Tony Sweet Creativity Seminar Notes

IMAGINATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWLEDGE

Compelling Composition

Scale: Relatively small subject in vast landscape, cityscape

Drama: Edge of storms (as it's moving in or right after); clouds, stormy coastlines

Work the subject: you should use several lenses, focal lengths, perspectives

Repetition: subjects that repeat shapes, color. Works well in macro using a shallow DOF (sharp prime foreground subject and softer background subjects)

Line: The use of line is critical in image design: Horizontal, vertical, diagonal, leading, 'S' and 'C' curves.
  • Perspective - think long triangles
  • Leading - take the viewer to a specific subject
  • Vertical - great for swipes
  • Diagonal - the most dramatic

Framing: Always look for a way to frame a subject through something: window, rocks, any opening that will pull the eye to the subject, a tree lined pathway.

Silhouettes: Should have a compelling shape. Best with colorful background.

• The lower you get using a wide angle lens, the more dramatic the landscape can be.

• Watch for bright sky color to light the subject, before sunrise and after sunset.

ISOLATE your subject **AND SIMPLIFY** its surroundings

• Use a telephoto to compress a scene.

• Use wide angle lens with a large foreground subject for visual drama

• When practical, always shoot a horizontal and vertical version of your image

• Always strive to separate elements. In 99.9% of images, merging denigrates the image

Compose asymmetrically - basically the "rule" of thirds. Although, bulls eye composition can work at times, for example, full frame flowers. Push subjects further up into the frame.

• Think **GRAPHICALLY**: Look for strong squares, circles, rectangles, and the strongest visual pull is triangles.

Flower Photography Tips

- Look for pristine or badly decayed subjects
- Fill the frame with the subject
- ISOLATE AND SIMPLIFY your subject
- use **Helicon Focus** or **Zerene** for focus stacking
- Add diffusion for soft, more lyrical feel (Soft focus filter, Diffusion glow in PS, image overlay in camera)
- Check out the BACKS of flowers!
- For macro: use a macro lens (obviously), or telephoto with extension tubes or Canon 500D diopter.
- Consider your system's macro flash system for flowers.
- Always strive for colorful, detail-less backgrounds. The fall off of focus is greatest using telephoto lenses shooting wide open
- You have the greatest control of light on bright, sunny days, but you'll need to use a diffusion and reflector disk: Large (30" or more) to diffuse the bright light, several sizes of reflector disks to use on various sized subjects. I have 10", 20", and 32" reflectors.
- Use a **Lensbaby** with the soft focus optic
- Shop for subtle textured glass. Great for flower abstracts
- Use multiple exposures and camera swipes.
- Texture overlays works great for flowers for more original interpretations

Panoramic Photography

- You can handhold pans if the shutter speed is fast enough. Overlapping by half is a good practice.
- You can still create pans in lower light by supporting the camera on a tripod and overlapping each image by half.
- For more precision, consider a panning system. We use and recommend the **Really Right Stuff PG-02 Omni-Pivot Package.**
- Important! The wider the lens, the more overlap is needed because of the lens distortion. For example, @ 14mm, I'll overlap by 2/3.
- When the scene is close to you, you'll need to set the nodal point or both nodal points if using the Omni Pivot system
- Shoot two overlapping horizontals to extend the canvas when one image is not enough.
- For HDR stitched pans, create each HDR first, then stitch the HDR files together.
- For little planets, begin shooting by pointing the camera downwards (including the mount plate, which you will clone out later), then work in complete circles, moving the camera upwards after each 360 until there is mostly sky.

Texture Blends

• Always keep in mind to photograph your own textures to place in a textures folder. On the worst shooting day, there are textures somewhere worth recording.
• Negative space good for applying textures. White sky and bald blue skies also very good.
• Colored textures act the same as mixing colors in real life. For example, a yellow reflection and blue water results in green.
• Aside from shooting my own textures, I highly recommend **Flypaper Textures**
• I use **Totally Rad Dirty Pictures** as a quick catalogue to sample textures without constantly opening and closing texture files.

