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- [Computers/Tech/Photo](http://www.letsgokings.com/bbs/f15/) (<http://www.letsgokings.com/bbs/f15/>)

- - [LGK Photography Challenge #2](#)

(http://www.letsgokings.com/bbs/f15/lgk_photography_challenge_2_a-72061.html)

PuckMonkey

February 7th, 2008 02:43 AM

All my critiques are based on personal opinions and may be entirely without merit. But they are thought out and presented with the intent of giving each other a fresh set of eyes to improve our chops. My intent is never to crush anyone's fragile spirit, but if that happens, well then bonus points for me. :)

FBJ:

Like the new images a lot as a whole. Great color and, as always, really nice composition. Just a few things to nit-pick about. On "Turnkey" I would have been more interested in seeing you exploit the shapes and colors of this subject. I get the sense that you pulled back to make sure the viewer knew it was a group of wind-up keys, but I think if you were to abandon the idea that the viewer needs to know what they are looking at (in this instance), there are a lot of possibilities for simple yet interesting composition there. But I realize your options were limited since I think you were hanging over a second floor railing to take this if I remember correctly. • "Umbrellary"; you saw the great composition of color over color, overlaid beautifully by a triangular frame, and you knew exactly how you were going to crop it (beautifully, btw)... but you missed the folded over flap on the umbrella. Super nick-picky I know, but "scanning the frame" is something I've been working on myself, so that's why it stood out to me. • "Stars Upon Thars"; LOVE the negative space here, and the colors and shapes are outstanding, but just as an exercise, rotate this image 180 degrees. I'm not suggesting it as the proper orientation, but it does give it a different, I don't know, center of balance. Would be curious what you thought either way. Great stuff as always

BIG JOE:

I had a thought on your radio dial experiment. I'm talking HDR, but old school Ansel Adams HDR. Try this: First off, lower that ISO. The noise is working against you in terms of clarity. Then test shoot images for the dial alone (low ISO, slower shutter). When you get what looks good to you for the lighted dial only, make note of how long the shutter speed is (for example, say 2 seconds). Now this is where it gets really convoluted. Make your shutter speed 15 seconds, auto-time the shutter, when the shutter opens count off the 2 seconds that gave you a good lighted dial, then physically unplug the radio so the light goes off. Then slowly wave a lit iPod or cell phone in front of the radio face for the duration of the exposure. This would take place in the dark obviously, but this is old school dodging and burning. I don't really know for sure what the result will be, but it will be different.

OTTO VoN BLoTTo:

The Tack Attack series is awesome. One day when I steal this idea (oh, and I will steal it), I promise I will have the courtesy to not claim to have invented it. Great stuff.

ValleyFan:

Go ahead and take a few dabs with the blemish tool on the "Red Kitchen Bowl" pic. Great image but those floating dust bits are distracting. The look is too smooth to ignore it. • "5 South"; I disagree with the previous opinion that the buildings are a distraction. In fact, I think the latest crop is not as effective as the initial version you posted. The buildings gave it context and really pronounced the movement of the lights below. To me, it's not as effective without the stationary aspect. Also, I see a great crop (too tight maybe), just around the merge sign.

Blurker:

Love the board shots, especially the first one. Nice graduated lighting over the pots. Like the soft spot lighting on the first golf ball also, though you did get a little hot on a couple of the dimples. How did you light that? And the red one too, how? Nice set.

rinkrat:

The neon shots are awesome. I need to find some neon in my neck of the woods.

PuckHead27:

Great images. Agreeing with ValleyFan a bit on the lighthouse pic, but maybe it isn't the angle that is the issue, so much as maybe it's too centered. A slight crop to put the subject into the "visual center" instead of the strict center would give the lighthouse a little more presence.

Blurker

February 7th, 2008 08:08 AM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **PuckMonkey** (Post 1069986)

Blurker:

Love the board shots, especially the first one. Nice graduated lighting over the pots. Like the soft spot lighting on the first golf ball also, though you did get a little hot on a couple of the dimples. How did you light that? And the red one too, how? Nice set.

The mixing board shots were available light through a window in my office. The first one was a 2 second exposure @ f/16. If I get time, I might try the recropping that's been suggested by a couple of y'all.

