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The Lens and Eye

North Bethesda Camera Club

Volume 44 Number 5 <http://www.nbcmd.org> Editor: José Cartas nbccleandeye@yahoo.com January, 2009

Calendar

January, 2009

- 6 PCR: 7:00 pm.
- 7 Competition Night: 7:30 pm.
Judge: Ed Funk.
Hospitality: Mark Segal, Alan Sisen.
- 8 Visual Design: 7:30 pm; Kent Mason's.
- 10 Field Trip: St. Matthew's Cathedral.
- 14 Program Night: 7:30 pm., M.L. Ravese.
Cultivating a Sense of Mystery.
Hospitality: Miranda Chin,
Jessyca Stansbury-McCargo.
- 19 Photo Critique: 7:30 pm; Kent Mason's.
- 21 Board Meeting: 7:30pm; Martell's.
- 22 Visual Design: 7:30 pm; Kent Mason's.
- 28 Workshop: 7:30 pm., Photoshop Local
Adjustments.
Hospitality: Marilyn Jacox, Gerry Weiss.

February, 2009

- 3 PCR: 7:00 pm.
- 4 Competition Night: 7:30 pm.
- 11 Workshop: 7:30 pm.
- 12 Visual Design: 7:30 pm; Kent Mason's.
- 16 Photo Critique: 7:30 pm; Kent Mason's.
- 18 Field Trip: Library of Congress
- 18 Board Meeting: 7:30pm; Mason's.
- 25 Program Night: 7:30 pm.
- 26 Visual Design: 7:30 pm; Kent Mason's.

Competition Assignment

Open - No Date Restriction

A photograph taken at any time which is not otherwise restricted or disqualified.



Program Night, January 14 Mary Louise Ravese on Cultivating a Sense of Mystery in your Photographs

Gerry Weiss

Often, the "wow effect" is what many photographers hope to create. Ultimately, the best test of success is whether or not the image grabs and keeps the viewer's attention for an extended period. The open question is: Are these "wow" images a matter of good fortune, or are there ways to intentionally "design" these captivating images?

In answer to this question, Mary Louise challenges the photographer to cultivate a sense of **mystery** as that added element of "je ne sais quoi" in the making of an image. Michael Reichmann, the publisher and primary author of *The Luminous Landscape* agrees that: **"What separates the mundane from the engaging is to have a sense of Mystery."**

In this presentation, Mary Louise will share the observations she made from reviewing thousands of images over the years. She will discuss specific ways for savvy photographers to create a sense of mystery in their own photographs through the use of compositional approaches, subject matter choices, leveraging atmospheric conditions, and utilizing a variety of camera and post-processing techniques.

Cont'd on p.4

Workshop, January 28 Photoshop Local Adjustments

Tom Field

NBCC members made clear on their application forms the desire for training in Adobe Photoshop (and the related software, Lightroom). These are the most popular and powerful software packages for photographers. Therefore, the Programs/Workshops Committee planned three Photoshop-related sessions this year, and our third is scheduled for January 28, 2009.

This workshop will cover local adjustments for images. "Local" means that the changes are applied to selected areas, not the entire image. This is the next level of image processing, which goes beyond global edits that can be performed at a drug store photo kiosk or even automatically by a digital camera. Local adjustments are essential for correcting some common defects and for further creative enhancement of your art.

Cont'd on p.4

**VERY
IMPORTANT
COMPETITION
REMINDER**

See details on page 5

Member Profile

Bill Seelig



I first met Bill Seelig at our new member reception on September 24. He immediately let me know that he was part of a rare, endangered species, a black and white film photographer. He also proffered a book of his images for me to see. I looked at them and was genuinely impressed. I decided then that he would be a good candidate for this column.

Bill actually has a past history with the Club. Back in the 1970s, he was a program presenter on several occasions. He also attended meetings from time to time but never became a member. However, he remembered our group with affection and when he made the decision to join a camera club, NBCC was his choice.

Both Bill and his wife, Claudia, are Rockville natives. Bill attended Winston Churchill high school, earned his BS degree in Civil Engineering from Virginia Tech in 1971 and an MS in Ocean Engineering from Texas A&M in 1972. He is currently employed with the U.S. Department of the Navy. He met Claudia at a housewarming party in the late 70s and they were married in 1978. Claudia is a digital photographer and is not yet a

Club member but may join in the future. She occasionally attends meetings with Bill, particularly if they are about using Photoshop. They both use Nikon camera bodies so they can trade lenses.

