ALAMANCE PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

2012–2026 ©

November 2026 Newsletter

www.alamancephoto.com www.facebook.com/alamancephotoclub



Photo by Randy Grosch

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President's Comments—November 2026

By Keith O'Leary

Greetings! It's hard to believe we are in November already. I trust you are enjoying the cooler temps. Thanks to David for the PhotoShow presentation last month on your favorite vacation spots. We saw a good variety of places near and far and I enjoyed hearing you speak of the various locations you have visited. Unfortunately, October was the second consecutive month that we had technical issues accessing the internet on my laptop using the church's Wi-Fi, so I had to connect using my personal hotspot again. I have reported the issue and tried several things to resolve it with no success. I tried connecting using Christie's laptop and it had the same problem. So, until this is remedied, we have decided to only offer Zoom meetings when the guest presenter is joining remotely and at those times we will be meeting via Zoom only, as I will be hosting from home. Our apologies to those of you who can only attend via Zoom and we hope this is fixed soon. With that said, **our November meeting on Abstract Photography will be ZOOM ONLY**, so please do not come out to the church. Of course, our Christmas party in December, which will be on **Dec. 14th** this year, will be in person (no Zoom).

As you may know, we have two positions becoming available in 2027 that we must fill soon and we need your help. If the secretary and membership chair positions are not filled by the end of November, the board has decided to suspend/pause club meetings for the first 3 months next year to see if anyone rises to meet the need. I really hope it doesn't come to that. Additionally, the board has studied all of the tasks your club leaders currently perform and attempted to shrink many of the jobs into smaller roles with fewer more specialized tasks. We think this will provide more opportunities for you to consider that might interest you in smaller more attractive roles. You should have recently received an email of these new roles and I hope you take the time to review each and find one or two that may interest you. We'd like to build up our leadership team with backups and understudies, so we want to hear from you now even if a position is already filled. Many of you will be contacted in the next couple of weeks to see what your interests are but if you are not contacted and are interested in helping out, just shoot us an email at alamancephoto@gmail.com or reply to the Crew Planner email.

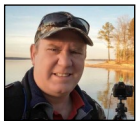
Well, that's it for this month. Stay well and happy shooting!

Your President,
Keith O'Leary

APC ACTIVITIES - November 2026

- **Club Meeting (ZOOM only)** **November 16, 2026**

APC Board with Contact Info

	President	Keith O'Leary	alamancephoto@gmail.com
	VP/Programs	John Reich	johnreich017@gmail.com
	Secretary	Taylor McBride	mr.taylor.mcbride@gmail.com
	Treasurer	George Siple	georgesiple4775@gmail.com
	PhotoShows	David Hall	apcphotoshow@gmail.com
	Exhibits	Sean Leahy	photoexhibitapc@gmail.com
	Field Trips	Hugh Comfort	apcfieldtrips@gmail.com
	Membership	Resi Forrest	apcmembers2@gmail.com
	Web Master	Christie O'Leary	alamancephoto@gmail.com
	Socials	Mio Winkle	apctabletalkers@gmail.com
	Newsletter	Ray Munns	raymunns@bellsouth.net

Programs for 2026

By John Reich

✓ January - Sterling Stevens of Sterling Stevens Design
Subject - Architectural and Fine Art Photography
✓ March - Mio Winkle
Subject - Mio's Underwater Photography
✓ May - Joe McDonald of McDonald Wildlife
Subject - The Best Techniques and Settings for Wildlife Photography
✓ July - Keith O'Leary
Subject - Photo Editing with InPixio Photo Studio
✓ September - Steve Dingeldein
Subject - Astrophotography
- November - Ann Parks of Ann Marson Annstracts
Subject - Abstract Photography

ZOOM Only

What other program topics are you interested in? Let me know of any suggestions you may have. Thanks! - John



November Program - Annstracts

By Ann Marson



Bio - Ann Marson is an abstract photographer and writer who didn't set out to photograph abstracts. In fact, she didn't really set out to pursue photography, but realized her dream of travel writing would require submitting photos with the articles she wrote. As she attempted to learn how to use her new camera, her photo critique leader noticed and pointed out, as she cringed, "You are drawn to shapes, textures, and colors. But for travel magazines, they need scenes with people having an experience."

