Camera Clips

February 2010

From the beginning
James Allan

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2010. We have made a good start to the year with a couple of 'well-attended' meetings. At a relaxed meeting in January we saw members bring in their holiday snaps. Ray and Julie took us to Tumbarumba and gave us an insight into the Pedlars garden shed project. Heather Connolly and Gary Secombe had a wonderful range of wild bird photographs. Arthur Farmer gave us an illustration of how to improve the impact by filling the frame. I showed a handful of cuttlefish pictures from Whyalla. I'm just sorry that I haven't mentioned all of the other contributors.

There were, as it turned out, more travel photos to come. At our fist competition, "less than 200 metres from your backdoor", Ursula and Theo had a range of photos from their Great Ocean Road trip   No they haven't moved to Port Campbell. These images were entered in the open section. The judge for this evening, Peter Phillips is currently president of the South Australian Photographic Federation. He invited our club to assist in hosting a state wide competition to be held later in the year. (If anyone is interested in this could they get in touch with Matt or Gary.) There were very many excellent entries, including garden birds, sunsets, koalas and clotheslines. One amusing photo had the koala and the clothes line full of jocks in the same frame. I selected two of my favourites to include in the photogallery on page 3. I congratulate Matt and Julie who have also given me some comments on these entries. We have also had a couple of new members, including Richard who not only entered for the first time, but also scored a 10 for his picture of a sharp red rose. I encourage all new members to enter the competitions. It is a fantastic way to become involved in the club. This Thursday we hope to have a workshop on matte cutting that will assist in preparing work for competition.

The club is still in possession of calendars that it would like to sell. We have dropped the price from $15.00 to $10.00. We would like your help us sell the remainder of our stock. If you have work mates, friends or relatives who would benefit from a calendar could you get in touch with me or Jenny Pedlar.

A Simple Lighting Scheme
Ray Goulter

Are there any members with a studio lighting set? If so, this is the first in a series of articles where a lighting set-up is shown along with a resulting image.

Don't think that you must have a studio lighting set to achieve the desired result. You too can achieve good results with an off-camera flash unit. You **can't** use your camera's in-built flash without some major camera modifications.

Taking a portrait at close range with the camera's in-built flash will usually result in lighting that is uninterestingly "flat" because it doesn't provide a good 3-dimensional effect. Moving the flash unit to the side of the model gives a far more pleasing 3-dimensional effect. This, unfortunately, can also give harsh shadows. This can still be very effective, especially for monochrome images. Mostly, though, we will want some detail in the shadow areas.

Figure 1 Soft side lighting and reflector

The scheme illustrated shows the camera's setting as f8 for 100 ISO. It might seem unusual that no shutter speed is indicated, however the exposure is dictated by the speed of the flash - usually about 1/3000 sec.

Set your flash unit 1.15m from the subject, slightly in front, and use a reflector to diffuse the light. A flash umbrella is shown in the scheme but you can use any highly reflective material. Introduce fill light for the shadow area with a Polystyrene / Styrofoam sheet placed to the left of your subject such that it
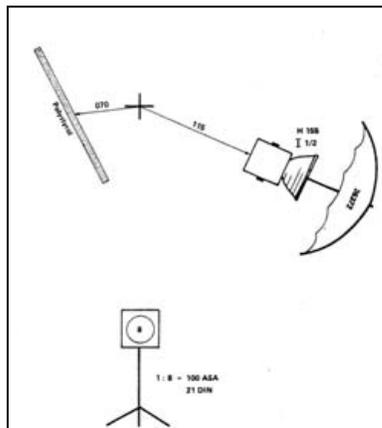
Contacting a member from the club; This month Mark & Jenny
Pedlar :mnjpedlar@biqpond.com

Image 1 Image taken with soft side lighting and reflector as in figure 1

Question: I was taking photos inside and had set my camera white balance for incandescent lights. The next day in the garden I took this photo in full sun. It wasn't until later that I realised I still had the white balance setting from the previous evening. Can I correct the colour of my picture in photoshop?

Answer: You have created a colour cast by using the wrong white balance settings. A colour cast is a tint of a particular colour, usually unwanted, which affects the whole of a photographic image evenly. Just imagine that you were looking at a picture covered in coloured cellophane. In this case the cellophane appears to have a blue colour. The human eye does not notice the unnatural colour at the time the picture is taken, because our eyes and brains adjust and compensate for different types of light. However when viewing the picture in a different environment we become painfully aware that the colour is wrong.

Ideally it is best to get it right in the camera, by selecting the correct white balance when you take the photo.

Photoshop however has several powerful tools for correcting a colour cast. If there is an area in the picture that should be black, white or grey this is a simple task using the **eye dropper tool**. (found in the levels or curves dialog box) By placing and clicking the grey eye dropper tool over say a cement driveway, or a rock or a cloud that should be grey, photoshop will be able to work out what colour "cellophane" is marring the image. It will adjust every pixel of the picture by the same amount to magically remove the colour cast and reveal the full colour range of the picture.

However what do you do if there are no convenient rocks or cement paths, as in this image? I tried clicking on black and white highlights with the respective eye dropper tools. However I was not happy with the result. The picture did not magically correct itself. The highlights seemed to be around the correct colour. It was the mid tones that were the problem.

