

Bellingham Photography Club

Issue 41

September 2021

President's Message

BPC has been taking a well-deserved vacation in August , with no meetings. Our August picnic was cancelled, so we have truly been 'on hiatus.'

But our next meeting, on September 8, is fast approaching. Our program for this meeting will be presented by Ham Hayes, our program chair; he will be sharing his thoughts and images related to "**Contemplative Photography**."

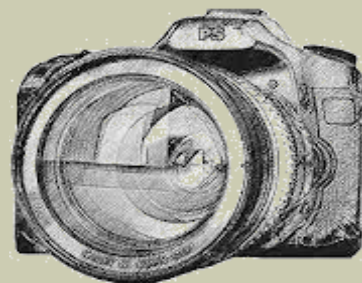
This summer vacation has given us a lot of time to work on our theme submittals for our second meeting on September 22. The theme this month is "**Still Life**," to give us an opportunity to try out some of the ideas and lighting setups demonstrated for us at our early July meeting by Alan Alquist. (See page 9 for photos to refresh your memory.)

We also will review our trial run of meeting twice each month instead of only once, and decide if we want to continue this schedule or revert to our once-a-month practice.

See you on the 8th!

Bellingham Photography Club Board

Lorraine Day - President	mesmerie1@gmail.com
Deanna Birdsall - Secretary	iamdela@gmail.com
Alan Alquist - Treasurer	alan@learn2inquire.com
Ham Hayes - Programs	hamhayes@outlook.com
David Johnson - Club Liaison	davidsamishphoto@gmail.com
Lorraine Day - Newsletter Editor	mesmerie1@gmail.com



Next Meetings:

Sept. 8 — Program:
*Contemplative
Photography*

Sept. 22 — Sharing:
Theme: Still Life

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How to submit

- .jpg format
- Width = 1920 px or less*
- Height = 1080 px or less*
Resolution not important;
150—300 dpi typical.
- File names to begin with
your last name and a
sequential number
(Day 1—Fish House.jpg)
- Total size of email with
attachments: 10 MB max.
- Include exif info in your
email if known

Send images for the website
(Theme, Commentary, or
Members Gallery) to David
Johnson

DavidSamishPhoto@gmail.com

Send images for the news-
letter to Lorraine Day—
mesmerie1@gmail.com

For those who care:

Our website host will resize
your images to a maximum of
1,550 pixels wide by 960 tall. It
does this "to prevent theft of
your originally uploaded full
resolution images and it also
help to ensure that your
images will always load with
minimal loading delay. Your
original image files are
retained and remain unedited."

About BPC

Bellingham Photography Club provides opportunities for photography enthusiasts to enhance and share expertise. Club activities include, but are not limited to, regular meetings, photography field experiences, photography competitions, and special interest forums.

Our goal is to provide encouragement, camaraderie and educational programs that will motivate photographers to improve their skills.

We are meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, when we have a program or demo, and on the 4th (not the last!) Wednesday of the month, to share our monthly theme photos, review photos submitted for critique, and have open photography-related discussion. During COVID-19 management we are meeting online via Zoom.

If you would like to join a meeting as our guest, please contact our president, Lorraine Day, at mesmerie1@gmail.com.

Show Your Stuff!

The Bellingham Photo Club has many venues for sharing your work. We'd love to see YOUR work in one of these places!

Website and Monthly Meetings:

- **Member Galleries** – Members can each upload up to 20 images to the members' gallery on our website. These can be anything you want – your own personal portfolio that you can share with friends and family!
- **Theme of the Month** – Each month, a theme is established and you can submit up to 3 images (the theme for the July meeting is 'Summer Play—Escape from COVID'). The themed images are for sharing, not for critical review (unless you ask for opinions). These images will be shared/reviewed at each monthly meeting.
- **Commentary/Review** – Each month, members can also submit up to 3 images for critical review. These do not need to be tied to the Theme of the Month. Members are encouraged to go online and enter comments; additionally, these images will also be shared at each monthly meeting.

Newsletter – Remember, members can send images the newsletter editor -- me, Lorraine, at mesmerie1@gmail.com – for inclusion in the newsletter. Especially welcome would be a brief explanation of your inspiration, your technique, problems you tackled and overcame (or failed to overcome!), location, exif data or any other information you'd like to share. Absent this, a brief caption would be great.

Come on; let's show our stuff!

Upcoming BPC Schedule

Subject to last-minute change, of course, here is our upcoming schedule for club meetings, programs, and themes.