After that epiphany, and a few more painful stabs at travel writing itself, she embraced abstracts. She bought a macro lens, learned the challenging world of close-up photography (at least partially), and searched for instructors. After two sessions with Art Wolfe, she never saw the world the same again.



Her work lives in the space between photography and imagination, inviting viewers to slow down and see differently. She has tried various techniques and situations, from composed tabletop setups to in-the-field shooting. Whether in urban settings or natural wonders, she gently nudges the viewer to notice what is usually missed and reminds us that sometimes the magic is already there, hiding in plain sight.

As a writer, she encounters rich symbolism in the intimate scenes and uses her photographs as imaginative writing prompts. Abstract photography appeals to Ann because she can connect deeply to thoughts and feelings in the compositions. Although others might see something entirely different, this allows her to share a part of her imagination.

Check out her website at Annstracts.com.

Our Christmas Slideshow – but it's only November

December is just around the corner, and with it comes one of our favorite Photo Club traditions, our annual **Christmas Social and Slideshow!**

For those who are new to the club, our December gathering is a special opportunity to put aside the usual meeting agenda and simply enjoy an evening of good company, holiday cheer, and, of course, photography. **Spouses and significant others are warmly invited to join us.**

To make the evening complete we need **your photos**! Each member may submit **up to 15 favorite photographs** for this year's Christmas Slideshow. There is **no theme, no competition, and no judging.** Your photographs can be of any subject and can have been taken at any time, the choice is entirely yours. Just select some of the photographs you most enjoy and would like to share.

I'll bring everyone's selections together into a slideshow to enjoy during our Christmas gathering.

I'm accepting photos now!

Choose up to 15 favorites, and send them in. They don't have to be recent, and they don't have to be award winners. **They just need to be photographs you enjoy.**

I look forward to seeing what everyone chooses to share.

1. Email them to: apcphotoshow@gmail.com. In the Subject line --- Christmas Show

2. SUBMISSION DEADLINE: ***Sunday, December 6th***

3. Photos 1MB to 25MB will display better.

4. Photos must be named as follows: FirstName.LastName_nn.
   a. Ex. John.Doe_01, John.Doe_02, etc.

   Naming the photographs is important

5. Each photographer will be highlighted with their submissions in the slideshow.

Esperanza Festival





Photos by Bob Finley







Photos by Keith O'Leary





Photo by Sean Leahy

Webmaster Notes

Our website: https://www.alamancephoto.com/ is a great way:

- To introduce potential members to the club.
- To stay up to date on the club events.

Thanks,

Christie O'Leary–Webmaster

APC Membership Corner

November, 2026



Happy Thanksgiving

Alamance Photo Club (APC) welcomes photographers of all skill levels, providing opportunities for members to explore their specific style of photography. We welcome all guests, so please continue to invite family, friends, and community members to our meetings. As a reminder, our meetings alternate between programs with guest speakers and themed photo shows to showcase your creativity. Please refer to the monthly newsletter calendar for full details on all upcoming meetings and events.

Please note that membership renewals are currently on hold until January. Please refrain from submitting online payments at this time. We will notify you as soon as the renewal window reopens.

Resi Forrest – Membership Chair
apcmembers2@gmail.com

ALAMANCE ARTS
WHERE ART LIVES

Dear Artist,

Alamance Arts would like to invite you to participate in our 39th Annual Experience Christmas Exhibition. This showcase has become a treasured tradition in Graham and provides a wonderful opportunity for our community to shop small and support North Carolina artists. The historic Captain White House, home of Alamance Arts, is transformed into a winter wonderland of sparkling garlands and Christmas trees, providing the perfect backdrop for a wide variety of handcrafted artisan works. We hope that you will be a part of that tradition this year.

