How to Make Better Photos of Your Work

A Seminar by Paul Donohoe

Presented by ACSP

Cabinets
&Closets
Conference & Expo

How to Make Better Photos of Your Work

(So You Can Sell More from Your Portfolio)

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Mine

Theirs

How to Make Better Photos of Your Work

(So You Can Sell More from Your Portfolio)

Seminar Objective

(What do we want to accomplish today?)

Seminar Outline

- What should be in your portfolio?
- What equipment should you have?
- Considerations for the actual shoot
- Post-processing (formerly called developing)
- HDR (High Dynamic Range) to fix bad lighting or bright windows
- Panoramas for large closets
- Legal issues

What should be in your portfolio?

- Include only your BEST photos
- Best projects but show your capability and variety
- Include detail shots of special features or accessories
- Photos of special projects (Extreme Makeover, Dear Genevieve, HG TV, pro bono work)
- Construction details, protective coverings, etc.
- Before & After
- Show the portfolio on a large tablet, not a phone, but also have a printed album for your showroom

Include only your BEST photos

This

Not This

Best projects but show your capability and variety

Include detail shots of special features or accessories

Photos of special projects (Extreme Makeover, Dear Genevieve, HG TV, pro bono work)

Construction details, protective coverings, etc.

Before & After

Show the portfolio on a large tablet, not a phone, but also have a printed album for your showroom

What equipment should you have?

- Camera
  - Large sensor size
  - Interchangeable lens or wide-angle zoom capability
  - Raw capture capability
  - Remote shutter release or timed release
- Lens
  - Wide angle
  - Quality, speed
- Tripod
  - Sturdy
  - Eye level height
  - Allows vertical (portrait) and horizontal (landscape) camera orientation
- Lighting

What equipment should you have?

What equipment should you have?

- Lighting

  - No flash but lots of even light
  - Avoid harsh shadows, intense light
  - For closets with windows, shoot late in the day
  - White balance

White balance in photography

Tungsten (2850 deg.)

Auto (near daylight 4500 deg.)

Shade (7500 deg.)

Considerations for the actual shoot

- Ask permission
- This is documentary photography, not fine art, but make it look good
  - Sharp focus and depth of field
  - Staging/styling- what you intentionally do to enhance the presentation
- Composition
  - Vertical or horizontal format?
  - Rule of thirds, point of interest
  - Single shot or montage?
  - Shoot details in addition to wide angle
- Shoot Manual
  - ISO/shutter speed/aperture → exposure
  - Exposure bracketing
- Naming files and folders

This is documentary photography, not fine art, but make it look good

- Sharp focus and depth of field- use a tripod
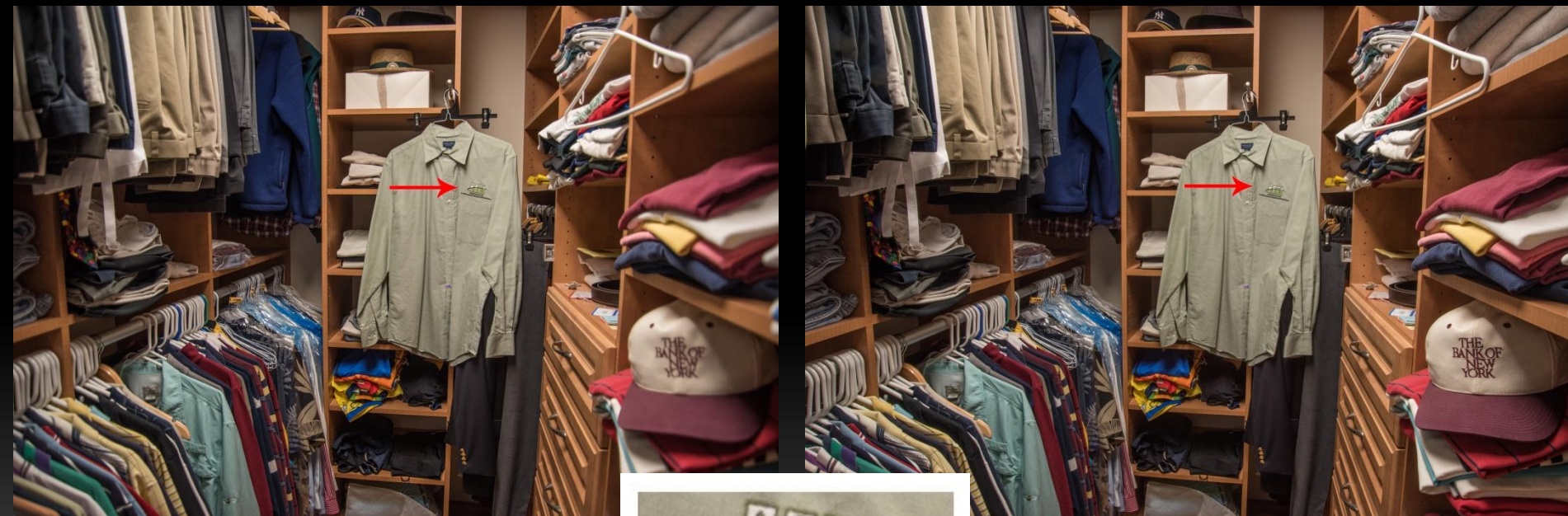
Aperture= F3.5, 1/80 sec.

Aperture= F22, .5 sec.

Composition

Landscape

Portrait

Composition

- Rule of thirds, point of interest

Composition

- Single shot or montage?