Bill has been interested in black and white photography since the 1960s. When color film came out, he believed it was "just a fad" and so kept on with black and white. On any given day, he will have about ¼ mile of film stored in his refrigerator, in case it ever becomes scarce. He still uses a handheld light meter and sets the f-stop and shutter speed manually for each image. Most of his lenses are a fixed focal length, rather than having zoom capability. He focuses manually and most always uses a tripod or monopod to steady the camera. At present, he owns an 8mm fisheye, plus 14, 20, 24, 28, 50, 55, 85, 105, 300 and 600mm lenses. With the advent of digital photography, many people have given him their old lenses. He was also able to buy a dozen Nikkormat camera bodies (the one he uses) on Ebay for about \$12 each.

Bill learned darkroom processing from two old masters, Marty Miller and Jim Johnson, who are now deceased. He has a complete darkroom in his basement and processes and prints all his images. He keeps all his negatives carefully organized, but sometimes doesn't make a print until several years have elapsed. That way he makes sure that he still likes the image. He realizes that this will not work for some of the NBCC competitions.

His images have garnered several awards through the years. He received the grand prize at Virginia Tech for a portrait in the first contest he ever entered. Later he met the woman whose photo he had won with and offered to be her wedding photographer. He has

won the Kodak International Snapshot Award twice, the Bodine Photo Award, etc. He published a book of 50 photos in 1983 and had 1,500 copies made. He uses these as gifts for friends and family and he is currently putting together a second book.

Bill's favorite subject is people and he likes to do portraits and nudes. Recently he has gotten more into "Modern Art" photography with such specialties as "lines" photos (see his November 2008 *Lens and Eye* article) and solarization. He also does a lot of reflection images, including distortion reflections and self-portraits. He takes many shots to come up with one or two that meet his standards.

When not occupied in his darkroom, Bill likes to cook and bake. His favorite recipes include biscotti and carrot cake. He learned to cook by necessity as Claudia was both finishing her education and working full time when they were first married. "It was cook or starve," he said.

Both Bill and Claudia enjoy the outdoors and are members of the Capital Hiking Club. They have made many excursions to the Grand Canyon and other national parks. They toured Utah last spring, Yellowstone this fall and plan to visit Costa Rica next year. One of Bill's images of Yellowstone received an award in the October "Shadows" competition. Bill also travels extensively for his job (a perk that keeps him in the working force) and has visited Denmark, Greece, Spain and most of Europe. With both persons "packing cameras" and Claudia a potential Club member, we might hope to see in the near future some interesting travel photos, as well as more of Bill's specialties: portraits and nudes.

*Text by Jean Hanson,
photo by Claudia Seelig*

January Competition Judge Ed Funk

Paul Taylor

Ed Funk is a versatile photographer and writer. He has been producing award-winning impact images and travel articles for over thirty years, while presenting many lectures on all aspects of photography. A member of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals, Ed conducts workshops on creative photography and digital imaging.

Ed's images have been published in leading magazines and newspapers and on Annual Report covers. He serves the community by judging photographic shows and competitions. Ed has written and coauthored several publications for the Northern Virginia Alliance of Camera Clubs. He is a past President of the Northern Virginia Photographic Society and served on the Board for many years. He has earned "Photographer of the Year" six times. Ed taught photography in Italy, Turkey, England and Germany, and currently lectures on photography at Northern Virginia Community College.

Influenced by the writings and teachings of Freeman Patterson, Joseph Miller, Ernst Haas, John Shaw, Bill Allard and others, Ed has developed his own Personal Artistic Statement. "Creative vision for some people is a 'gift' that comes naturally. I have found that what is often perceived to be creative vision is in reality creative 'technique.' My earliest creative work came not from vision but from the development of my photographic 'craft/technique.'

"My creative vision developed slowly over a long period of time. I was largely unaware of the subtle changes as they were taking place. It was only after studying with Canadian photographer Freeman

Patterson that I began to understand the nature of my developing creative vision. When I began reorganizing and cataloging my work, from the early days up to the present, the changing nature of my work and vision became apparent.

"Freeman Patterson said he can see his personal development including major life changing events when he reviews his work in a time line. I believe this is true for most artists who have been working over a long period of time. Life experiences are reflected in their work.

"Photography for me began with nature because of my love for the outdoors and quickly included travel photography. Today I see images everywhere! Often when a scene or object captures my attention I try to abstract the strongest element and present it in a way that the viewer might feel the emotion that I felt at that moment. This is the essence of my work."

For an overview of Ed's photography and related activities visit www.edfunkphotography.com.



"Stonehege Revisited" © Ed Funk

December, 2008, Splinters from the Board

Tom Sullivan, President

Membership Chair Chuck Lee reported that we had 27 people on the waiting list for membership.

We have finalized our plans and made a commitment to have our end-of-year awards banquet at Asbury Village in Gaithersburg on June 3, 2008.

The board felt the rule for submitting "similar" images in competitions needs some clarification and awareness to members. The competition committee will

develop some updated information for distribution to our members.

