

FOCUS

SCHENECTADY PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY NEWS

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Adobe magazine called George Gruel the Realist

A background in traditional art also informs the work of landscape lighting renderer George Gruel [www.oddstick.com]. But in his industry, realism is king. "We can't sell clients something that won't work," says Gruel. "I can make a front walkway look beautiful in Photoshop, but if it can't realistically



©George Gruel

be lit that way, then no one's happy."

Staying true to this goal of visual accuracy requires a keen understanding of the distinct effects

of light on objects. And plants. "It's all about subtleties. It's about understanding how light filters through a Magnolia with brown on the back of its leaves." Such details can't be rendered accurately in 3D CAD, the tool of choice for many in the landscape lighting industry. "CAD just looks fake," says Gruel, who uses Adobe Photoshop to create ultra-realistic night-time lighting mock-ups from ordinary daytime photos.

"Sometimes, to get it right, I'll have more than 100 layers," says Gruel. "I'll have to add shadows that weren't in the original image, or change shadows that were side-lit in daytime to show what they're going to look like when they're down-lit at night," says Gruel. "The



©George Gruel

creativity of my work is in nuances like these. I paint with light."

For more info please go to: <http://www.oddstick.com/pages/rendering.html>



©George Gruel

In Memorial: Dr. Jeff Altman

By Nick Argyros



Jeff Altman ©Jeff Perkins

Dr. Jeff Altman, generous and long-time supporter of The Photography Center, passed away Monday November 5 after a long bout with cancer. We are much saddened to lose such a kind, endearing and caring person, and such an excellent photographer. Jeff's recent images have garnered much acclaim and recognition, including the 2012 Print of the Year from the Schenectady Photographic Society, 2011 Photo Regional at Albany Center Gallery, and the 2012 People's Choice Award at the PhotoCenter. His portrait of Lady Ostapeck will remain on permanent exhibition at the PhotoCenter. His image "Church in Lucca, Italy" is currently on display in the Members Show at the PhotoCenter.

The photograph attached was made in December 2011 during our visit to the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute's exhibit of Ansel



Church in Lucca ©Jeff Altman SPS 2011-2012 Print of the Year

Adams works. The image is whimsically titled *Dr. Jeff*

missed. Funeral arrangements will be posted in the Wednesday Times-Union. Our condolences to his wife Karen McCann and loving family.



"what's it all about" Altman.

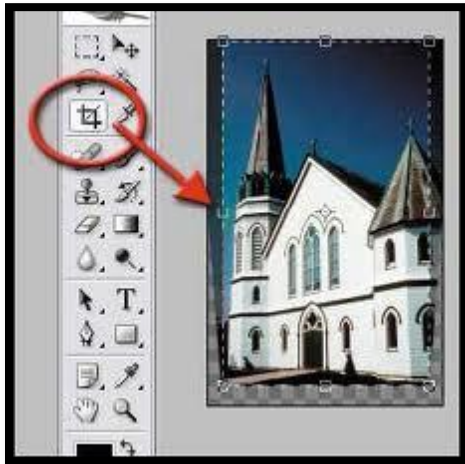
His subtle wit, impish smile, and companionship will be sorely

***"Let's each say a prayer for him and his family. He was a very special human being and we will miss him immensely."
Jeff Perkins***

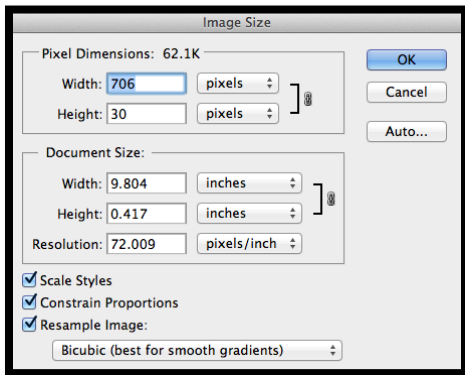
Little Known Features of the Photoshop Crop Tool

By Jim Craner

Like most tools in Photoshop, the Crop Tool has some little known features and functions that can save time, add flexibility, and improve results. This short-talk will focus on three of the more useful of these features.

