

FOCUS

SCHENECTADY PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY NEWS

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Number 2

Print Night Presents “Lake George – By the Pixels”

Robert Near

Photo © Carl Heilman



Join Adirondack photographer Carl Heilman II for a digital multi-image presentation on Lake George featuring some of his most

recent work that has been done with a digital SLR. Carl is presently photographing for a

Please see Heilman page 6

November slide night presents Reggae photos

Jeff Plant

Photo © Jahvitz Avital Blanton

This summer, as I entered the McGreevy Prolab, my eye was taken by a particularly colorful and dramatic exhibition of portraits

of Reggae performers. I immediately determined this would be a great program for slide night.



The maker, Jahvitz Avital Blanton of Saratoga Springs, graciously agreed to present a talk on his work on slide night, Wednesday, November 14th.

Mr. Blanton is a serious student of Reggae and the Rastafarian culture underlying that great body of music. He has p h o t o g r a p h e d

Please see Blanton page 6

Constructing a Photo Essay

N. Sukumar

Welcome to the world of the Photo Essay. Putting together a photo essay is more of an art than a craft. This article will deal primarily with the aesthetics of constructing a projected photo essay. There are several issues to consider: the idea, the chronology or story line, the images, the audio (narrative or music) and the synergistic integration of all components.

The Idea: Any photo essay begins with an idea. Give some thought to the idea before you begin, because the story is organized around this idea, which serves to tie the photo essay together. A travelogue is perhaps the most obvious choice of format, giving rise to a very natural story line. But there are several other kinds of themes that lend themselves to a photo essay. Any cohesive body of photographic work can form the basis for a viable photo essay. This can be organized around a place, a person, family, community or culture, or an object or emotion that you explore in depth through the photographic medium. Photo Essay themes used with success in SPS in past years have included Afghanistan, Vietnam, Sicilian vacation, gargoyles, abstracts, Sand Hill Migration, Ukrainian Easter Eggs, the life of a farm, a telephone booth, ... As you can see, the possibilities are limited only by your imagination.

The story line: The story line is perhaps the most important component of your photo essay. A photo essay has to be more than just a random collection of images, no matter how good. Any image that does not contribute to your intended story line has no place in your photo essay. It may be painful to eliminate your favorite images, but be merciless in weeding out anything that does not help tell the story you want to tell. Your photo essay should have a natural beginning, a logical sequence and a natural end. Again this is easy to see in a chronological story like a travelogue that follows a sequential timeline. You may have to work harder to determine a logical sequence with a different kind of photo essay, but it is time well spent. I like to look upon


a photo essay as a musical *raga* or a set of variations on a core theme. One begins by outlining the broad outlines of the theme, followed by a more in-depth exposition and variations thereof, from simple to complex, concluding by returning to the fundamental theme of your photo essay. The point of this is that, even without a title slide, the theme of your photo essay should become obvious in the first few slides, should be developed and elaborated in what follows and re-emphasized at the end (without repetition). Look for common elements and group similar images together to form a progression. Developing a progression from simple images to complex is one way to build up a formal sequence in the absence of a chronological timeline. Often there may be multiple alternate sequences that seem equally logical or natural. In such a case, aesthetic considerations can help you decide upon a particular progression. If you're telling the story of a person or an event, again the historical timeline can be used to organize your story line. Many natural (and human) ecosystems have a natural life cycle that can be utilized to tell a story. Also bear in mind that you do not want to tire your audience by showing every last detail. Less is often more; so concentrate on images with maximum impact and assess the appropriate length of the essay to convey the story.

The images: While images are the essence of any photographic work, the important caveat with respect to a photo essay is that the images used here do not need to stand on their own. Assess the impact of images used in a photo essay in the context of the overall story being told. Every image used in a photo essay must complement the others and advance the story line. However all the other usual considerations employed to judge an image still apply — technical quality, composition, *etc.* Resist the temptation to leave in a sub-standard or defective image just because it promotes the story line. Even one or two badly exposed, badly composed or poorly focused images can kill a photo essay in the eyes of a judge or a discerning viewer.

The Music: Devote some thought to the selection of appropriate music or sound track to accompany your images. Don't be lazy — avoid using generic music that has no relationship to the theme of the photo essay. The mood of the music should match that of the photo essay; otherwise you have a nasty clash that will detract from the impact of your essay, for instance peaceful pastoral scenes accompanied by heart-throbbing heavy metal percussion. If your essay deals with a foreign land or culture, do a bit of research and collect some ethnic music to go with it. The same holds true closer to home — local mountain music to accompany your Adirondack images is an excellent choice. Spoken narrative is often used to accompany a teaching presentation, a travelogue or a historical or biographical

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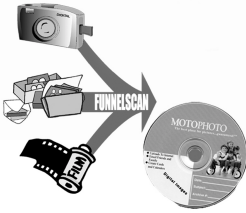


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essay, but is less than ideal for an artistic photo essay. But remember that in a photo essay, you are not being judged on the music, although your selection of music and the synergy it creates will certainly influence the viewers and judges. And please acknowledge your co-creators, get their permission and be mindful of copyright issues, especially if you plan to use your photo essay commercially. Just as you wouldn't want someone ripping off your images, there should be no excuse for ripping off a musical artist.