A committee to define the assignments for the 2010–2011 year was announced, with Les Trachtman as the chairman. If members have any ideas for assignment topics they can contact Les for input to the committee's consideration.

The Club has been selected to hold an exhibit at the Holy Cross Hospital from December 2009 to January 2010. Also, the club will have an exhibit at Asbury Methodist Village in March, 2009.

January Program Night (cont'd from p.1)

If you are intrigued by the idea of adding an element of mystery to your photography, then at the end of the presentation there will be an interactive "Discussion and Critique" portion to allow members to show a selection of their images that they feel convey that certain sense of mystery.

Mary Louise studied photography at the University of California, Santa Cruz and Berkeley, and now specializes in nature and travel photography. Her vocation has taken her across the United States, Europe, and Japan. Her favorite subject matter includes country landscapes and nature close-ups.

Mary Louise photographs primarily in color, having mastered a technique derived from Ansel Adam's famous Zone System, which she refers to as the Color Zone System method. She uses both 35mm film and digital SLR cameras to create her painterly images. Her photographs frequently feature intriguing juxtapositions of vibrant colors, distinctive shapes, and unique textures. Through her photography, Mary Louise aims to capture the essence of the natural world in color, form and spirit. She enjoys capturing fleeting moments of beauty or drama that might otherwise be lost. Her ambition is to combine the beauty of painting with the clarity of photography.



"Jupiter" © M.L. Ravese

Mary Louise is a member of the North American Nature Photography Association, the American Society of Picture Professionals, and the Equine Photographers Network. Her work is exhibited nationally through art shows, galleries and shops and is in corporate, university and private collections in over 29 states. As a popular photography instructor, Mary

Louise regularly teaches photography classes on a variety of topics and leads field workshops in the mid-Atlantic and other photogenic locations across the country. On January 17 and 18 she will be teaching "Introduction to Digital Photography" at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, MD. For the month of January, Mary Louise's latest works will be featured at the Applegate Gallery in Vienna, VA. On March 8 she will be a guest speaker at the annual Meadowlark Photography Expo in Vienna, VA. For more information about Mary Louise and her upcoming engagements, visit www.BellaVistaPhotography.com.

January Workshop (cont'd from p.1)

All of the global adjustments we covered in October can be performed on a local basis. Probably the most common is to increase or decrease brightness in specific areas of your image—called dodging and burning in the chemical darkroom. Of course, getting your adjustments just right is so much easier in the digital darkroom! A related trick simulates the effect of a graduated neutral density filter—again, quite easy in software.

Another typical local adjustments is color correction. We will also take a look at selective sharpening, which means increasing the sharpness or clarity only for certain parts of your image—typically at the points of interest. Depending on time, we can go into other correction and enhancement techniques.

A common problem with digital SLR cameras is dust on the sensor, resulting in spots on the image. Not to worry: we will show Photoshop's easy repair methods for removing dust and other minor distractions. And if there is time, we will have a live demonstration of cleaning dust from your camera sensor.

As with our sessions in Global Adjustments and Lightroom, we will discuss non-destructive editing techniques and how they can be applied to your own workflow. In short, this methodology allows you to change your mind about image adjustments later, and modify or undo them without starting all over. Photoshop provides very powerful tools for this, and we will emphasize the use of **layers**, **adjustment layers** and **layer masks**.

Our global adjustments workshop concentrated on Adobe Camera Raw (ACR). Most of the local adjustments will be demonstrated in Photoshop, though some of these can now be performed in ACR or in Lightroom. Photoshop CS4 may be used for some of the demonstrations, to introduce the new version and some of its improved methods.

SAVE THE DATE!
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2009
ANNUAL AWARD EVENT
AT ASBURY VILLAGE
IN GAITHERSBURG, MD

NBCC Field Trip – January 10

St. Matthew's Cathedral

John Barnes

NBCC's field trip for January will visit St. Matthew's cathedral. We will meet at the main entrance to the cathedral at 9:00 am and we will be free to photograph until 11:30. Participants will be asked to make a donation to the Cathedral. The suggested amount is \$10 per visitor.

We will be free to use tripods, but the cathedral asks that we respect the privacy of persons who are praying by not photographing them.

Persons wishing more information on this historically and liturgically significant building can visit www.stmatthewscathedral.org/main.html.

I recommend that everyone take a look at www.flickr.com/photos/neardc/2290751000. This is the entry point to a series of HDR images that reveal the ornately decorated interior of the cathedral in a really stunning fashion.

The cathedral is located at 1725 Rhode Island Ave, NW, Washington, D.C. The closest Metro station is Farragut North. The Metro map shows public parking nearby, but it is not clear what this means on a Saturday. Downtown parking in some areas on a Saturday is free. I recommend that we carpool to the site because spaces are limited. We can hope to arrive early enough to grab some available spaces.

