Art of Light

By
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Depth of Focus

The classic style of blurring a background brings a photo's subject into dramatic focus. One of the first techniques I learned, and one I've used frequently since. Isolating something beautiful in the world to give offer a new perspective allows photographers to draw amazing out of the ordinary.

To capture that perfect moment, a photographer has to watch the world for any opportunity, and be willing to exert themselves. An unwilling model, like the pictured squirrel here, may move rapidly and require quick adjustments to camera settings in order to get a suitable photo. Post digital editing also can help repair an unclear or poorly exposed image. Contrast can be improved, colors brightened, and details sharpened.

Both chasing squirrels and sizing up innaminate objects takes patience. Crouching in knee-high snow banks to get a good photo is all part of the experience.
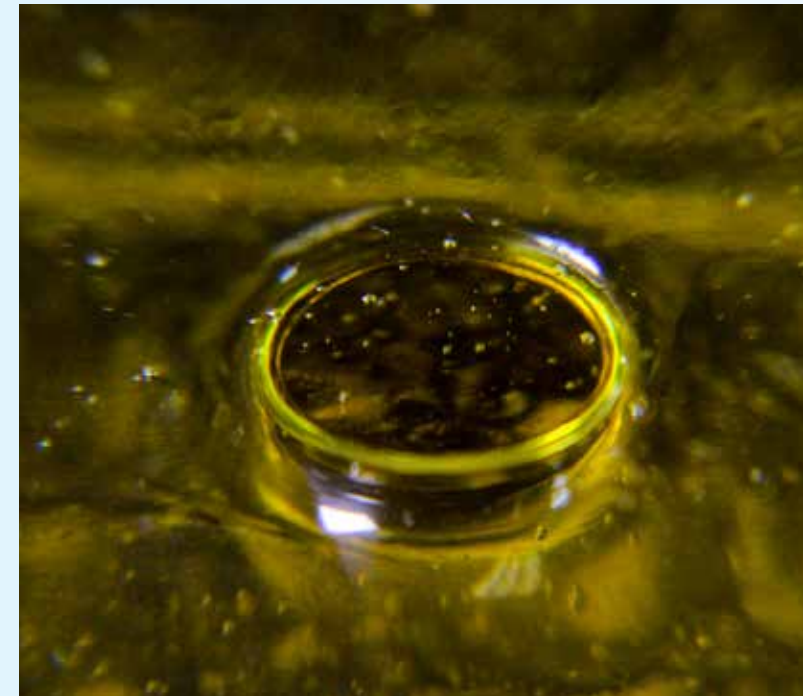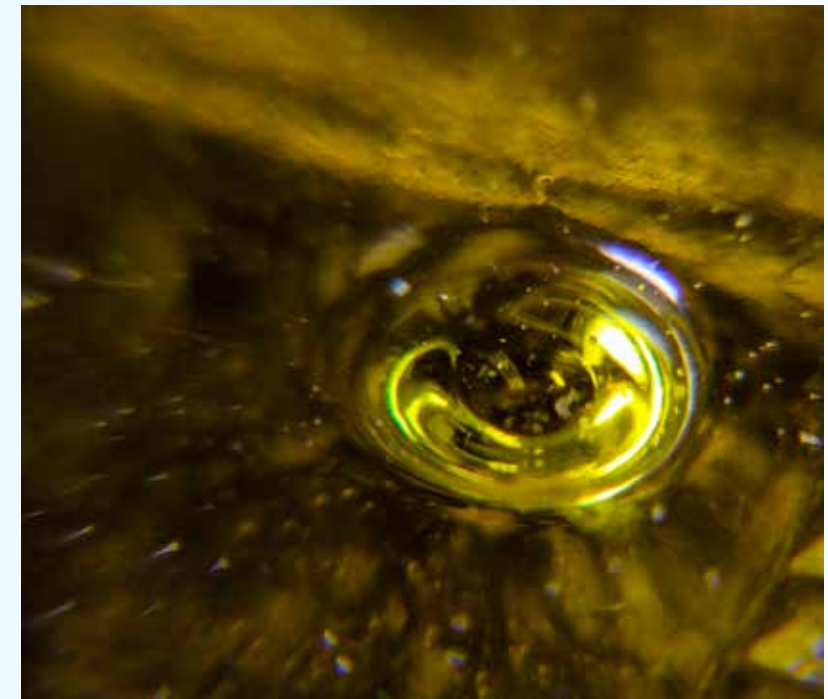
Macro

Special equipment allows a photographer to capture minute details and amplify beauty that lies hidden below the unaided eye's ability to see. Using amplifying lenses and careful lighting, I could draw images from small jewelry, tiny bubbles of liquid, and droplets of water.

Drops
of Light

Macro photography enabled me to
capture the details of flower petals
touched with water. Tiny reflections
could be captured to show the small
bits of light in every composition.
Proper lighting, artificial or ambient,
lets these beautiful parts of the
world be seen.

Facing Light

Careful attention to camera settings and artificial lighting brings powerful contrast and vibrancy into a portrait shot. I gained an appreciation for photo studios as I worked with reflectors and speedlights to properly illuminate the stunning models that let me capture them in radiant detail.

A Single Subject

Targeting a single subject from myriad angles brings a wealth of images. This ancient steam tractor, displayed in the Smith park in Rexberg Idaho, provided stunning compositions with its massive build of black metal.

Here I also experimented with utilizing Photoshop to overlay a patterned image onto the left-page photo to create something different. A cracked marble texture was applied over the image, and a clipping mask allowed me to remove the effect from the tractor, isolating it from a textured background.

Light in Mundane

It's a well known technique to seek out unique images using common objects. This reveals the light and beauty in the world around us, opening our perspective. While touring Bannack Montana, I was able to capture mundane objects in a variety of compositions in pursuit of finding something amazing in them. Shallow focus, new angles, and post editing allowed me to draw something a little more unique out of these objects and places.

Structures too have potential light in them. The next page features old buildings from Bannack that were caught in a new light to show the intrinsic beauty of man-made things.

The Photographer and Author

Matthew Sortomme is a novice photographer, and also studying Web Design at BYU-Idaho. Still learning the fine art of photo taking, he's found post-editing to be a powerful tool for refining images. He's also enjoyed portrait photography with auxillary lighting.

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Design, layout, and writing by Matt Sortomme. All photos, save a texture used on the Single Subject full-bleed image, taken by Matthew Sortomme. Portrait of Matt courtesy of Michael Sortomme (his brother.)

Art of Light:
The photography of Matthew Sortomme