Here's what you need to know:

- Alamance Arts staff handles the displaying and sales of all artwork. Artists set their own prices, and Alamance Arts will retain a commission of 30 percent.
- Number of pieces accepted will depend on how many artists participate and the size of the art. Specifics will be worked out with each artist individually.
- There is no submission fee for this exhibition.
- Art should be delivered to Alamance Arts during operating hours starting October 1st through October 24th. If this time line will not work for you please let me know and we will work out an alternative.
- Artists will need to sign an exhibition contract and fill out an inventory sheet. These documents can be emailed to you, or you may fill them out on site.
- This exhibition will open on the evening of Friday, November 20th with a ticketed reception. We will then be open to the public November 21st through December 24th. We will have an After Christmas Sale event January 5th-9th. Discounts applied to sales will not affect artist's 70% commission.
- Unsold art can be picked up starting Monday, January 25, 2027. Further details about art pick-up will be sent out closer to the end of the year.
- Artists intending to participate should contact me, Artist Services Director, Kat Harris, by email at artservices@alamancearts.org or by phone at 336-226-4495. Indication of intended participation would be appreciated by September 18th.

Thank you for helping to make Alamance Arts a community hub for creativity. We could not exist without the participation of our dedicated artists. I look forward to seeing all the amazing pieces you each have to offer this year.

Sincerely,

Kat Harris
Artist Services Director
Alamance Arts

MPB helps you buy, sell or trade used camera gear at the perfect price.

By recirculating over half a million items annually, MPB promotes a brighter photographic future for visual storytellers of all experience levels.

Don't wait to change gear with MPB. The planet (and your pocket) will thank you. Click logo below for more info:

mpb

Landscape Photography Lessons for Capturing Light

By Peter Coskun

Landscape photography is all about capturing light, quite literally. Without light, there wouldn't be much to photograph (let alone see). In this article, I discuss different types of light and how landscape photographers can use that light to come away with breath taking photos.



Milky Way night photography with very low light.

Golden Hours

Let's start with the obvious, light at golden hours. This is the time when most photographers seem to be active in creating their images. Seeing a blazing sunrise or sunset always feels like a gift, but photographing them can get tricky in intense light. To get the best light out of a sunrise or sunset, look for clouds that may light up and a gap on the horizon for the sun to poke through. Landscape photography before or after a storm often provides the most dramatic golden hour photos. Check the weather beforehand and see if there is any cloud cover in the early morning or evening you wish to photograph.

Often times, a wide angle lens is used to capture these stunning and colorful displays. This is one of the few times where I find myself using an ultra-wide angle lens to really fit as much sky into the scene as I can. Try using zoom lenses and telephoto lenses if the light is further off in the distance to isolate the best light. From my experience, the best color in the sky happens just after official sunset and just before official sunrise. This also allows you to not have to worry about your shadow being in your foreground.

Landscape Photography Lessons for Capturing Light . . . *Continued*

Really intense light can create a warm color cast over the entire scene. In post, I like to create a duplicate layer and create a layer mask for adjustments. Usually, these are color adjustments like color balance or white balance in camera RAW. This way, you can still retain the colors in the sky while giving the scene some color contrast. The most problematic areas are the shadows, which should have a cooler feel, opposed to the highlights of the scene. For very intense light, I also recommend bracketing and making multiple exposures for the sky and landscape to later blend in post for dynamic range. Sometimes even the best sensors can't handle the dynamic range of these scenes.



Landscape photography during Golden Hours – Panamint Mountains and Zabriskie Point, Death Valley National Park, California

The landscape photo above showcases golden hours at the Panamint Mountains and Zabriskie Point in Death Valley National Park. The intense colors of the sunrise gave the badlands a warmer color palette which was reduced by shifting the white balance in a duplicate RAW file to a cooler tone.

Reflected Light

Many photographers tend to call it a day once the light becomes too harsh. However, some of the most interesting light can occur throughout the midday hours. **Reflected light** in landscape photography is a common form of light that usually occurs during mid-morning and afternoon. This type of light can occur in places like slot canyons. Certain angles of the sun may illuminate one side of a canyon wall, which reflects onto an opposing wall or feature with rich glowing light.

Landscape Photography Lessons for Capturing Light . . . *Continued*

This type of light can also occur during golden hours with colorful clouds reflecting the warmth onto the landscape. However, in this instance, we refer to the later-in-the-day type. Much like sunrise and sunset, the warm colors of a reflected canyon wall may create an unflattering color cast in the shadows. Once again, it's time to do some color adjustments to create contrast. As I mentioned before, I prefer using a duplicate layer for these adjustments. This allows you to click back and forth to see what your adjustment is doing, and if you need to further your adjustments.