Composition

- Shoot details in addition to wide angle
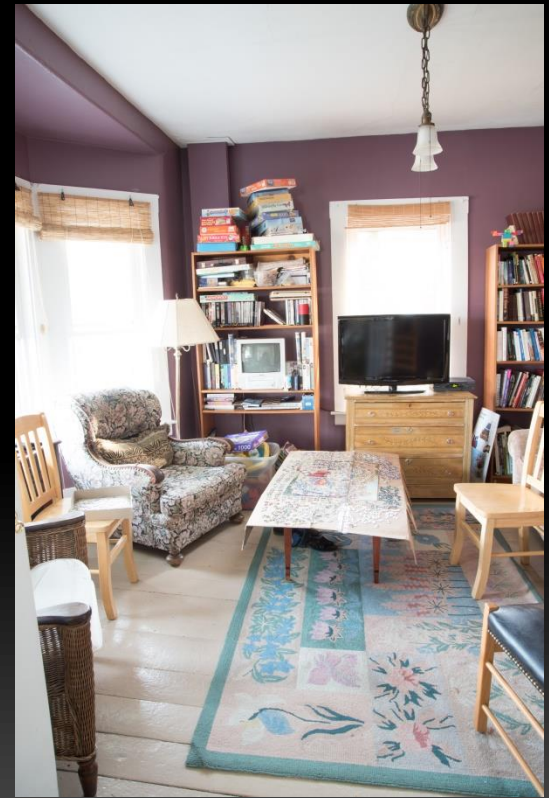
Shoot Manual

- ISO/shutter speed/aperture → exposure
- Exposure bracketing

"Correct" Exposure   Underexposed   Overexposed

Naming files and folders

- Use a consistent naming system, e.g.

      JobName-Date-Seq#.ext
      Jones-20160715-1.NEF

- When transferring files to hard drive, use a simple folder structure, e.g.

      Photos →   Photos
         Year →   2016
            Jobs →   Jones

- Enter key words in metadata when transferring

- Always back up photos to a separate storage device before deleting them from the camera

Post-processing (formerly called developing)

- There are many applications available to process and make corrections to original photos, and some are specific to Apple or Windows computers. I use:
  - Adobe Lightroom
    - Adjusting white balance
    - Lens corrections
    - Crop
    - Adjust overall exposure
    - Adjust highlight and shadow exposures
    - Sharpen
  - Adobe Photoshop
    - Getting rid of dust spots by cloning
    - Other more detailed or specific adjustments
    - Plug-ins

Post-processing (formerly called developing)

Camera Raw

Straightened, increased exposure, increased contrast, brightened shadows, sharpened, cropped

Post-processing (formerly called developing)

Before Adjustments

Straightened, cropped, cloned fan blades, adjusted exposure, sharpened

Post-processing (formerly called developing)

Before Adjustments

Straightened and fixed perspective, corrected white balance, brightened shadows, increased exposure, decreased highlights, cropped

HDR (High Dynamic Range) to fix bad lighting or bright windows

- Use HDR processing software to fix photos where parts of the photo are under or overexposed and detail is lost because the camera can't capture the full range of brights and darks. E.g. shooting a closet with a south facing window in the middle of a sunny day- either the window will be blown out or the closet will have no details in the shadows.

- To use HDR software shoot the same scene in at least three ways: properly exposed, 1 or 2 stops overexposed and 1 or 2 stops underexposed

- The software will then combine the 3 photos to produce a new photo which will have more details in both the highlights and the shadows.

- Some newer cameras have an internal automatic HDR capability but in general you will get better results by combining the photos using separate software.

HDR (High Dynamic Range) to fix bad lighting or bright windows

Panoramas for large closets

- Panoramas are photos that are assembled from multiple photographs and provide a "360 degree view" of the closet.

- Special software is required to "stitch" the photos together, although Adobe has incorporated the capability into Lightroom and Photoshop.

- Use a tripod, level the camera, and shoot vertically, overlapping about half of the frame for each shot.

Panoramas for large closets

Panoramas for large closets

Panoramas for large closets

Legal issues

- Obtain a written property release from the owner if possible.

- If you captured the photo, you own the copyright. Put a copyright notice in the metadata.
    - "Copyright Paul Donohoe 2016"
    - "© 2016 Paul Donohoe"

- Watermark any photo that you put on the internet with a copyright notice (and your website address). The bottom right-hand corner of the photo is generally a good place.

Permission for Photography of Property

For good and valuable consideration herein acknowledged as received, the undersigned, being the legal owner of, or having the right to permit the taking and use of photographs, still or moving, of certain property designated as_____, does irrevocably grant to Paul G.F. Donohoe ("Photographer"), his/her heirs, legal representatives, agents, and assigns the full perpetual rights to take and use such images in advertising, trade, or for any purpose and in any medium. The undersigned also consents to the use of any printed or displayed matter in conjunction therewith. The undersigned hereby waives any right that he/she/it may have to inspect or approve the finished product or products, or the advertising copy or other matter that may be used in connection therewith, or the use to which it may be applied. The undersigned hereby releases, discharges, and agrees to save harmless and defend Photographer, his/her heirs, legal representatives, and assigns, and all persons acting under his/her permission or authority, or those for whom he/she is acting, from any liability by virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form, whether intentional or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the making of said images or in any subsequent processing thereof, as well as any publication, transmission or display thereof, even though it may subject the undersigned, his/her/its heirs, representatives, successors, and assigns, to ridicule, scandal, reproach, scorn, and indignity. The undersigned hereby warrants that he/she is a legally competent adult and has every right to contract in his/her own name in the above regard. The undersigned states further that he/she has read the above authorization, release, and agreement, prior to its execution, and that he/she is fully familiar with the contents thereof. If the undersigned is signing as an agent or employee of a firm or corporation, the undersigned warrants that he/she is fully authorized to do so. This release shall be binding upon the undersigned and his/her/its heirs, legal representatives, successors, and assigns.

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Start Selling More from Your Portfolio Today!
Questions?

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