

## MILTON ULLADULLA DISTRICT CAMERA CLUB

### 2023/24 COMPETITION THEMES - DEFINITIONS

The MUDCC Committee has developed a set of ten themes for the 2023/24 Competition Year to help develop your photographic skills and enhance your creativity – both through your own approach to these themes and by reflecting on the work of other members. The program comprises a balanced mix of subject-based themes and technique-based themes.

Each theme is described below to provide members with guidance on its intention, along with any specific requirements or exclusions. Please use these theme definitions in conjunction with the rules that apply to all our Club competitions as outlined on our website, noting that all images must be the member's own work, including any layers and textures and only financial members can compete in monthly competitions.

<http://www.miltonulladullacameraclub.asn.au/>

The definitions also contain some hints on how you might approach each theme. Additionally, you will be able to draw on the monthly folder of inspiration images provided on the Facebook page. [www.facebook.com/miltonulladullacameraclub/](http://www.facebook.com/miltonulladullacameraclub/)

Please ensure that all images entered in the theme category have been taken within 12 months of the competition date (not the submission date), and that all your images meet all the requirements for width, height, file size and file name. These too are set out on the Club's website.

Creativity in interpretation is always encouraged within the spirit of the theme. If you have any queries about a theme, please contact a member of the Committee via phone, the Club's email account or our Facebook page.

Lastly, these definitions are also provided to our judges. However, judges will always have discretion in interpreting monthly themes, and the competition rules, and their selections, are final.

### **2023**

#### **FAST SHUTTER SPEED**

##### **24 July 2023 - DPI Competition - Images Due 10 July 2023**

Shutter speed is exactly what it sounds like: It's the speed at which the shutter of the camera closes. A fast shutter speed creates a shorter exposure — the amount of light the camera takes in whereas a slow shutter speed allows more light into the camera.

To freeze the action in an image, you will need to consider the kind of subject you are photographing. Fast shutter speeds will be required for moving subjects such as birds in flight, animals which are moving quickly, or objects in motion such as cars and other vehicles. Sporting events are excellent subjects for using fast shutter speeds too, capturing the excitement of a football match or perhaps a local tennis event or board riders surfing the waves. To keep things closer to home, you may have a member of your family who can perform mid air acrobatic feats!

It is important to experiment with the shutter speed. If your light is poor you will need to increase the ISO of the camera when you are using a fast shutter speed. Depending on the depth of field required you may also find it necessary to open up the lens to allow more light. Bird photography, for example, will require a range of between 1/800 to 1/3200. Smaller birds definitely need the higher end.

In order to capture your subject using a high shutter speed, you will also benefit from shooting with continual autofocus selected plus with a low/high burst instead of a single frame or shot selected. This can be accessed on the back of your camera and is easy to set up.

Have fun and experiment.

## **URBAN LIFE**

### **28 August 2023 Print Competition**

Urban life can be thought of as akin to street photography; it may include the elements that comprise an urban environment, a city or township: people, with the urban backdrop of streets, buildings, parklands. A few examples may be the hustle and bustle of peak hour, be it traffic congestion or just people heading to or from work; perhaps busy train stations, cafe society, pub life, outdoor dining, people jogging, dog walkers. Architecture plays an important part in urban life but it is more the backdrop on the stage rather than the subject so buildings on their own won't constitute urban life.

You can photograph urban life with an iPhone, or a larger full frame camera. However, a smaller lens attracts less attention and will allow you to blend into a scene. Don't be put off by rainy weather. Often a city or township at night in the rain can provide the most dramatic effects. Also consider how your images may look in black and white.

Should we need to include people in our photographs? Urban life does imply "life" which one thinks of as people; however, urban life can also reflect a busy environment, the drama which people indirectly bring - imagine a busy intersection with a fire truck or ambulance racing by; perhaps people are not actually visible, but it does demonstrate urban life.

## **CAPTURING THE MOMENT**

### **25 September 2023 - DPI Competition - Images Due 11 September 2023**

When we talk of capturing the moment in photography, we would like you to reference an emotion, vibe or atmosphere of a photo.