Reflected light in landscape photography – Dried mud cracks along the Paria River in Utah

In the landscape photo above dried mud curls catch the reflected light from the sandstone wall above. This wall had this nice glow from an opposing canyon wall fully illuminated to provide the glow here. Notice how the shadows still retain the cool tones here and the highlights in the mud show the warmer light.

Dappled Light

Another form of light that can occur during daylight hours is **dappled light**. This type of light happens when there are patchy clouds in the sky and the sun breaks through creating speckled patterns of light and shadow over the landscape. This can happen over any type of landscape, but it is most photogenic when you have layers in the landscape. Mountains, valleys, and canyons work well for this type of light due to the uneven terrain. I find vantages high up offer great perspectives to take advantage of this light.

Landscape Photography Lessons for Capturing Light . . . *Continued*

Dappled light can even be just as dramatic as sunrise and sunset light. Depending on how much light and shadow you have, your scene can look like something out of Mordor. This type of light works great with high contrast processing to really separate the highlights and shadows. Just like the other light mentioned in this article, it is still possible to get color casts. It is best practice to ensure that your shadows remain a cooler tone than your highlights.



Dappled light over layers and ridges in Death Valley National Park, California.

This image showcases afternoon dappled light over Death Valley National Park. The darker areas over the landscape are shadows from the clouds, while the highlights pop in random sections. The speckling of light is most notable in the upper half of the image.

Twilight

After the sun sets, then photography is surely over as there is no more light to work with, right? Wrong! **Twilight** offers one of the more unique displays of light for landscape photography. This type of light typically occurs about 30 minutes before sunrise and 30 minutes after sunset. Because the sun is below the horizon, we don't have to deal with a lot of warm tones. Twilight colors are more about the pastel blues and pinks that occur in nature. This should make it a lot easier to avoid a color cast, right? Wrong again! While all of the other light displays we've discussed can create a warm color cast, twilight can create very blue or magenta color casts.

Landscape Photography Lessons for Capturing Light . . . *Continued*

There are specific colors to look for and adjust to avoid any color casts: blues, cyans, purples, and magentas. Snowy scenes under twilight light may appear to have more cyans and blues while other scenes may show too much purple and magenta. Using the color balance tool on a duplicate layer via a layer mask can help balance your scene. Here you can adjust your cyans, blues, and purples without adjusting the entire scene.

Be sure to click on and off on the layer as you mask out areas to make sure the color cast is diminishing. You can get creative with your colors though, and maybe you want the scene to appear more blue or purple. Just make sure that the entire scene isn't one uniform color.

Landscape photography during twilight hours – Toroweap Canyon, Grand Canyon National Park



This landscape photo was taken during twilight over Toroweap Point in Grand Canyon National Park. Note the much cooler tones in the landscape. It is common to have faint sunset or sunrise light linger in the sky with intense displays of light.

Hopefully this article helps you discover other types of light in nature to photograph, especially if you tend to shoot only during golden hours. Great light happens all day long if you know how to spot it. Now you can shoot all day long if the conditions are right.

VISUAL WILDERNESS

Family Gathering Photography Tips

By The PictureCorrect Team

It's that time of year again – time for the annual family gathering! Whether you're gathering around the table for Thanksgiving dinner or celebrating the holidays with loved ones, these occasions are always filled with laughter, love, and of course, lots of photo opportunities. Whether you're a seasoned photographer or just starting out, here are some tips to help you capture those special moments and create lasting memories.



Photo captured by cottonbro studio; ISO 2000, f/1.4, 1/1250s, 50mm

Here are some example camera settings assuming an indoor setting with minimal lighting:

- **Aperture:** Aperture controls the amount of light that enters the camera through the lens. In low light situations, you might want to use a lens with a wide aperture (e.g. f/2.8 to f/5.6) to let in more light. This can also create a shallow depth of field, which can be a nice effect for portraits.
- **Shutter speed:** Shutter speed controls the amount of time that the camera's sensor is exposed to light. In low light situations, you might want to use a slower shutter speed to allow more light to reach the sensor. Just be aware that using a slow shutter speed can cause motion blur if your subjects are moving.