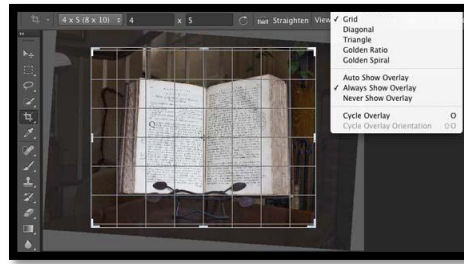


- Hiding rather than deleting the 'cropped-out' pixels
- Cropping to a specific size and resolution, and
- Fixing perspective problems during the crop.



The demonstration will be done using Photoshop CS4; however these three particular functions have been a part of the Crop Tool since the early days, and have been retained, and

even improved in versions CS5 and CS6. References will be made to Photoshop Elements as appropriate to the topic.



The talk will also include some related issues such as setting the default image resolution in Photoshop 'Preferences', Using the Photoshop 'Transform' tool to alter image perspective, and the benefits of changing the 'Background' layer to a conventional image layer.

Finally, time permitting; I want to spend a few minutes talking about the history of the aspect ratio of DSLR images and the effect of that ratio on final image sizes. I find that too often photographers frame images in the camera much too tightly, and then run into problems when a customer requests a 'standard' enlargement size – 8x10 for example.

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Basic Photography and Imaginative Thought

By Ken Deitcher M.D.

Observing experienced photographers and their work enable a novice photographer to add ideas, techniques and ways to improve the vision he or her has in creating images that are



©Ken Deitcher Chameleon, In camera double exposure

unique to one's thinking.

I plan to demonstrate images taken pre-digital and post-digital and their effects on my vision and future images. When I began to photograph my main interests, nature photography generally and reptiles and insects specifically over 70 years ago I wanted to show these interesting and sometime elusive creatures to my friends and to enter



©Ken Deitcher

nature competitions and to write about my experiences.

I have traveled extensively to isolated areas where these animals lived, such as The Amazon basin, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador. I even created a small zoo in my home and office to rear and photograph these 'creatures'.

The use of a home wet darkroom enabled me to print my images the way I saw them. Digital photography gave me another medium to express my interest in different ways.

“Surrealism is destructive, but it destroys only what it considers to be shackles limiting our vision.” - Salvador Dali



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Joby Gorillapod Focus w/ Ballhead

By Keith Patankar
Hunts Photo & Video

Sometimes you want a tool that is versatile and flexible. Especially when traveling, photographers are always looking for to lighten their load. Instead of carrying a full tripod that is heavy and bulky the Joby Gorillapod Focus just may be the perfect tool to take with you. But don't expect the Gorillapod to replace your tripod. Instead it is a flexible support system that can be used for support in certain situations. Unlike a straight table top tripod the Gorillapod allows you to bend the legs in different angles. This allows you to place your Gorillapod on uneven surfaces. You can place it on a rocky hillside, wrap it around a tree branch or railing, or just lay it flat on the ground.

The Joby Gorillapod Focus supports up to 11lbs; which is sturdy enough to hold a DSLR with zoom lens. The Gorillapod measures under fifteen inches and weighs just over a pound and a half with the heavy duty Ballhead X attached. The unique difference between the Gorillapod and a traditional tripod or table stand are the ball joint legs that are chained together and allow you to twist and turn each individual leg in any direction you desire. I was able to take this out and attach it to a railing, wrap it around a steady tree branch and position it on a rocky surface. The Ballhead X is very strong and is easily adjustable. It has a quick release plate with a standard 1/4" thread to mount to the base of your camera.


The bottom of each leg is equipped with rubberized seals that prevent the Gorillapod from sliding on smooth surfaces. It would be nice to see retractable spikes in future models to anchor into loose gravel surfaces. Overall the design and finish of the Gorillapod Focus is



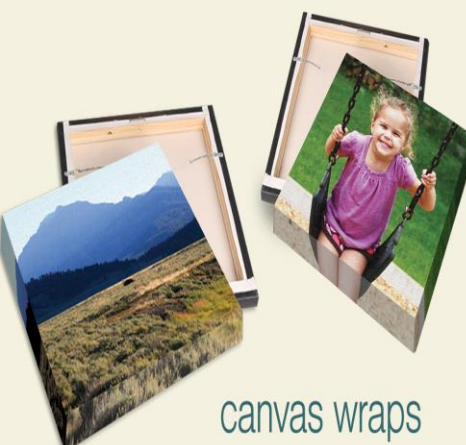
solid and does not feel like it will easily break.