The white ball was lit using the on-board flash on my XTi. I was flagging the flash with my free hand while shooting, so that explains the lack of background light. Most of the other shots looked like crap, so I guess I got lucky here. I'll admit that I did tweak contrast a bit to cut down on the hotspot and help the background fall off just a bit more. But I didn't want to take it too far. If I was serious about it, I could certainly use the burn in tool in Photoshop to knock down the glare a bit more...

The red ball was lit by...

The red ball.

It's the same ball as the first shot, it's just lit with an internal flashing LED that's activated by impact so that you can play golf at night without paying the high greens fees at your local country club.
cough *cough*

The exposure details were 1/20th sec @ f/5.6 at 1600 ISO.

ValleyFan

February 7th, 2008 09:27 AM

OK, I posted [new versions](#) with some of the suggestions made.

I totally agree with the dust being distracting, and in my haze of illness over the weekend, I apparently didn't notice or care how dusty my water was, so with the permission granted to use the healing tool, I abused those pixels to the best of my ability.

For the 5 South shot, I am not sure what the "right" crop for this is. I'm not too happy with any of the ones I have done so far, but I had another try. The one thing I did with this version is to burn the

sings a bit so they weren't so crazy over exposed. I think really, I'm wishing I was set up more camera left of where I was. I like the idea of the really tight crop, I'll try it out and see if I have the pixels to do it.

Blurker I see what you are saying with the Red, Green, Yellow triptych. I was trying to have some fruit that still had some leaf on it, and the closest I came was the stem on the lemon, and I think you are right, it is more distracting than anything. With the relative size of the fruits, I was trying to keep about the same negative space on the sides of each, so perhaps instead of cropping what I should to is clump the limes a little closer together, so I can push in on them more, fill more of the frame but keep the negative space around the edges. I'm hoping to reshoot this setup with some colored backgrounds, so I'll give it another go perhaps this weekend.

Thank you guys for the feedback!

PuckHead27

February 7th, 2008 10:22 AM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **ValleyFan**

Landscape shots in this weather are hard, because they often end up being low contrast due to all the atmosphere. Beyond doing some photomagic in something like Photoshop, I think a simple crop might help here. If you cropped off the top of the image, where the background is fading to gray, you still get a lot of the rainbow, and retain the high contrast portion at the bottom of the image.

I gave it a try. Please check my [original post](#) for the update.

I messed up and cropped the original instead of the copy that I made, so everyone that "quoted" that photo in a response now has the edited/cropped version.

Did that make any sense? :lol:

Quote:

Originally Posted by **ValleyFan**

The colors in this are great, but I think that the viewing angle is disadvantages for the lighthouse, as it makes it feel probably shorter than it is. Of course this might not help you at all because this might have been the only place you could get a shot of the lighthouse, but if at all possible, try and get that camera low so something like a lighthouse looks nice and big.

Actually that lighthouse is pretty stubby compared to most. From sea level it's located high up on the cliff so they really didn't need to build it very tall. You're right about my viewing angles, we had to hike up to the viewing platform located above the lighthouse to get a shot of it. Really great coastline views from up there BTW. **Thanks** again for all the great advice!! :cheers:

Quote:

Originally Posted by **PuckMonkey**

Great images. Agreeing with ValleyFan a bit on the lighthouse pic, but maybe it isn't the angle that is the issue, so much as maybe it's too centered. A slight crop to put the subject into the "visual center" instead of the strict center would give the lighthouse a little more presence.

Thanks for the advice PM. I gave it a try and I've added the "attempt" the my [original post](#). :salute:

PuckMonkey

February 7th, 2008 10:47 AM

http://i84.photobucket.com/albums/k3..._5413-Edit.jpg

^ Wow. HUGE difference. It's amazing what 37 pixels worth of dust can do to an image.

http://i84.photobucket.com/albums/k3..._5465-Edit.jpg

^ I like this much better, and it now balances the image with the merge sign (which I am fixated on for some reason). How averse would you be to dodging that merge sign by a stop and a half? :)

<http://amdelrosario.smugmug.com/phot...901471-L-2.jpg>

^ Knocking it off center makes a difference, but not as much as I had hoped. What's your thought on the difference? Maybe try going "[rule of thirds](#)" with it.

PuckHead27

February 7th, 2008 12:14 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **PuckMonkey** (Post 1070175)

Knocking it off center makes a difference, but not as much as I had hoped. What's your thought on the difference? Maybe try going "[rule of thirds](#)" with it.

