

Workshop # 4: Photography and Project Documentation

Speaker: Mr. Kim David McNeill Simmons, Adjunct Faculty, Fine Arts Department: Photography, College of Design, Arts, Architecture, and Planning (DAAP), University of Cincinnati

Date: June 27, 2008

Time: 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. (4 hours)

This workshop was given by Mr. Kim David McNeill Simmons, Adjunct Faculty, Fine Arts Department: Photography, College of Design, Arts, Architecture, and Planning (DAAP), University of Cincinnati on June 27, 2008 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. (4 hours). Mr. Simmons received his BFA in photography from University of Central Florida in 1979 and M.A. from Ohio University in 1988. In 1981 he went to work with a local Ohio photographer, Roy Frankenfield, with whom he learned all those things one never learns in school. Roy Frankenfield was shooting Star Wars toys for Kenner; and Kim followed in his footsteps becoming known as the "Star Wars Photographer" for Kenner and later Hasbro. Kim as an early adopter of digital imaging, becoming one of the first in Cincinnati to take the leap into digital. Since that time he has taken many clients into the digital realm, educating his clients as he creates the images they need. Teaching about digital photography and color management has become as important to Kim as taking images. Kim is also a consultant for digital photography and color management to other photographers. When not consulting and shooting, Kim teaches Digital Imaging at DAPP.

This workshop covered the types of settings that should be used on the camera in order to obtain the best pictures to be used on a report. The workshop started off with definitions of different parts of the camera and different settings that can be used. Aperture is the hole that the light enters in order to expose the film. The wider the hole, the easier it is, and a greater amount of light is exposed onto the digital equivalent of film. In addition, a smaller number setting corresponds to a larger hole, i.e., f/2 gives the largest opening while f/11 gives a much smaller opening. By setting the aperture at a high number a greater depth of field can be obtained, meaning that more of the object and backdrop in the picture will be in focus. Additionally, the shutter speed can be set to a long exposure, such as one minute, in order to get more information into the picture. However, there is a limit to how long you expose the picture. Too long of an exposure will lead to noise in the picture, distracting the viewer from the subject. Noise, simply put, gives the picture a grainy look, making it unclear. Noise can also be caused by a high ISO. ISO is the sensitivity of the film or digital chip to light. It is a good rule of thumb to set the ISO as low as possible in order to obtain a clear picture with lots of information. Figure 1 below is an example of a picture that was taken using ISO 100 with 3x digital zoom and optical zoom. The picture is slightly out of focus since it was taken without the use of a tripod. The tripod adds stability to the camera when shooting in a low ISO and for a long exposure. For better clarity of pictures, especially to be used in a report or other official demonstration, a tripod should be used as it can help steady the photo.



Figure 1. Picture Taken with ISO 100

Lighting also plays an important role in the quality of the picture. Even if good lighting is unavailable it may be reflected from other sources. Figures 2 and 3 below demonstrate this idea. In Figure 2, light has been reflected just from the sunlight entering a window. However, in Figure 3, no light was reflected on to the structure being photographed. Different types of reflectors can provide a different feel to the picture as to the color warmth and contrast. A smooth silver reflecting surface (e.g., aluminum foil) will reflect a crisp bright light, while a crinkly gold will add a warmer softer look to the picture.



Figure 2. Effect of Lighting on Subject



Figure 3. Effect with No Reflected Lighting

In addition to learning how to utilize light and different camera settings, this workshop also discussed the importance of camera maintenance. The most important rule of thumb is to not let anything scratch the lens of the camera. If dust or fingerprints obstruct the lens, it is important to wipe with a microfiber lens cleaning cloth and not a handkerchief or with your finger. If a scratch gets onto the lens, every picture taken with the camera will show this flaw in the lens. Also, it is important to not use eyeglass cleanser on the lens, as the acidity can eat away at the finished surface of the lens. A soft makeup brush can be used in combination with the use of a soft microfiber cleaning cloth.