So if your off on a hike or taking a trip that your will not need a full tripod the Gorillapod Focus with Ballhead X should be considered as a travel companion. It can't and won't replace your full size tripod, but adds another alternative in support when you need it in a pinch. I have focused on the larger of the Gorillapods in this article, but there are many flavors available to every kind of photographer out there. Joby makes Gorillapods for smaller cameras from point and shoots to smaller mirrorless cameras and even has options for your iphone. They have Gorillapods with magnetic feet to snap onto magnetic surfaces. With all these choices you have support for any device to choose to capture your world.

Keith Patankar works in outside sales, marketing and specialty market at Hunts Photo & Video in Melrose MA. Please feel free to contact Keith directly at 781.462.2340 with any related questions.




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SPS members Ron Ginsburg, Robert Coppola, Julie Palyswiat and Jeff Perkins at the Victorian Stroll in Troy.

Members Exhibit

SPS member Sue Gersten will be having an exhibit of her dance photographs. Her images will be on exhibit for the months of December and January at the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center in Houston Texas. This is a solo exhibit of over forty images. Many of the photographs can be found on her website WWW.suegersten.com.

“Hardening of the categories causes art disease.” - W. Eugene Smith

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*You know you're a
photographer when.....*

*While wearing polarizing
sunglasses, you rotate your head
left and right to assess what
impact your circular polarizing
filter might have on a potential
shot (Ron Tripp)*

6 Digital Photography Tips for Christmas

by **Darren Rowse**

It's just a few days until Christmas so I thought a quick tutorial on the topic of Christmas Photography might be appropriate. Hopefully this will give you some good Christmas photo ideas.

Here are 16 Christmas Photography tips and ideas to try that come to mind for digital camera owners wanting to capture the big day:

1. Prepare – Making a List, checking it twice....

Making sure you're ready to capture any planned event is part of the key to a successful shoot. Getting yourself ready but also the location of your shots is worthwhile.

- Pack the camera – goes without saying? I forgot mine last year in the rush to get the car packed.
- Make sure your batteries are charged and you have extras and/or the recharger packed.
- Pack extra memory cards – have them empty and ready to fill up
- Put someone on 'photos' – our family has someone on drinks, main course, dessert – why not put someone on 'photos' so that in the craziness of the day they don't get forgotten.

- Consider the light in the room that you'll be photographing in. Is there enough light? Will you need a flash? Are the backgrounds too cluttered and distracting?

2. A White Balance Christmas

Here in Australia we often celebrate Christmas outdoors, but many people around the world do it inside in unnatural lighting. Pay attention to what type of light you're shooting in and set your white balance settings accordingly. Alternatively, if you've got a camera that shoots in RAW you can shoot away and set your white balance later.

3. Set up a DIY 'Photo Booth'



Photo by [gwdexter](#)

While you probably can't afford to hire a photo booth for your party you can set up a 'portrait zone' of your own where you'll take photos of your guest.

I did this a few years ago and set up a little place where I asked everyone who came to sit for me so that I could take a nice shot of them.

I photographed everyone as they came in and then left the camera (a point and shoot) set up on a tripod and set to a short self-timer time so people could photograph themselves during the rest of the party.

I set it up in a well-lit position with a red velvet curtain looking background with a few Christmassy decorations around the edges. I left a few Santa hats and tinsel for people to decorate themselves with.

The shots were great – people went back to it throughout the party and the photos got crazier and crazier as time went on. It was the hit of the party.

4. Capture the preparation stages



Photo by [paper by design](#)

The actual Christmas meal or party is obviously the best part of the day, but there are other photographic opportunities, particularly in the preparations stages of the day.