When a moment is captured flawlessly, the resulting image provides far more than precious memories. The photo should tell the story, by propelling you into the scene and evoking powerful emotions.

The theme will be about getting the viewer to be drawn into the moment.

"Timing is everything"

A split second could separate a good photo to a gallery worthy shot that draws you in.

If shooting people, generally snapshots of people who know you are taking their picture may not produce the image you are after. Try to keep them candid to show for unrehearsed moments.

Top tips

- Shoot Continuously – Watching that footy game and anticipating capturing a try being scored or a surfer scoring that epic barrel. Use continuous shooting mode (burst mode)
- Create moments manually – you don't have to wait to something to come your way, think days at home with kids, pets, birthday parties (blowing out the candles), local events.
- Be Patient – Sometimes this means snapping candid shots of unsuspecting subjects, eg families/couples enjoying picnics, animals feeding their young, a couple watching the sunrise, a dog catching a ball mid air.

## SUNRISE/SUNSET

### 23 October 2023 Print Competition

Light changes very quickly around Sunrise and Sunset, so while always expect the unexpected, I suggest a bit of planning is required when it comes to location and scouting for a composition ahead of time. Keep an eye on the weather forecast and tides (if you are shooting seascape).

We are looking for photos that capture the beautiful soft warm light that occurs early morning or late afternoon (Golden Hour). **Golden hour** is the period of daytime shortly after sunrise or before sunset, during which daylight is redder and softer than when the sun is higher in the sky.

The sun does not have to be the subject. You can also consider the effect of the sun on the landscape or object.

The sunrise or sunset can provide the lighting, and the success of the image will likely depend on what it's illuminating—and how it's doing the job. Rocks, docks, boats, islands, bridges, skylines—they're all good subjects for beautiful sunrise or sunset photographs.

So have a think about what look you are after? Do you want to capture a clear subject lit by the sunlight? Or will the sunrise/sunset itself be the star of the show? You don't have to commit to an approach in advance – and you can always try out multiple options once you're in position – but the sunrise/sunset will occur quickly, and if you're not prepared, you'll miss out on the action.

Suggested camera settings you use will depend on whether you are using Neutral Density Filters. The filters can be a great addition to help control the light and your shutter speed.

I find a tripod very useful for sunrise and sunset as usually your shutter speed will be slower due to low light. When using a tripod, I generally keep my ISO as low as possible to reduce noise and saves on additional editing time if noise reduction is required.

If you have a steady hand and a modern camera with built in stabilisation, I find you can still take handheld shots at around 1/25th second (if you are game).

For most landscape style photos, I suggest a mid to small aperture of between F8 & F16. This of course depends on the subject and effect you are aiming for. Using this range will help keep most of what's in frame in focus (assuming this is the look you are after)

The shutter speed will vary as the light quickly changes and depending on the shot you are after, so keep an eye on this if you are shooting in manual.

Using your histogram on the back of your camera can be a great help. Generally aim for the data on your histogram to be as far to the right as possible, without touching the right hand side.

For phone users without a tripod, keep a steady hand and don't forget to touch your screen where your main subject is so it will focus correctly for the best result.

## **MACRO**

### **27 November 2023 - DPI Competition - Images Due 13 November 2023**

In its purest form, macro photography is when the size of the subject in the photograph is bigger than it is in reality. In practice this usually involves close-up images of small subjects, thereby revealing detail that might not often be seen. Objects in nature are common subjects for macro photography, but you can take close-up photos of just about anything. A close-up photo of fabric might reveal an interesting weave, or taking the back off an old watch and getting in close can show the intricacies of its inner workings.

You may have a specialised macro lens that you can use on your interchangeable lens camera, or perhaps your fixed lens camera has a macro setting. Alternatively, you can use an app or macro lens on your phone. Even cheap clip-on phone lenses can produce good results if you have a steady hand, lean against something, or use a phone tripod.

