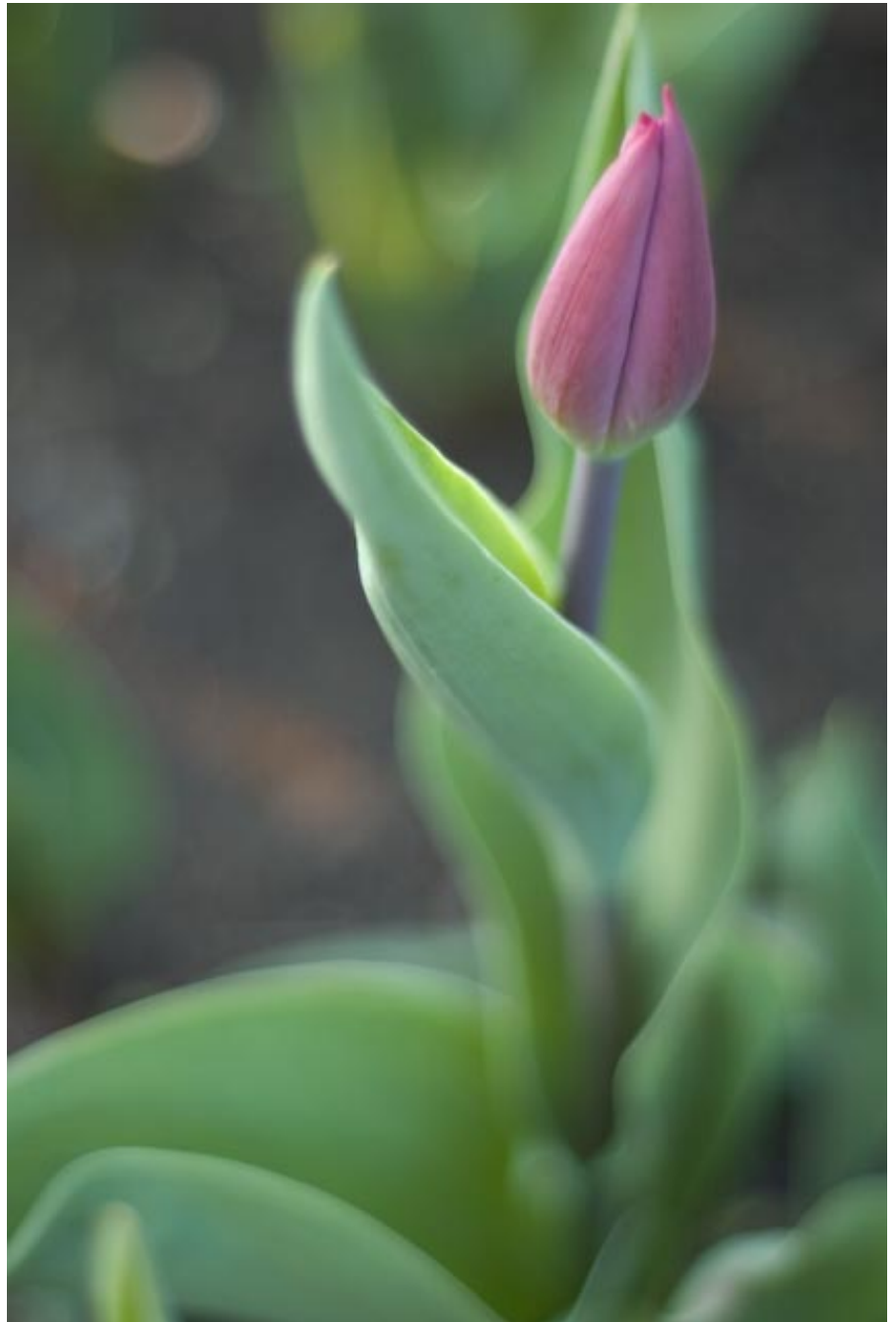
Much like a good photograph simplicity works well for books. Pick a theme and try not to deviate to much from it. This does not mean your theme can't be complex in terms of what photographs it incorporates, but any photograph that makes it into the book should relate to

the theme of the book. For example, a book with 50 flower shots and 20 photos of your family likely won't work well. Just stick with one idea, either flowers or family. Now your theme doesn't have to be simple like "flowers" or "family", you can get quite complex with a theme just take a look at published coffee table books. With titles like Landscapes across Canada, The Rockies and Portraits of the World, clearly they incorporate latitude that allows the photographer to work with.