- Food preparation
- Putting up decorations
- Wrapping gifts
- Kids throwing a tantrum while getting dressed in their Christmas outfits
- Setting the table

The shots before the event starts properly are often great because they show everything at it's best before everyone descends on your party zone.

5. Before and After Shots

Speaking of shots before the party starts, why not set up some before and after shots both of the place you're holding your party and what it looks like afterwards. Make sure you take the shots from the same position.

6. Time-lapse Christmas series

I have one friend who set up his computer with a web cam in the corner of the room with the camera looking down on the Christmas table. He set the camera to go off every 5 minutes over the day and ended up with one of the most wonderful series of shots that I've seen for a long time.

7. Christmas Lights

Photographing Christmas lights is something that can be tricky to do. David Hobby from Strobist has put together a great tutorial on how to do

it. Check it out at [How to Photograph Christmas Lights](#).



Photo by rachel r

8. Find a Point of Interest – but just per shot

All good shots should have a [focal point that holds the attention of those viewing your images](#). The problem with Christmas is that there can often be too many competing focal points in shots with people, color, decorations, food in every shot. Work hard and de-cluttering your images. Check out this post on [minimalism](#) which contains some tips on de-cluttering images.

9. Fresh Group Photos

One of the most common types of shots at Christmas is the 'group photo'. It's usually taken at the end of the evening or day when everyone is looking at their worst. For a 'fresher' shot take it once everyone has arrived. Also think before hand about how you might pose everyone and where you might take the shot. I've posted [12 tips for taking a great group photo](#) previously.

10. Opening Gifts – Shoot in Continuous Mode

There are certain moments during a Christmas gathering that are filled with all manner of photographic opportunities and the opening of gifts is like no other in that it is filled with an array of emotions, facial expressions and excitement – especially if you've got kids around. [Switch your camera to burst mode](#)(sometimes called continuous shooting mode) and take lots of shots at this time of the festivities. You'll find you end up with some excellent series of shots when you do this that capture everything from the anticipation of getting the wrapped gift, through to the excitement of unwrapping to the joy (or occasionally disappointment) of seeing what's inside. Don't forget to shoot the reactions of those who GIVE the gift as well.



Photo by grace*c*

11. Fill your Frame

One of the most common mistakes I see in Christmas photos (or any party/even photography) is that people often end up with shots of

their subjects off in the distance on the other side of a room with lots of space around them. Fill your frame with your subject either by using your zoom or getting up and moving yourself closer. While this is one of the simplest tips I ever give it is one that can have the most profound impact on your shots.

12. Diffuse/Reflect Your Flash

- Another common problem with Christmas shots is ending up with shots where the flash is so bright that subjects look like rabbits in a spotlight with harsh shadows behind them. One way around this is to use some sort of a flash diffuser or reflector. If you're lucky enough to have an external flash try bouncing it off walls or the ceiling. Another way to reduce the impact of your flash and to create some interesting effects is to switch your camera into 'night mode' (slow sync mode). This will tell your camera to choose a slower shutter speed but still fire your flash. In doing so it'll capture some of the ambient light of the room as well as freeze your subject. Be warned, you can end up with some wacky shots doing this (but they can also be lots of fun).

13. Go Macro

Most digital cameras come with a macro mode and an increasing

number of DPS readers are buying macro lenses so flick to that mode, attach your lens and photograph the smaller things around your party. Ornaments on the tree, table decorations, sweets in the bowl on the table, a nativity scene on the mantle piece, holly above the doorway – sometimes it's these small things around your party that are the real 'money shots'. Don't forget our Macro Hacks for compact cameras.



Photo by Splat Worldwide

14. Watch Your Aperture

I quite often shoot in Aperture Priority mode on a day like Christmas and am constantly changing the aperture depending upon my subject. For example when taking shots of a Christmas decoration on the tree I'll select a large aperture (a small number like f/2.8) so as to throw the background out of focus, but on a shot taken from the end of the table of everyone sitting down eating I'll choose a small aperture (like f/8 to f/11 or more) so as to have a larger

depth of field and keep everyone in focus.