The integration: Integration is, of course, the key to the success of a photo essay. This includes integration of individual images with each other and into a narrative, integration of the music with the images, the mood of each, the beat and tempo with the transitions. Avoid any unintended disharmony like the plague. Try to minimize the number of back-and forth transitions between vertical and horizontal images, although it is generally impossible to eliminate such transitions entirely. Match the beat of your music to the tempo of your transitions and optimize the length of your transitions — if the music has a progression from a slow beat to a fast one, you should organize your images and transitions accordingly. In a traditional dissolve, the new image “fades in” while the old one fades out. This has the pleasing effect of eliminating abrupt jarring transitions. A “fade to black” can still be used with great effect (as in *The Sopranos* final episode) if you want to introduce a deliberate break between different movements. But the traditional dissolve means that there is a finite length of time during which two adjacent images are projected onto the screen together — this often produces a totally new image. If the two adjacent images interact constructively, you have great synergy! But if they clash severely, you have “destructive interference” which detracts from the impact of both, especially if the transition is too slow. This is yet another reason why you need to be mindful how you order your images. Optimize the transition speed to get around this or try using a different kind of transition if two images that must be shown one after the other produce a “destructive interference” with a traditional dissolve. By all means, experiment and make creative use of some of the rich variety of digital transitions available in most modern software in place of the traditional dissolve, but please, *please* don't go overboard with them! I can't tell you how common (and tiresome!) this is among those trying out new software. Two or three different kinds of transitions, varied in the course of the photo essay, normally provide adequate variety. If your audience is waiting with bated breath to see what is going to be your next cool digital transition, it means they aren't paying attention to your images! Is that what you want? Most judges have seen these digital transitions and will not be bowled over by them, but they will be impressed by great images and by a great

story unless you manage to distract them away from your photo essay.

Last but not least, have fun. A photo essay is a great way to indulge yourself creatively, to go beyond the confines of the rectangular frame and the two-dimensional visual medium, to tell a story that perhaps only you can tell. If you approach it with a spirit of adventure and excitement, it can be a great transformational experience. In the process, you may even learn a little more about yourself.

How To Remove A Color Cast Using Filter/Blur/Average

John Saville

1. Open the image to be corrected. Make two duplicate copies (number 1 & 2) by clicking on **Image / Duplicate** twice then close the original.
2. Click on **Filter/Blur/Average**. This will cause the selected image (number 2) to go to a solid average color.
3. Select the **non-averaged** image and position the **averaged image** so you can see at least ½ inch of it.
4. Make a **Levels Adjustment Layer** by clicking on the **half-black-half-white circle** at the bottom of the **Layers Palette** then select **Levels**.
5. Click on the **Midtone Eyedropper** (center one) in the levels dialog box and then click on the averaged image. Instantly you will see the non-averaged image be corrected.
6. **Close** the Levels dialog box and the averaged image then flatten the corrected image using **Layer/Merge Layers** or **Layer/Flatten**. Save the corrected image.
7. If this process didn't properly correct your image, try another method – there are several other methods available in Photoshop.

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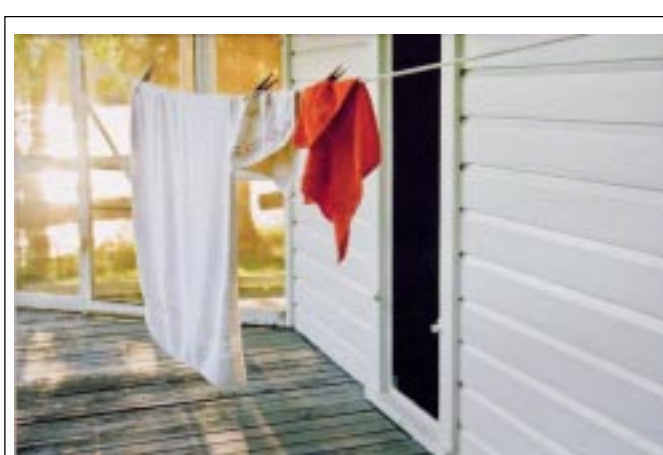
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October Competition Winners



Clockwise from upper left: 1st place digital projection general category, *Cube Faces* by Ken Deitcher
1st place monochrome print *Cold Steel* by Frank Bumardatore
1st place color print *Monday Morning* by Jane Riley
1st place digital projection assigned category *Peering through a Parted Fence* by Tracy Rudin
1st place assigned print *Bike* by Connie Bush