Portfolio Design

This is a coffee table book and as such will likely be examined by friends and family. Consider this your chance to shine and truly show everyone your ability and skills as a photographer. Now both you and I know that we take a lot of bad photos. The last time I paid attention to my trash/keep ratio it was roughly 50:1, for every fifty shots I took, I was only happy with one to take it to the post processing stage. Everybody take bad photos, that's a given, but not everybody shows bad photos. Choose only finished photos that your happy to show to others, don't include photos that your somewhat happy with.

This philosophy will truly force you to take a close look at your photos and spend a lot of time tweaking them that will ultimately lead to a photo being at its best. This can also be a very time consuming so take your time and try not to force a photo. If you have a photo that you really want to include but it's not the best it could be try and get out and



take a similar one that you will be more happy with.

Photo Placement

After a while of photographing and processing you will have a selection of photos to insert into your book. The next task becomes order and placement. There are no set rules, but you should strive to tell a story or share the evolution of your vision. In other words, what is the purpose of your book are you trying to teach the viewer about a place or culture, preserve ideas or memories or commemorate a major moment like a wedding or journey.

The order you place them in should make the book flow, this doesn't mean you have to show your photos chronologically, but there should be a format that makes the view want to check out what's on the next page. Contrasting photos can work well, by placing dramatically contrasting photos on adjacent pages you can keep the viewer guessing as to what the next photo may be. For example, if your publishing a book on Hawaii, perhaps showing a raging

volcano/lava right after a peaceful serene waterfall will keep the reader occupied about the diversity of Hawaii.

Play around with layouts and see what you like, don't be afraid to stick with a layout you not entirely sure with at the moment.

This process involves a lot of trial and error.



Text

Text can be useful to provide insight or help your ideas come across in collaboration with the photo. The key to remember is that text is to aid the photos, not to replace them. It's fairly easy to forget that you're making a photo book and start writing a novel, try to keep your text clear and concise. If you are deciding to add text to every page make sure it flows with the book.

Editing Your Work

So imagine its about 10 months later and we have slowly brought our photos up to there best, we found a format we like, the layout we are happy with and the text has been brushed up to fit the photos, spell checked and perfectly placed. Now comes the tough part. Print off a rough draft of your book (regular or photo paper) and pass it out to a few people whether it be photographers, artists or peoples whose ideas and opinions you respect and ask them to take a look and offer ideas, suggestions and criticisms. Encourage them to mark it up and be brutally honest about what they like and what they don't. Much like critiquing a photograph this can be a tough process, after all you put a lot of time and effort into this project. They may comeback and say they don't like certain photos that you consider to be some of



your best. They may like things that you weren't too sure about. Welcome to the editing process. While this process can be frustrating it will often benefit you greatly in the end. Having a non-biased opinion will often catch things you missed.

Now after you get back the edits, read them over, get angry (if it suits you) and then put them away

for a week. Don't touch your book or the edits. They may be right, they may be wrong. Often the initial reaction is to say "This person doesn't know what he/she is talking about" That maybe true, but chances are while you don't agree with all the comments (or any) if they did an honest review of your book they likely have some relevant ideas. The trick to making good edits is to let all that frustration and anger pass before taking the comments under consideration. By leaving it for a week you can come back to it with a more subjective opinion and undoubtedly you will start to see what they mean in their comments. You still

may not agree with them or make the suggested changes, but if you can understand why they suggest something you will be in a good spot to understand how your book will be received when it is finally published.

Publishing

Searching for a publisher is easy, there are several companies out there that can bind books, give you options to themes, layouts and page numbers. One website that I have found was for the company Blurb, while I can't say much about them yet, they seem to have reasonable prices and have

been recommended by other photographers. What ever publisher you decide to go with make sure they have the options you are looking for. The size of the book, are the pages glossy like a photography book, do they offer good quality. Ask around and search for reviews on what ever company you decide.