I liked it better than my original photo, but like you I'm not sure it made that much of a difference.

I made another copy and gave it another go, this time attempting to use the "rule of thirds." I like it even better. A positive side effect is that the lighthouse (although still small) does not look as tiny as it did before. :yourock:

[My Original Post](#)

ValleyFan

February 7th, 2008 01:52 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **PuckHead27** (Post 1070144)

I gave it a try. Please check my [original post](#) for the update.

I messed up and cropped the original instead of the copy that I made, so everyone that "quoted" that photo in a response now has the edited/cropped version.

I like it better, I would be interested to see if you kept the width, but cropped the top off, so it was in something like a 2.40:1 aspect ratio instead 4:3 (sorry, I wasn't clear in my original comment).

I like the lighthouse crop a lot! PM knows what he is talking about.

PuckMonkey

February 7th, 2008 01:52 PM

One more added to [my set](#) from the arboretum.

FlyBoeingJets

February 7th, 2008 02:42 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **PuckMonkey** (Post 1070340)
One more added to [my set](#) from the arboretum.

Heh. Your priorities are set perfectly.

- 1) Get the shot of the peacock.
- 2) Get child away from annoyed peacock.

Nice shot, too!

ValleyFan

February 7th, 2008 03:09 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **PuckMonkey** (Post 1070175)
I like this much better, and it now balances the image with the merge sign (which I am fixated on for some reason). How averse would you be to dodging that merge sign by a stop and a half? :)

[Sign pushed](#). Might be a little far though, I think that version of the sign might work well with your tight crop idea. I'm sneaking these changes in between my real work, so it takes me a while to try them out :)

Unruey35

February 7th, 2008 03:41 PM

I need to try harder. mhihi:

Blurker

February 7th, 2008 03:42 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **ValleyFan** (Post 1061993)
Sign pushed:
<http://i84.photobucket.com/albums/k3...465-Edit-2.jpg>

This is the one that does it for me. Having the signs in the upper left corner gives me a frame of reference for those buildings, instead of them just being misc background jumble. I like the solitary yellow traffic sign standing alone in the river of light. It's somehow symbolic of LA life now.

Great job.

OTTO VoN BLOTT

February 8th, 2008 10:53 AM

PuckMonkey, the Peacock is NIICE. It almost doesn't look real. Great shot.

And it seems many of the suggestions are working, as the results are excellent. ValleyFan, I'll try and fiddle according to yours soon..... as well as put up a new image or two. Just gotta get through this f'n workweek.

Keep up the good work, boys and girl! kewlpic:

empire

February 8th, 2008 12:36 PM

Using my point n shoot Canon PowerShot A550:

http://i39.photobucket.com/albums/e1...g/IMG_0797.jpg

http://i39.photobucket.com/albums/e1...g/IMG_0801.jpg

http://i39.photobucket.com/albums/e1...g/IMG_0787.jpg

http://i39.photobucket.com/albums/e1...g/IMG_0783.jpg

rinkrat

February 8th, 2008 01:32 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **PuckMonkey** (Post 1070340)
One more added to [my set](#) from the arboretum.

<http://www.cindrome.com/LGKPHOTO/pri...ocktoasten.jpg>

Awesome!

PuckHead27

February 9th, 2008 12:10 AM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **ValleyFan** (Post 1070338)
I like it better, I would be interested to see if you kept the width, but cropped the top off, so it was in something like a 2.40:1 aspect ratio instead 4:3 (sorry, I wasn't clear in my original comment).

Excellent suggestion, I'll try it and post it on my [original post](#).

THANKS VF!!

OTTO VoN BLOTT

February 9th, 2008 02:35 AM

Added a couple [here](#).

FlyBoeingJets

February 10th, 2008 06:37 AM

Okay. I'm back from work. I hat four-day trips with a passion! So here I am finally getting around to commenting.

Again, thanks to everyone who's participated in these two Challenges!

This post will be a round of comments on the new images I've seen posted since my last commentary. Again, picture critiquing is highly subjective, so don't take these as anything more than my opinions of the images. I am by no means a professional, and my **** is by no means flawless. Above all, remember that I'm learning just as much from your images by critiquing them as I am from you guys critiquing mine.