We will plan to have the traditional post-shoot debriefing at some local watering hole. I am open to suggestions. If you plan to attend, please e-mail me at johndbarnes@verizon.net, and send me also your ideas for a place to eat.



Sharing images is an important part of being an NBCC member. The Club has had a number of quite successful field trips this year, and some of our members have chosen to share their experiences by posting images to the **NBCC web gallery** that is devoted to images from these events. To view these images, simply point your web browser to <http://albums.phanfare.com/nbcc>.

This is not a competition. No jurying is done. Each image informs the viewer in its own way. Submitting images for posting is as simple as sending an e-mail to fieldtrips@nbccmd.org with the JPEG images as attachments. To learn more about the web gallery visit <http://nbccmd.org/fieldtrips.htm#galleries>.

New Members' Corner

Potomac Community Resources (PCR)

New members have seen a Club schedule listing for "PCR" and wondered what they might be missing. PCR stands for Potomac Community Resources, a private, non-profit, non-sectarian organization that encourages and supports the integration of persons with developmental differences into the life of the community. As a community outreach, the camera club works with PCR by teaching basic photographic techniques to PCR members referred to as Phabulous Photographers. The meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 622 Hungerford Drive, Suite 8 in Rockville. New volunteers are welcome. If you would like to participate in this program or would like to learn more about it, call Joel Hoffman at 301-294-3374.

On other issues. In December, only four of the 33 new members entered images on Competition Night—down significantly from the 16 who entered on opening night in September. The good news is that all four were winners—two being first place and two being second place. Congratulations. Also, there are now 27 on the NBCC membership waiting list.

Chuck Lee, Membership Chair

Competition Reminder!

THIS IS THE SAME REMINDER AS LAST MONTH (but it seems that it needs repeating). Please read rule #6 on page 12 of the 2008-09 *Membership Booklet*: "An image, or one closely similar, may be entered **only once** on any competition night. ... When an image has won an award in NBCC competition, it may **never** be resubmitted in **any form in any category**; ..."

Images which are of the same or similar subject, taken under the same or similar lighting, from the same or similar perspective, with a similar photographic treatment **may not be entered on the same competition night**.

To Infrared or Not to Infrared

Text and Photos by Alan Sislen

A few NBCC members remember the days of infrared **film** photography: loading and unloading the film in complete darkness; focusing and then re-focusing using that little red dot on the lens barrel; guessing what the photograph might look like when it came back from the lab; and then if all went as planned, enjoying surrealistic, grainy prints that people found intriguing. Today, infrared film photography is very difficult, if not impossible. Finding infrared film is a challenge and expensive (as I write this, a roll of 36-exposures of Kodak infrared film was offered for \$49!), and finding a lab to process it is even more difficult.

But that's infrared **film**! Making infrared images is easier today than it has ever been, because of the ability to make **digital** infrared images. You have two choices for digital infrared: use an older digital camera with a special filter, or have a digital camera "converted" to an infrared-only camera.

If you have an older digital camera that is sensitive to infrared, you may be able to use a visible-light-blocking filter (like the Hoya R-72) to block virtually all visible light from entering the camera, enabling primarily the infrared spectrum to reach the digital sensor. Putting those filters in front of the lens requires manual focusing before attaching the filter, very long exposures and a tripod. Because the exposures are long, your image will be noisy, but some feel this gives a more traditional grainy infrared look. The advantage of using external filters is that when you remove the filter you still have your original digital camera that can capture color images.

The second choice—converting a camera—is more expensive (\$300+), voids your camera warranty, gives you a permanent infrared camera (i.e., no more color images), but significantly reduces any focusing and long exposure issues. Camera "conversion" requires

complete disassembly of the camera, the removal of the infrared-blocking filter that sits on top of the sensor and its replacement with a special visible light blocking filter.

Once converted, you shoot normally, with a few caveats. Remember, your camera's

exposure system, focusing system and white balance measure visible light, not infrared. You should create a custom white balance by filling the frame with green grass in bright sunlight (see your camera manual for creating a custom white balance). This minimizes magenta previews on your LCD and in your files. Although you can shoot JPEG, I always suggest shooting RAW for maximum data capture and image adjustment flexibility. Make extensive use of your camera's histogram. When I shoot in color with my non-infrared-converted camera, I usually expose "to the right" of the histogram, while avoiding most "blow-outs." When shooting with my infrared-converted camera, I have found that exposing towards the middle of the histogram provides better results. However, each camera will be different, so you must experiment.

