

# ALAMANCE PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

2012–2024

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## February 2024 Newsletter

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Photo by Mio Winkle

### APC ACTIVITIES

Our club will be taking a different approach in 2024. While our Programs, PhotoShows and Field Trips will continue, all will be geared towards an overall theme of learning and practicing basic photography.

We will also be adding some workshops to the mix. We feel our planned activities will appeal to both novice and advanced photographers alike and provide an opportunity for us to learn more from each other.

See more about what we have planned for 2024 on pages 3 & 4. We hope this will be a fun and educational experience for all. – Your editor

## President's Comments—February 2024

By Keith O'Leary

Happy February APC! As we begin our 13th year as a club, we will be kicking off our 'Back to Basics' program this month on Feb. 19th with an ice-cream social informational meeting followed by a PhotoShow featuring 'The Rule of Thirds'. Thanks to all who have helped us advertise this meeting by sharing the flyers around town. We are anticipating many visitors that evening so please attend and help us make everyone feel welcome. As we focus more on learning this year, our photoshows will take a little different spin

in that we will be encouraging more interaction and discussion around each photo vs rating and presenting the top six. This is also renewal season and thanks to many of you who have already renewed your membership. Stay warm and happy shooting. See you on the 19th!

Keith O'Leary

## APC BOARD

President	Keith O'Leary	Interim Exhibit Chair	Christie O'Leary
Vice President	John Reich	Outings/Field Trips	Hugh Comfort
Secretary	George Siple	Membership	Ken Sellers
Treasurer	Dianne Sellers	Web Master	Christie O'Leary
Interim PhotoShow Chair	Keith O'Leary	Editor	Ray Munns

## 2024 Activities – Calendar View

Jan 15, 2024 Program: Sean Leahy – Birds from Columbia

Feb. 19, 2024 PhotoShow: The Rule of Thirds (and 'Back to Basics' Ice Cream Social)

Mar. 18, 2024 PhotoShow: Photograph **three (3)** of the following:

1. Close-up of a person
2. 2 to 3 people interacting
3. Action shot
4. Animal shot
5. Nature shot

Apr. 15, 2024 Program: George Bohannon – Camera Basics with a Twist of History

May 4, 2024 Field Trip/Workshop:

Place: Burlington Arboretum

Objective: Understanding Light & Exposure

Exercise: Experiment with different light sources and exposure settings.

May 20, 2024 PhotoShow: One subject with 2 Different light sources

June 1, 2024 Field Trip/Workshop:

Place: Burlington Arboretum

Objective: Understanding Depth of Field, Composition, Angle of View

Exercise: Experiment taking same compositions with shallow (wide aperture) and deep (narrow aperture) depths of field and from different angles.

June 17, 2024 PhotoShow: One Subject with 2 Different depths of field

June 29, 2024 Field Trip/Workshop:

Place: Burlington City Park

Objective: Understanding Stop Action vs Blur Motion

Exercise: Experiment taking stop action & capturing blur motion from same or similar subjects.

July 15, 2024 PhotoShow: Stop Action & Blur Motion of Same (or Similar) Subject

Aug. 19, 2024 PhotoShow: One subject from 2 different angles/perspectives

Sep. 16, 2024 Program: Photo Editing Workshop/Presentation (Host TBD)

Oct. 21, 2024 Program: Jim Harrington – Drone Photography

Nov. 18, 2024 PhotoShow: 5 to 8 Picture PhotoStory by Youth Participants

Dec. 16, 2024 Christmas Party & Slideshow

## 2024 Programs

- JAN: Sean Leahy – Birds from Columbia
- APR: George Bohannon – Camera Basics with a Twist of History
- SEP: Photo Editing Workshop/Presentation (Host TBD)
- OCT: Jim Harrington – Drone Photography

## 2024 PhotoShows

- FEB: The Rule of Thirds (and 'Back to Basics' Ice Cream Social!)
- MAR: Photograph **three (3)** of the following:  
Close-up of a person  
2 to 3 people interacting  
Action shot  
Animal shot  
Nature shot
- MAY: One subject with 2 Different light sources
- JUN: One Subject with 2 Different depths of field
- JUL: Stop Action & Blur Motion of Same (or Similar) Subject
- AUG: One subject from 2 different angles/perspectives
- NOV: 5 to 8 Picture PhotoStory by Youth Participants

## **(Tentative) Field Trip/Work Shops**

- 5/4: Place: Burlington Arboretum  
Objective: Understanding Light & Exposure  
Exercise: Experiment with different light sources and exposure settings.
- 6/1: Place: Burlington Arboretum  
Objective: Understanding Depth of Field, Composition, Angle of View  
Exercise: Experiment taking same compositions with shallow (wide aperture) and deep (narrow aperture) depths of field and from different angles.
- 6/29: Place: Burlington City Park  
Objective: Understanding Stop Action vs Blur Motion  
Exercise: Experiment taking stop action and capturing blur motion from same or similar subjects.

