



Frank Comisar

© Frank Comisar-Scenic Aperture

AUG
2020

The Shutterbug
a newsletter of Trinity Arts Photo Club

From Screen to Print



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www.trinityartsphotoclub.org



meetup

Have something to contribute?
Email darrenwiedman@gmail.com

August VIRTUAL Meeting

Monday, August 24, 7 p.m.

Program Speaker:

Frank Comisar

Nature photographer Frank Comisar has always had a deep love for the majesty of the outdoors, especially the American West.

Comisar worked as an architect for 27 years and eventually became president and CEO of an architecture and engineering firm. Despite the incredible professional and monetary success he experienced during this phase of his life, he began to see that something important was missing.

Looking to fill that void, Comisar began to rediscover his passion for nature photography, which became an "escape from the corporate grind." He started attending workshops taught by masters of fine-art nature photography and becoming familiar with the work of prominent American photographers like Ansel Adams and Edward Curtis.

Though Comisar is now a full-time nature photographer, his work is heavily influenced by his previous experience as an architect. Architects work with two-dimensional media, such as paper and computer screens, to create our three-dimensional built environment.

In a somewhat related way, photographers capture the scale, emotion, and grandeur of the three-dimensional world on two-dimensional media.

Working as an architect also taught him that ". . . the creative process is not a destination but a journey. It is a journey that includes



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research, planning, timing, technical skills, creative judgment, and a bit of good luck."

Comisar shows his photographs at Scenic Aperture Gallery on historic Main Avenue in Durango, Colorado, which he owns with his wife, Cheril. He is also a member of the North American Nature Photography Association, and his work has been featured in a number of publications, including *Outdoor Photographer* magazine, *Healthcare Design* magazine, *Focus on Nebraska* by the Omaha World Herald, and the National Natural Landmarks 50th Anniversary Calendar.

Additionally, he teaches workshops for aspiring photographers, giving them the skills he has developed over years of his own training, experience, and opportunities to photograph some of the beautiful landscapes and wildlife he has come to love. The encouragement and mentorship he received at the beginning of his development has been key to his success, and he hopes to share that with other photographers.

www.scenicaperture.com



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Frank Comisar believes that a hard-copy print is (or should be) the end game of your best photography. Digital images are easy to scroll by and forget. But when you print an image, it becomes physical. As a



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From Screen to Print...

Keys to Success



© Frank Comisar

print, your best work becomes part of your daily physical existence, and therefore, much more meaningful.

But there are many excuses not to print your images: it's hard work, time consuming, and expensive, and the prints never look like the image on your screen. Right? Wrong.

To be successful, a professional photographer requires a cost-efficient, time-sensitive, and dependable printing process. During our August presentation, Frank will share his printing workflow and several keys to successful printing.



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© Aaron Hockley

Meet our August judge

Aaron Hockley is an award-winning professional photographer based in Vancouver, Washington. He is a member of the Professional Photographers of America and has Master of Photography and Photographic Craftsman degrees. Visit his website to view his work and learn more about him.

www.hockleyphoto.com

One last reminder

Comedy Pet Photo

\$2.50 entry fee per image
First Prize: \$3,700
Ten percent of all gross income donated to Blue Cross.
Closing Date: August 31



www.comedypetphoto.com

Trinity Arts Photo Club Competitions

August Topic: Down Low

September Topic: Open

Entry Deadline: **September 1**

No assigned topic. Challenge yourself with the camera and/or with post-processing. Try something new. Push yourself.

Upcoming Competition Topics

October – Procrastinator’s Delight

Topic will be chosen from a hat at the August meeting. Photos must be taken between drawing and the October 1 competition deadline. No shooting ahead. No looking through archived photos. You have a limited window of time to take this competition topic.

November – Patterns in Nature

Look for repeated patterns and geometric shapes in nature.

December – No contest

January (2021) – Open

February (2021) – Still Life

March (2021) – Architecture (Inside or Out)

April (2021) – High- or Low-Key Images

May (2021) – Open

June (2021) – Images That Say Texas!

July (2021) – Composing with Curves

August (2021) – Long Exposure Images

September (2021) – Open

October (2021) – Procrastinator’s Delight

November (2021) – Portrait (People or Animals)

Composition:

What Do You Do When There Is No Subject?

by Jim Hamel

Landscape photographers face a problem that other photographers usually don't have: deciding on a subject.

When a portrait photographer prepares to take a picture, there is no question what the subject will be: the person. Similarly, a wildlife photographer always knows what the subject of their photo will be: the animal. That's not to say those types of photography are easy...but if you are a landscape photographer, you have, no doubt, spent countless hours driving or walking around looking for something—anything—to use as a subject. It is often the biggest challenge we face.