Enjoy

Display your book proudly, don't just look at it once and put it on the shelf, keep it out for people to see. There is no doubt that if you take the time and put in the effort to creating a well designed coffee table book the comments will be overwhelmingly positive.

Taking Sharper Images

Written by Kurt Kemling

www.kurtkemling.com

Many photographers moving from a compact point and shoot to a DSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex) camera are initially disappointed with the lack of sharp images. Compact cameras for the general consumer, utilize heavy in camera sharpening and in camera stability features to enhance sharpness. DSLR's however, are more conservative with in camera processing and leave you to make more selections within the camera menu and exposure settings; which is one of the reasons to have a DSLR (more control). Beyond setting your camera's sharpening level there are crucial things you can do to achieve "tack sharp" images. Surprisingly none of them require spending money on the best camera bodies and or lenses; although that never hurts and can increase sharpness even further.



Shutter Speed

One tip which is often times overlooked, is to simply be cognizant of your shutter speed, relative to the focal length you are using. The general rule is to use a shutter speed at least that of the focal length's reciprocal. For example, If you are using a telephoto lens at 200 mm, you should be shooting with a shutter speed of at least 1/200th of a second or even faster (e.g., 1/500th or 1/1000th). Conversely, if you are shooting a wider angle shot, at 30 mm, you could probably get a sharp shot using a slower shutter speed like 1/30th or 1/60th of a second. Of course the faster the better.

Tripod

At times, you simply need to use a shutter speed so slow that the human hand cannot hold the camera without blurring the image. This caveat is common in landscape or macro photography where a small aperture is needed for maximum depth of field and as a result a slow shutter speed to allow for enough light to hit the sensor. For these situations a tripod is necessary. However, a tripod can also improve your every day shots and is one of the best ways to guarantee sharp images.

Shoot in Burst Mode

Sometimes you may not have a tripod available to allow for the slower shutter speed. In these situations it is best to shoot in burst mode and hold the shutter down for a burst of exposures (typically a series of 3 or more exposures). This increases the odds of a sharp image being taken. Even if only one of them are sharp, it costs nothing to take the images and you can quickly delete the blurry ones after. This really works and it relies on the fact that as your body moves, at least one of the shots will be in between this movement.

Hand Holding Technique

Holding the camera properly is important in any situation and will certainly help you get sharp images. Extending your heavy DSLR with your arms out (as you would a point and shoot when looking at the LCD) is ineffective and leads to your arms moving excessively. With a DSLR, you want to ensure your arms are close to your body and your elbows are

tucked in. This will allow you to support the weight and reduce movement. When you depress the shutter do so gently without moving the camera excessively.

Aperture Selection (the sweet spot)

All lenses have particular apertures where the image quality is best and at its sharpest. Generally speaking this range is one to two stops down from wide open. Hence if you have a maximum aperture lens of 2.8, it should be pretty sharp at 5.6. Many high end lenses are sharp throughout a larger range of apertures (even wide open), however even they have a range where sharpness is at a maximum. You can find your lens's sweet spot by simply shooting test objects with the lens at various apertures. Be sure to use a tripod to control for your hand holding technique and other movements.

Proper Focus / Depth of field

Many people mistake sharpness for depth of field related issues. For example, in the image at the beginning of this article, you see of some crayons where the depth of field was seemingly shallow. The green crayon is tack sharp, where as crayons only millimeters away were not. This was due to the proximity of my camera to the subject and aperture I was using. When using a very shallow depth of field (large aperture), it is imperative that you are focusing on the exact portion of the image you want to be clear. Where as if your depth of field is very deep (small aperture), your subject may still be in focus and appear sharp, even if you miss the focus point. See the images below. The one shot at F/4.0 has a very shallow depth of field, however the part in focus is very sharp. Compared to the one at F/36, much more of the shot is in focus.



F/4



F/36

Camera/Lens Stability Features

Most camera manufacturers offer some sort of in camera/lens stability. Both Canon and Nikon offer this on their more expensive lenses (IS and VR respectively). This feature helps reduce hand shake and or small camera movements to enhance image sharpness. This type of feature can allow you to hand hold the camera while shooting at very slow shutter speeds where a tripod would typically be necessary. This technology does have its limits and cannot stop objects from moving so you can still get motion blur from a moving subject.