For applying multiple textures, check out Dr. Browns Texture Panel for CC2014 (an older version is available for CS6). Find it here: http://russellbrown.com/scripts.html

Plugins

NOTE: *ALWAYS* download a free trial before purchasing.

• Highly recommended
  • Skylum's Aurora HDR and Luminar
  • Topaz - Adjust, Impression
  • AlienSkin - Exposure X
  • We are awaiting the release of DXO Nik fall, 2018

ALL DISCOUNTS ARE HERE!

Special in-camera efex

• **HDR** - Aurora HDR
  • You can always tone map a single image or process to taste and add a layer of Aurora HDR at its default setting, adjusting the layer opacity.
  • There is no need to shoot constant HDR series. If one exposure has all of the highlights and shadows within the histogram, that's all you need to get your desired HDR look.

Multiple Exposure

  • Use SMALL move increments between exposures

FOR Nikon: Choose Shooting Menu > Multiple Exposure > Auto Gain ON > choose number of shots. Shoot! If you choose to hold down the shutter during the multiples, it will stop at the number you selected.

FOR Cameras that do not perform in camera multiple exposures, shoot 10 (for example) images, moving the camera slightly each time. Save into a folder for organizational purposes. Open all images in layers in PS. Adjust the opacity to the percentage of 1/ the layer #. For example layer 10 is 1/10 (10% opacity); layer 5 is 1/5 (20% opacity); layer 2 is 1/2 (50% opacity), etc. When all of the opacity changes are finished, you will see the multiple exposure image in the PS window.

Swipes - This is a single exposure technique where you move the camera (in the orientation of the subject) for a shorter exposure, up to about a second, but it will take a little practice with each new subject.

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Infrared - **Converted Camera**

- We recommend kolarivision.com (East coast) and lifepixel.com (west coast).
- We use and recommend Standard 720nm for high contrast B&W infrared and 590nm, Super Color conversion, as it allows us to shoot straight infrared, but can also create color infrared or to just add a blue sky.
- Try blending with an extremely blurred image or an image with extreme glow. Adjust the opacity to get the best of both, resulting in a strong, but detailed glow effect.

Infrared - **Singh Ray iRay filter** - 690nm
- This filter can be used on your regular (color) camera. Since the filter takes a while to gather enough infrared light leak from the sensor, exposures can be longer than normal, from a few seconds to a minute or longer.

Infrared - **Color**
- With the Super Color conversion, there is color hidden in the picture. After swapping channels in Photoshop (Google Channel Swapping) and convert to B&W, you can use Nik's Viveza, using control points and playing with the Hue slider, if it works on your computer or use selections and Color Balance to affect colors
- Here's an action to help facilitate channel swapping: http://khromagery.com.au/resources.html (be sure to read the "It is discussed further here" part)

Filters to add glow to an IR image

- Nik Color Efex Pro - Glamour Glow (opacity to taste)
- Digital Sandwich (montage) Technique - below
- Soft focus hardware filter (Singh Ray Soft Ray) or any soft focus filter.

Digital Sandwich (Montage) technique:

1. Open image (Background)
2. Duplicate background layer (Background copy)
3. Click Image (Background copy)
4. Select Image>Apply Image and set blending mode to Screen>Click OK
5. Make duplicate layer of Background copy
6. Change blending mode of third layer to Multiply.
7. Click Filter => Blur => Gaussian Blur and move the radius slider to taste

How to extend the canvas to fix something that has been inadvertently cut off at the edge of the frame:

1. extend the canvas on the petal (or whatever has been cut off)
    1. open canvas size (Image/canvas size or PC: Ctrl +alt+C or Mac: Cmd+C)
    2. Menu: choose percentage to increase canvas on side where subject was cut off/
        1. ...try 5-10%, adjust to the amount of canvas needed/
        2. check "relative"/on Anchor click on opposite side you want to extend /
        3. a blank area will show on the side to be extended) on "canvas extension color choose "white."
    3. select the extended area
        1. brush magic wand across extended area
        2. expand selected area (marching ants): Select/Modify/Expand 1-2 pixels (a slight overlap is needed to avoid a seam)
    4. edit/fill/content aware fill/okay