October Competition Results

Prints

Color 32 Entries

* Jane Riley	Monday Morning	1
Robert Near	Industrial Creature	2
Bernie Herman	Swamp Trees	3
Jane Riley	A Special Occasion	4
John Saville	Too Nice to Use	5
Robert Near	Beginning of the Day	HM
Bernie Herman	Herb	HM
David Jeffery	White Barn	HM
Sue Gersten	Spider	HM
Kevin Sarsfield	Into His Own Thoughts	HM

Monochrome 22 Entries

** F. Bumbardatore	Cold Steel	1
David Jeffery	Lone Pine	2
Faustin Baron	Graduation Party	3
J. Levasalmi	The Eyes of Age	4
Christine Ostling	Nova Scotia Beach	HM

Assigned Transportation 25 entries

*** Connie Bush	Bike	1
David Jeffery	13 Bouys	2
Linda Buckman	Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star	3
Luba Ricket	Gondola	4
John Sullivan	Classic Launch	HM

Judge Janet Riker

Program Craig Barber / Pin Hole Camera photos in Viet Nam

Winner's Notes:

*Jane took this winner with a Nikon D200 and a Nikon 18-200 lens. It was taken at the SPS women's retreat last year at Wiawaka on Lake George. She just saw the clothes on the line, the bright morning sun and loved the scene and all the textures. She worked to bring them out in Photoshop CS3 with blend modes.

**Frank took this with a Canon 10 D, Lens - Canon 100 - 300mm USM, Digital - ASA set to 100. Camera was wedged in a tree, shot taken from about 1/4 mile away, very little if any crop. Converted to B & W in Photoshop 7 - Printed on an Epson 2400 E-Matte paper. Frank writes: "I thought I would miss the lack of drama in the sky but this is a shot of a defunct steel mill in Beth. Penn. After printing it I felt the stark sky fed into the emotion I was trying to evoke and I was happy with the resulting effect."

***Connie shot this photo on the morning of Sept.1, in the backstretch of Saratoga Racecourse. She used a Pentax K10D digital SLR and a 50-200mm lens set at 70 mm and used aperture priority. The photo was processed in photoshop using the filters smart blur and watercolor.

Digital Projection

General 25 Entries

* Ken Deitcher	Face Cubes	1
Ken Deitcher	Pit Stop	2
Bill Lanahan	Sail Again Tomorrow	3
J. Levasalmi	Happy Feet	4
Robert Near	Basin Falls	5
Kevin Sarsfield	Grazing On the Green	HM

Assigned Agriculture 7 Entries

** Tracy Rudin	Peering Through A Parted Fence	1
H. Johannessen	Radishes	2
Colleen Magai	Fall Flower	3

Judge: Luanne Ferris

Program: Jeff Plant / Taking on a Photographic Project

Winner's Notes:

*This is a composite of 13 different images. The background is a fractal created with Kai's Power Tools in Photoshop. The other images were taken with a Canon A2E film camera and scanned into my computer. They were combined in Photoshop CS3 using the vanishing point filter, layers and blend modes. The entire process took about a week to complete.

**Tracy writes that this photo was taken with a Canon PowerShot A540 set on F stop: f/4.0 and Shutter speed 1/800 second. It was taken in Antigua, Guatemala. "The volcano peak all the way on the left was having a small eruption and I drove closer to see the eruption. (If you look closely at the peak all the way on the left you can see a small amount of smoke from this eruption). The eruption could be seen from within the city of Antigua itself, but I found a much more interesting picture by driving away from the city to a less touristy area. Though the volcano eruption had dissipated by then I found a much more interesting picture."



**Schenectady Photographic Society
is a member of the
Photographic Society of America**

Welcome New Members

Pat Connell
Brian Ginett
Mike Kane
Pat McCormick
Jill Paolucci
Saul Seinberg

Skyler Florence
David Jeffery
Bernie Mattus
Bruce Oudekerk
Tracy Rudin
Dick Weber

Heilman

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book on Lake George to be published in spring of 2009. He finally invested in a digital camera this past spring - a Nikon D200 - and since then has recorded almost 20,000 image with it (includes brackets of 3 exposures for most images, of course...).

In addition to the presentation, Carl will also review various digital images he has shot - from aerial and astrophotography to fireworks, re-enactments, wildlife, and balloon rides. He will also touch on digital workflow, advantages of RAW files over film, and show some special effects like multiple exposure and time lapse photography done with an interval timer and Adobe Premiere.

Carl has been photographing the wilderness landscape since 1975, working to capture on film both the grandeur of these special places, and the emotional and spiritual connection he has felt as well. His passion for spending as much time as possible in some of the wildest regions of the Adirondacks, soon became a lifelong quest to create images that record the essence of a true wilderness experience, and help convey that feeling to others. Today he is a full time professional outdoor nature photographer who has just recently moved into the digital SLR world for his latest project.

