

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

PART 1: CREATIVE IMAGE CAPTURE

APPROACH AND CAVEATS

- We will be talking about “soft” topics and ideas on how to approach your photography in general terms, not “rules” or “this is how you do it”.
- I am not an expert, I have no photographic qualifications and I still have so much to learn.
- There may be important things that I have missed.
- I may not be the best person to lead this discussion but I will do my best.
- You can help by joining in the discussion and sharing thoughts and ideas.

How do you decide what to
photograph and how to
capture it?

PHOTGRAPHIC INTUITION

- We all use it
- It can be our best friend
- It can also limit our creativity

HOW CAN IT LIMIT OUR CREATIVITY?

- Reactive rather than analytical
- Habitual rather than tailored solutions
- Echo chamber – reinforces habits

THINK IT OVER

- Take your time
- Examine the subject and its setting
- Consider:
 - How does it make you feel?
 - What you want to say?

THE CHALLENGE

How do you express a multi sensory, three dimensional experience visually in two dimensions?

DO WHAT YOU CAN

- Portray the subject in a way that emphasises the characteristics you want to draw out.
- Include as much of foreground, background and contextual information as is necessary to convey your vision.
- Frame your image to complement and support that vision.
- Create a connection with the viewer.

ALL THE WORLDS A STAGE

It may be helpful to draw analogies with the theatre:

- The lead actor (s) - your subject
- The supporting actors and cast - characters that help tell the story
- The props - the objects that help tell the story and create the setting
- Front stage - foreground setting
- The backdrop - background setting
- The lighting - creates mood and focuses attention

CONSIDER

- What is the overall feeling you want to achieve?
- Which aspect ratio suits the subject best?
- Which point of view is best?
- How large in the frame should the subject be?
- Where should the subject be placed in the frame?
- How prominent should the supporting actors, cast and props be?
- How much foreground and background detail do you want to include?
- Is the lighting right?

THE KEY TOOLS AVAILABLE TO YOU

- Image aspect ratio
- Point of view
- Shutter speed
- Aperture
- Subject distance
- Focal length
- Post processing (This will be covered in part 2)

COMMON ASPECT RATIOS

- Square - strong, static, grounded, neutral, balanced
- 4/3 - more natural, more energy, controlled, more retro in feel
- 4/6 - dynamic, energetic
- Letterbox - dramatic
- Portrait vs landscape
 - Portrait invites you to look up, it can be more static and controlled
 - Landscape invites you to look across, it can have more dynamism and energy

POINT OF VIEW

Changing your point of view can have a dramatic effect on your image:

- Emphasising the characteristics of the subject that you want to draw out.
- Changing the relationship of your subject to its environment
- Drawing together, separating or establishing relationships between the components of your composition

POINT OF VIEW

Eye level

- Normal point of view for us
- Familiar, more comfortable, neutral in feel
- Can create greater feeling of connection with your subject if you are at their eye level

POINT OF VIEW

Low Level i.e. ground, knee or hip high, not looking up

- The lower the level the more the foreground is compressed and the background emphasised
- Adds enhanced sense of scale

POINT OF VIEW

- Low Angle – looking up
 - Makes subject feel dominant, in control, revered
 - Reduces foreground
 - Can emphasise background/sky
 - Can be used to isolate subject by reducing busy detail behind subject

POINT OF VIEW

- Worms Eye View – Extreme low angle
 - Unusual point of view – can be unsettling
 - Emphasises size and scale
 - Makes subject more dominating, dynamic, majestic
 - Increases energy
 - Can lead to obvious distortion from converging verticals

POINT OF VIEW

- High Angle - looking down
 - Can be used to isolate subject by reducing busy detail behind subject
 - Can be used to draw attention to prominent items in the foreground that support the subject
 - Or to emphasise foreground subjects that are supported by items in the background

POINT OF VIEW

- Birds Eye View – Extreme high angle from a high viewpoint
 - Another unusual point of view which again can be unsettling
 - Makes subject feel smaller in relation to surroundings, less dominant, submissive, less dynamic,
 - Can feel passive, less energy
 - Can make viewer feel protective

POINT OF VIEW

- Tilt/Dutch Angle
 - Unusual angles can add dynamism and create disorientation or tension.
- Over the shoulder
 - A way of presenting the subject from the point of view of the person working on it or observing it.
- Don't forget you need to move around and find the best vantage point for any point of view.

