From the Editor
James Allan

Welcome to the May edition of Camera clips. I have been away to Macau in the last 2 weeks where a long time friend got married. If you want to see some of my pictures from this Portugese outpost you can check out my picasa album at the following link: (https://picasaweb.google.com/110444046121398285855/0411Macau?authkey=Gv1sRgCMzv09Plj4KFVQ&feat=directlink) Unfortunately I missed both the Nature competition and the expedition to Carrick Hill. I have been informed that both of these events were quite successful with good attendances. Some of the images can be seen on the club website http://blackwoodphotoclub.org/ and the flikr group http://www.flickr.com/groups/blackwoodphoto/

This edition is a departure from the previous format. After discovering an interesting series of images by an Adelaide photographer, Denis Smith, I asked Eric to write an article on trick photography. The dialogue was quite interesting, and so I have included all of our correspondence as a bit of a blog. I hope that you find it interesting.

Shortly after this conversation we had a club expedition to Hallet Cove. Eric brought his torch and we experimented as a club trying to make a light ball of our own. The inexpert result is included above as the header for this months edition of Camera clips. Also on the left we have Matt Carr writing a new club logo with his torch.

This months gallery on page 2 consists of a selection of my favourite architectural photos from our club website, Flikr group and competitions. I have been quite excited by some of these images, in particular the images of Chris Schultz and Eric Budworth who have both recently been to Melbourne.

The club will be submitting 2 club sets in to the SAPF competition. Watch this space for further news of how we fare.

Also don't forget to bring your camera to the lighting workshop this fortnight. We are hoping to have setups for both compact cameras and SLR's. There will be assistance from members who have experience with this areas to help novices (like myself) to understand the fundamentals of studio lighting.

Lastly don't forget to register for the disposable camera competition. Once they are available the disposable cameras can be collected from Fotoswift in Blackwood.

Trick Photography—A dialogue
Eric Budworth & James Allan

Hi Eric

Do you know of Denis Smith?

He is an Adelaide Photographer who is taking shots in our city that are getting published in overseas magazines. His particular innovation is the "ball of light". I presume this is a form of light painting with a small Led swung in an arc. It has been getting a lot of aclaim. You can check out the pictures at his web address http://www.denissmith.com.au/what-is-the-ball-of-light/ and he also has a Flikr group with the user name biskitboy. (I wonder if he has an edwardstown camera club affiliation.)

I am fascinated as these are our icons, that appear in our competitions - that he has managed to broadcast onto the world stage. Incredible!!! His particular genius is in combining simple light painting with landscape photography in an artistic way.

ball of light

Contacting a member from the club; This month Mark & Jenny Pedlar :mnjpedlar@biqpond.com

Eric Budworth—Flinders Street Station
Michael James—Window (in corrugations)
Chris Schulz—Web Bridge Melbourne
Adrian Hill—Burra Rock Wall
Theo Prucha—Urinal
Eric Budworth—Eureka Tower
David Tullock—Old Police Barracks
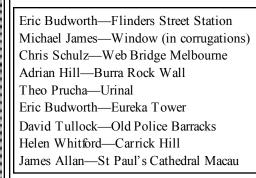Helen Whitford—Carrick Hill
James Allan—St Paul's Cathedral Macau

10 Tips for Photographing Architecture

Reference: http://www.digital-photography-school.com/architectural-photography

1. Watch the Light. Direct lighting is not always best. Back lighting creates drama. Side lighting helps demonstrate textures. Shadows may distract or enhance an image. Bracket the exposure if the lighting is awkward. Consider HDR processing.

2. Wide angle lenses are a good choice. Even consider a fish eye lens. If this is not possible, try a multishot panorama and stitch it with appropriate software.

3. Try taking a shot of the interior. Be carefully of interior lighting and adjust white balance accordingly.

4. Sunset & Dusk can produce interesting silhouettes. Stop the exposure down to get more colour in the sky and less detail in the building.

5. Inclement weather may add drama. Rain, clouds, wet pavements may all improve the shot if you work them to your advantage.

6. Look for reflections. Reflections in glass, water features, even a puddle.

7. Come in close. Zoom in and make a highlight of features of interest. Research the building, why is it important or interesting? Windows, doors, gargoyles, buttresses.

8. Play with perspective / vertical distortion / angles to show the scale of the architecture. Shoot straight up from the foot of the building. Include people / objects to give a sense of scale.

9. Create movement / dynamism in the images. Look for patterns and symmetry.

10. Enhance detail and reduce noise. Use a tripod. Choose a small f-stop. Use good quality lenses. Experiment with long exposures.
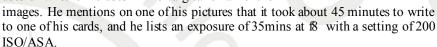
Do you have any comments?

I was thinking of doing a feature in the next camera clips. I thought that if you were to write me an article on "trick photography" that it would make a nice theme for the newsletter. What do you think?

We've still got about 6 weeks, so there is lots of preparation time.

Do you think you could help me out?