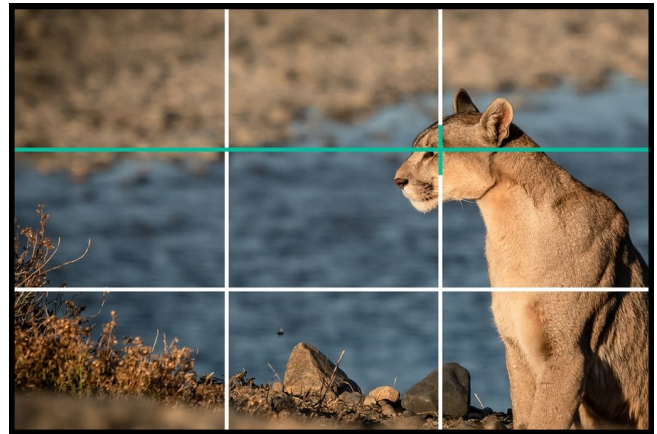
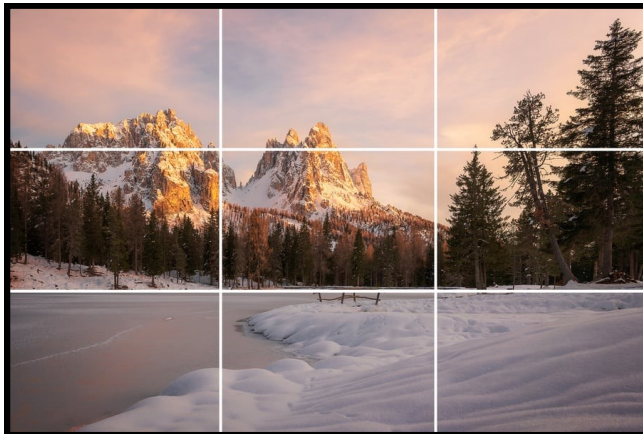
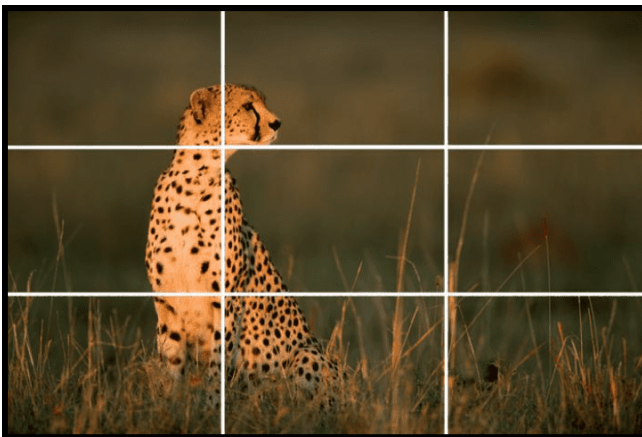
# February 19<sup>th</sup> PhotoShow

## “The Rule of Thirds”

Keith O’Leary, Interim PhotoShow Chair

In photography, the rule of thirds is a type of composition in which an image is divided evenly into thirds, both horizontally and vertically, and the main subject of the image is placed at the intersection of those dividing lines, or along one of the lines itself.

Examples:



Video link for more info:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpEuYp4\\_iSg&list=PLu4zxjfe3eU5qJw0wZ3nXNNAmy5qEX65A&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpEuYp4_iSg&list=PLu4zxjfe3eU5qJw0wZ3nXNNAmy5qEX65A&index=1)

Please submit your photographs for February’s Photo Show on the Rule of Thirds per the guidelines on page 6.

If you have any issues with formatting or submitting, please let us know at [apcphotoshow@gmail.com](mailto:apcphotoshow@gmail.com) and we will be happy to assist. Also let us know if your submitted photo is not acknowledged within a few days and/or by the deadline.

## Submission Details

### Number of Entries:

Max of three (3) entries per member.

### Format:

.jpg

### File Naming:

Please rename your photos using the following format:

Firstname.lastname\_01, \_02 or \_03 (*per use preference*)

Example: john.doe\_01.jpg john.doe\_02.jpg john.doe\_03.jpg

### Size:

No smaller than 1MB. No larger than 25 MB.

### Email:

Email Address: Send all images to [apcphotoshow@gmail.com](mailto:apcphotoshow@gmail.com)

Email Subject Line: Include the month of the PhotoShow and your name

Example: Photos for FEB. Photoshow – John Doe

### Entry Deadline:

5:30 PM on Monday, Feb. 12, 2024.

### Please Note:

*Submissions that do not adhere to the guidelines above may be returned.*

***Don't forget: Photos may be submitted early for the following show!***



# FREE ICE CREAM

*Come get the Scoop!*



ALL ages are welcome!

**WHEN:** Monday, Feb. 19, 2024 @ 7:00 PM

**WHERE:** First Baptist Church  
400 S. Broad St  
Burlington, NC 27215  
In Fellowship Hall (facing Mebane St)

## Want to learn more about photography?

*Come join us and hear about our planned activities for 2024. LEARN THE SECRETS of photography as we return to the basics and offer fun and informative programs, workshops, field trips, photoshows and hands on experience with fellow photographers of every level.*

For questions or more information, contact:

- [alamancephoto@gmail.com](mailto:alamancephoto@gmail.com)
- Keith O'Leary @ 336.693.8268
- James Allegretto @ 336.675.1300

# RSVP

to

[alamancephoto@gmail.com](mailto:alamancephoto@gmail.com)



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## WEBMASTER NOTES

### Members' Gallery!

START picking out your photographs to share in the club's online gallery. We will accept submissions from March through April. Each member who submits photos will have a personal slideshow on the [website](#). We encourage ALL members to submit pictures for the club's website gallery and would like to see EVERYONE represented!

Note: If you have photos in the gallery now, you are welcome to submit 20 new images to replace the existing ones.

**Keep watching for more information in next month's newsletter.**

*Looking forward to the 2024 gallery,*

**Christie O'Leary—Webmaster**

## APC Membership Corner

February 2024

Our 2024 membership drive is underway until the end of March. With the kick-off of our "back to basics" program series starting with an ice cream social in February, it is the perfect time to invite a friend to join and learn more about the basics of photography. This year promises to be exciting with a good mixture of workshops, photo shows, and field trips. Come and join us! You can join online or by paying (cash, check, or card) at our monthly meeting. Remember, as a potential member, you are free to visit up to 2 monthly meetings before deciding to join!

See you at our next meeting!

**Ken Sellers – APC Membership Chair**  
**336-253-1113 or taikijorsel@gmail.com**



# EYES ON ALAMANCE

## \*4 OF OUR OWN ARE PARTICIPATING!

Eyes on Alamance - a group exhibition in The Sister Galleries of Alamance Arts from January 18 - March 27, 2024.

Alamance Arts begins the new year of 2024 exhibits by celebrating Alamance County. *Eyes on Alamance* is a group show featuring artists of all mediums with ties to Alamance County. Through this exhibit Alamance Arts is celebrating the creativity, sights and stories of the people who live in Alamance County.