15. Explore Your Neighborhood

If your neighborhood is anything like mine there is an almost unlimited number of photographic opportunities presenting themselves all around you. Christmas carols services, houses covered in Christmas decorations, shopping malls filled with busyness etc. Get out there with your camera and capture it. What a wonderful time of year to practice using your camera. Have fun.

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PDN's PhotoPlus

Expo 2012

by Nancy Jones

PhotoPlus Expo is a trade show in New York City for all things photographic. Held in the Javits Center in Manhattan every fall, there are 1200 exhibit booths that would take more than the three-day show to

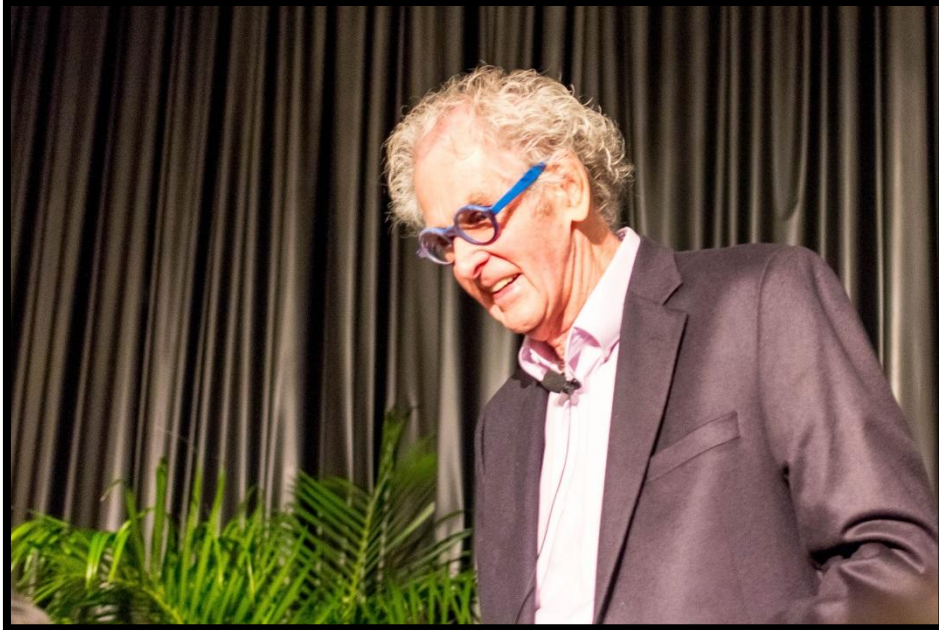
Amarillo, Texas and a humorous account of his enthusiasm for post cards: ordering 50,000 copies and failing to sell even one of them.

David LaChapelle told about his artistic origins with Andy Warhol and later experience as a magazine photographer of celebrities. He brought his life story up to date with details of his iconic "Pieta with

debut screening of the documentary followed Balog's speech.

A highlight of the Expo was another documentary film "Jerry and Maggie: This is not photography" that was also premiered at the Expo. It was produced by Lynda.com and the film makers were there to speak about it. It told the story of husband and wife Jerry Uelsmann and Maggie Taylor. The darkroom technique that Jerry uses to make his surreal images before photoshop was invented is amazing. Maggie uses digital techniques and scans her subjects rather than using a camera. After the film, Jerry and Maggie talked about the documentary and work that they are currently working on.

In addition to the Expo, the Chelsea area of Manhattan offers a variety of street photography subjects. The High Line is a couple of blocks south and is a great place to stroll and take in the architecture and people walking in this elevated city park. The area was badly damaged by Hurricane Sandy just days after the Expo.