Hi James,

First things first, No, I do not know of this photographer, Although I find his images intriguing and very well done. He states that they are not manipulated other than a few brightness and saturation tweaks. He states that the image has been taken in a single exposure with no usage of mechanical devices. He does not say however what camera he uses or whether he uses film or digital on all of the images. He mentions on one of his pictures that it took about 45 minutes to write to one of his cards, and he lists an exposure of 35mins at f8 with a setting of 200 ISO/ASA.

I can only think that he has a torch with a bare bulb which is attached to a piece of string of a fixed length which he then rotates while he stands on one spot and also turns whilst spinning the torch, however if that was the case he would be illuminating himself !. In the "Green Lantern" shot you can see that the exposure is fairly long due to the movement of the star trails but in the image called "Protecting the Innocent" there does not appear to be any star trails, thus indicating a fairly short exposure. I don't know how he deals with the noise in the long exposures or how many shots he takes before he gets the right one !

Did you notice that he doesn't give any camera make or exposure details ? He does list that the pictures appear in the Canon Users Group, so presumably he uses a Canon camera.

I will see if I can put together something on so called trick photography.

Regards   Eric.

Thanks Eric

Intriguing isn't it. Thanks for agreeing to do the article.

The sphere appears to be made of overlaping light trails. It looks to me that the trails are grouped in around 15 degree clusters.

Re illuminanting himself. - If the light did not shine on the person spinning the light and it took say 1 minute to create the sphere but 5 minutes to expose the landscape he could be out of the picture and leave little trace.

It looks like other people have made similar spheres, but on the blogs they all give him credit for the greater quality of his spheres.

I thought you'd be interested. worth an experiment isn't it. Are you game.

James

Hi James,

Please find attached a shot I just this minute tried in the back yard. As you can see the normal surroundings have shown up normally and the light trails have shown up quite well without any evidence of me spinning the torch on a short lanyard. The biggest difficulty is to be able to spin the torch at a consistent rate whilst maintaining the centre of the circle at a fixed point, also the problem of switching the light off without leaving a tracer at the end of the spin.

ball of light

Trick Photography—A dialogue   Eric Budworth & James Allan

Regards   Eric.

Hi James,

This is an idea so far:

When I was asked if I would write an article on "Trick Photography" I though that it would be quite simple, however it turned out not to be the case !

I asked myself....who or what are we trying to trick ? Are we trying to trick the viewer of the final image or are we tricking the equipment to give us a required result ? In the former we are trying to make the viewer believe that something out of the ordinary has taken place and in the latter we are trying to make the equipment give us the result.

There are many different ways to achieve the end result. We can, if we are using film manipulate the film development by various methods using chemicals or the enlarger. The use of different types of filters can be used to alter an image. If we are using film we can turn on a white light during the development to achieve a "Sabattier" effect. Images can be altered by raising the temperature of the fixing bath, this causes the emulsion to curl and break up giving a jigsaw puzzle effect akin to a cracked old master oil painting. Tricks using the enlarger can be achieved by bending the photographic paper in different ways during exposure to distort an image, The age old use of "dodging & burning" can also effect an image.

As most club members are now using digital cameras these effects can be done simply using Photoshop or a similar post image capture program. Tricks which cane be done "in camera" so to speak would be done by using double exposures, slow or faster shutter speeds, different apertures and lighting techniques or a combination of all three.

Trying to take a portrait of somebody wearing an all black outfit against a black velvet background would only show the persons face and hands if photographed using frontal lighting due to it's perceived invisibility by the film or sensor. Some people may remember the "Black Theatre of Prague" where this technique was used to create a stage show.

The actual black portion of the image is an unexposed area on the sensor or film and thus can be exposed to record another image on the same frame without any problems.

Long exposure times are another way of altering an image, we have all seen star trails and car light trails caused by long exposures. With these longer exposures one must be wary of other light sources which may appear in the images, things such as street lamps will be over exposed if the photographer is not careful.

Very long exposures can be used to turn busy streets and roads into deserted places by using Neutral Density filters. the moving articles such as people and/or vehicles are not recorded as they pass in and out of the image while the shutter is still open and therefore still giving more exposure to the fixed parts of the scene. Multiple exposures can also be used to achieve the same result : If we were to photograph a street scene at an exposure of say 1/125th sec the traffic and the people would show clearly, however if we were to take 10 exposures of the same scene at 1/1000th sec. on the same frame allowing some time to elapse between each exposure, the moving objects in the scene would be indistinct at each exposure and the final image is overlaid by the other nine exposures and the street would appear entirely empty.

There are still some shortcomings with digital photography especially in the areas of long exposures due to the noise (similar to film grain) which is created. Try taking a 4 hour or more exposure to capture star trails and you'll see what I mean. The successful shots that I have seen in magazines are those which have been up to 40 images ! which have then been stacked on top of each other in order to get the required image, where as using film this could be done with one exposure, with no post processing other than develop and print.