Each piece incorporated in the *Eyes on Alamance* exhibit describes or depicts an Alamance County location, event, or experience. This exhibit bridges the wide variety of Alamance County voices and artistic perspectives. It is a clear message of the breadth and wealth of creative thinking and community care that grows in Alamance County.

Alamance Arts is honored to be showing the work of 32 artists of Alamance County. The wide variety of mediums in Eyes on Alamance exhibit includes: acrylic painting, books, digital artwork, oil painting, painted bobbins, pencil drawing, photography, poetry, pottery, watercolors paintings, and wood-turning.

### Featuring Artists:

Mary Archer, Jake Campbell, Barbara Clayton, Randall Davis, James & Rita Duxbury, Linda Fowler, Kathleen Gwinett, Gayle Hardy, Ame Jo Hughes, Marc Kennedy, Kate LaDew, Frank Lane, Carolyn Langley, Sean Leahy\*, Steckley Lee, Nerys Levy, Doran Marold, Asja Milak, Keith O'Leary\*, Anna Peterson, Steven C Polisenio, Coy Quakenbush, Fabian Ramos-Jimenez, Sandy Scott, Jaki Shelton Green, Antje Shiflett, George Siple\*, Cheryl Wilder, Abigail Wilson, Luz Winkle (Mio)\*, Giannina Woods, and Barb Young

### Reception:

**When:** February 22, 2024 from 6 pm to 8 pm

**Where:** [ALAMANCE ARTS](#) — [Get Directions](#)

213 S Main St, Graham, NC 27253

\*Refreshments will be served\*

Thank you for your support,

**Christie O'Leary**

**Interim Exhibit Chair**



## Table Talkers



**Wednesday February 7, 2024 at 6:30 pm**

**Location: Panera Bread**

**Huffman Mill Road in Burlington.**

**Mio Winkle**

### **Q1 2024 Personal Field Trip:**

## **Burlington Train Station**

The field trip for this quarter to the Burlington Train Station is a personal field trip to be done on your own schedule. The location in the heart of downtown Burlington is probably familiar to most of us; the address is 101 N Main St, Burlington, NC 27217. It is served by Amtrak, the United States' passenger rail system, and hosts two Amtrak trains, the Carolinian and Piedmont. Photos may be taken either inside or outside the station. Unlike many of our field trips, this is a relatively limited location. Here is your chance to show how many different aspects of this station you, as a group, can capture with your creative eyes and your camera. Good shooting!

This personal field trip runs from January 1 – March 31. Information on submitting photos will be provided by email at a later date.

Hugh

# APC Trading Post

Submit brief descriptions of photography items you would like to sell, swap or purchase to Ray Munns ([raymunns@bellsouth.net](mailto:raymunns@bellsouth.net)) no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please include your name, contact info (phone and/or email) and if each item is for sale or something you are looking to purchase. Also notify Ray when items should be removed from the newsletter.

## For Sale

Nikon D5000 Camera with 2 batteries \$300

Nikon 28-300 F3.5- 5.6 ED VR  
\$500 Excellent condition



**Contact Mio Winkle 336-329-4423**

## All Free

I have three books for the Trading Post.

- Layers by Matt Kloskowski—A Complete Guide to Photoshop's Most Powerful Feature
- creative photoshop landscape techniques by Les Meehan
- Neat Lightroom Tricks by Dave Kelly

**Contact David Hall @ dlhallofnc@gmail.com**



# 9 Tips for Beautiful Landscape Architecture Photography

By Jeremy Flint

Architectural landscape photography is a unique and challenging genre that blends elements of both landscape and architectural photography. It involves capturing landscapes within architectural settings and buildings within natural landscapes, and the results can be stunning – if you know the right approach!

In this article, I offer plenty of practical tips for shooting architectural landscapes, with a focus on gear selection, composition, lighting, and planning. Whether you're an intermediate or advanced photographer seeking to enhance your architectural landscape images, this guide can help you out – so if you're ready to level up your shots, then read on!

## 1. Use a wide-angle lens



As I mentioned above, landscape architecture photography involves capturing both buildings and landscapes in the same frame. But while there are plenty of stunning examples of this type of image, getting top-notch results can be a bit more complex than it appears.

You'll want to start by choosing the right equipment, and while your camera won't make a huge difference, a wide-angle lens is essential. It'll let you include more elements in the frame, which is particularly useful when photographing large architectural structures alongside significant landscape features.

Plus, wide-angle lenses can help you add depth to your landscape architecture subjects by including room for interesting foreground elements, such as vegetation or paths.

That said, wider focal lengths do tend to cause converging verticals – where straight lines lean inward – and while it's possible to correct this perspective distortion in post-processing, I actually recommend a different approach.

## *9 Tips for Beautiful Landscape Architecture Photography . . . Continued*

### **2. Try a tilt-shift lens**

Converging verticals are a common problem in architectural photography. This perspective distortion occurs when parallel lines, such as those created by the walls of a building, tilt toward the center of the image. And the unfortunate result is that vertical objects appear to fall backward.



Correcting this issue in post-processing can be challenging, but tilt-shift lenses are designed to address it before you press the shutter button. Tilt-shift lenses are particularly effective at straightening lines in architectural landscape photography because by carefully shifting the lens either horizontally or vertically, you can straighten the edges of buildings as well as inward-leaning trees in the landscape.

Tilt-shift lenses are more expensive than conventional glass, and there aren't a whole lot of options – but if you're serious about photographing landscape architecture, grabbing a TS model is often worth the cost and the reduced flexibility.

(That said, in some cases, leaving the lines as they are may benefit the composition of the image! Therefore, if you don't wish to use a tilt-shift lens, or you simply happen upon a scene that looks better with perspective distortion, feel free to use the more conventional approach.)

### **3. Incorporate flowers and plants**

When observing interesting architecture, have you ever stopped to appreciate the breathtaking flowers and plants in the gardens or surrounding landscape? The flora around architectural wonders – be it palaces, castles, or urban skyscrapers – can dramatically spice up your photos.