PuckMonkey:

"Digging For Dinosaurs" is a great image, conceptually and compositionally. But I find myself looking for a places where the subjects are in focus, and I'm finding only a very few. The 1-inch or so band in the middle of the photograph where objects are most in-focus only encompasses the very tip of the brush and bottom end of the film canister. IMO, had you shot a bit wider, placed the focal plan a bit higher up on the objects (to bring the entire yellow film canister into focus, since that is what the eye is drawn toward in the image) or maybe deepened it with a tighter aperture, and cropped to get your desired composition, the viewer would be able to find in-focus subjects much easier. My opinion, is all.

The peacock image is visually stunning, primarily for the vibrant blues and greens. The circles of the "eyes" also fit well into the Challenge. Patience clearly paid off in this case.

Big Joe:

I like the red-brick photo for its simplicity. The cut-off bricks at the edge of the photograph add squares to your red.

The dog pic, however, seems a bit "snapshotish" to me. The primary problem with this is that the dog appears to be motion-blurred and the focused area is impossible to find. When taking images like that, the eyes are where you want to be perfectly in-focus.

Otto:

"Tack Attack" is a great idea. My two favorites are the ones with the black backgrounds. All of them could use some lighting, either via an off-camera flash or a light-stand. I think I'm seeing a bit of camera-shake in there, too. But that may just be my bleary eyes this early in the morning.

The Japanese matchbox images have SO MUCH POTENTIAL, but (and not to sound like a total dick here...just an opinion I'm stating) these images fall drastically short of that potential in terms of composition. The match-heads are red, right? Include them as a bigger subject! Find some different angles! It may be a relatively tiny object, but there's SO MUCH to explore with it! Also, the first picture's crop-angle is off just enough to make a person think "snapshot" instead of "photograph."

The traffic signal shot needs a background and better lighting.

Get the camera on a tripod with some off-camera flash (or other lighting) to shoot the masks and there'd be some major improvement. Also, maybe angle the masks in the image or play around another way with the composition.

ValleyFan:

You've obviously done some touching up on some of the images based upon other's critiques (which I would have mentioned as well), so I'll critique the "finished" images.

"Red Kitchen Bowl" is nicely composed and I like the color a lot, but I'm not finding anything in the image that's in focus. Even the water droplet seems blurred, though I'd have figured 1/1250th would have been a fast enough shutter speed to freeze it. I might feel differently about that if I were looking at the as-shot image instead of the shrunken-down version. Also, the first thing that catches my eye in the image is the bright-white reflections in the top right corner. It's difficult to keep my eye from wandering back to that part of the image. While it obviously gives depth to the image, it's brightness is a bit distracting to me.

"8 Second Stoplight" appeals to me. It's very HDR-like. Technically, it's obviously well-planned. Composition is appealing as well...I like the angle from which it's shot.

"5 South" also appeals to me, especially in its final form. It looks to me that you're square enough with the yellow sign that you may have been able to get it to reflect a properly-aimed pop from your flash to illuminate it. That might have saved you some Photoshop work. The brighter that yellow sign is (so long as it doesn't overpower the white headlight streaks) the more that image is "made."

Blurker:

Interesting images of the mixing board! I'm glad I'm not the only switch-flipper/knob-twiddler in here! Mine do different things, of course, but they're equally confusing to the layman. In the first shot, I imagine that less venetian blind in the shot might make for an even more interesting image. I also catch myself wondering "WTF?" about the thing in the top-right corner. Cropping it a bit differently would add appeal, as far as I'm concerned. OR, get tighter and use a more wide-open f-stop to play with the depth-of-field a bit!

The two red circles on the paper (I think it's paper, anyway) would be an interesting image if the one of the circles were in focus. It appears to me that the focal plane falls smack-dab between the two circles, drawing my eye to a plain piece of paper as the subject of the image.

"Twilight Tracer #1" is coool. Lots of circles! Get the flash off the camera to avoid that wicked shine-mark on the ball and you've got a good image here. "Twilight Tracer #2" is too centered. Rule-of-thirds is your friend. Also, with a dark image like that it might have been better to place the ball on a surface that reflects the ball better. I'm not thinking 'mirror' here, I'm thinking more like a granite countertop or something with a smooth, somewhat reflective surface.

Rinkrat:

"36/36 Club" is an interesting image. Go with a longer lens and stand further away and you might get a better result in terms of composition, though. Also, it looks to me like your camera metered it's exposure on the center of the image, which would have been the side of the building. Meter on the brightest part of the neon (which in that image are a tad blown-out) and you will get rid of a LOT of the background clutter (like the street sign and the building's side) in darkness. That, in my opinion, would make for an image that focuses attention more on the signage that you're trying to capture, rather than the ugly building the signs are bolted onto.