Sept 8	Program: Contemplative Photography	Ham Hayes
Sept 22	Sharing: Theme = My Still Lives	-----
Oct 13	Program: Layering Your Intent	Keron Psillas
Oct 27	Sharing: Theme = Contemplating Fall	-----
Nov 10	Scavenger Hunt Results	Ham Hayes
Nov 24*	Sharing: Theme = Enhancing Intentionality	-----
Dec 8	Member Slide Show	Ham Hayes
Dec 22*	Sharing: Theme = My Still Life Images	-----

*Possibly subject to change due to holidays

Local Photography Classes and Workshops

We are fortunate in the Northwest to have several opportunities for photography classes and workshops, and at least one specialized photography school. Below are a few of the ones I'm aware of.

- [The Pacific Northwest Art School](#)—Workshops run roughly from April through November and include a world-class lineup of photography instructors for students of all levels and interests. (Note: Keron Psillas, assistant to Arthur Meyerson and the great Sam Abel, and teacher of her own workshops this fall, will be our October presenter!)
- [North Cascades Institute](#) — holds classes of interest to those concerned with environmental matters and who love our unique NW geography, including [several photography classes](#). They offer field excursions, retreats, birding tours, online classes — something for everyone. Book-mark this one and check it out from time to time, as their line-up changes.
- [Daniel Gregory](#)—a fine-art photographer from Whidbey Island, Daniel sometimes teaches on CreativeLive, at the Photographic Center Northwest, and at many other conferences. He has been a guest speaker at the Skagit Valley Camera Club. He also holds talks and on-line and in-person workshops on the more technical aspects of photography, including black/white conversion, film photography, and digital printing.
- [Photographic Center Northwest](#) — On Capitol Hill, PCN is a serious photographer's paradise. Their catalog of classes and events is too large to detail here; private tutoring is also available. Check them out.
- [John Greengo Photography](#) — Greengo, [past assistant to Art Wolfe on Travels to the Edge](#) and popular instructor on [Creative Live](#), has launched his own website complete with downloadable video tutorials. I have purchased his Fundamentals of Photography class (several times over, as it is updated) and his classes on each of the cameras I own; the thoroughness and clarity of his presentation is without parallel. Many of his classes will let you download the first three lessons free!
- [Kenmore Camera](#) — This great camera store in Bothell has in-person classes and on-line webinars, many (most?) of them free.

If you know of other schools or private teachers available to our member, please email me, [Lorraine Day](#), and I will add the info to this column.

Taking pictures is
savoring life intensely,
every hundredth of a
second.

— Marc Riboud

The mystery of light [and]
the enigma of time form
the twin pivots around
which all my work
revolves... my work
attempts to create a
mythology for our
contemporary world.

— Jacques-Henri
Lartigue

If I knew how to take a
good photograph, I'd do it
every time.

— Robert Doisneau

I've been so lonely trying
to become a photo-
grapher. If I'd known that
before, I don't know if I'd
have the courage to do it
again.

— Robert Adams

Northwest Council of Camera Clubs 2021 Conference News

Saturday, November 13 thru Thursday, November 18, 2021

Keynote Speaker **ERWIN BUSKE**, Print Salon, Award Ceremony

Saturday, November 13 Noon – 5pm

OneLife Community Church

3524 NE 95th St. Seattle, WA

Carpooling is encouraged; parking is limited. A shuttle may be available from Northgate, TBA.

Recorded Classes on Zoom

Sunday November 14 through Thursday November 18

Cost: \$60

Registration will open Sept. 5

NWCCC Conference Covid Safety Protocols:

1. In person meetings are limited to Saturday afternoon only — Keynote Speaker, Award Ceremony and Print Salon.
2. Due to the spaced seating, only 112 seats will be available. Registration will start September 5. Register early to get your seat.
3. All classes Sunday through Thursday will be conducted on Zoom, and will be recorded and accessible through the end of the year.
4. **Only vaccinated persons can attend the in-person events.** This will be asked on the registration form. The speaker will be recorded and the sessions available for registered persons until the end of the year.
5. A no-touch thermometer check station will be at the registration desk to take the temperature of everyone entering the building.
6. **Masks must be always worn on Saturday**, per the Governor's mandate.
7. We request that everyone inside the building keep socially distanced 6 feet from others.
8. No food or drink inside, so masks stay on all the time. Bottled water will be in a cooler outside on the patio.
9. The Print Salon will be designed with a one-way route, with one entrance and a different exit. The number of people will be monitored in the print salon, and 6 feet distancing required between persons.
10. Seating for Saturday's keynote speaker: chairs will be distanced 3 feet from the next person on each side of the seat, and in rows 6 feet apart. Family and household members can sit together.
11. The building has recently remodeled bathrooms with "hand wave to flush" toilets (you wave your hand over the tank, and it flushes) with no-touch sinks, and sanitizer.