The images accompanying this article are both film and digital files. The pictures of "Storm in a Teacup", "Sparkling Hot Curry", "Ignition" and "Hot Shoe" were all

taken originally on Fuji Sensia slide film, The others were taken using a digital camera:, credits given to the images from a magazine and "Light Trails" taken by the author in his back yard.

The "Storm" was done using a picture of a lightning strike which was cut out and placed in a tea cup, simple ! The curry tin had a sparkler dropped inside and then photographed, The ignition shot was achieved by sticking the spark plug to a black card with blue tack and shining a torch through a pin hole which was covered in red cellophane, in the Hot Shoe shot the shoe was suspended and the outline was traced using a sparkler. The digital image called Light trails was made using a 30 sec. exposure, during the first 10 seconds a 150watt flood lamp was turned on, Then I stood in the line of fire and spun a torch until the shutter closed. This was done outside at night. The other two photo's are for examples of what can be achieved and were copied from a magazine.

I personally find making these types of images quite satisfying albeit time consuming to set up but quick to expose.

Modern photography has now become a questionable art form as people tend to ask "how much of this image is real" gone are the days when we thought what the camera saw was real and the camera never lied.

See what you think James.

Regards   Eric.

I read through the article and checked the pictures tonight. I think it would be just fine. Just what I am looking for.

My thoughts on the subject:

When I was growing up all of the special effects at the cinema were attributed to trick photography. Now they are attributed to computer manipulation. It was regarded as the "photographers skill" - now as "too easy".

I believe that as in a magic show there is a language of deception and a contract that the photographer fulfills with his audience to surprise and entertain them. I am interested in understanding this language and the tricks that make it work. I guess ultimately the camera has different physics to the human eye and it is the exploration of that difference that is the crux of the deception. Perhaps it is the departure from using optics that undermines that understanding and makes computer manipulation seem unfair to many people.

What do you think?

James

Hi James,

As you would be well in your line of work, the human eye in tandem with a good functioning brain is a fantastic combination, which present day cameras simply cannot compete. The eye can view a piece of white paper under many different lighting sources such as incandescent, fluorescent, flash and daylight and it always appears white. However that's not to say that it cannot along with the brain be tricked into believing something different such as an "Optical Illusion"

Film emulsion however does not have this capability and only works under a limited range of lighting situations. Film emulsions are made to suit a limited range of lighting sources, these are mainly Daylight, Tungsten, A. type and Infrared. Fluorescent lighting is usually catered for by using a combination of CC (colour correcting) filters.

Using a mixture of filters and films we can trick the eye into believing all sorts of scenarios such as turning day into night and making the sun appear as the moon, a effect used frequently by movie makers in the 30's and 40's.

Regarding the camera and it's optics, by using different focal lengths of lenses we can change the appearance of an image, if we were to take an image of say some buildings in a major city we can make them appear very close together with the use of a

long telephoto lens, this is due to the compressing effect of this type of lens. On the other hand we can make the distance between articles seem greater by using the reverse......a wide angle lens. If we were to use a "Anamorphic Lens" we could stretch and compress and image by just rotating the lens. This type of lens is used to correct the wide "Cinemascope" effect but if placed on a normal camera can result in some amusing effects. Probably one common trick especially in the form of cinema photography is the use of back projection. We have all seen the film stars in the cars supposedly driving along with the usual bumps and scenery passing by when in actual fact they are sitting in a studio in a mock up of a car on springs with person out of shot rocking the car occasionally this coupled with a movie camera projecting a film on the back drop gives rise to the sensation that they are being filmed in an actual car being driven on the normal road......damn fine "trickery".... not really just astute thinking on the part film maker !

Modern technology has now reached a new level where actors are not required visually to make a movie but instead are used as voice over's. With the use of computers animation has almost become reality now anything seems possible. What effect this will have on the very young as they grow up I'd hate to say...........Painting themselves blue and jumping of the shed thinking their in Avatar ! A bit like kids dressed as Batman in the old days.....perhaps nothing has changed.

I'm not sure there is a "Language" as such. I think one needs to be behind the scenes when a movie is being made. Although I must admit there are things such as blue screens and other such words to describe ways of altering the image seen by the TV viewer. I think a lot of so called trickery is also done with the lighting effects.

 I think that digital photography has made a great difference to the "art" of photography and more people have become what I perceive to be good image creators but not necessarily good photographers, in that they can create some terrific images using their knowledge and skill for "post processing" a technique sometimes frowned upon by some judges.

Regards   Eric.

Thanks Eric,

interesting discussion. Great points. What do you think of these images:

Not one of the images is mistaken for the alternative view of reality they suggest, but all are enjoyable for the deception that they attempt to portray, in fact you might even say they were clever. A bit like a pun or a joke.

what do you think?

Hi James,

I like the fun theme behind these images. You'll notice in some of the pictures the effect is caused by the use of a telephoto lens which has given the image an apparent compression of the the distance between the person and the background, this then tricks the viewers eye into almost believing that they are on the same plane.

 I think these are good fun and deserve a place in anybodies album, after all photography should also be fun and not just for the purpose of what is perceived to be art.

Regards   Eric.