Infrared does not focus at the same point as visible light, hence the need for the little red dot on most fixed-



focal length lenses. Conversion companies generally make a slight focusing adjustment in the camera's mechanism, but I find that stopping down one to two stops adds enough depth of field for all but my longest lenses at their maximum magnification, although not for macro lenses. One other lens issue is "hot spots." Today's state of the art (or should I say, state of the science) lens manufacturing is truly amazing. But again, all the lens calculations and specifications are optimized for visible light. Because infrared radiation is not visible light, with some lenses, on some cameras, you will see aberrations, such as "hot spots" in the middle of the image. Trial and error is the only way to determine if you will have problems with any of your lenses on your particular camera.

All the technical issues aside, shooting infrared is FUN! You never quite know what to expect and it enables you to capture the world around us in ways different from what we see. Infrared images can be dramatic and they can be surreal. Shooting infrared is best done when there is bright sunlight (a pretty good proxy for when there will be a lot of infrared radiation present), which means the middle of a bright summer day is perfect!

If you decide to have a camera converted, there are two companies I know of with good reputations, LifePixel (www.LifePixel.com) and MaxMax (www.MaxMax.com). Look at their websites to learn about their services. If you decide to use LifePixel, and put my name (SISLEN) in the Coupon Code box during the online order process, they should give you a 15 percent discount off the price of the conversion. I am not affiliated in any way with LifePixel and do not receive any remuneration from them.

A few of my infrared images are accompanying this article. If you want to see more of them, just visit www.alansislenphotography.com and go to "Galleries" and "Beyond the Visible."



January, 2009



PSA News

Judy Burr, NBCC PSA representative

The December issue of *PSA Journal* includes an essay introducing the PSA Club Services Website. This explains how member clubs can benefit from PSA services. Clubs and individual members can benefit from a variety of services that PSA offers. There are interclub competitions as well as forums, judging services and programs.

If any NBCC members use **Red River Paper**, the Club may be able to earn some money. If you use this paper, please let President Tom Sullivan know so he can sign up for the Club Affiliate Program, and then the club can earn commissions on your purchases. For more information visit www.redriverpaper.com.

Book reviews in the current issue include two on High Dynamic Range and others on Fine Art Printing and Lighting. There is also a review on Photoshop Elements 7 (6 for Macintosh). There is a Plus feature that provides online sharing. For those members who do not feel the need for the full version of Photoshop, Elements is an alternative to consider.

Drury's Digital Column covers printing and may provide the help you need to improve your techniques. There is also an article on trees—a competition topic coming up for NBCC. There is also a review of the Convention in Portland, which provides an overview and may make you think about attending the convention in West Yellowstone in September 2009. If that is too far for you, think about Charleston, SC in October 2010.



Lester LaForce © "Malcolm & Corvair"

Nine Days in Hong Kong

Text and Photos by Jean Hanson

Many travelers view Hong Kong as a stop-over place where you can change planes on your way to some other destination. Others have visited Hong Kong as a two-day "add on" at the end of some other Asian trip. For Lester LaForce and me, Hong Kong was our primary destination. In June of 2008, we spent nine very busy days there as guests of my son Alan, who is a corporate lawyer in the office of Merrill-Lynch (now Bank of America.) He and his family reside on Lantau, one of the nearly 30 islands that comprise the Hong Kong group.

It rained much of the time that we were there. However, either on our own, or with my son, his eight-month pregnant wife and my two year old grandson as guides, we were able to visit many sights and to use our cameras to record our impressions.

My son and his family live in the Discovery Bay Community on Lantau Island. This island also contains the airport and the home offices of Cathay Pacific Airlines. Many airline personal, as well as expats from Australia, Japan, and much of Europe live in Discovery Bay, which includes a swim club and golf course and was originally designed to be a resort community. Cars are not allowed, so each household is issued a golf cart for use as local transportation. Public buses are also available. Discovery Bay has its own shopping center and medical center. It also has its own ferry terminal, from which boats leave every half hour for Hong Kong.



Like so many Asian countries in a state of transition, Hong Kong constantly presents the viewer with the contrast of old and new. The

buildings rimming Victoria Harbor were constructed after World War II. They comprise a skyline of modern shapes and innovatively used materials: e.g., glass, marble, concrete and steel. In contrast, ships of the old Star Ferry Line, first started in 1898, with their wooden seats and lower passenger decks open to the weather, ply the distance between the Hong Kong terminal and the Kowloon district for about 10 cents a ride.



On the leeward side of the island we visited Aberdeen, a fishing village dating back to the 18th century. In its harbor, houseboats still in use as dwelling places contrast against a background of modern, high-rise apartment buildings located on the opposite shore. Along the narrow streets, the villagers shop for fresh fish, raw vegetables, freshly butchered meats and all the necessities of living, just as they have done for decades.