Whenever I think of Adirondack photography, one photographer always comes to my mind; this is Carl Heilman II. Several of his photographs have been reproduced as large wall murals in the exhibit, The Peopled Wilderness, in the Map Room of the Main Building at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake. His murals have also been in various exhibits and displays including the NYS Museum, the Northway High Peaks Information Centers, the Adirondack Park Visitors' Interpretive Centers, and James Madison's Montpelier home exhibition on the Lewis and Clark Centennial. A gallery exhibition of Carl's Lake George photos and a 4 feet by 40 feet mural of Lake George can be viewed at the Lake George Forum. Along

with Carl's photography he is an avid hiker and paddler of the Adirondacks and his love for these majestic mountains clearly shows through in his photography. Please join use for what is sure to be a wonderful presentation on November 7th at 7:30pm.

Blanton

continued from page 1

performers at major Reggae festivals in California, and frequents Reggae venues in New York City and the Northeast.

Mr. Blanton has also made several trips to Jamaica, the birthplace of Reggae. He has shot performers on the red carpet at the international Reggae and world music festivals at the famous Apollo Theatre in Harlem.

His work is exciting and marked by an extraordinary use of vivid color, as well as being a fascinating visual treat. Mr. Blanton's presentation should be instructive to members interested in photographing the numerous performance venues in our area.

Reminder for the slide group

November's competition is limited to "classic" slides created on film. For the slide competitions only, members may enter up to two slides in general and two slides in the assigned category. You cannot enter three in one category and one in the other.

We encourage members to compete, and to demonstrate that "real" slides can still hold their own with other media. Jeff Plant, slide chair.

Only paid members will receive *Focus*

Anyone who has not paid their dues by the end of October will not receive further copies of the *Focus*.

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News You Can Use



Happy Thanksgiving



Many SPS members had photos selected for hanging in the members only show at the Nick Argyros' Photo Center in Troy. Pictures at left are a few of them.

First Row: Juha-Matti Levasalmi, Luba Ricket, Judy Breslau.

Standing: Theresa Swidorski, Harvey Gurien, Max Tiller, Dale Winsor, Ruby Gold, Barb Lawton and Jim Craner.

Ken Deitcher wins awards

Ken Deitcher received a PSA Medal for first place in the 2006 Published Picture of The Year. The image was 'RUGBY' which won first place in *Pop Photo's* yearly contest in 2006.

And he had a photograph selected for a new book *Photographs That Inspire*.

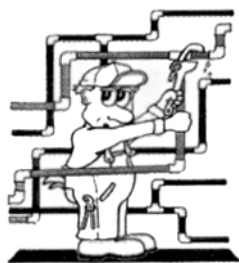
C.A.M.E.R.A.

The bi-annual show of C.A.M.E.R.A. will be held on Sunday, November 4 at the Albany Clarion Inn. General admission from 10 am to 3 pm is \$5.00. Early admission/preview from 8 am is \$20.00

SPS Traveling Exhibit at Guilderland Public Library in December

The Traveling Exhibit composed of work by 33 members of the SPS will hang in the Guilderland Public Library for the month of December. We will install the exhibit on Friday, November 30, starting about 4PM. All members are encouraged to participate in hanging the prints. We will go out for dinner when we finish.

Members who do not have work in the exhibit and would like to join the group, please contact Ray Henrikson (439-4308, rlenriks@nycap.rr.com). The Society will supply mats and frames.



Frank Bumbardatore

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Schenectady Photographic Society
Linda Buckman
3749 St. Highway 30A
Fultonville, New York 12072

Web Page Address

www.schenectadyp photographic society.com

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November Calendar

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Wed., November 7 | Print group: Multi media presentation of Lake George / Carl Heilman
Assigned: Unusual angle |
| Wed., November 14 | Slide group: Reggae performers photography / Jahvtz Avital Blanton
Assigned: Rain, fog, or mist. Must be taken on slide film and presented as slides |
| Wed., November 21 | No meeting. Happy Thanksgiving |
| Wed., November 28* | Mentoring group: Lenses, perspective, camera and how to enhance your photography / Frank Bumbardatore |



Meetings are at 7:30 pm

*Board meetings are at 6:30 pm

The *Focus* is published nine times a year by the Schenectady Photographic Society. The organization meets each Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. from October through May to promote and present informative programs, activities and competitions in the photographic arts for photographers throughout the Capital District. Members range from novice to expert. Annual dues are \$40.00 for individuals and families. The *Focus* newsletter is included in the membership dues. SPS meets at the First United Methodist Church, 603 State Street, Schenectady, New York. Parking and entrances are on Chapel Street, a one way street off Nott Terrace. Guests are welcome at all regular meetings.