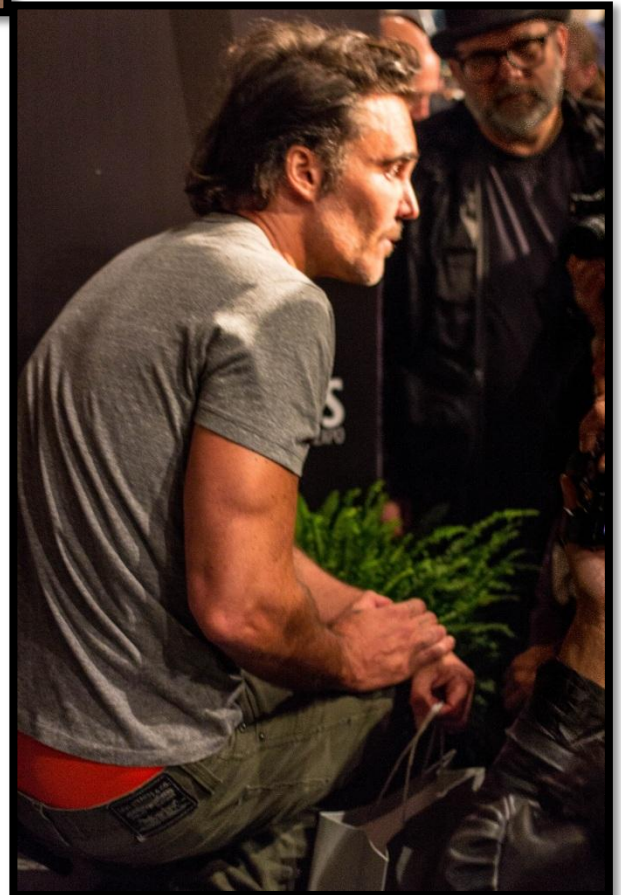
Jerry Uelsmann ©Nancy Jones

give them all a onceover. From retail stores to major manufacturers, all the big names were there. Canon, Nikon, and Sony had famous speakers with power points and fabulous photos. Some demonstrated lighting tips for fashion shoots. Nik, OnOne, and other software booths had demonstrations and answered questions. There were gizmos just invented and traditional photography products. Wedding photography was targeted by print and album vendors emphasizing products for brides to buy to memorialize the magic of the big day.

Each day at noon is a keynote speech, this year by Stephen Shore, David LaChapelle, and James Balog. These speeches were held on a lower floor of the Javits near the seminars and portfolio reviews. Stephen Shore spoke about his life in photography and the influence of Stieglitz, Walker Evans, and Jack Kerouac on his work. He showed images of

Courtney Love" with a video of its making including the filming of a fire purposely meant to destroy the set where the image was shot. His work reflects his serious religiosity combined with his brilliant and unique surrealism. He was gracious staying after the speech to informally talk to audience members.

James Balog is a National Geographic photographer who talked about making the documentary "Chasing Ice." He explained the techniques he used to prepare the cameras and to make the time-lapse images of glaciers melting and shrinking. He told of his suspicions of climate change theories prior to making this documentary and his new realization of the real, world-wide change in the nature of the earth. The world



David LaChapelle ©Nancy Jones

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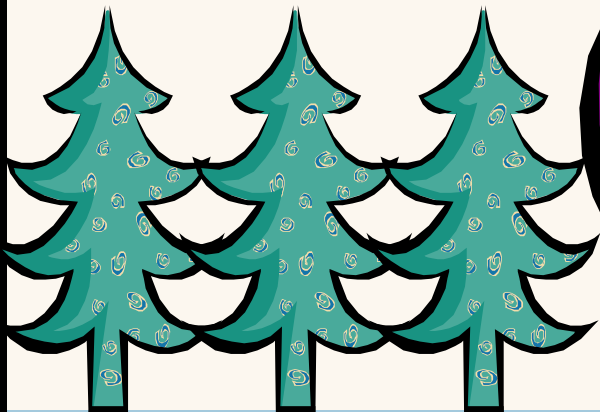
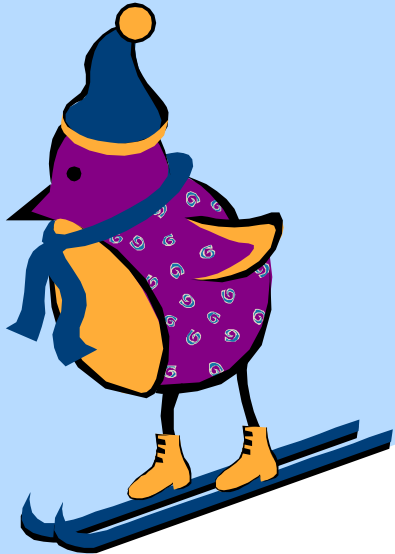
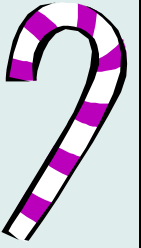
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Happy Holidays?