This tool is can be very powerful. It can either bring you very close with just a bit of tweaking to correct edges or not seem to work. However, if it doesn't seem to be working as hoped, you can
1. start over. It remembers what you didn't like and tries again.
2. increase or decrease the expansion of the canvas

3 Cool moves to add POP to your images done at the end of the image process:

• Jeff Schuwe's "pop" - in Photoshop, Unsharp Mask- Amount-20%, Radius-50%, Threshold-0%

• Unsharp Mask - percent - 75%, radius - 2, threshold - 0
(just a jumping off point)

iPhone Apps I use   *** = must have apps

Cameras - primary camera - ··· <u>645Pro</u> - high end camera app that can save tiffs

> <u>Hipstamatic</u> - cool square format. Great for grab shots.
>
> ···<u>**Camera +**</u> - Can control exposure and where to focus, also edit image using
>
> > the **Clarity filter**
>
> Clear Cam - hi res captures. Takes up to 3 images, saving the sharpest
>
> <u>Classic Pan</u> - shoots in panoramic format
>
> <u>Average Camera Pro</u> - for multiple exposures
>
> ···<u>**Slow Shutter**</u> - for long exposures

Processing

> ···<u>**Snapseed 2**</u> - High end image editing. **Highly recommended!**
>
> <u>Filterstorm</u> - Super adjustments, masking, etc.
>
> ···<u>**Touch Retouch**</u> - Content aware
>
> <u>Photo Wizard</u> - Very cool special effects as well as standard adjustments
>
> ···<u>**Blender**</u> - Blend two images
>
> ···<u>**AutoStitch**</u> - to create stitched panoramics
>
> <u>Camera Awesome</u> - Great textures and special effects

HDR

···**ProHDR X** - Blends 2-3 images. Best to date.

Works great using 645PRO (+2,0,-2 bracket).

Simply HDR - Single Image HDR

True HDR - 2 image HDR

Vivid HDR - 3 image HDR

···**Bracket Mode** - Shoots a 2 image HDR and puts both images in photos folder

for later processing.

Grunge

···**DistressedFX** - smaller but certainly usable file size

···**Mextures** - great presets and guest artist presets

···**Stackables** - Great presets and textures. Highly recommended!

Scratch Cam - Grunge textures and frames

Modern Grunge - Grunge textures and frames

Super Retro - Old photo looks

Artistic

···**Glaze** - Cool painterly effect.

Painteresque - Good as a stand alone or blended image

TangledFX - Fun and different

Jazz - outstanding presets to blend.

PhotoStudio - many textures and masking

PhotoCopier - Artist's styles in various mediums

Color Splash - Hand coloring

B&W

···**Simply B&W** - Excellent B&W

Light Effects

Rays - Add "god" rays

Lens Light - Add various types of natural light effects

Dynamic Light - Used mostly for digital Orton

···**Reflect - adds several reflected surfaces to the bottom of the image**

···**Alien Sky - Adds moon, stars, milky way, planets, etc.**

Utilities

···**PhotoSize** - Check file size. Helpful to check to see if an app downsizes

···**TransferApp** - Wirelessly move hi-res images betwen iPad, iPhone, Computer

···**NDExposure** - Used in the field to quickly calculate very long exposures.

···**Frontview** - Correct key-stoning

···**A+ Signature** - add a digital signature to your image

Jixipix Apps

··· **ArtistaOil -** painterly texture

···**Aquarella** - oil painting effect

Moku Hanga - wild textures!

Snow Daze - add snow

Portrait - smooths image out

Romantic - soft focus

···**Vintage -** add a vintage look

Rainy Daze - add rain

NIR Color - various infrared looks

···**Simply HDR -** Excellent for flat images

···**DramaticB&W -** Excellent BW

···**Haiku -** Great for blending with the original

Sketch - pencil sketch look

Grungeatastic - Many different and unique grunge options

As with your regular photography, think in terms of blending two versions of your image in Blender, adjusting opacity and choosing blend modes.

Have fun and let me know if anything is unclear!

Tony Sweet

http://tonysweet.com

please visit my blog: http://tonysweet.com/blog