Because flowers are seasonal and generally only last between two and twelve weeks, timing is crucial if you want to capture them at their peak. For instance, many snowdrops are typically found in winter, daffodils in spring, and lavender in summer.

Incorporating these elements into your shots can enhance the overall scene and even make the architecture seem more prominent, so do your research and try to photograph when the gardens are in peak condition!



## *9 Tips for Beautiful Landscape Architecture Photography . . . Continued*

### **4. Think about the light**

Lighting significantly influences your results in landscape architecture photography; depending on the light quality and angle, you can capture dramatic silhouettes, soft scenic views, high-contrast building profiles, and more.

There's no single best type of light for landscape architecture subjects, so experimenting with different lighting conditions is a great idea, especially when you're just starting out.



Daytime offers opportunities to capture scenes under overcast skies or in bright sunlight, which can look nice but lack drama. On the other hand, early morning and late afternoon shooting can accentuate shadows, adding depth to your files.

Shooting just after sunset is another excellent choice, as the mix of artificial building lights and the dimming sky can yield stunning results.

Basically, you have a lot of options, so the key is to carry your camera in a wide variety of lighting scenarios, and then simply photograph scenes that captivate you. Over time, you'll gain an eye and an appreciation for certain types of light, and you can use that as a springboard to even better shots!

### **5. Composition matters!**

Composition in landscape architecture photography is often neglected in favor of stunning subjects and dramatic light. That is a mistake. Composition is a critical aspect of landscape architecture photography because the placement of elements within the frame can significantly influence the image impact.

Therefore, you must think long and hard about the composition of each frame before pressing the shutter button.

Symmetry, for example, can be a powerful compositional tool. You can create horizontal symmetry by dividing the image into two similar top and bottom sections, or you can create vertical symmetry with a central line creating mirror images on either side.

One of the easiest ways to create horizontal symmetry is through reflections on water surfaces, and the results can be very compelling.





## *9 Tips for Beautiful Landscape Architecture Photography . . . Continued*

### **6. Remember the rule of thirds**

While symmetrical compositions can be effective in some instances, and while it's a good technique to have in your back pocket, I don't recommend symmetry as a go-to compositional approach.

Instead, when doing landscape architecture photography, applying the rule of thirds often yields better results. This technique involves dividing the image into nine equal parts using two horizontal and two vertical lines. By positioning the main subject off-center, either along the gridlines or at their intersection points, you can achieve more visually appealing and impactful photographs.

Notice how the most prominent element in this image – the tree – is positioned left of center for a dynamic effect.



### **7. Frame your subject**

Including a frame in the foreground of your composition is a classic trick, one that works great when photographing architecture in the landscape!



The frames can be created by any natural or human-made elements, such as trees, windows, or bushes that surround the main subject or even just lead the viewer's eye into the shot. This technique not only creates contrast but also adds depth to the composition by incorporating a foreground element that highlights and complements the primary subject.

## *9 Tips for Beautiful Landscape Architecture Photography . . . Continued*

### **8. Spend time planning**

Arriving at a location unprepared makes it challenging to capture compelling images. Research and planning are key; it's during these early stages that you can identify interesting subjects and determine the optimal time for your shoot based on desired lighting conditions.

If possible, scout a location on foot a few hours (or days) before you plan to photograph. Consider different compositions. Think about the position of the sun and the effect it'll have on the scene.

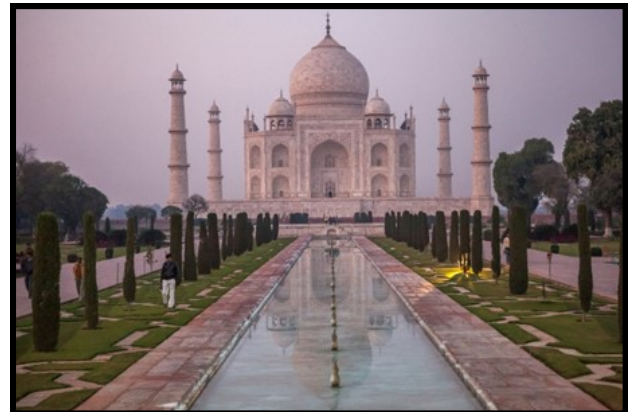
If you can't check out a location in person, spend some time Googling other images captured of the subject, or at least "drive" by on Google Maps. Compile a list of shots you might be interested in creating.

But during the real shoot, don't become so focused on the plan that you miss any outstanding spontaneous opportunities. Spend time planning, but be flexible and adaptable!

### **9. Use a tripod**

A tripod is a vital tool for capturing landscape architecture photos. It can be useful in any light, but it's especially important to work with a tripod in low-light conditions.

If you shoot sunset images, blue hour images, or night images, a tripod will ensure that your files turn out tack-sharp. That way, you can focus on creating a well-composed, well-lit photo, and you won't have to worry so much about maintaining a fast shutter speed while handholding.



Just make sure you don't spend money on a cheap tripod that won't last. With tripods, it's generally better to invest a decent amount of cash upfront than to pay for a sub-\$50 tripod and have to upgrade within a few months.

### **Landscape architecture photography: final words**

Whether you're a beginner, an intermediate, or even an advanced photographer aiming to enhance your landscape architecture photography skills, these tips can significantly improve your results.

Remember to pay attention to the issue of converging verticals in architecture and consider using a tilt-shift lens. Also, focus on creating strong compositions by employing techniques like symmetry, the rule of thirds, and framing.



**Digital  
Photography  
School**

# Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide

By Darren Rowse



Silhouettes are a wonderful way to convey drama, mystery, emotion, and mood. They often stand out thanks to their simplicity and incredible storytelling capabilities, not to mention the breathtaking colors and shapes.

But creating top-notch silhouette photography can be hard, especially when you're just starting out – and that's where this article comes in handy. Below, I share all the essential details for anyone hoping to become a silhouette master, including:

- How to choose the right subject and location
- How to handle different lighting scenarios
- How to choose the best settings
- Creative silhouette photography ideas to get you inspired
- Much more.