Now, sometimes picking a subject is not that difficult. If you have the Portland Head Light or the Golden Gate Bridge in your scene . . . well, it is pretty clear what your subject is going to be. What about a standard scenic view though? Usually there are just some hills and trees in front of you with the sky as the background. It might be pretty. It might be a nice view. But what is the subject?

Even if you go to a remarkably scenic spot, you might still face the same challenge. You can go to the Grand Canyon or Monument Valley and still come home with nothing more than a bunch of snapshots.

So what do we do about this problem? Well, we cannot fix it entirely. We often

just have to muddle through. The reality is that much of the world is just not that interesting or doesn't translate well into pictures. That said, there are great pictures to be had even where there is no obvious subject. Further, there are some things you can do to mitigate this problem. Here is how I suggest you approach it:

Step 1: Plan Ahead

Photography is in many ways similar to fishing. You can never guarantee success and some days will be better than others no matter what you do. Still, there are things you can do to improve your chances.

In fishing, if you simply drop your line into a random part of a lake, then yes, you do have some chance of catching a fish. The chances are not that great though. Real fishermen plan ahead with maps. They look for the structures where they know the fish hide. They race out to the best spots based on the intel they

received. When they are on the water, they are using fishfinders. They are constantly moving around to find the part of the lake where the fish are. In short, they make every effort to know where the fish are, and then get to those spots.

Similarly, in photography, if you simply walk around with a camera slung over your shoulder, then yes, you do have some chance of running into a beautiful scene that will translate well into a great picture. But the odds are not great. Rather, just as in fishing, you should plan ahead and find those structures and other things that

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© James Hamel



might serve as a good subject or center of interest for your photo.

Here are a few excellent tools to find these subjects:

The 500px World Map:

This map will show you pictures taken by location so you can see what other photographers did in the area to plan to visit. (Ed. note: I could not find this.)

Google Street View:

This feature of Google Maps will allow you to virtually walk around and explore an area ahead of time. The “pegman” feature will show you all sorts of angles and views. It is the next best thing to being there.

Simple keyword search:

If you are going to a distinct place, you can also run a simple search on that area through Google, Flickr, or 500px. Once you find a photographer or two that have specialized in that area, check out their websites.

There is a chapter devoted toward this subject in [my book](#), so I don't want

to belabor the point too much here for those who have already read it. Just use the tools available to you to plan ahead and find features that might serve as interesting subjects. This will save you a lot of time.

Step 2: Run Through the Features You Can Use

What features might actually serve as a useful subject for our pictures? Of course, such a list is nearly infinite. Anything from a blade of grass to a tree to a rock can end up being an interesting subject. But saying that doesn't really help anybody.

In the context of coastal photography, here are some things to look for:

Old piers and docks • Lighthouses • Rock formations • Patterns in the water • Animals • Powerful waves • Clouds • People (for a sense of scale) • Reflections in the water

For landscapes, consider some of these subjects:

Old barns • Cows • Wind mills • Large rocks or boulders • Cliffs • Horses • Creeks • Bridges • Waterfalls • A hill or mountain peak • Abandoned cars or boats

Step 3: There Just Isn't Anything Here. Now What?

When there just doesn't appear to be a subject, just start looking for something you can use as a center of interest to tie the picture together. Sometimes it might be a cloud or one stand-out tree. Other times it can be the road.

© James Hamel



If you cannot find one thing to be a subject, you'll need to go in a different direction. Very often that means finding a pattern, shape, or line to serve as the centerpiece of your picture. A row of trees and can sometimes work here. If you are dealing with a desert or barren scene, patterns in the sand can work well. Be careful though, as you often cannot see these patterns the way your camera does. You will need to look through the camera a lot.

Frankly, anything that you can turn into a line through your picture works as well. The line helps guide the viewer's eye, which is ultimately what you are trying to do with a subject or center of interest in the picture. Roads and creeks are good examples. A winding pathway can work really well. You might also set up your shot

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so that a line or shoreline line runs through the picture. You can do the same with rows created by farmers or by hedges.

Remember that the subject of your photo isn't necessarily a thing. It can be an idea. As long as the picture is held together visually by a pattern, shape, or line, the underlying subject can still come through.

Step 4: The Wait

Sometimes the best pictures are created by setting up an interesting composition—even if there is no real subject—and then waiting for something to happen. Particularly in an urban context, it is often a great idea to set up your composition and then wait. A person may walk through the scene. Any number of things might happen to provide you with a great subject. Henri Cartier-Bresson was famous for this technique.

Does this technique work in a remote location or a landscape context? Sort of. You typically aren't going to have a lot of people or traffic coming through your

scene (and, frankly, that is probably the last thing you would want anyway). You might get lucky with an animal or some birds coming into your scene, but this is not likely.

The best bet is to return to your location later, if you can. Come back when there is something going on—a storm is approaching or there is dramatic lighting. Anything to create that extra "something" that anchors or completes your picture.