Your second image is an almost-perfect example of what I was trying to say about the first.

I like the lighting in the image of the artist. Good capture! The only thing is that maybe you could crop it down from the top a tad. I get this "yeah okay, already!" feeling when I look at the top of the image. There are plenty of his pictures in the rest of the image that you could crop down a little and give the viewer a little less to wander around the frame about.

Tsk tsk tsk...the Doodah pictures were taken before this Challenge started!! They do fit, though.

And clowns are evil.

Puckhead27:

Again, you've already done some work with the suggested improvements other people have given you, which were pretty much identical what I would have said, so I'll hit the finished images.

The first rainbow capture (the one with the cityscape) is definitely improved by more creative cropping to get rid of the visually unappealing parts of the image. Only improvement left to make would be to go back and shoot that one off a tripod, but I know that's impossible. On the larger version of the image, there is definitely some camera shake visible. I can't tell what the exposure settings were, but I'd suggest using a faster shutter speed at that focal length to help alleviate that problem. Also, since your subject is static, good breathing and a slow shutter-release squeeze might have helped as well. The second rainbow pic doesn't do much for me. I don't think the rainbow was quite vibrant enough to make itself the subject of that image. The mountains and bland sky sort of take over the shot.

The stubby lighthouse edited for rule-of-thirds is a good shot. I like the colors and the brightness of the white in the image. It really draws the eye to the subject. Again, looking at the larger version of the image reveals a tiny bit of blurriness due to camera-shake. But that's almost invisible on the smaller image, so I'd have to say, "Well done!" with the hand-hold.

The colors in the sunset shot are stunning. The problem I have with the final version of this image is that there's not enough contrast between the dark of the water and the shadow of the boat to make the boat pop out of the image as the subject. Because of that, my eye has a tendency to focus on the brightest spot in the image. I'm not sure how far away from the boat you were or what focal length you used for this image. I definitely am not certain exactly what could be done to make the boat pop out a little bit. Perhaps a matrix-metering instead of a single-point metered on the sun? Perhaps a [fresnell-lens flash extender](#) to help light the boat just a hint? Perhaps taking the photograph just a tad earlier (15 minutes or so) so that the sun isn't quite as low to the horizon? I don't know for sure, but pulling that boat out, contrast-wise, would make that a really really interesting shot.

Empire:

Thanks for getting into this! That little Powershot takes some pretty descent photos!

The first image of the Chinese lamps could use a little bit more contrast and perhaps a slight bump in vibrance to get the sky to pop a bit more blue. A bit of straightening to get the white columns of the railing to be vertical is a must, in my opinion. A crop would be advisable too (though a slightly steeper angle to the subject for the shot in the first place might have been even better), to get the big outdoor light out of the bottom left hand corner of the image. Perhaps a portrait-oriented crop right out of the center of the image might make it really nice? Of course, straightening and cropping are unnecessary things if you keep an eye on them when framing the shot. If you get in the habit of taking a look all around the frame before you squeeze the shutter release to make sure you like everything that you capture, post-processing time goes way down.

The second image has an appealing perspective. It, too, could benefit from a slight increase in contrast and a tidbit of a bump on the vibrance slider in Photoshop.

The third image suffers from what the first image suffered from in terms of crop and straightness. Again, more contrast would take the "haze" out. Get closer to your subjects! Explore different angles! For some reason, I want to see what these lamps would look like from underneath or close-in with the camera at a shallow angle.

The fourth image is kind of the "wtf" image of the group. I don't think you're close enough to the subject for the viewer to understand exactly what it is they're looking at (aside from blobs of color). Also, floating heads in the bottom of the image make it look sort of hastily-shot. In addition, the white railing is slightly off-horizontal, which gives the whole image a feel of "leaning" to one side. Had you gone portrait orientation with the camera and gotten a slightly higher vantage point from which to capture the image, it would have served you better, I think.

Aside from all that, I think that place is WONDERFULLY colorful! Is it always decked out like that, or was that for a special occasion? Can any average joe-schmoe go in there and photograph? If so, I may need to visit there.

All times are GMT -8. The time now is 09:35 AM.

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