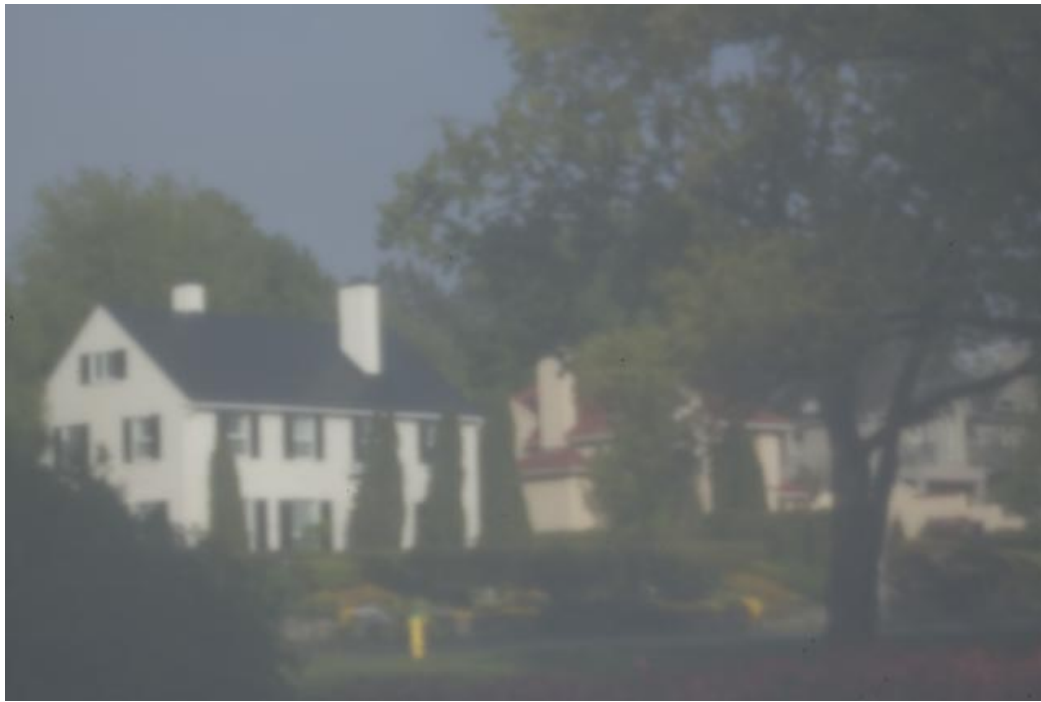


Pinhole Photography Using a DSLR

Written by Jeff Tindall

Did you know about the other lens that came with your camera? I'm not talking about that kit lens that came in a bundled deal, I'm talking about the other one! What do you mean there was no other lens, sure there was you likely took it off the camera and threw it back

into the box about 5 minutes after opening your camera. Don't worry it's a cheap lens and if you happened to have lost it or threw it out you can pick up a new one for a couple of dollars. If you haven't guessed it by now I'm talking about the body cap for your cam-



era (not the lens cap, the body cap). It's the small plastic disc that mounts on the camera to keep dust out when you don't have a lens on. This little piece of plastic and a little modification can produce a digital pinhole camera.

Pinhole photography is a basic form of photography, it consists of two things. A pinhole for light to enter and a surface to record the light (film or CCD). It can produce beautiful soft focused photos that give the impression of a surreal, dreamy, romantic or mysterious scene.

Making the pinhole attachment is simple:

- 1) Drill a small hole in the centre of the body cap. Use the smallest drill bit you can find.
- 2) Now cut a small piece of aluminum foil, card-board and attach it so it covers up the

small drilled hole. Use tape too attach the material. This is done because despite you choosing the smallest drill bit possible it's almost certainly larger than a pinhole and too big to provide a focused image.

- 3) After you have covered up the drill hole, take a small pin and poke a hole through the material. The smaller the hole you make the sharper the image will

be. Congrats you now have another "lens" for your camera. I put lens in quotes, because technically there is no glass involved so I don't think it actually qualifies as a lens.