The next tool I used was **"colour balance".** I knew that incandescent lights were orange and that my picture was blue. Therefore I reasoned that I need more orange and less blue. By moving the sliders in the appropriate direction and a bit of trial and error I was able to get a picture that looked more or less accurate. Another tool is **"variations".** Here you get to chose from a range of possible manipulations. This is a useful place to go if you are not sure which way to manipulate the colours.

An alternative approach is to adjust the red, green and blue channels separately in **"curves".** Although this sounds awfully complicated, I found it more powerful than "colour balance" and achieved a pleasing result more easily. I selected the blue channel and then, grasping the curve at the midpoint, dragged it down and to the right to reduce this colour. I did the same in green but to a lesser extent, and boosted the red by moving it in the opposite direction (up and left). Now I have a picture that looks correct.

Having learnt this lesson it is worth looking more critically at the colour of your photographs. A little correction can vastly improve the colour range and impact of your images. However it is worth remembering that not all casts are bad. Sometimes a cast can create a mood in a picture. After all, many photographers use coloured filters to achieve interesting results.
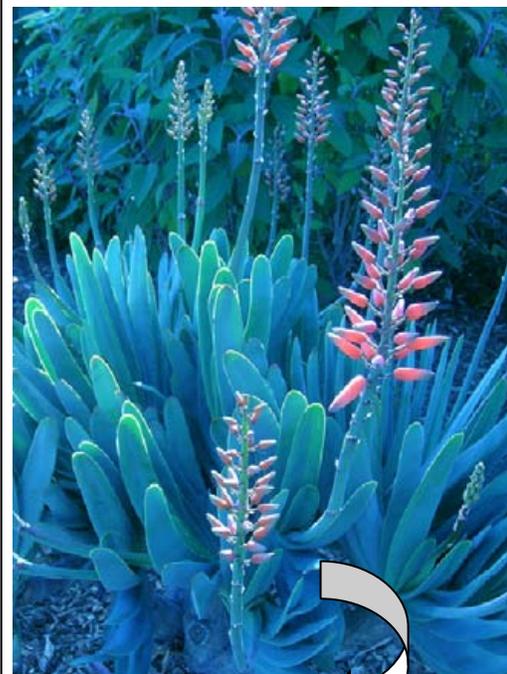
Studio Lighting Crossword   James Allan

In the margin you will find the answers to the studio lighting Crossword from the last newsletter. I will use this opportunity to go over the meaning of these terms.

Any device that alters the way a light emits from it's source is known as a modifier. An umbrella, snoot, barn door and gobo are all modifiers. The umbrella reflects light and gives a softer more diffuse effect. A snoot gives a narrow intense beam of light like a flashlight. A barndoor restricts or narrows the beam of light. This can be adjusted by moving one or more of the four barn doors in or out of the beam of light. A gobo is a stencil-like modifier that projects a decorative shadow over the subject.

A hotshoe is the connector where an external flash is mounted to a camera. A flash unit that is subservient to another flash unit is known as a slave.

Studio Lighting Crossword (cont from page 2) James Allan

Neutral density filters do not alter the colour of light. The colour of a light source can be expressed as a Kelvin setting. Kelvin settings represent the range of colours emitted by a piece of heated metal. (Metal will go from warm red colours to cool blue colours as it is heated.)

The key of a lighting scheme refers to the degree to which the subject is lit. High key schemes will have the subject wholly lit, where as low key schemes will have the subject dark with light only on small highlights and edges.

Well I hope that clears up any confusion.

A photograph should…. be focussed on the kind of subject matter which hits you hard with its impact and excites your imagination to the extent that you are forced to take it. Pictures are wasted unless the motive power which impelled you to action is strong and stirring.

Bernice Abbott 1898—1991

Photo Gallery—Images from "**Within 200 metres of your back door**" competition

Dragonfly by Matt Carr

I included this into the comp as I liked the T shape composition, with the focus on it's amazing eyes. I also liked the muted tones in this, and how they all complimented each other.
This shot was taken with my Pentax K20D, and old Vivitar Series 1 105mm macro (one of the finest macro lenses made). Off camera flash with a diffuser was also used.
Very little was done in PP apart from a curves adjustment, and some output sharpening.
I think working distance at 1:1 with this lens is around 12-16 inches, and this photo is as shot - no cropping was done.

Gus by Julie Goulter

I included this as part of set subject for the last competition as he was a subject within 200 metres of my front door.

Apart from that it was the intense concentration on his face that appealed to me, and although I may be biased, I think he is a good subject to photograph.

Gus is 4 years old today.

A Simple Lighting Scheme (Continued from page 1) Ray Goulter

redirects light from the illumination source back onto the model.

If you can change the output of your flash unit (such as a Metz 45CT or similar) you will get better flash control. Take a couple of shots and check the result using your digital camera's playback mode. If the results show too little exposure you can either increase the output of the flash unit if this can be done, or move the flash unit closer to the subject. If the result shows the lighting is too bright, either reduce the flash output or move it further from the subject. It shouldn't take long to get the result you're looking for. Worth the experimenting especially if you are thinking ahead to the "*In the Style of*" competition evening 15th July and you have Rembrandt in mind…. (thanks to James for the Rembrandt image).

Note—Rembrandt Lighting was a term coined to describe a lighting scheme with strong side light and a small amount of reflected light giving a characteristic triangular glow onto the cheek below the opposite eye. This is the scheme used in many Rembrandt portraits.

Rembrandt