No trip to Hong Kong would be complete without a visit to Victoria Peak and its spectacular view of Victoria Harbor at sunset. At 1286 feet, the Peak is the highest point on Hong Kong Island. One can walk to the top (a 2-3 hour trip) or take a 30 minute, nearly vertical, tram ride. After disembarking the tram and taking a series of escalators ever upwards, one arrives at the observation deck. As the sun begins to set, photographers of many nationalities crowd the railings. As the sun descends further and the buildings along the bay become illuminated, the effect is indeed impressive. However, one must snap pictures quickly. The light is constantly changing and the ubiquitous evening fog rolls in, threatening to shroud the magical scene from view. Lester and I took dozens of images as fast as we could, and then headed to dinner in one of the many available restaurants.



One weekend day, with no rain in the forecast, we departed for Hong Kong Disney World with our host family. My grandson, who had been there before, began humming the Mickey Mouse song as soon as he saw the mouse-head shaped windows on the train that was the final leg of our journey. The facility is smaller than the Anaheim and Orlando parks but it still bears the unmistakably Disney stamp.



The Chinese love it! Entertainment is constant all day and both children and adults gleefully follow the marching bands, dance along with the parades and pose for photo-ops with Disney characters. The rides, of course, are all free as is the boat trip through the "Wide, Wide World," my own personal favorite.

On another day, Lester and I took a Grey Line Tour to the New Territories. This is a less developed area west of Kowloon that is rapidly becoming the "suburbs" of the congested city. Old fishing villages and farm communities, with multi-family dwellings clustered along narrow alleyways, can now be reached by commuter buses and trains, and are being rapidly "colonized" by workers and retirees who cannot afford apartments in the city. New communities



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of government subsidized housing are also springing up everywhere to meet the need. Many local farmers have become entrepreneurs. They build multi-family dwellings on their land, sell off a floor in each one to a different owner and, with the profits to live on, never have to farm again.



One of the highlights of this tour was a visit to the Yuen Yuen Institute, a temple complex dedicated to the three major religions of Hong Kong: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. A feature is a gold-leafed room where all the characters of the Chinese Zodiac, together with their lucky symbols, are arrayed on a stage along the walls that surround the altar. Another feature is a shop where paper replicas of the necessities of life, e.g., food, clothing, drink



and cigarettes, can be purchased. These are to be burned to honor a dead relative as gifts for his use in the afterlife.

Well, we missed the Po Lin Monastery and the Giant Buddha. By the time we got around to going, heavy rains had washed out the road. We did manage to see the Museum of Art and the Hong Kong History Museum. But we missed the one day trip to Lamma Island with its picturesque village and sandy beaches. We did go (in the rain) to Nathan Road—the famous district for electronics' stores—so Lester could buy a new wide-angle lens. But there are still dozens of parks, shopping centers, restaurants and quaint villages and several monasteries and museums we haven't yet seen. It looks like we will just have to go back again next year.

BlackRock Exhibit Opening a Success

The opening reception of the NBCC exhibit, "At Home and Abroad" at BlackRock Center for the Arts, on Sunday, December 7, was a well-attended event. Many of the exhibiting artists, other NBCC members as well as the general public could appreciate the high quality of the Club's work. The gallery was a wonderful venue, with a lot of light flowing in to view the wonderful photographs. Thanks to all the members who participated and made this exhibit a success. And a special recognition to Angelique Raptakis, Exhibits Chair, who flawlessly organized this superb show!



Above and below: some of the visitors to the opening reception.



In recognition for her hard work, President Tom Sullivan presents a bouquet to Angelique.

Exhibits

Portraiture Now: Feature Photography

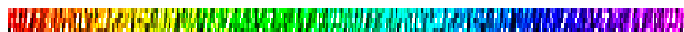
The exhibit focuses on six photographers—Katy Grannan, Jocelyn Lee, Ryan McGinley, Steve Pyke, Martin Schoeller and Alec Soth—who, by working on assignment for publications such as *The New Yorker*, *Esquire* and the *New York Times Magazine* each bring their distinctive perspective on contemporary portraiture to a broad audience. Critically acclaimed for their independent fine art work, they also pursued a variety of editorial projects, taking advantage of both the opportunities and the parameters that these assignments introduce. The resulting work builds upon a longstanding tradition of photographic portraiture for the popular press and highlights creative possibilities for 21st century portrayal.

Through September 27, 2009, at the National Portrait Gallery, F and 8th Streets, NW, Washington, D.C. For more information visit: www.npg.si.edu.

Accommodating Nature: The Photographs of Frank Gohlke

For more than 30 years, Frank Gohlke (b. 1942), a leading figure in American landscape photography, has explored the ways Americans build their lives in a natural world that rarely fits within a traditional pastoral ideal. This retrospective exhibition, which captures Gohlke's longstanding fascination with nature's proclivities for growth, destruction and unexpected change, features 79 photographs—both black-and-white and color prints—spanning the artist's career from the early 1970s through 2004. Rather than celebrating uninhabited landscapes or avoiding evidence of human intrusions, Gohlke's photographs reflect how people interact with an environment that can never be fully controlled. Gohlke deftly captures the tension between humanity and the natural world, exploring how people adapt to the forces of nature both great and small, even within the confines of their own backyards.