## **2024**

### **FEELINGS**

#### **26 February 2024 Print Competition**

Photography has the power to tell unique stories from all around the world, and one of the best ways to do this is by capturing the feelings and emotions.

When photographing people, you can almost always tell what was going through the person's mind when the photographer pointed the camera at them.

Often the easiest way to tell how someone is feeling is through their eyes. This will be something you will need to consider if capturing people.

What will you be looking for? Joy, Love, fear, sadness, success?

So whether you're photographing a person, a landscape, or a structure, your aim should be to elicit an emotional response in the viewer. Will you look to capture the 'anger' in a thunderstorm, the warmth of a sunrise, or the joy of a rainbow?

Some photographers suggest identifying your own mood before shooting. So how are you feeling today? Let that emotion guide your shooting and channel it into your photos.

In addition, many photographers will tell you to put your camera down and observe. See what pulls you in, what are you drawn to and why? How can you capture what you are seeing and feeling?

Finally, consider playing with Colour in your photos. Colours can evoke feelings, even at a subconscious level.

## **MONOCHROME**

### **25 March 2024 - DPI Competition - Images Due 11 March 2024**

A monochrome photograph is an image produced in one colour and its tonal variations using differing amounts of light. It includes all forms of black-and-white photography - which produce images containing tones of grey ranging from black to white - but also includes varying shades of other colours such as sepia or cyan. Because it involves removing colour from the image, monotone photography tends to be used for artistic and aesthetic purposes. It can be particularly effective for subjects that have strong structural elements or where you want to remove distractions that colour photography can produce. You may choose to capture your image in monochrome if your camera has this capacity, or you may alter the image to monochrome in post-processing. But please note that a black and white image with selective colouring applied to any part of the image (also known as colour popping) will not meet this theme definition. Your theme images must be entirely monochrome.

## **STILL LIFE**

### **22 April 2024 - Print Competition**

At its most basic, still life photography is simply taking images of static items. However still life art including photography generally refers to arranging a small group of inanimate (not living) objects and depicting them in an artistic way, often to tell a story. It frequently involves the use of common items such as food, plants, kitchen items or jewellery, but you should not feel constrained by tradition. In still life photography, elements such as composition, lighting and angle are especially important. Experiment with your items and arrangements. Try different times of the day or different light sources. Move around your subjects to see the effect varying your point of view has on the image. All of these things will affect the mood and narrative. You will also need to carefully consider your background, ensuring that it doesn't detract from your objects. If you are working inside, you will probably benefit from the use of a tripod or finding some other way of steadying your camera. But don't forget that you can capture beautiful still life images outdoors too!

## **PORTRAIT**

### **27 May 2024 - DPI Competition - Images Due 13 May 2024**

Portraiture involves depicting the personality, identity, essence and attitude of a person or people by careful use of posing, lighting and location. It features heavily in the history of photography and is one of its foundations.

Portrait photography encourages you to think as much about narrative as about the technical aspects of your image. What inherent facets of your subject do you wish to highlight for the viewer and how might you convey them? What impact does lighting have? The pose? The location? The angle?

Usually the face or faces of the subject/s are shown in the photograph, but faceless portraits can also be very engaging, requiring you to think even more carefully about setting and about parts of the body other than the face that speak of your subject.

## **SILHOUETTES**

### **24 June 2024 - Print Competition**

In photography, a silhouette is defined as an outline that appears dark against a light background. More specifically, it is where your subject is seen as a black shape without detail against a brighter background. This effect can be achieved with any kind of bright light source, but of course the most commonly used is the sun around sunrise or sunset. The backlighting from the sun shadows everything towards you and produces this effect. The main key to silhouette lighting is having your background lighter than your object, but this can be done in more ways than one. Many photographers focus on a certain time of day, where their subject is, what kind of weather there is, and where the sun is positioned in the frame. Silhouetting requires that the exposure be adjusted so that there is no detail (underexposure) within the desired silhouette element, and overexposure for the background to render it bright.