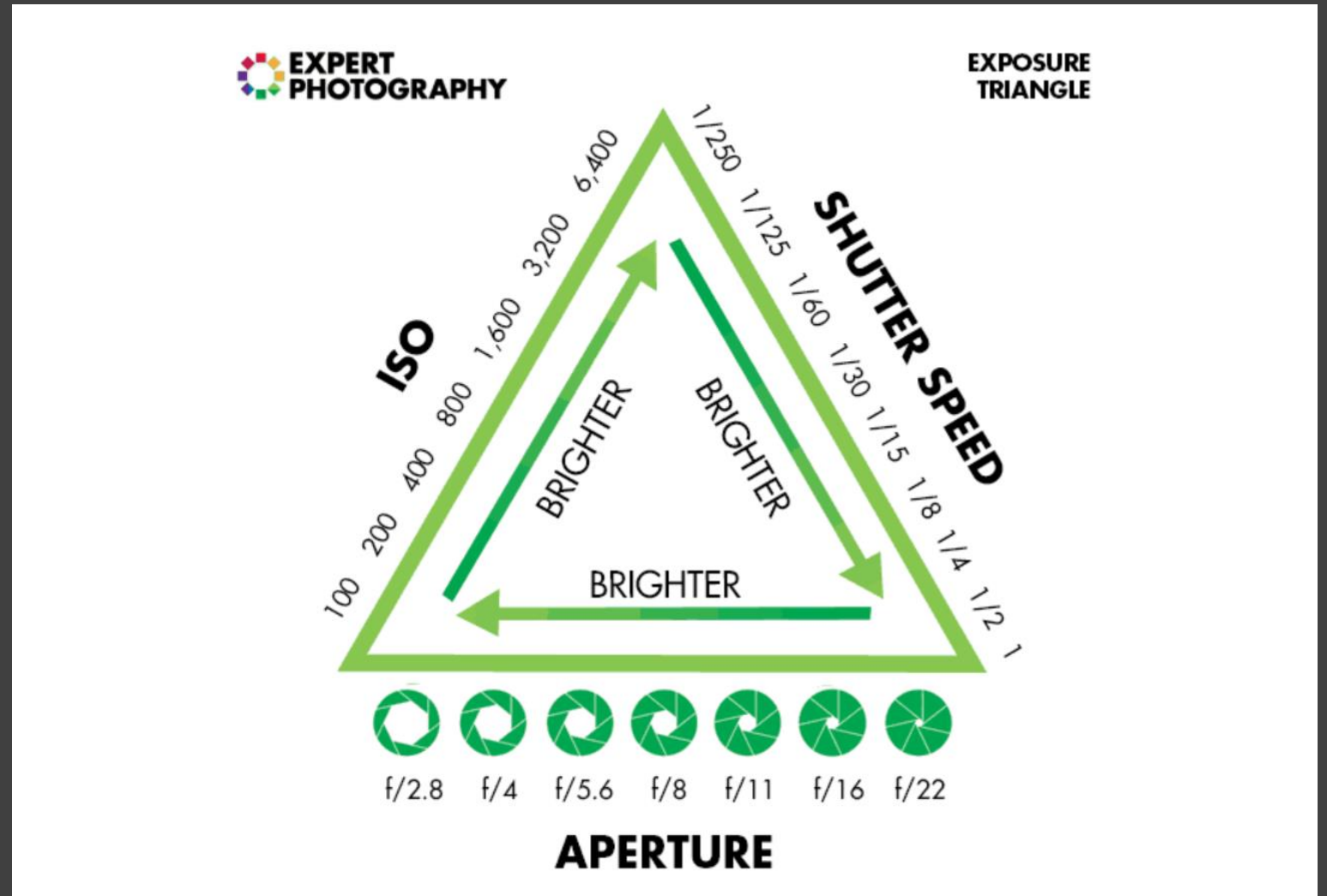
SIZE IN FRAME

What does Size of subject in frame say? Some thoughts:

- Small - not usually an option for the subject
- 1/3rd to 1/2 of frame high - foreground and background important part of story
- 2/3rds of frame high - foreground and background provide context and setting
- 4/5ths of frame high - foreground and background provide minimal context
- Fills frame - subject is all, or maybe subject is constrained

EXPOSURE TRIANGLE

Before we talk about shutter speed and aperture a quick reminder of the exposure triangle



SHUTTER SPEED

- High shutter speed freeze's action
- Low shutter speed allows subject or background blur and is usually used to convey a sense of movement

APERTURE

- Determines depth of field - i.e. how much of the scene is in focus, front to back.
- Small f number
 - Large aperture and shallow depth of field
 - Shallow depth of field isolates subject by making background and foreground out of focus
- Large f number
 - Small aperture and deep depth of field
 - Deep depth of field brings subject, background and foreground more into focus
- By choosing an appropriate f number you can have your subject in sharp focus and can choose how much detail you want to reveal in the background and foreground

APERTURE



SUBJECT DISTANCE AND FOCAL LENGTH

- **Telephoto lens** (generally considered to be 70mm or higher)
 - Increases the size of the subject in the frame.
 - Narrows the field of view thus cutting out some of the background.
- **Wide angle lens** (generally considered to be 35mm or lower)
 - Reduces the size of the subject in the frame.
 - Widens the field of view thus including more of the background.
- **Two foot zoom**
 - Reducing the distance between you and the subject increases the size of the subject in the frame,
 - Increasing the distance reduces the size of the subject in the frame.

FOCAL LENGTH OF LENS – SAME SUBJECT DISTANCE

(Wide to mild telephoto focal lengths)

Uncropped



FOCAL LENGTH OF LENS— SAME SUBJECT DISTANCE

(Wide to mild telephoto focal lengths)

Cropped to aid comparison



FOCAL LENGTH OF LENS - SIMILAR SUBJECT FRAMING

(Wide to mild telephoto focal lengths)

Cropped to aid comparison



TWO FOOT ZOOM - PRACTICAL EXAMPLE



POST PROCESSING

This will be the subject of the next part of these talks.

However knowing how you intend to process your image at the time of capture can be helpful.

AND NOW WE SWITCH TO
LIGHTROOM TO DISCUUS
SOME EXAMPLES FROM
OUR MEMBERS IMAGE
BANK

No EXIF data
Image taken from
Youtube talk by
Caroline Preece



FURTHER READING

- Presentations in the members area of club website:

Restricted Depth Of Focus

- YouTube Videos

Tools Not Rules – Presentation to the RPS by Caroline Preece:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSQ7cl4UFRg>

DON'T FENCE ME IN

Keep an open mind and keep looking outside the club world:

- YouTube Blog- The Photographic Eye

<https://www.youtube.com/c/ThePhotographicEye/videos>

- National competitions and exhibitions

<https://www.hasselblad.com/inspiration/>

- RPS and other exhibitions
- Art Exhibitions

WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN

- Next session will cover post processing and will be held on 21st January 2025
- Here is some homework for you:



EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

MAKE IT YOUR STORY

AND

GO YOUR OWN WAY

NOW FOR A BIT OF FUN

WHO IS WONDERING WHAT THE
BOX OF HEROES IS FOR?

HOW MANY SONG TITLES DID
YOU SPOT IN THIS
PRESENTATION?

1. Every Picture Tells A Story - Rod Stewart
 2. Think It Over - Buddy Holly, Sissy Houston, Delfonics
 3. Do What You Can - Bon Jovi
 4. Don't Fence Me In - Bing Crosby And The Andrews Sisters
 5. We've Only Just Begun - The Carpenters
 6. Go Your Own Way - Fleetwood Mac
- Tie Breaker: Keep Looking - Sade