Step 5: When All Else Fails...Using "The Scene"

I should mention that this article stemmed from an email discussion I had with a reader who posed the question "what do you do when there's no subject?" We talked about a lot of the concepts in this article, and he raised the point that sometimes the subject is just "the scene."

I am resistant to accept this notion because it sounds a lot like taking a snapshot to me. I have countless pictures on my hard drive that were "a good view" or "the scene" but did not translate into anything more than that.

That said, he has a point. Again, very often the subject is not a thing at all. It is a feeling or an idea. In fact, those are frequently the best subjects.

Final Takeaway for Finding a Subject

I am not pretending that I can solve this problem for you. Finding a great subject is something you will struggle with as long

as you decide to keep taking pictures. However, I am writing this article for two reasons. First, to acknowledge the problem, so you won't think it is peculiar to you or that you are doing something wrong. For landscape photographers, finding a subject has been a challenge, is a challenge, and always will be a challenge. There is no technological development that I see changing this. If you find this part of photography difficult, you are far from alone.

Secondly, I want to provide at least a few tips for dealing with this constant struggle. Hopefully, planning ahead and running through a checklist of potential features will result in clear subjects for you. If not, then creating a pattern or leading line may help. Finally, don't overlook just waiting around or coming back later. Whatever you do, remember to work the scene from several different spot and angles so that you can be sure you've covered everything.



Jim Hamel is not just a great photographer, writer, and teacher, he's also one of our very own TAPC members. Check out his free photography guides and tutorials at

Outdoor Photo Academy. You can also see this original unedited article.

Beginner

July Contest Winners – "Landscape/Waterscape"



© Greg Richards

1st Place & People's Choice Award (tie)
Mountain Beauty Greg Richards



© Robert Wertz

2nd Place *Surfs Up* Robert Wertz

"We were hiking at Sunshine Meadows in Banff, Canada, when I took this photo."
(f/4, 1/640, 7.889mm, 125 ISO)
- Greg Richards

Honorable Mention
Pacific Beauty
Robert Sharp



© Robert Sharp

3rd Place
Creek Near Lake Tahoe
Laura Richards



© Laura Richards

People's Choice Award (tie)
Fall Reflections Sonya Young



© Sonya Young



Advanced

July Contest Winners – "Landscape/Waterscape"



© David Roberts

1st Place
New Day at Mill Pond
David Roberts



© Bill Webb

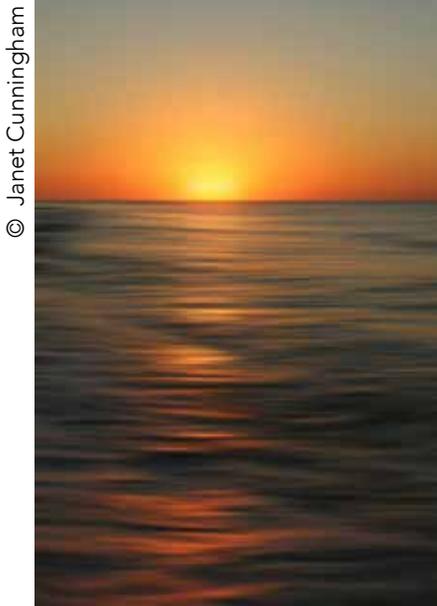
2nd Place *Along Carson Creek* Bill Webb

3rd Place
Sunrise in Paradise
Janet Cunningham

"This image was made on a beautiful January morning at my favorite spot at the Colleyville Nature Center." (ISO 100, f11, 1/8 with tripod)

- David Roberts

People's Choice Award
Penguin Parade Lana Macko



© Janet Cunningham



© Lynne Rogers Harris

Honorable Mention
Texas Sunrise Lynne Rogers Harris



© Lana Macko



The Story Behind the Photo

"I have a friend that has a cabin in Colorado near Rocky Mountain National Park. Three of us girls took a week long trip up there to get away and also do some wildlife photography. We were able to social distance quite nicely (well, except the plane ride, which really wasn't bad at all).

The cabin is near a small lake so moose can often be seen around it, but this particular day we decided to go into the park and do a small hike. Lucky for us, we saw this momma moose and her baby crossing the creek directly in front of our parked car just after arriving. Of course, this was the highlight of the day.

When you have a momma and baby, you take the opportunity to shoot continuously and then later delete 95% of your images. One thing to always be careful of is that you want something—a tree or car or big bush or anything—between you and the moose; and you really don't want to be too close.

We were probably less than 50 feet from these two, but we had several cars and trees we could get behind."

- Lynne Rogers Harris



© Lynne Rogers Harris

Momma Moose with Baby Lynne Rogers Harris (ISO 200, f4.0, 1/320)