

Changing the rules

by Malcolm McElvaney

I can only speak for myself but the one thing that stays the same no matter where I go to take pictures is the way I see the world around me. My method for capturing a scene can also get somewhat predictable I suppose so how do I break out of the patterns I fall into. I tend to be more open to whatever catches my eye be it the foreground element or background element and go from there to compose the image. The final image tends to be "HDR" or bracketed with an eye toward black and white but I use to try to produce stereoscopic imagery primarily prior to this so my interest will shift but the question still remains.



Cropping the "wrong way"

Occasionally it is helpful to alter the routine slightly or maybe even more radically if you prefer to shift your focus to be more aware of what your looking for in the scene. On October the 11th I went to the Davis Mountains State Park to test out two new rules that had recently been formulated from random inspirations. In places I visit often like this particular state park finding something to photograph I haven't taken before can be a challenge but also a good place to try new ideas.

Cropping the "wrong way" came up in regards to a zoom talk on fashion photography but got me to thinking about composition in general. When does your subject become your framing element as well? By filling the frame multiple areas can be created for example or perhaps it is just a reminder that going closer in on a subject can be an important alternative in composing an image as well.

It is kind of unusual for me but the second rule was also inspired by photography. I like to explore painting, comic books,

and other art forms for ideas as well but in this instance a video on embracing your shadows is what caught my attention. The photographer liked to shoot to keep his highlights so had to sacrifice some detail in his shadows. Accepting this lost of detail was his theme and working within those limits. I chose instead to overexpose to capture details in the shadows and lose some the highlights. The pattern of the mid tones and highlights you do capture support the enhanced shadows. The example I took seems to match my goal or at the very least produced something different.

This particular photo session yielded some nice results and the looking closer at the subject did make me recompose or find a new picture or two. Setting some more “unusual” session goals might be a way to boost your creativity, especially in places where you photograph a lot and just want to play.



Embrace your shadows