*Photography's potential as
a great image-maker and
communicator is really no
different from the same
potential in the best
poetry where familiar,
everyday words, placed
within a special context,
can soar above the
intellect and touch subtle
reality in a unique way.*

— Paul Caponigro

*Art, to be art, must point
at something.*

— Anne LaMott

*You can't teach people
photography, they've got
to learn how to do it the
best way possible for
them. They can learn from
looking at pictures... but
they don't really get
intimate with the medium
until they've made a few
bad shots.*

— Cecil Beaton

If you have any questions or concerns about these safety protocols, please contact our club liaison, [David Johnson](#).

From David duChemin, May 23, 2021

To Make Better Photographs, Study More Photographs—part 2

From [Photographically Speaking](#), [The Craft](#), [The Life Creative](#), [Thoughts & Theory](#) by David duChemin, May 23, 2021

The first installment of this two-part series began an exploration of the way in which we study a photograph, first to experience it and then to learn from it. If you missed it, you can [read the first part of *To Make Better Photographs, Study More Photographs* here](#).

The main point in that first article was this: our first point of engagement with a photograph must be the *experience* of it.

We need to ask, “What does this image make me feel or think?” *before* we can then ask the next question, which is what I’d like to explore here. That next question, once we’ve given the photograph some real time to sink in and to bring those feelings, thoughts, and other reactions to the surface, is “What is it **within** the photograph that makes me feel that?”

You’re asking: why do I feel the way I feel in response to what is visible in the image?

It’s not always obvious. Most often, it’s not just one thing, but rather a combination of things—very specific choices on the part of the photographer, not the least of which was the choice of this one image over many others, which matters when you feel inclined to ask whether the photographer was actually intentional about every choice. I mean, couldn’t some of it be a happy accident?

Of course it can, but accident or otherwise, the photographer made a decision later that might be expressed like this: “Yes, I made some very intentional choices, and yes, some of it was just pure luck, but they worked, and together they made a photograph that did what I hoped it would do.”

Accept that every image has an element of chance or serendipity and ask the question anyway:

What choices did the photographer make to create this particular photograph, and specifically, how do they affect my experience of the image?

Your answers might then include some version of the following.

Promoting the idea of purity in creativity is not only absurd but is also detrimental to the creative spirit in that it sets up a false premise.

That premise posits that what ultimately matters is difference, the extent to which a photograph or a body of work can stand apart from everything that came before it. What really matters, however, is not difference but substance – not standing apart, but making a contribution... the pursuit of difference puts the emphasis on what to avoid rather than what to create, an emphasis that is ultimately counterproductive.

— Erin Babnik, *To Look or Not to Look: Can You Find Yourself through the Work of Other Photographers?*

Continued....

You don't make a photograph with just a camera. You bring to the act of photography all the pictures you have seen, the books you have read, the music you have heard, the people you have loved.

— Ansel Adams

I live in a small place more urban centers make fun of, where art is not necessarily the first thing in most people's minds, and I thought: Gee, I don't need to go in some exotic locations to make a meaningful picture, why don't I just play like I came from China and I was transplanted into this culture, with this people and this language and this landscape and this architecture and this music and all these animals I've never seen before... why don't I try to belong to my own place and make pictures that I really would like to make. I started doing that and it was the first time that anybody started paying attention to my work.

— Keith Carter

David duChemin, continued...

For example, in the image below, the photographer chose a very high point of view with a wide-angle lens pushed in nice and close to the foreground, and that gives the image a lot of depth. Additionally, the shutter speed was slow enough to allow for a sense of movement in the clapping hands. The choice of moment was important as well, or we might not have seen the exact moment that the girl at the center of the image looks up and into the cell phone camera of the person photographing her.



Lalibela, Ethiopia

In the paragraph above, I'm trying to illustrate for you the kind of thinking that I have found helpful.

It's not just noting what you see in the image. And it's not just noting what you think the photographer did, though both are important. It's *connecting* them. The photographer did *this*, and it accomplished *this other thing*.

How did the photographer use the light? How does that make you feel, or what does that accomplish? Do the dark shadows (and therefore a choice about exposure) give the image drama or mood?

What focal length do you suspect the photographer might have used, and from where (near or far)? What does this do to the image? Does it give the image more energy because of how the wide-angle lens exaggerates the diagonal lines? Or does that longer lens compress foreground to background? What does that contribute to the feeling or to the story?

David duChemin, continued...



Istanbul, Turkey.

Why did the photographer choose this moment over another, or what makes this moment so important to the image?