So if you're ready to discover everything you ever wanted to know about photographing silhouettes, let's dive right in!

## **What is silhouette photography?**

Silhouette photography is all about capturing subjects so that they lack detail. The focus is on creating striking black shapes against a beautifully exposed background. It's a technique that emphasizes the shape and form of the subject, resulting in minimalistic and graphic effects.

## *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*

Silhouettes also allow you to showcase the vibrant colors of the sky behind your subject, adding an extra level of visual impact. Imagine capturing a stunning sunset or sunrise with the silhouette of a tree or a person standing tall against the vivid hues of the sky.

The best part? Silhouette photography is accessible to everyone, regardless of the equipment you own. Whether you're shooting with a high-end mirrorless model or a smartphone, you can try your hand at capturing these compelling shots, making it an ideal creative outlet for photographers of all levels!

### **When should you try silhouette photography?**

If you're looking to add some pizzazz to your portfolio or spice up your social media feed, silhouette photography is the way to go. These graphic, eye-catching shots can truly make your work stand out.

I talk a lot about light later on in this article, but in general, sunrise and sunset are like magic hours for silhouette photography. The soft, warm light during these times creates the perfect backdrop for your subjects to take center stage as striking silhouettes. If you already like photographing during the golden hours, then you're off to a great start.

You can capture silhouettes of pretty much any subject – people, buildings, animals, trees, flowers – given the right light, but they're not ideal for all occasions. Silhouettes tend to lean towards the artsy side, so if you're doing more formal photography (e.g., a real-estate photoshoot), you might want to opt for more straightforward shots.



Happily, silhouette photography is not limited to any specific skill level or equipment. Anyone can dive into this captivating genre without breaking the bank or spending hours learning new techniques, so if you're on the fence about trying out silhouettes, I highly recommend giving it a go. It's a whole lot of fun, and you never know what magical results you might create. Plus, you'll have the opportunity to explore a new world of colors and shapes!

## *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*

### **Tips and tricks for stunning silhouettes**

In this section, we'll delve into practical tips that will take your silhouette shots to the next level. Get ready to elevate your photography game, starting with:

#### **1. Find a flat or raised location**

When it comes to capturing stunning silhouette shots, the location plays a crucial role. The right environment will help you achieve that captivating contrast between your subject and the sky, while the wrong environment will distract the viewer or even prevent you from creating a crisp silhouette.

First and foremost, opt for locations that offer a flat or raised vantage point. Why is this important? Well, silhouettes tend to work best when your subject is framed against the sky, with the dark figure standing out against the bright background.

Beaches are a popular choice for silhouette photography because their flat landscapes make it easy to position your subject against the vast expanse of the sky. The uninterrupted low horizon provides the ideal opportunity to capture the outline of your subject in all its glory. Prairies are another solid option, though you'll need to be careful to prevent high grasses from obscuring portions of your subject.

But what if you can't find a flat location nearby? Don't worry, you can still create captivating silhouettes in areas where your subjects are raised off the ground. Bridges, hills, boardwalks, mountains, and even parking garage roofs can serve as elevated platforms to showcase your silhouetted subjects against the backdrop of the sky.



Pro tip: Crouching down low to the ground can also work wonders, especially when your subject isn't already raised above you. Don't be afraid to get dirty!



## *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*

### **2. Choose a strong subject**



Almost any object can be made into a silhouette. However, some objects work better for silhouettes than others.

I recommend choosing a subject that has a strong and recognizable shape – one that'll be interesting in its two-dimensional form. Silhouettes can't draw on colors, textures, and tones to make themselves appealing, so the shape needs to be distinct.

Ask yourself: Can you tell what your subject is simply by seeing its shape? Or does it just look like a blob? Does the shape look eye-catching and interesting, or does it feel relatively boring? (Also, sometimes the things that seem boring during

the day can make great subjects for silhouettes – remember that it's about the shape, not the overall look!)

People make great silhouette subjects, but if they're doing something interesting – running, jumping, or riding a bike – the shot will look even better. The best silhouette shots often feature props, such as a bike, a basketball, or a skateboard.



### **3. Find your subject well before sunrise or sunset**

Preparation is key in silhouette photography. Timing plays a crucial role, especially if you're looking to capture the rich colors of sunrise or sunset. You'll want to identify your subject and set up your shot well in advance.

The sky can change dramatically within a short period. That's why I recommend being in your chosen location at least 30 minutes before the sun makes its appearance or takes its leave. You should have your camera (and tripod, if you're using one) set up and ready to go a few minutes before the magic begins, and if you're working with a model, ask them to arrive a little early and use the extra time to get them prepared for the photoshoot.



### ***Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued***

And you should also make an effort to stay after the sunrise or sunset. You might think you can predict when the sky will be at its most vivid, but nature often surprises us. Sometimes the most amazing colors appear when you least expect them. So it's wise to be present for the whole event – before, during, and after the sun crosses the horizon.

(How long should you stick around? At least 30 minutes after the sun has risen or set is a good rule of thumb. This ensures you don't miss out on any late surprises the sky might have for you.)

#### **4. Make sure your flash is off**

Silhouette photograph often involves shooting in dim light (at the start and the end of the day), and most silhouette subjects look pretty dark, too. Therefore, if you have your camera in Auto mode, it may try to turn on the flash, which will ruin the shot.



You see, to capture a silhouette, you need to have as little light as possible on the front of your subject. The goal is to keep the subject dark and the background bright, not the other way around.

So make sure that flash is off! You may need to set your camera to Aperture Priority mode or Manual mode to control the flash (and as I discuss below, these modes are highly useful for silhouette shooting anyway!).

#### **5. Get the light right**

Silhouette lighting doesn't work like normal photographic lighting. To capture a conventional shot, you generally want to ensure that your subject is lit from the front (so that the sun is coming from over your shoulder and striking your subject) or the side (so that the sun is off to your right or left and is striking one half of the subject).

