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YOUR PERSONAL CREATIVE AGENCY

Photography Masterclass Notes

SmartPhone cameras are incredible, so lets get the most out of them.

1. Lighting



Lighting is King. Bad photography is often down to bad lighting. In most cases, especially photos of people, we want soft light. Harsh light ages us. So try to shoot in softer light conditions, like overcast days, or in the shadows cast by trees and buildings.

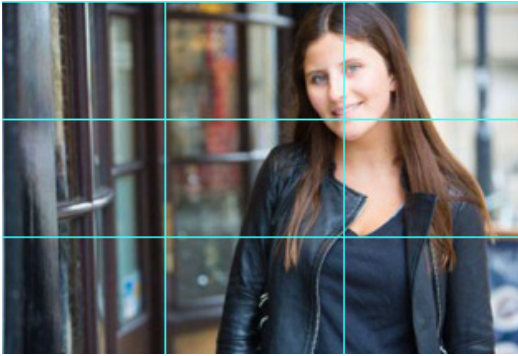
For depth, look to vary the direction of the source of light. Experiment. Try back and side-lighting your subjects for more interesting levels of depth and contour.



Our best photographs will invariably come by shooting during 'Magic Hour', sometimes called 'Golden Hour'. This is around sunrise and sunset (during winter, Magic Hour often lasts more than an hour). It can also happen before or after big storms. Whenever we experience this sort of light, grab the camera!



2. Composition



Composition is Queen. First, try using the Rule of Thirds. Most photographs have a natural direction of energy to them, and by placing our subject in a third, rather than centred, we create negative space, which is good.

Fortunately, cameras come with a grid feature to help remind us to do this.

Usually we want the negative space in front of our subject – in their line of sight. But we will find some exceptions to this. Experiment. Try both.



Think beyond the subject - look at the background of the shot - if we move around the room is there a more interesting angle?

Photographs of people are usually better if they're shot at their eye level. With kids, this can mean we need to bend our knees a bit!



How close can we get to our subject and still be comfortable? By 'cutting off the head' of our subject, we create intimacy. We also follow the example set by most of the best photographers in the world.



3. Aperture



For SmartPhones that have it, use the Portrait mode when shooting a person, or small group of people (2-3). This creates depth by making the background a bit blurry.

For DSLRs, consider getting a 50mm or 85mm prime lens, and place the F-stop setting between 1.8 and 2.4.

For landscapes and cityscapes and some groups, use a higher F-stop.

4. Crop, don't Zoom.

The zoom on SmartPhones is digital – it just lowers the quality - so very little benefit and it reduces our editing options later.

We want to take be active with cropping. Many photos are simply better with a crop. Use the composition tips, like the rule of thirds, to guide the crop.



5. Lock the Focus and Exposure

Lock the Focus and Exposure by touching the screen for 3 seconds. This is very useful in sunsets.

Step 1 - Select the faces to lock the focus on them. The sunset will be overexposed when we do this.

Step 2 – Drag your finger down the screen, which darkens the exposure of the sunset (making the faces darker).

Step 3 – Lighten the exposure of the faces later in editing.



6. Edit your photos.

Download some good editing software, like SnapSeed (there are several good ones), and start having fun with them.

Mostly, we just need to start playing with these features. Filters are great, but editing gives us more options. Of course, there is no filter or edit, no single button, that will help all photos.

So just play. Here are a couple of examples.

- **'Healing' tool** – removes an object that is surrounded by another. So the perfect example is the couple in the background below (between the girls). Because they're surrounded by sand, the 'healing' tool easily picks them out and replaces them with sand with the touch of a button.



I also warmed up this image, which can be done in 'Tuning' or 'White Balance'.

- **Filters** - Snapseed has some really good filters.



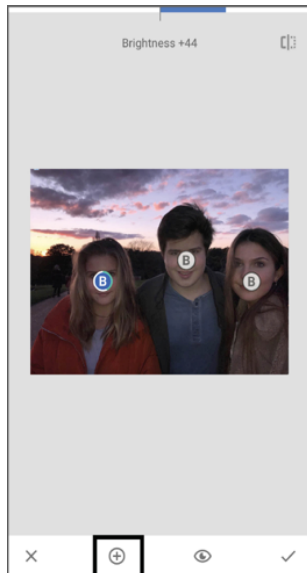
This image was created with one button. Drama. You can imagine how pleased I was with this.

Each button has several options; we alter the intensity of the filter by dragging our finger left or right across the screen.

Have fun with it.

- **Sunsets (the Selective button)**

Here we recover the exposure on the faces of our subjects, whilst retaining our beautiful sunset.



Step 1 – in Snapseed tools, choose 'selective'.

Step 2 – select the 'plus' button at the bottom of the screen, then highlight the area (face) you would like to brighten. Hint – with two fingers zoom in to make sure you're highlighting the centre of the face.

Step 3 – brighten the areas of the image by dragging your finger left and right across the phone's screen

Step 4 – repeat with other faces

Some Final Tips.

- For indoor shots, consider adding a Frame (last button), and for outdoor shots, consider adding a Vignette. See what you think.
- Some of our other favourite buttons include: Crop, Lens Blur and Expand
- Play and have fun!

We hope you found this helpful. Our client work is more sophisticated - including Art, Design, Photography, Video and other types of creative projects.

Check out the website, and if you see something that sparks your interest, give us a call!