



Camera Clips

June 2010

From the Editor

James Allan

Welcome to another edition of Camera clips. It is autumn and the leaves up here in Aldgate have been putting on their usual fine display. I am excited by the current edition. We have an excellent article by Matt Carr on Macro photography. Matt explains that this was a draft written in preparation for his Macro mania workshop which was not only well attended but also well received. I hope that you also enjoyed the small brown tree frog who attended this meeting. He is back in the camellias and doing fine. I'd be interested in publishing any images you took on this night. I also asked Ray (my co-editor) for an article and he wrote a stimulating opinion piece on dumbing down. We have had two competitions since the last edition, 'colour' and 'song title'. I have included digital images from the "colour" competition. It is interesting to note that we are receiving excellent entries from new contributors like Adrian Hill and Jim Trice. Meanwhile new contributors like Chris Schultz have been scooping the '10's' in the competition. Well done Chris. Unfortunately we have not had a good start to the year with club expeditions. A trip to the Northern Lights and another to the kite festival were both cancelled due to rain (and jetty collapse). We hope to run future excursions with greater success.

On a different note I have put together a photo essay on "photography as art". I hope that these images stimulate you to think about possible entries for the "in the style of..." competition. I must admit I was quite astounded by the Salvador Dali 'atomicus' picture when I first saw it. Phillippe Halsman has obviously captured something of the spirit of surrealism with Dali leaping off the ground, along with all of the furniture, a trio of cats and a bucket load of water. I wonder what Heronimus Bosch or Hans Brugel would have done if they had a camera. It must be remembered what an incredible impact photography has had on art.

Recently we have also had an interesting visit to the narrow little "Hutt street Photo's". Alan Logue easily communicated his enthusiasm for photography, along with a demonstration of the equipment that he has brought to the enterprise. He handed each of us a wallet with a range of images and a CD. The purpose was to assist us to calibrate our computer screens with the sample images. I note that Gary Secombe also has a spyder device that can be used to calibrate the screen automatically. I think Gary is happy to loan this to anyone who is interested.

Finally I want to remind everyone that I want your images for the 2011 club calendar. I have received images from only 7 members to date (well done to those members). Gary Secombe also wants images for a display at Photographic wholesalers in the city. Gary has offered to print selected images on his large A3 printer.

Macro Mania - an introduction to macro photography by Matthew Carr

Macro photography, sometimes called micro photography by all those Nikonians, is as far as I am concerned, basically just photography that is taken at close to 1:1 magnification or higher – in some cases much, much higher.

Now you may be asking, what am I talking about 1:1 magnification? Well basically 1:1 magnification is where the actual item being photographed is reproduced on the sensor or film at the same size as it actually is in real life.

From a personal view point, some of the reasons I enjoy macro photography is because it is technically difficult, and the end result of capturing details in creatures/plants etc that you wouldn't be able to see with the naked eye.

So what do you need to be able to take a 'macro' photo? Well the obvious answer would be a camera, and a whole lot of patience – and to be honest, that is pretty much it! I suppose it depends on what sort of camera you are using – if you have a compact or bridge type camera, these will generally have a macro mode that can be enabled, and these cameras can produce some outstanding results – just have a look at some of James' images!

If you are using a SLR or DSLR, which I suspect most of the members here are using, then there are a number of options.

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Contacting a member from the club; This month Mark & Jenny Pedlar : [mnjpedlar@biqpond.com](mailto:mnpjpedlar@biqpond.com)

Upcoming Events

May 20—Competition—**In the style of** Of a well known artist (Rembrandt, Picasso, Monet, whoever).

June 3—Worshop—Post Production—optimizing your images after capture

June 14—Queen's Birthday—an opportunity to visit the cuttlefish at Whyalla

June 17—Competition—**Mechanical** Machines—and not their operators

July 1—Worshop—Workflow & Archiving—How to manage your files.