Family Gathering Photography Tips . . . *Continued*

- **ISO:** ISO controls the sensitivity of the camera's sensor to light. In low light situations, you might need to increase the ISO to allow the camera to capture more light. However, increasing the ISO can also introduce noise (grain) into your photos, so try to keep it as low as possible while still getting a well-exposed photo.
- **White balance:** White balance helps to ensure that colors in your photos look natural. Indoor lighting can sometimes cause colors to look yellow or orange, so you might need to adjust the white balance to compensate.
- **Focus mode:** In low light situations, it can be more challenging for the camera to focus accurately. You might want to consider using a focus mode that allows you to manually select the focus point, such as "single point" or "flexible spot."



Photo captured by Nicole Michalou; ISO 800, f/2.8, 1/160s, 50mm.

Here are some more general tips for capturing the gathering:

- **Get everyone involved:** Encourage family members of all ages to take photos, whether it's with a traditional camera or their smartphones. This will help capture a variety of perspectives and candid moments.
- **Use natural light:** Take advantage of natural light by shooting near windows or doors. This will help create soft, flattering light for your photos.

Family Gathering Photography Tips . . . *Continued*

- **Experiment with different angles:** Try shooting from different angles to add visual interest to your photos. This might include shooting from above, below, or at eye level.
- **Get close to your subjects:** Don't be afraid to get close to your subjects and fill the frame with their faces. This will help create intimate, emotional photos.
- **Capture candid moments:** In addition to posed photos, make sure to capture candid moments as they happen. These types of photos often capture the true spirit of a family gathering.
- **Tell a story:** Use your photos to tell a story of the gathering. This might include capturing the details of the decorations, the food, and the activities that took place.
- **Have fun:** Above all, remember to have fun! Photography should be enjoyable, so don't stress too much about getting the perfect shot.



Photo captured by Tyler Nix; ISO 250, f/3.5, 1/1250s, 50mm.

With these tips in mind, you'll be well on your way to capturing beautiful and meaningful photos at your next family gathering. So don't be afraid to get creative, have fun, and above all, embrace the chaos! These are the moments that make life worth living and the memories that we'll look back on and cherish for years to come.

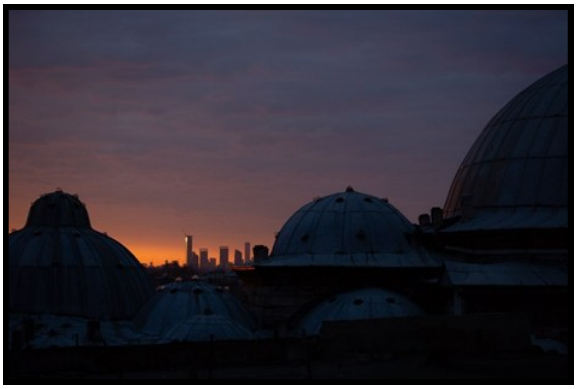
PICTURECORRECT.com

7 Things Van Gogh Can Teach Us about Photography

By Anthony Epes

In keeping myself motivated as a photographer, I love to look for inspiration from all across the creative spectrum. Today I want to share some ideas with you from the painter Van Gogh that I hope will bring some exciting new ideas for your photography.

I love who I am when I am taking photos. It is one of my favorite things, and I would imagine it's the same for you.



To have my camera in my hand, exploring, finding beautiful light, and capturing interesting people I meet along the way, is immensely satisfying and massively fun.

However, life often gets in the way (who'd have thought it!), and I get distracted and lose my creative energy.

For example, I have too many conversations with my accountant, or I am doing a lot of admin or rushing around doing the tasks that are super important to make my life function but aren't conducive to creativity.



I have been a photographer for over two decades, and I know that making time for being creative is really good for me. Of course, it's good for my career as a whole, but more than anything, it makes me happy!

These ideas are timeless because they remind us what we love to do, and why – take photos, be creative, and make things.

I've also included some ideas that are reassuring – offering guidance on some of the common challenges that we all face as creative people.