Mr. Bubbles
©Dave Bennett

1st Place Assigned Print
Canon 5D MIII
Canon 50 mm f1.4
1/60 f8 ISO50
Hand held
Single monolight and
Reflector
Rainex on Glass with
water drops

Happy Jack
©John Sullivan

2nd Place Assigned Print
Canon 5D mk III DSLR, Canon 24-105
f/4L lens, tripod; Settings - RAW, f/13,
1/5 sec, ISO 320; Lighting - natural
(skylight) augmented with off-camera
LED panel light; Workup - Lightroom &
Photoshop.



I Think I See a Mouse
©Barb Lawton

3rd Place Assigned Print
Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ
200 "bridge"
1/60 sec. @ 2.8, ISO 320
Photoshop CS6, liquefy
tool created smile



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Trash Talk ©Ron Ginsburg
1st Place Color Print
Canon 5D MarkII
Canon EF 24-105mm f/4L IS USM lens at 60mm
f/8.0 1/200 ISO 100
Hand held late afternoon

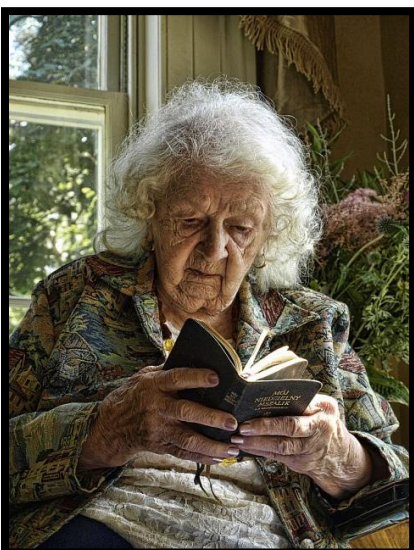
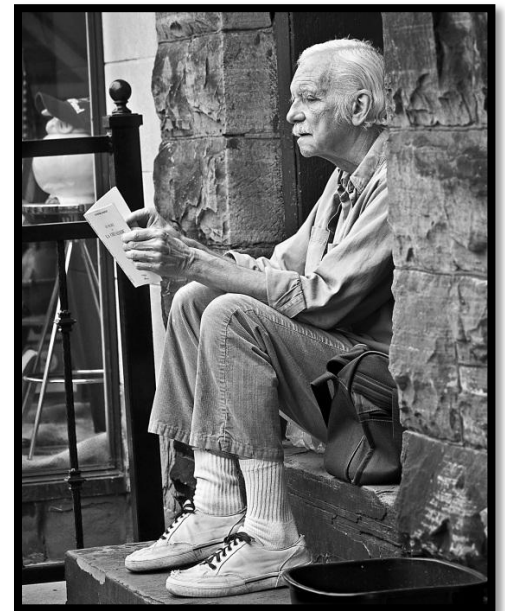


Seedballs
©Maureen Goldman
1st Place Monochrome Print



The Plaza ©Doug Mitchell
2nd Place Color Print
Canon 5D 70-200mm lens
1/500 f2.8 ISO 100
Natural light, hand held

The Dean of Lark Street
©Robert Coppola
2nd Place
Monochrome Print
LUMIX G1
84mm (1/160 f/5.6
hand held natural
light
Photoshop CS6



Marriane
©Max Tiller
3rd Place Color
Print
Olympus E510
14-24mm
1/125 f6 ISO400
Window light at
Pruyn House



Covered Bridge at Stone Mountain
©Harvey Gurien
3rd Place Monochrome Print
CanonT2i 18-55mmIS lens
1/20 f4 ISO800

Projected Image



Trio of Pears ©Julie Palyswiat
1st Place Assigned Projected
Nikon D300 Nikkor 80-200 f2.8
1/60 f5 ISO 100
1 Nikon speedlight and fill reflector
Photoshop CS6 Beta Painting filter

Delicious ©John Sullivan

2nd Place Assigned Projected

Canon 5D mk III DSLR, Canon 24-105 f/4L lens, tripod
f/13, 1/8 sec, ISO 400; Lighting - natural (skylight)
augmented with off-camera LED panel light
Lightroom & Photoshop.



