

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 or down 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.
- I use the texture blending script from Uwe Steinmueller for blending an image and one texture. It gives you total control of every aspect of the image and the texture go to the **Tuning Filters page**
Then scroll down to the following:

Artistic Tools

DOPF017: Texture Blending, then, under the word, "Article," click to download or to try ***Make sure you read the Article.***

For applying multiple textures, check out Dr. Browns FREE 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
 - Nik Complete Collection
 - Topaz - Adjust, BW Effects, Detail, Clarity, ReStyle
 - AlienSkin - SnapArt, Bokeh, Exposure, Blow Up
 - Athentech - Perfectly Clear
 - MacPhun - Intensity (mac only)
 - Red Giant Software - Knoll Light Factory and Magic Bullet Photo Looks

ALL DISCOUNTS ARE HERE!

Special in-camera efex

- **HDR** - Nik's HDR Efex Pro and **Photomatix**
 - Always select favorite presets to get you going. Don't always scroll through all presets, many of which aren't very good.

- You can always tone map a single image. 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 cameras that cannot perform them, **download this free script**: then, under "Free Scripts," go to *DOP_LayerStackOpacityBlending*. Go to Free Download.
 - After shooting a number of properly exposed images (try 10) with movement between each shot, place into a folder. Open the script. Locate the folder and the script will combine the images instantly.

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..

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.

ALL DISCOUNTS ARE HERE!

Infrared - Converted Camera

- Get cameras converted at **Life Pixel Infrared Camera Conversions**
- We use and recommend the Super Color conversion as it allows us to shoot straight infrared, but can also use for color infrared or to just add a blue sky.
- Try blending with an extremely blurred 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

- 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 a minute or longer. This is great if you want to record long exposure cloud movement or water movement in your infrared image.

Infrared - Color

- With the Super Color conversion, there is color hidden in the picture. After swapping channels in Photoshop (in video) and converted in Silver Efex Pro, you can use Nik's Viveza, using control points and playing with the Hue slider.
- 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 - Midnight (low opacity) and Glamour Glow (opacity to taste)
- Digital Sandwich (montage) Technique - below
- Soft focus hardware filter (Singh Ray Soft Ray)

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

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

- nik's Color Efex Pro, Tonal Contrast - highlights-10%, midtones-15%, shadows-10% (you may need to play around with these settings a bit)
- 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)

PROCESSING NEWS FLASH!!!

Check out the Tony Kuyper's Actions and TK panel.
The Complete Package is recommended for \$79
Luminosity masking will change the way you process.

FOR FUJI X SHOOTERS!

Check out this article on sharpening in LR

iPhone Apps I use

*** = must have apps

Cameras - I use the *iPhone Camera* primarily

Hipstamatic - cool square format. Great for grab shots.

••**Camera +** - edit image using the **Clarity filter**

645Pro - high end camera app that can save tiffs

Clear Cam - hi res captures

Classic Pan - shoots in panoramic format

Average Camera Pro - for multiple exposures

••**Slow Shutter** - for long exposures

Processing

••**Snapseed** - “App of the Year!”

Filterstorm - Super adjustments, masking, etc.

••**Touch Retouch** - Content aware

Photo Wizard - Very cool special effects as well as standard adjustments

••**Blender** - Blend two images

••**AutoStitch** - to create stitched panoramics

Camera Awesome - Great textures and special effects

HDR

•••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

•••Stackables - Great for multiple textures and more

•••texBlend - one of the best with much control

•••DistressedFX - smaller but certainly usable file size

•••Mextures - great presets and guest artist presets

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

Light Effects

Rays - Add "god" rays

Lens Light - Add various types of natural light effects

Dynamic Light - Used mostly for digital Orton

Utilities

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

•••TransferApp - Wirelessly move hi-res images between iPad, iPhone, Computer

•••NDExposures - 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>