7 Things Van Gogh Can Teach Us about Photography . . . *Continued*

So let's get started!

1. "I am always doing what I cannot do yet, in order to learn how to do it." Vincent Van Gogh

One thing I regularly hear from people when they arrive on my photography workshops is how they can't do things.

It could be: I can't be creative! Or I can't shoot on manual, it's impossible for me!

To me, this is just a habitual way of thinking that is not based on facts. Just because we can't do something now, does not mean we will never be able to.

It is therefore an uncomfortable and unfamiliar feeling for us to be faced with things that we don't understand, and so we really struggle with learning.



Photography almost always shows us the things we have struggled in the past to do. Because photography is a unity of skills – the ethereal concept of creativity and the highly technical world of cameras, computers, and post-processing software.

Many of my students fall into two camps: those who are comfortable with the technical, but not the 'arty/creative' side of photography. Or the reverse: very intimidated by tech, gear, etc. but very comfortable with the idea of being creative.

If, though, we want to get really confident in photography (and we should because otherwise, why would you be drawn to this medium?), we have to overcome the discomfort and look to learn about these things we struggle with.

Here I can offer some inspiration. It is possible for anyone to learn anything. No one is too far gone, too un-creative or un-technical. It just comes down to belief. Can you believe you can find ways to learn what you need to learn to become comfortable and confident shooting?

If you say *yes*, you are halfway there. Saying yes to learning is the first step.

7 Things Van Gogh Can Teach Us about Photography . . . *Continued*



"Men often become what they believe themselves to be. If I believe I cannot do something, it makes me incapable of doing it. When I believe I can, I acquire the ability to do it even if I didn't have it in the beginning." **Mahatma Gandhi**

And how about we just decide to be people who are learning new things? Be like Van Gogh and always be doing things we don't know how to do.

2. "Seek only light and freedom and do not immerse yourself too deeply in the worldly mire." Vincent Van Gogh



This talks about how much we need to detach ourselves from normal life, and the endless tasks of our lives in order to create. Being creative connects us to the world in a completely different way to how we normally live.

In 'normal' life, we are living on the surface. We are doing a lot, we are being busy, and we are jumping from task to task. We are responding. And that's all totally necessary to take care of our lives.

But it is not the only way to live. It's the least enriching, and least satisfying way to live.

And it's definitely not the mode to be in when you're being creative.

When you are out shooting, when you are creating something, it has to come from a different part of you. Because taking photos is the work of the soul, not the mind.

It's diving deep into yourself and using everything you are, everything that you've experienced, known and loved, and bringing that out in your images.

But real life knocks very loudly and getting yourself into your creative flow state can be challenging. Even I, a professional photographer who shoots all the time, find it hard sometimes to switch off my mind when it starts reminding me about my mundane daily tasks.

7 Things Van Gogh Can Teach Us about Photography . . . *Continued*

So what I do when I am finding it hard to connect to my inner creative spirit, the inspiration I seek when I am out shooting, is finding other ways to stoke my creativity.

That either involves going out into nature, searching for beautiful light or looking at other artists and what they have created.

I also love to read about what my favorites artists have said about making things, because it helps inspire me and helps me leap into a state of wanting to go out and create beautiful photos.

When Van Gogh said *"The only time I feel alive is when I'm painting,"* feels mostly very true to me.



We are rarely totally living in the moment, totally alive to everything that is around us, connecting to the world that we see.

Totally normal of course, we all do it. But I also think it's important to carve out time to have those moments of deep fulfillment, of connection, deep beauty, and joy. This is what photography brings into my life. The chance to slow down, to see and be present for what life is.

3. "If you hear a voice within you say 'you cannot paint,' then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced." Vincent Van Gogh



Photography is an inner game.

Taking good photos has nothing to do with your current skills or your ability to nail sharpness or your exposure. It's everything to do with what you believe about yourself and what you believe is possible for you.

7 Things Van Gogh Can Teach Us about Photography . . . *Continued*

If you start with this idea of not being able to do something, you won't be able to do it. You have to overcome that mind of yours that loves to remind you of your inadequacies.

But it is also to say that all people who create, have fear. You are not alone when your mind tells you you're not much of a photographer, or you might as well as give up because your photos are boring.