July 15—Competition—**Nature** (Remember to hide the hand of man)

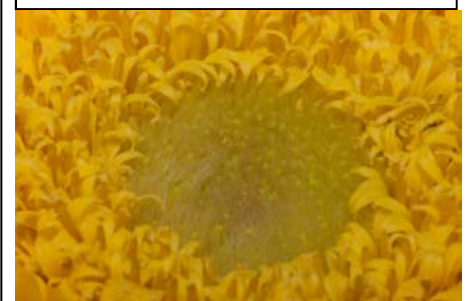
July 29—4 of a kind—print or projected images

August 12—Competition—**Self Portrait**

August 26—Senior High School



Increasing magnification with various lens combinations. Note that the depth of field becomes an issue at higher magnification.



The most obvious answer is to use a dedicated macro lens – these range in focal length from about 35mm to 200mm, and is the easiest way to achieve a 1:1 magnification – of course these lenses, which are (as far as I know) are all prime, or fixed focal length lenses are not cheap, and can be a considerable investment, but many of these lenses due to their amazing sharpness and clarity, are excellent for other purposes – ie many people use 100mm macro lenses for portrait work. Most, if not all purpose made macro lenses will result in excellent image quality, so it is certainly worthwhile investigating third party manufacturers, where you could save a considerable amount of money.

If you are starting off in macro, and can't justify a large outlay for a dedicated lens, fear not! There are many options available, some of which I will briefly touch on.

The way I started taking macro photos, was to use a cheap 50mm prime lens (Pentax 50mm f2.0), which I reversed, and mounted on the end of a existing 28-80 zoom lens (fixed to 80mm) This combination gives me a 1.6x magnification, and works surprisingly well. Prime lenses can be, with the help of special adaptor rings, be mounted reversed directly to the camera – something which I have yet to try, but from what I have seen, can result in some great results.

Another option, involves putting some form of space between the camera body and the lens, can take a few different forms, these include using a macro teleconverter, which when paired up with a 50mm prime lens will result in 1:1 magnification, using bellows, which give a great degree of control, but which can be quite awkward to use, or by using extension tubes – either fully manual, or automatic in which they stop down the aperture blades to the selected setting.

Yet another option involves using a close up filter that usually screws onto the front of an existing lens – these are available for both SLR systems, and compact cameras. Although these can achieve excellent results, many people try and avoid putting any extra glass between the lens and the subject or camera, fearing this may degrade image quality. Personally I think that there is some truth to this, but it can be over hyped somewhat.

Of course the easiest way of achieving 1:1 or less magnification is to use a dedicated macro lens – these come in all shapes and sizes and from all manufacturers. As far as I am aware the only manufacturer that makes a lens that goes beyond 1:1 magnification is Canon, with their MPE-65 this is a 65mm macro lens that goes up to 6:1.

The difficulties facing the macro photographer are many and varied, but in my opinion, there are a couple that cause more frustration than others – these being wind, and lack of depth of field. To get over the first problem, early morning starts may be required, or better yet, bring the subject inside. The second problem is a bit more involved, but there are a number of ways of overcoming this.

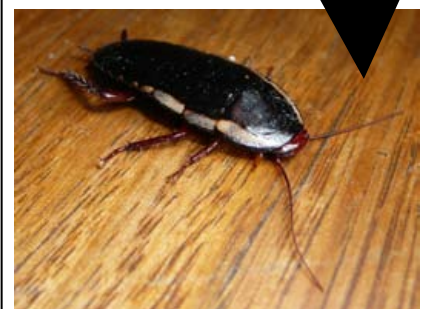
The first is to use as small an aperture as possible – somewhere in the region of f11 or more. Depending on the lens, using small apertures f19-f32 can introduce problems such as lens diffraction or pin cushioning – also there is the problem of light – or lack of it. This is where I believe that using extra light in the form of a single or multiple flashes is almost essential. At generally such close working distances, the depth of field will be quite small, usually measured in millimetres.

Another more recent advent in the world of macro is focus stacking – this consists of taking a series of photos – or slices of a subject, and combining all the 'in focus' bits in a software package. This can be done fairly painfully in Photoshop using multiple layers, but there are a number of software programs that are specifically designed to do this – some are even free. Those that are interested in this technique should do a search on the internet, where a whole swag of information is available.