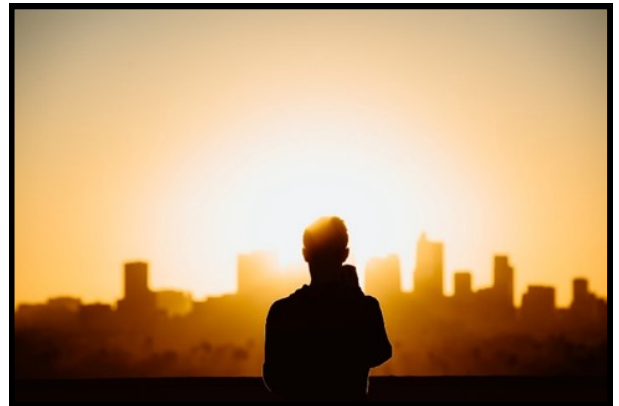
But when you're shooting silhouettes, you'll need to reverse this approach. Find the scene's main light source, then ensure that it's shining from the back of the subject, not the front. Remember, the goal is to keep the background bright and the subject dark. You don't need the light to come from directly behind the subject, but the brighter the background, the better.

## *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*



That's why it's easy to create silhouettes at sunrise or sunset; you can position yourself so that you're shooting into the low sun, and you can frame the dark subject with the bright sky in the background. However, it is possible to capture silhouettes during the middle of the day. You just have to figure out a way to shoot your subject against strong light. For instance, you can:

- Crouch down so that your subjects are framed against the high afternoon sun
- Photograph from below (e.g., folks walking over a bridge)
- Seek out shadowy subjects walking by a brightly lit wall
- Photograph indoors against a bright window



### **6. Frame your subject with negative space**



Even once you've chosen the right subject and found the right light, you'll need to pay careful attention to your composition. The best silhouette shots tend to feature a single subject (or group of subjects) surrounded by empty space, like at the left.

The empty space (also known as negative space) helps the shot breathe, and it also focuses the viewer on the main subject.

One trick is to shoot when the sky is bright and cloudless; that way, you don't have to deal with any distracting clouds. You might also try photographing in areas with lots of empty space (e.g., fields, grassy plains, parking lots).

That said, you can also capture fantastic silhouettes that feature more than just a subject plus negative space. Don't restrict yourself, but do make sure that you only include subjects that contribute to the shot.

## *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*

### **7. Prevent shape intersections**

If your silhouette composition includes multiple shapes, do your best to keep them separate. A person walking can look great, and a tree can look great, but if the person and the tree overlap, you'll end up with a confusing mess. The two shapes will merge into one, and the viewer won't know what's happening.

Instead, carefully observe the scene and isolate only those shapes that are highly distinct. If you want to include multiple shapes that are currently overlapping, try changing your angle until the shapes separate.



Alternatively, if you're photographing a moving subject, you can always wait until it changes position.

One related tip: If you're photographing people, you probably want to silhouette them in profile, not head-on. That way, their features (nose, mouth, and eyes) will be outlined, and they'll be more recognizable to the viewer.

### **8. Carefully adjust your exposure for the best results**

Most modern cameras are pretty good at exposing photos so that everything is nice and bright. That can cause a problem; after all, you don't want your subject to turn out nice and bright in a silhouette shot.

So what do you do? You trick your camera.

Simply set the camera to your shooting mode of choice (Aperture Priority can work great for this, but you can try Auto mode, too). Then point your camera at the brightest part of the scene and press the shutter button halfway. On many cameras, this will set the exposure, and as long as you keep the shutter button half-pressed, it'll remain locked in.

Next, while still partially depressing the shutter button, point your camera at your subject and frame up your composition. Finally, press the shutter button the rest of the way.

With most digital cameras, this will result in a silhouetted subject!

## *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*



Pointing your camera at the bright part of the scene will cause your camera to darken the exposure – and then, when you do take the shot, the main subject will be rendered as a dark silhouette.

Note that some cameras also have a spot metering mode that helps with the above technique. Spot metering causes the camera to set the exposure based on the central part of your frame; with it, you can tell your camera the exact portion of bright background you want to use to determine the exposure. If you're not getting the shots you want using the technique discussed above, you can always try switching your metering mode and see if that helps.

### **9. Try shooting in Manual mode**

The technique I discussed above often works well, but if you want even more control over your settings, I'd really recommend shooting in Manual mode.

Manual mode lets you input each and every exposure variable on your own. It can be a little difficult at first, but after a few hours of practice, you'll get the hang of it.

Once your camera is set to Manual, I'd recommend dialing in a low ISO (100 is a good starting value) and a mid-level aperture (such as f/6.3). Then point your camera at the brightest part of the scene, and adjust the shutter speed until the exposure bar in the viewfinder is balanced.

Take the first shot and review the results on your camera's LCD. If the image looks too dark, you can always lower the shutter speed, and if the image looks too bright, you can always increase the shutter speed instead.

(If you're working with very limited light and your shots are turning out dark, you can also widen the aperture or boost the ISO to increase the exposure, but do so sparingly; widening the aperture will limit the area of the photo that's in focus, while boosting the ISO will add unwanted noise to the image!)

I'd also recommend capturing the same shot using a variety of different exposures – just so you have slightly darker and slightly lighter versions as backup files.



## *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*

### **10. Take steps to keep the subject sharp**

The best silhouette photograph tends to feature sharp, in-focus subjects.

Unfortunately, this can make the automatic metering process – described in Tip 6 – somewhat tricky. You see, pushing your shutter halfway down to get the metering right also means that your camera will focus on a spot in the background rather than on your subject.

If you're using the Manual mode shared above, you won't run into any issues. You can always acquire your exposure settings by pointing your camera at the background, dialing them in, and then focusing on your subject. But if you prefer the Auto mode strategy, then you have two options.

First, if your camera offers manual focusing, you can prefocus on your subject. Then, when you meter off the background, the point of focus won't change. You can effectively frame up your composition before triggering the shutter.