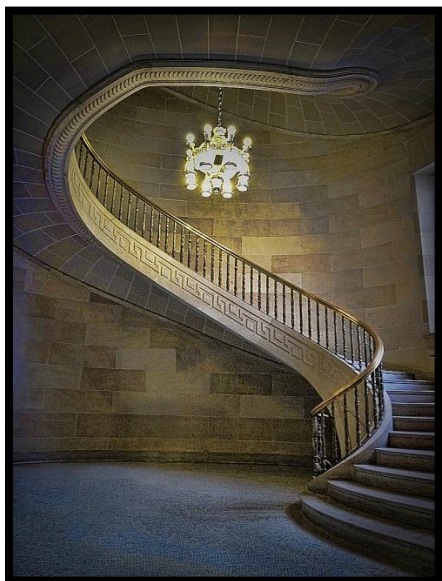
Pear Still ©Gerald Skrocki
3rd Placed Assigned Projected
Canon EOS 7D
EF 24-70mm f/2.8 L set at 66mm
ISO 200 f/18
three exposure (3/10, 1/10, 1/2 sec) bracketed
Photoshop CS6 HDR Pro



Competition

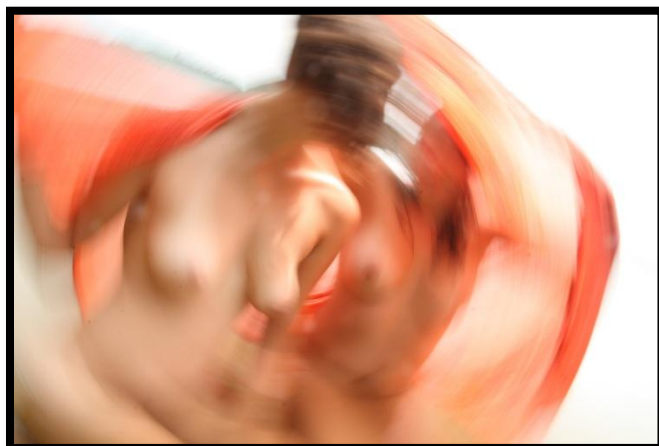


Troy Morning ©David Lilac
1st Place General Projected Image
Taken on the way to work with
Leica C-Lux
Tweaked in Topaz



Stairs © Max Tiller
2nd Place General Projected Image
Lumix ZS 5
25mm Leica Lens
1/6 f3.3 ISO400
New York State Education Building
Available and Incandescent
Shot in the pinhole scene mode and
converted to color in Topaz Adjust 4

Whirling Dervishes ©N. Sukumar
3rd Place General Assigned
Canon EOS DIGITAL REBEL XTi
Canon EF-S17-85mm f/4-5.6 IS USM lens @
17.0 mm
1/10 f/22 ISO200
Camera rotated (holding lens steady) during
timed exposure (Aperture Priority Manual
focusing).



Date	Speaker	Title
12/05/2012	Jim Craner	Little Known Features of the Crop Tool
12/11/2012	George Gruel	Turning Day into Night
12/19/2012	No meeting	Happy Holidays
12/28/2012	No meeting	Happy Holidays
01/02/2013	Ken Deitcher	Basic Photography & Imaginative Thought

December Competitions

December 5th

Print – Bicycle

Make those Bicycle Wheels Spin

November 14th

Projected Image – Rule of Odds

Simplest way to make a dynamic image, have an odd number of subjects.

January 2nd

Print Group-Motion

Show us something in motion and make us feel it



Schenectady Photographic Society
Is a proud
Member of
The Photographic Society of America

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