Your job is to ignore whatever rubbish your mind is saying about your photography, as Van Gogh says, and silence your mind by *doing*.

Creativity comes from such a magical and mysterious place – you can't just find it anywhere. You can't quantify it or set an exam for it. The fact that there is often no way to quantify if your photos are any good can create some anxiety.



The way to overcome this is to just get started. Just go out and shoot. Don't worry if it's going to come out well or not. Don't pre-analyze what you may or may not achieve or what you are or are not.

The mind is clearly an incredible organ, but it's not always on your side. It can dissuade you from doing things you love before you've even got started, so regardless of the outcome, go out and shoot and love the experience.

4. "Be clearly aware of the stars and infinity on high. Then life seems almost enchanted after all." Vincent Van Gogh



It's really easy to get so familiar with our world that we stop seeing what is beautiful and awe-inspiring around us. It's normal to see your everyday environment and not be inspired by what's there. Our eyes get dulled to the familiar world around us. That's often why we travel or go to new places, to see new things.

But here is a big change we can make right here and now in our photography. When we are prepared to really find the magical and beautiful in life, wherever we are; when we can learn to be impressed and excited about what is, we will see more and more opportunities for photos.

We don't need to travel or find new things to be inspired to shoot, we just need to connect with what is enchanting in this crazy, wild, and incredible world.

7 Things Van Gogh Can Teach Us about Photography . . . *Continued*

5. "Painting is a faith, and it imposes the duty to disregard public opinion." Vincent Van Gogh

In many ways, I think learning photography now is harder than in the past. And that's not because there are so many photographers, or because of smartphones, etc. Instead, it's because of the amount of information out there, and the multitude of opinions.

The internet has given us so much incredible access to information and to communities and groups where we can share our photos. But often, instead of it being an empowering experience, it can become disheartening. You can get into the habit of judging your photos on how many 'likes' they receive.

When you post your photos online, you can get a whole raft of opinions back that is often useless for your photography.

People who aren't necessarily any more experienced than you will share their random thoughts. (And I can guarantee there are very few professional photographers hanging out online doing constructive criticism on photos.) It's also so easy to get dissuaded by what other people say about your images.

To make something unique and interesting, and to shoot with creative freedom, you need to be very careful about where you get feedback and who is giving it. You need to give most of your time creating images. Then find people you really trust – whose photography you admire – and seek feedback from them.

That's how you can learn to grow and get better as a photographer.



7 Things Van Gogh Can Teach Us about Photography . . . *Continued*

6. "It is looking at things for a long time that ripens you and gives you a deeper meaning." Vincent Van Gogh

Photography often becomes viewed as a series of technical tasks that need to be learned. To learn the way of the camera is to unlock all the gifts of photography.



For me that couldn't be further from the truth.

The camera is merely the tool to execute your vision. That's not to say the tool doesn't have lots of cool and exciting features. I mean, I love tech, and I love what it can do. However, all of that gear is not going to get you great shots if you don't know how to see, use your imagination, and bring feeling to your photos.

The key to accessing amazing photos all around you is to start to really *learn to see.*

You might say – but of course, I can see what's around me! But you would be wrong. There is so much visual information around us that our brain blocks out most of what is there. What we end up seeing is a mere fraction (less than one percent) of what is going on around us.



What is even more surreal is that because of how our brains like to make our lives as easy and simple as possible and to create habits in how we think and do things, we often see the same things over and over. We don't notice the different things in our environment.

If you think about a street you've maybe walked down hundreds of times and all of sudden you have the urge to look up to the tops of the buildings. And it's like – wow, I don't remember seeing that.

This happens all the time with everything in our world.

Therefore, it is a good job as a photographer, to learn to open our awareness. Learn to see beyond what our brains feed us. Learn to look for a long time, and pay attention to what is around us.

7 Things Van Gogh Can Teach Us about Photography . . . *Continued*

This helps to develop our patience too. Developing patience in looking for shots is a great skill to nurture as a photographer. I find people are usually too quick to move on from a scene or a subject.

When we are patient and take that extra time working on a scene or subject, we often find more qualities of the subject are revealed. More ideas spring to mind too. Perhaps things in the moment change; like the light or things moving around the subject, thus, changing the possibilities of the photo.