Through March 3, 2009, at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, F and 8th Streets, NW, Washington, D.C. For more information visit www.americanart.si.edu.



Upcoming Exhibit Opportunity!

There will be an upcoming exhibit in March at the Hefner Auditorium, Asbury Methodist Village, in Gaithersburg, MD. We expect this to be another large exhibit with up to 65 photographs on display for the month of March 2009. Please watch your e-mail for announcements!

Courses

Introduction to Digital Photography at Brookside Gardens, by Mary Louise Ravese. This immersion class addresses key core concepts essential to capturing a successful image: depth-of-field, elements of photographic exposures, use of the camera light meter and image histogram, and camera settings such as white balance. On Sunday morning, participants will practice what they have learned in a private session in the indoor conservatory at Brookside Gardens. Saturday and Sunday, January 17-18, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

For more information and to register visit www.BellaVistaPhotography.com or contact Mary Louise at (540) 882-9354.

Washington School of Photography

For more information and to register visit the School's website at www.wsp-photo.com.

Photography of the Ballet. This workshop will teach the techniques involved with photographing ballet dancers, on stage and in a studio. Lighting, movement, and capturing the right moments will be the focus of the course, as well as how to find appropriate dancers as models. Suitable for both film and digital, this is a studio lighting class with models provided.

Instructor: Don Becker

Sunday, January 11, 2:00 to 8:00 pm.

Glen Echo Park

For more information and to register visit the Park's website at www.glenechopark.org.

Book Project. Learn about focus, purpose, audience and technical aspects of one-off book production. The class will work with a local lab for printing, and binding (softcover) a book. The lab provides user friendly software for PC and Mac. A field trip to Chrome Lab in Georgetown during the week will be scheduled. The course culminates in a book unveiling. Small portable hard drive suggested.

Instructor: Barbara Southworth

Saturdays, January 10 and 24, February 7 and 21, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Art of Critiquing: Theory & Practice. Editing and critiquing your own art work is essential to the artist. Learn the theory of critiquing from a master teacher and workshop leader and have your personal 2-D artwork critiqued. Bring images that you have questions about, a small portfolio or a single image for critical discussion.

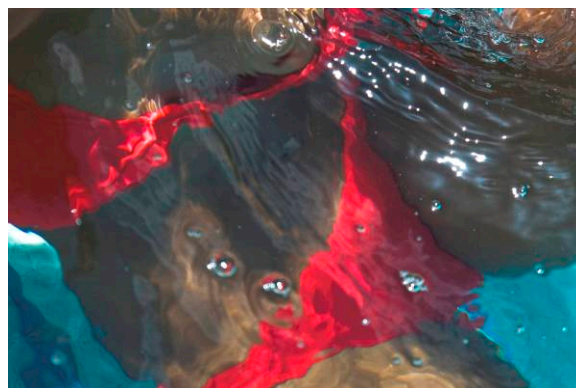
Instructor: Lisa Semerad

Saturday, January 31, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

January, 2009

Electronic Competition 1st Place Winners

December 2008 – The Human Body



Novice – Cynthia Hunter – "A Light Breeze"



Advanced – José Cartas – "Curves"



Altered – Alex Guo – "Silhouette Solo Dancer 2"

Results of Competition for December 2008 – The Human Body

Competition Judge: Don Becker

Prints

Black and White – 6 entries

1 st	Ross Pierce	Sky Pose
2 nd	Chris Hanessian	Valerie I

Color, Novice – 2 entries

* Not enough entries to hold a competition

Color, Advanced – 5 entries

1 st	Chris Hanessian	Valerie II
2 nd	Bob Dargel	Painted Lady

Altered – 3 entries

1 st	Bill Seelig	The Lady
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Focus on NBCC Members

Alan Sislen is showing new landscape photographs at the Multiple Exposures Gallery in the Torpedo Factory Art Center, Studio 312 (105 N. Union Street, Alexandria, VA).

“(Black and) White Sands” records another visit to this amazing geological wonder, where Alan explores the natural beauty of these gypsum sand dunes in classic black and white. To him, the dunes are living, moving structures that change minute by minute and hour by hour depending on the winds, the play of light and clouds, and the ever-changing weather.

The exhibit runs until January 11, 2009. Gallery hours are daily from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.



