

HORIZON NEWS #12

NEWS, THOUGHTS AND IMAGES FROM HORIZON PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

I remember what has happened in my life through moments that I remember visually.
Dorothea Lange

STUDENT PHOTOS: CLOSE-UP



After choosing a subject to photograph, most photographers choose a position where there's a clear line of sight between the subject and camera. Like hunters who don't want brush between gun and prey, these photographers want a "clean shot." In many cases this is a big mistake. Foreground elements often can add information, color, balance, mystery, surprise, and visual focus to your photos. Two examples: Michelle Hatch's portrait of her father Mike uses foreground elements to great effect. The rusty chain forces the viewer's eye to Mike's eye...and then to his mouth, nose and beard. Note also how this juxtaposition imparts the masculine strength of the chain to Mike. Note also how the wooden beam in the right foreground pushes your eye toward the main subject. Consider how this shot would look without the chain and beam. No comparison.



Karin Welch's shot through the window is a completely different use of foreground. Obviously, it tells us we're peering into a room; because the window's mullions are out of focus, our eye goes right by them to peer into the room. Natural human curiosity entices us to look inside to see what's happening "behind the scenes." What makes this shot particularly unusual and provocative is that we are simultaneously looking *through* the house, via the big window on left, and looking *behind* the camera position, via a mirror in the house that reflects two women talking...or are they looking at an LCD screen?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Bob Madden**, noted National Geographic photographer and magazine designer, joins Horizon's team of instructors in 2007. Bob will be teaching "Travel Photography."
- Horizon's 2007 course schedule is now posted on our web site.
- The Cecil County Arts Council & the Historic Society of Cecil County will jointly sponsor a gallery exhibition and booksigning for **Steve Gottlieb's** new book, *Cecil County: A Personal Portrait*.
Date & Time: November 20th at 7:00PM, 135 E. Main St., Elkton, Maryland.

QUICK TIPS: WHEN IS LESS MORE?

“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” it is often said. Another aphorism cuts in a different direction: “God is in the details.” In photographs, as elsewhere, it all depends. A good photographer looks at things carefully, then decides what makes a stronger picture: the whole or a part of the whole. More often than not, we’re partial to the detail—the tight shot that captures the essence of the bigger thing. Two examples:

Sylvie Brossard titled her shot “Shy Guy.” At first her subject resisted having his photo taken...then he relented. Cropping his face and using a simple background make this portrait of shyness mesmerizing.

Mike Hatch zeroed in on the upper part of this Chesapeake City



home, highlighting its light and shadow facets. Note: When you point your camera up from ground level to the second story, as Mike did here, you get “perspective distortion.” We gave this a quick fix in Photoshop so that all the vertical lines are parallel. (More on this in a later newsletter.)

END FRAME



“To tripod or not to tripod?” That is the proverbial question. Many students bring a tripod to the workshop only to leave it in their trunk. Our advice: in the woods, where the leafy canopy keeps light levels low, a tripod is absolutely essential because slow exposures are often required. Alison Roberts’ lovely hand-held image exhibits a softness that would prevent it from being effectively blown up to an 8 x 10. How big should your tripod be? One photographer joked: Buy the heaviest tripod your wife is willing to carry for you. (Politically incorrect, but it makes the point.) As for tripods on sunny days, more on that subject another time.