- 4) Now since this "lens" is attaching directly to the camera body with no glass barrier there is a risk having dust enter the pinhole and onto the sensor. One way of avoiding this is to attach a UV lens to the outside of the body cap. You could also tape a clear transparency (overhead sheet) over the hole, but the quality may be reduced. Alternatively, it may give you more of a dreamy or mysterious feel so experimenting with it may be useful.

- 5) That's it! Attach the body cap to the camera and you are ready to take some pinhole photos.

Taking Photos with your Pinhole DSLR

Here is a cool thought, since you are working with a pinhole, essentially you are stopping down the aperture in camera. How much? Well that depends on the size of the pinhole but generally your working with a camera stopped down between $f/64$ to $f/300$, and you thought $f/22$ was a small aperture.

Since your dealing with large f /stops that means you're also dealing with long exposures and it's likely your camera's meter will not be useful. Pinhole photography is about experimentation and guessing. Try it out on bright days first and play around with ISO's and shutter speeds to get a feel for what a proper exposure should be. Depending on your lighting conditions and your cameras settings you could be talking about exposures in terms of minutes.

After you take a photo you may be a little shocked to find that your photo may be showing lots of dust. This is not dust that happened to sneak in because you didn't properly cover your pinhole, this dust has been on your sensor the whole time. The large f /stop values just exaggerate the dust and make it more noticeable. This is why when checking for dust on your sensor you stop down your

lens all the way. In this case you stopped down your "lens" to the extreme. Come to think of it, for those obsessive dust fanatics who pride themselves on dust free images, consider this a warning. Taking photos with a pinhole may cause you to faint or panic!

Have fun, experiment with it and most importantly send up your pinhole photos it would be great to post a few of them in an up and coming issues.

tipsandtricksphotography@gmail.com



Just one last note, don't be surprised if you get approached by people who look at you like you're an idiot and then comment "Hey, I think you forgot your lens". At the very least, it makes an interesting conversation piece!

Post-Processing

Dreamscapes

Create a soft dreamy photo using a few simple photoshop steps.

Open your image and duplicate the photo.

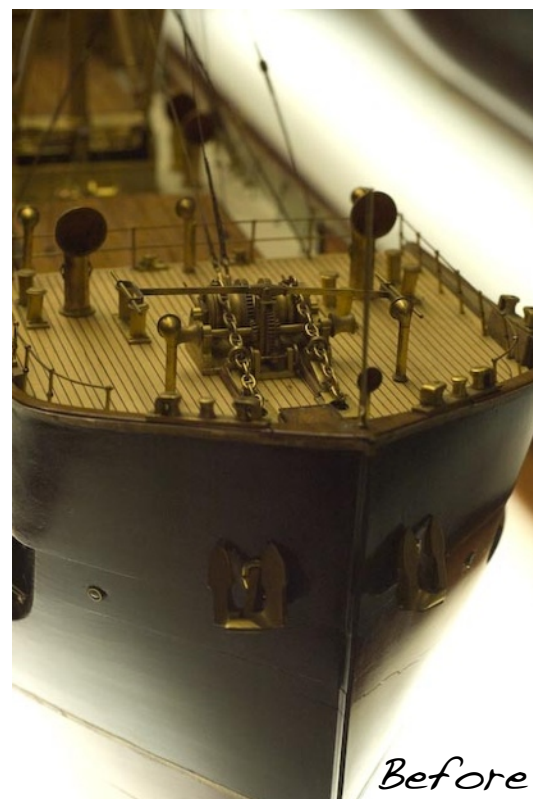
Choose one photo and brighten the image using the levels adjustment until its over exposed by about 2 or 3 stops.

Switch to the duplicate photo and goto the filters and choose Gaussian Blur. Blur your image as desired.

Now drag one of the images onto the second image and align the images overtop of each other.

In the layers pallette, change the blend mode from normal to multiply.

Make any last adjustments and to the photo and then flatten and save.



Advertise with us

Tips and Tricks Photography is trying to upgrade the PDFCast, we are interested in giving its readers the opportunity to enter photo contests, develop a new website, participate in a forum and generally expand our readership.

If you are interested in sponsoring photo contests, or are interested in promoting the PDFCast through advertising, please get in contact with us at tipsandtricksphotography@gmail.com.