The world of macro photography is a challenging one, but when you get it right, and can be very rewarding. I would certainly recommend those that are interested in this wonderful aspect of our hobby, to experiment with different set ups and techniques that work for you, and to keep shooting – you never know what you might find!



The power of Macro Photography takes you into another world.



Home Made Diffuser (Compact Camera):

A simple piece of polystyrene foam held over the in-camera flash with masking tape can make a marked improvement in close up photography.



In the 1940s, **Salvador Dalí** and **Philippe Halsman** teamed up and produced a number of surrealistic works of photographic art -- some are iconic, like *In Voluptas Mors* and *Dali Atomicus*

The *Atomicus* photo (left), the most famous of the Halsman/Dalí collaboration, took 28 takes --

"after each exposure, while the assistants mopped the floor and reclaimed cats, Halsman developed the film to see the progress in the composition. Accidents would happen. The water, intended for the cats, would cover Dalí's face instead."



Andy Goldsworthy (born 26 July 1956) is a British sculptor, photographer and environmentalist living in Scotland who produces site-specific sculpture and land art situated in natural and urban settings. His art involves the use of natural and found objects, to create both temporary and permanent sculptures which draw out the character of their environment. His art is often ephemeral—like the arrangement of autumn leaves (far left), lasting for just a brief period and captured by means of photography.

"My art is an attempt to reach beyond the surface appearance. I want to see growth in wood, time in stone, nature in a city, and I do not mean its parks but a deeper understanding that a city is nature too—the ground upon which it is built, the stone with which it is made."



Photographs from the collection at the **Australian National Gallery**

Edward Weston a founder of the f64 club photographed a single cabbage leaf in monochrome in 1931. This image was included in his fiftieth anniversary portfolio spanning the years 1902—1952.

"Anything that excites me for any reason, I will photograph; not searching for unusual subject matter, but making the commonplace unusual. "

Gjon Mili (1904-1984) an American photographer used flash to freeze the motion in "Frog Submerged" photographed on colour film in 1941

An interesting conversation arose after a recent management meeting, and (believe it or not!) the subject turned to photography – in particular digital photography and the ease with which we can take hundreds of images where once we were circumspect about what images we wanted to capture using film.

I made the comment that I felt digital photography had “dumbed-down” photography as the cost of film and its development was no longer a prime consideration and digital photography has resulted in masses of photographs being taken. Most will never be seen in print.

To illustrate my point I made reference to Facebook, where it’s possible to go to someone’s page and view their photographs. In many cases you will find 40-50 or more photographs that a person has uploaded, taken at a party they went to, often using the camera facility of a mobile telephone. The images are generally repetitive with little thought to composition, originality, technique, impact and presentation – although presentation methods are restricted in these public domain sites.

A debatable point was offered to counter my argument, along the lines that, years ago, the box Brownie was the choice of millions of people and it’s those photographs that were the “Facebook” images of their time. The modern-day digital images will be tomorrow’s “Box Brownie” images.

This has given me food for thought about my own attitude to what I see as uninteresting repetitive images posted on the various public domain sites like Facebook, Twitter and so on. Am I wrong in my attitude to those images?

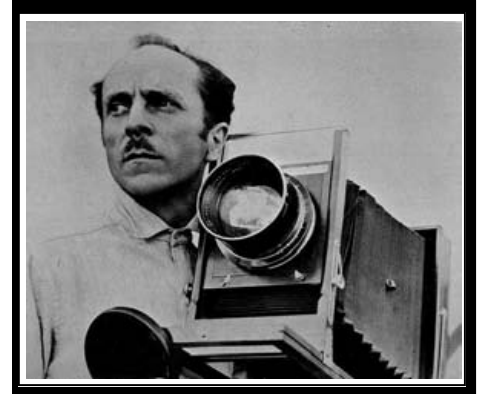
If film and its processing had suddenly become “dirt-cheap” and cost not a consideration, would there be millions – probably billions – more images of yesteryear for us to enjoy today? Most likely there would be. Did the cost of film and processing years ago prevent many more interesting images being taken? Probably so. Would the “serious” photographers of that time decried the “dumbing-down” of photography due to the cheapness of film and processing allowing millions more images to be taken? Hmmmm.....