Second, you can try adjusting the aperture to maximize your depth of field (i.e., the amount of your image that is in focus). For this, you'll need to set a small aperture (i.e., a large f-number, such as f/11 or f/16).

If the f-number is large enough and your subject isn't too close to the camera, you'll end up with a sharp subject and a sharp background, even if your camera is focused on the area behind your subject.

### **11. Look for action**

If you're seeking silhouettes that pop off the screen, think action. A bit of movement can bring a unique layer of interest to your photos. Picture a dancer frozen in mid-leap or a skateboarder executing a trick. These dynamic moments create shapes and lines that captivate your audience.

The key is timing. You'll want to be ready to click the shutter at just the right moment. Don't worry; with practice, you'll get the hang of it (though burst mode can be helpful, too!).

Your camera settings are also crucial here. If your subject is moving fast, you'll need a quicker shutter speed (1/500s is a good starting point, though you can go slower or faster depending on the speed of your subject).

You don't always have to plan these action shots, either. Sometimes, the best moments are spontaneous. Keep your camera ready, and keep an eye out. You never know when a cyclist will zoom by, perfectly framed against the setting sun.

## *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*

### **12. Be aware of your surroundings**

Now that you're in your spot and set up, it's easy to become fixated on the spot where the sun is rising or setting. But don't let that narrow focus limit your creative vision. The sky is a vast canvas, and sometimes the most extraordinary colors appear where you least expect them.

Take a look around. Not just left and right, but also behind you. Sometimes, the sky opposite the rising or setting sun takes on hues just as dramatic, or even more so. These moments can be fleeting, and you have to be prepared to capture them.

If you're working with a tripod, it should be easy to move. In the rush of capturing a great shot, you might need to pivot quickly to face a different part of the sky. Make sure your tripod and camera setup allow for this.

Bottom line: Keep your eyes peeled and your camera ready. The sun has a way of illuminating clouds and creating color spectacles in unexpected places. So be aware of your surroundings, and be ready to capture the magic wherever it happens.

### **13. Incorporate reflections into your shots**

One trick that can apply that extra touch of magic to your shots? Adding reflections. Not only do reflections add pizzazz to your images, but they also break up the monotony of an all-black foreground.

Once you've found the perfect location for your silhouette shoot, keep your eyes peeled for a reflective surface in the foreground. Look out for small pools of water or wet areas, especially if you're shooting by the beach.

Once you've found a nice surface, don't just shoot without thinking. Instead, you'll need to adjust your angle to ensure that your entire subject is reflected. For example, if you're photographing a graceful jogger against the vibrant sunset, you wouldn't want the reflection to accidentally cut off their head! Try shooting from higher or lower vantage points until you achieve the best composition.





### *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*

Keep in mind that incorporating reflections into your silhouette photography can require some patience. It's not always easy to stumble upon the perfect combination of a reflective foreground, a compelling subject, and a captivating background. But the reward is well worth the effort. Don't give up! Keep exploring, keep searching for those hidden gems, and you'll be amazed at the incredible opportunities that you uncover.

#### **14. Try partial silhouette photography**

While a total silhouette with a crisp, dark subject can be powerful, also consider capturing some partial silhouettes. I'm talking about photos that include some detail on the subject, like this one.

As you can see, the subjects are dark, but they're not completely dark, and you can still see a bit of detail in the sand and the subjects' clothes.



Sometimes, a touch of light makes the subject slightly more three-dimensional and real, which – depending on your goals – can work well. Plus, a bit of extra detail can add to the mysterious feel of the image.

And if you're not sure whether to create a full silhouette or a partial silhouette, that's okay; just bracket your shots! That's the beauty of bracketing: it will leave you with both total and partial silhouettes to choose from.

#### **15. Create a halo effect**

Ever seen those breathtaking silhouettes framed by a heavenly glow? That's the halo effect, and it's not as hard to achieve as you might think. This effect adds a radiant outline around your subject.

Now, to get that glow, you'll need to position your subject directly in front of a light source. The setting sun is ideal for this, of course – so work hard to get the right angle as the sun lowers in the sky. If you can ensure that your subject is the right size in relation to the sun, and you can position your subject so the sun is almost entirely blocked, you can get a beautiful halo around the subject's edges.

### ***Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued***

Your camera's exposure settings come into play here. Experiment with different settings. You'll find that slight adjustments can make your halo more or less pronounced.

Composition matters, too. Make sure there's nothing intersecting with your subject's outline. Random objects or clutter can disrupt the halo. So aim for a clear and unobstructed view.

If you're struggling, don't get discouraged. This technique takes practice. Start with simple subjects and work your way up!

#### **16. Include props for unique results**

Most photographers create candid silhouettes of distant strangers, but if you're up for a bit of creative experimentation, why not try some posed shots? While I generally wouldn't recommend capturing only silhouette shots during a portrait photoshoot, incorporating a few well-placed silhouettes can provide your subject with some cool and artistic photos that stand out from the crowd.

And if you're really looking to elevate those images, try adding a prop or two. Whether it's umbrellas, hats, musical instruments, or any other object that catches your fancy, props can inject personality and storytelling into your silhouette images. Just imagine a silhouette of a musician with a guitar, or a dancer with a flowing scarf.

When adding props to your compositions, keep in mind that they should be highly visible and not overshadow your subject. Also, ensure that the prop doesn't intersect with your subject in a way that detracts from the clear outline you're trying to create.

Remember, incorporating props is all about adding that extra touch of creativity and fun to your silhouette photography. So don't be afraid to experiment and think outside the box. Let your imagination run wild!



#### **17. Take a storytelling silhouette**

Silhouettes hold the power to tell a story in the simplest sense. Strip away the clutter, the colors, and the chaos, and what you're left with are raw emotions and actions that speak volumes. Picture a parent stooping to tie their child's shoelaces, or an elderly couple holding hands while watching the sunset. These moments tell stories that resonate with us all.