“Yucca and Sky” © Alan Sislen

Electronic

Novice – 11 entries

1 st	Cynthia Hunter	Underwater
2 nd	Stu Reiter	Waiting
3 rd	Jean Hanson	Pointing Skywards
HM	John Barnes	Elbow

Advanced – 24 entries

1 st	José Cartas	Curves
2 nd	Sigrid Vollerthun	Nimble Fingers
3 rd	Joel Hoffman	Legs and Light
HM	Nikhil Bahl	Lost in Thought
HM	Judy Burr	Abby's Hands
HM	Alex Guo	Silhouette Solo Dancer
HM	Don Martell	Repose
HM	Janet Myder Hammack	Chasing His Shadow

Altered – 19 entries

1 st	Alex Guo	Silhouette Solo Dancer 2
2 nd	Christianne Witten	Black Triangle
3 rd	Jess Stansbury-McCargo	The Hand
HM	Lucia Goldman	The Creation of Alfred
HM	Janet Myder Hammack	His Left Foot
HM	Rebecca Tidman	Nude Study



Did You Know?

Anita van Rooy

1. When you finish working in Camera RAW and then want to open your image in Photoshop, there are two possibilities: as a straight image or as a smart object. By holding Shift you can toggle between these two options.

2. When you have a paint brush open, you can use the keyboard to set the opacity of the BRUSH (5 is 50%, 7 is 70%, etc.). If you do not have a brush open, you can do the same keyboard strokes to set the opacity of a LAYER.



Cumulative Scores for 2008-2009; Through December, 2008

Black and White Prints

42 Judy Switt
38 Chris Hanessian
10 Ross Pierce
8 Chuck Bress
6 Roy Sewall

Color Prints

Novice

25 Angelique Raptakis
24 Willem Bier
19 Bill Olson

Advanced

39 Bob Dargel
38 Chris Hanessian
26 Nikhil Bahl
16 Cynthia Keith
9 John Villforth
8 Les Trachtman
6 Dan McDermott

Altered Prints

29 Bill Seelig
18 Sharyn Greberman
10 Anita van Rooy
9 Jean Yuan

Novice Electronic

33 Cynthia Hunter
29 Dawn Sikkema
28 Willem Bier
28 Jess Stansbury-McCargo
20 Jean Hanson
18 Angelique Raptakis
12 John Barnes
10 Christianne Witten
9 Rob IJsselstein
9 Stu Reiter
8 Cheryl Naulty
6 Shereen Kopp
6 Bill Olson
6 Paul Taylor

Advanced Electronic

32 Alex Guo
30 Judy Switt
24 Nikhil Bahl
18 José Cartas
18 Gordie Corbin
18 Joel Hoffman
16 Evelyn Jacob
12 Ira Adler
12 Bob Peavy
10 Rebecca Tidman
9 Carl Root
9 Sigrid Vollerthun
8 Barbara DeLouise
6 Judy Burr
6 Bruce Davis
6 James Hammack
6 Don Martell
6 Janet Myder Hammack
6 Mark Segal
6 John Villforth
6 Gerry Weiss

Altered Electronic

34 Gordie Corbin
25 Jess Stansbury-McCargo
22 Jim Hawkins
21 Stu Reiter
18 Lucia Goldman
18 Rebecca Tidman
16 Janet Myder Hammack
14 James Hammack
10 Alex Guo
9 Bruce Davis
9 Christianne Witten
8 Joel Hoffman
6 Judy Burr
6 David Davidson
6 Dennis Green
6 Evelyn Jacob

"The picture is not made by the photographer, the picture is more good or less good in function of the relationship that you have with the people you photograph."

Sebastiao Salgado

Tim Grey's Digital Darkroom Questions

I want to drop in a silhouette onto the sky of a photo image. The problem is that the silhouette I found has a solid white background. Using the instructions for the composite image, I have successfully added the rectangular white block with the black silhouette to the photo. How can I eliminate the white block background, replacing it with the sky?

In this case the solution is relatively easy, since the image is completely (or nearly completely) black and white. With the silhouette layer already placed into the background as a separate layer, start by creating a selection for the area you want to keep. For example, you could use the Magic Wand or Quick Selection tool to select the black; or you could create a selection of the white and then invert that selection (Select > Modify > Invert) to get the black area selected. The quality of the selection is important for the final effect, so take the time to get that selection as accurate as possible.

With the selection active (and the layer you want to form the silhouette active on the Layers palette), click the Add Layer Mask button (the circle inside a square icon) at the bottom of the Layers palette. This will add a layer mask to the active layer based on the active selection, so that only the selected area will be visible. In this case, that will leave you with a silhouette over your existing image.

You will then want to apply at least a slight feathering to the mask, so it will blend in slightly with the background. Before Photoshop CS4, this called for applying a slight Gaussian Blur to the layer mask. However, with CS4 you will want to instead go to the Masks palette and adjust the Feather setting. This produces exactly the same result as if you had applied a Gaussian Blur to the mask with the same setting, but when you use the Feather control on the Masks palette it is non-destructive, so you can go back and modify the effect later.

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