This subject also made me think of a comment made by a guest at a wedding I photographed recently near Victor Harbour. I’d taken my photographs using my usual approach. I’d normally shoot 3 x 36-shot colour and 1 x 36-shot B&W for a wedding using film and I do admit to taking more digital images than when using film. Another person at the wedding had taken many more images, often in “continuous” mode. The guest I referred to made the comment that it was easy to see I came from the “film” school of photography and gave more thought to the photographs I was taking. Prior to taking the completed DVD and proofs to the wedding couple I was asked by them how many photographs I’d taken and I replied “about 300”, which I felt was a fair number. They told me the other person had taken over 2,000 and sounded a little disappointed I hadn’t taken more. Nonetheless they were very pleased with my images. This has also given me cause for thought. Should I now consciously take many more photographs than I used to? (As an aside: all the 2,000 or so images the other person took on their Canon had a thin green line through them, so it appears there was a problem with their camera).

Back in the 1940s when my parents married, the wedding couple usually selected one photograph (the bridal party), taken in a studio. This was usually taken on a large-format view camera. The couple could order more than one print, and it was normal for them to select a sepia-toned 10” x 12” print (or similar size) for themselves and a couple of postcard-size ones for the parents on each side. The studios were often commercially associated with the reception venue. More food for thought: Those formal photographs recorded the bridal party and are interesting from the point of view of seeing how youthful your parents or grandparents were, but would the more interesting images have been 100 or more informal ones taken during the reception or after the ceremony?

I’m still undecided about whether the ease of digital imaging has “dumbed-down” photography, but I do recognise the merits of the counter-arguments.

What do you think?



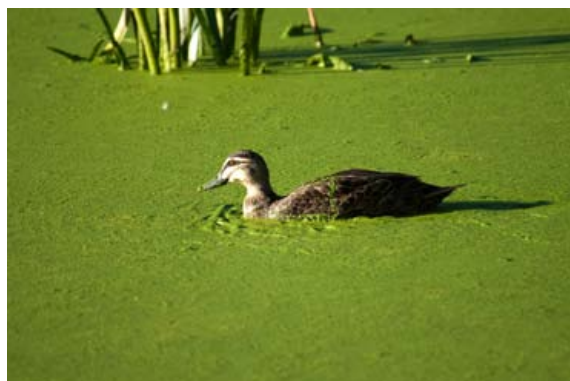
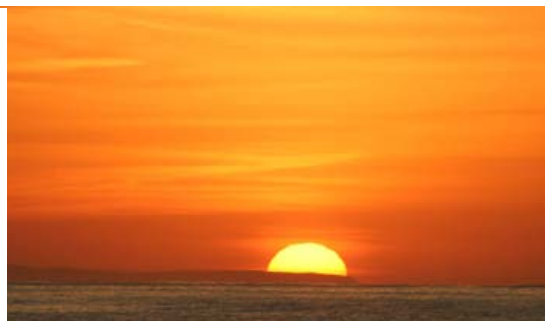
“Consulting the rules of composition before taking a photograph, is like consulting the laws of gravity before going for a walk. “

“I see no reason for recording the obvious. “

Edward Weston



Gjon Mili (1904-1984) explored the anatomy of movement using stroboscopic flash to freeze motion. His images of ballet dancers and horses are memorable. In 1949 he visited Pablo Picasso in France and took a series of photos where Picasso painted light trails. The shutter was left open in a dark room. Drawing with a torch the entire picture appears on the film. Pablo however appears only three times in the sequence at the moments when the strobe fires.



Blue—Gary Secombe—
Windmill

Yellow—Reg Connolly—It
happens everyday

Orange—Ursula Prucha—
Backlit Sunflower

Purple—Matt Carr— Purple
haze

Red—Adrian Hill—Railway
Machine Terowie

Green—Matt Carr—Green
Fields

Pink—Jim Trice—Just an-
other Rose

Brown—Adrian Hill—there's
a hole in my bucket

The August edition of Cam-
era clips will be produced in
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