### *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*

Adding more elements to your scene can make it even more dynamic. Think of a busy marketplace with various vendors and shoppers, all silhouetted against the evening sky. Props can also play a role. Imagine a fisherman with his net, or a musician playing a saxophone. Their outlines not only identify them but also say something profound about their life or passion.

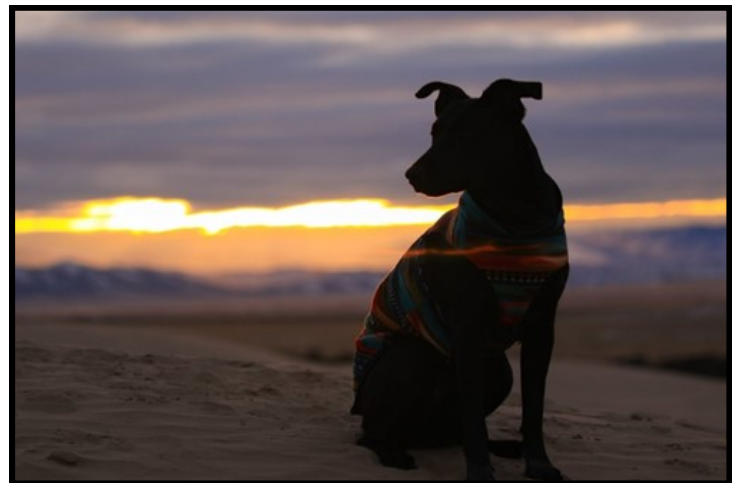
As I've emphasized throughout this article, it's crucial to keep your subjects' outlines clean. Intersections are the enemy of good silhouette stories! So do your best to avoid these overlaps as much as possible.

One final tip: the environment can be a supporting actor in your storytelling. A silhouette framed against a stormy sky can add drama, while a peaceful sunrise can impart a sense of hope or a new beginning.

#### **18. Don't just photograph people**

Most silhouette photographers focus on people, and people do make great silhouette subjects. But you can also capture beautiful – and original – shots by focusing on other interesting objects.

For instance, you can create silhouettes of staircases (by getting down low and shooting upward), buildings, pets, planes, cars, and so much more.



Really, whenever you see a subject with a compelling shape, see if you can position yourself so that you have a nice backlighting effect, then try to shoot a clear silhouette. You'll often fail to get the result you're after, but occasionally the photos will look amazing.

#### **19. Try photographing at sunrise**

There's no denying the challenge wind can pose in silhouette photography, especially with plant subjects. A slight breeze can introduce unwanted motion, turning what could have been a crisp silhouette into a blurry mess, especially when the light is very low. One way to circumvent this issue is to schedule your shoot for the early morning hours.

### *Silhouette Photography: The Ultimate Guide . . . Continued*

Generally, the wind is much calmer during the sunrise than at sunset. This tranquility allows for steadier shots, particularly if you're trying to capture delicate subjects like leaves or flowers. The early morning atmosphere tends to be more stable, making it easier to get that perfect shot without any motion blur.

Now, if you're not a morning person, don't fret. There are alternatives. For those instances when you have to shoot later in the day, consider increasing your shutter speed. This will help to freeze any motion, reducing the chance of blur. Of course, this might require adjustments to aperture and ISO settings to maintain proper exposure, so be sure to make any necessary tweaks!

#### **How to photograph silhouettes: final words**

Now that we've reached the end of our journey into the captivating world of silhouette photography, I hope you're as excited as I am about all the incredible possibilities this technique offers.

Remember, there are no rules when it comes to silhouettes. You can stick with vibrant colors that sing harmoniously or go for the drama of black and white. And don't be afraid to incorporate props for that extra touch of uniqueness – imagine a dancer twirling with an umbrella under a fiery sky!

Now, armed with the knowledge we've shared, it's time for you to unleash your creativity. Grab your camera, and embrace the simplicity, the elegance, and the pure artistry of silhouettes!



# 13 Habits of Highly Effective Photographers

By Ray Salisbury

1. **Don't expect their camera to do all the work.** This means saying goodbye to 'Auto' and bravely using other modes such as Aperture Priority or Manual.
2. **Read the camera manual**—several times—to get familiar with their gear.
3. **Gradually work through various functions and features on their camera.**
4. **Take control of their camera,** and the lighting conditions they are faced with.
5. **Understand that pressing the shutter is only half of making a good photograph.** Modern cameras are no match for the human eye, and still have lots of limitations, especially in low light situations. Post-processing has been done since the invention of photography (either in a traditional darkroom or on a computer). This is where you polish your final images, and make adjustments to compensate for the constraints of the camera.
6. **Select and present only the very best images** from a photo shoot.
7. **Store a back-up copy of their images** onto an external hard drive, or somewhere safe.
8. **Publish photographs,** so they aren't destined to die on a dusty hard drive, unseen by the world.
9. **Share their work** to get constructive feedback from peers (via online galleries such as 500px, Flickr, Google Photos, Instagram or a Facebook group).
10. **Present their images as a means of self-expression**—their contribution to recording the world, from their point of view (e.g. framed photos, greeting cards, calendars, art galleries, photo books, or merely as prints inside a simple photo album).
11. **Get inspiration from other photographers** they admire. Read eBooks, magazines, blog posts, look at Facebook posts, or view YouTube videos. Visit galleries, take workshops or go on a photography tour to learn from a more experienced shooter.

### 13 Habits of Highly Effective Photographers . . . Continued

12. **Travel in search of fresh subject matter**; this could be interesting locations or photogenic people. On a micro level, they use their feet to find fresh angles and perspectives – they ‘work the scene’, and don’t just settle on the first composition they see on a macro level, they visit exotic or remote locations away from home, opening their eyes to new possibilities.
13. **Avoid shooting clichés**, looking for a new take on well-photographed subjects.



*Photo by b k*

In summary, you can be a more effective photographer by educating yourself, embracing challenges, and becoming proactive.

Thomas Edison once said that “genius is one percent inspiration, and 99 percent perspiration.” The one thing that will greatly improve your photography is practice... lots of practice. Go for it!



*Rm*