Learn to really look at the world and it will open up so many incredible facets to your photography.

7. "If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere." Vincent Van Gogh

I don't just mean nature in a traditional sense – the beautiful flowers, people, or landscapes. It's when we bring the idea of beauty into our photography that we see that we can capture what is beautiful to us, in any guise.

For me, it's often the interplay of cities and nature. The smash of orange fruit on the tarmac. The gorgeous colors of the sunrise above a housing complex. Or the dramatic, metallic grey of a sky before a storm.

I would actually expand this idea to say there is beauty in all things, you just need to develop your ability to see and find it all around you.

Conclusion

I hope you found these ideas from Van Gogh useful for your photography. Hopefully, these ideas have inspired or taught you something valuable. Thanks for reading!

Digital Photography School

Harnessing Soft Light:
Where & When to Find Diffused Lighting

By Richard Schneider

As a photographer, understanding light is as fundamental as understanding your camera. One of the most flattering and universally appealing types of lighting is diffused light. This kind of light is soft, gentle, and does not cast harsh shadows, making it ideal for a variety of photography genres. But where and when can you find the best diffused lighting? Let's dive into some key tips to help you harness the power of diffused light for your photography.



1. Golden Hour – Dawn and Dusk

Golden hour is that magical time just after sunrise or just before sunset. The sun is low in the sky, and its light is filtered through a greater amount of the Earth's atmosphere, which scatters the direct sunlight and reduces its intensity. This natural diffusion creates a warm, soft light that is not only less intense but also casts long, gentle shadows. It's perfect for portrait photography, landscape shots, and even urban scenes where the golden tones can bring a new dimension to your compositions.

2. Overcast Days – Natural Soft Boxes

Cloudy days might seem dull to the untrained eye, but they are actually perfect for diffused lighting. The clouds act like a giant softbox in the sky, scattering and softening the sunlight. This eliminates harsh shadows and provides a clean, even light that is excellent for shooting portraits, macro photography, or any scene where you want subtle details and colors to emerge without the interference of strong shadows.

Harnessing Soft Light: Where & When to Find Diffused Lighting . . . *Continued*

3. Shaded Areas – Soft Shadows

When the sun is too intense, look for shaded areas under trees, buildings, or other large objects. These spots can provide a sanctuary of diffused light. The key here is to find areas where the sunlight is not directly hitting the subject but is instead filtered through or bounced off other surfaces. This setup is particularly useful for achieving beautifully lit portraits without squinting subjects or harsh facial shadows.

4. Using Windows – Indoor Diffusion

Indoors, windows can serve as excellent sources of diffused light, especially when covered with sheer curtains. The fabric acts to scatter the light, mimicking the effect of a softbox used in studio photography. This method is ideal for product photography, food photography, and portraits. The directional light from a window can also create a dynamic range of light and shadow, adding depth to your indoor shots.

5. The Blue Hour – Twilight Ambience

Following the golden hour, the blue hour provides a brief period where the sky takes on a predominantly blue tone with a cool, soft light. This light is diffused through the absence of the direct sun and offers a unique quality that is excellent for cityscapes, landscapes, and even nighttime portraiture. The softness helps to smooth out imperfections and brings a tranquil and ethereal mood to photographs.

6. Tools to Enhance Diffusion

While natural light provides many opportunities for diffused lighting, sometimes manipulation is necessary to achieve the perfect shot. Tools like diffusers, reflectors, and softboxes can help recreate or enhance the qualities of diffused light. These are particularly useful in harsh lighting conditions or when shooting in direct sunlight.

Harnessing Soft Light: Where & When to Find Diffused Lighting . . . *Continued*

Summary:

Finding the perfect light can sometimes be a challenge, but with an understanding of where and when to find diffused light, you can significantly improve the quality and aesthetic of your photographs. Whether utilizing the golden tones of the early morning, the soft evenness of an overcast day, or the subtle hues of twilight, mastering diffused lighting can transform your photography. Always be prepared to observe and adapt to your environment to make the most of the light available to you, and don't hesitate to use tools to create or enhance light diffusion where necessary.

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