See the pattern? What did the photographer do (or what do you think they did)? How did that affect how you experience the image?

Another example: in the photograph above, I see that the photographer chose to leave some strong foreground elements and probably used a wider aperture (because those elements are close to the lens and out of focus), giving the image its feeling of depth to make me feel like I'm right there. That hand coming out of nowhere is an important choice of moment and makes me feel more like I am part of the scene, and provides a key part of the story, placing it strongly in a coffee shop. The disembodied nature of that hand makes it feel like it could almost be my own, increasing my feeling of really being there.

Choice and effect. *This* was done or chosen, and *this* is what it accomplishes for me.

What did the photographer choose to include or perhaps exclude? And how does that affect how I experience the image? Forget good. Forget bad. Forget (for now) what you would have done. Think photographer's choice and respondent's experience. This does that.

Does the chosen shutter speed have any effect on how you experience the image? What about the aperture and resulting

A picture is like a prayer.

— Harry Callahan

One very important difference between color and monochromatic photography is this: in black and white, you suggest; in color, you state. Much can be implied by suggestion, but statement demands certainty... absolute certainty.

— Paul Outerbridge
[Julia Scully, "Seeing Pictures," *Modern Photography* Oct. 1976]

Writing is not about words. Painting is not about pigment. Music is not about tones. As long as photographers insist that photography is about photographs, the art is limited and self-containing.

— Brooks Jensen,
LensWork Quarterly
no. 18

Photography helps people to see.

— Berenice Abbot

Continued...

There's a kind of reverence that goes along with doing this process. You have to pay your dues to the photo gods.

— Sally Mann

The qualities that I think get underestimated quite often are durability and tenacity and a willingness to just keep at it. Time spent behind the camera is just phenomenally important.

— Joe McNally, *The Great LIFE Photographers* by The Editors of *LIFE*

Photography looks like pictures but it's really ideas, and they're your ideas.

— Joel Meyerowitz

David duChemin, continued...

depth of focus? What about the choice of colour or its absence? What other compositional choices were made, and do they contribute to how the photograph feels to you or what the photograph is saying? Did the photographer use a specific device like repeated elements or sub-framing (frame within a frame) to draw your attention? Did they use balance or tension in a way that makes you feel a certain way? What kinds of contrasts or juxtapositions did the photographer use, and what does that make me think or feel?

You might not be able to do more than guess at some of these, but this exercise will help. Just asking the questions is a way to raise your awareness of the possibilities, and, perhaps most importantly, the awareness of the connection between the choices photographers make in terms of gear, technique, composition, or choice of moment and the way we will experience that image.

Ultimately, you're asking, "If I had to make this particular photograph, what decisions would I have to make so that the photograph would look and feel the way it does?"

Notice the wording? I didn't say, "What would I have done instead?" You can ask that, but I suggest you leave that to the very last question you ask, not the first, as is so often our habit.

There's value in turning it all around at the end and wondering what options the photographer might have missed or deliberately not chosen. Lord knows you'll be faced with this when you've got a camera in your hand.

Training yourself to consider other possibilities is training yourself to be more observant and to think more creatively. But even then, consider asking stronger questions. Not "What would I have done?" so much as "What might I have done and what would that choice accomplish in terms of how the image looks and feels?" Sure, you'd have used a different lens, but why? How would that change the *feeling* of the image? You might have cropped it differently or chosen a different point of view. Why? To what effect for the person looking at the image?

These aren't simple questions, but they will help bridge the gap between technique and all the many choices you make and the way the image gets experienced. And learning to ask these questions of photographs that have endured and become iconic in some way is a useful way to do it. I find it easier to look at the images of Sam Abell or Ernst Haas or Elliott Erwitt (just to name a few) and ask these questions, rather than asking them about my own work—because I already think I know the answers. I'm often blind for being too close to it, especially when the photographs are fresh.

David duChemin, continued...

But looking at the work of others is where I learn the best, in order to then apply those ideas to what I make myself.

I hope this helps! If this interests you, my recent book, *The Heart of the Photograph*, asks these kinds of questions. More specifically, it is about the questions you ask with the camera in your hand, but can just as easily be used to guide your study of the photographs of others. [You can find *The Heart of the Photograph* on Amazon here.](#)

Oh, one more thing before you go. I know one of the questions I'm going to get next is about which photographers I recommend studying or which books of photographs I recommend. [Follow this link to a list I made back in 2017.](#) My recommendations still stand, and I've updated it today with a couple more. Also, be sure to look at the comments for other recommendations, and I would love to hear from you. Did I miss one of your favourites? Let me know.

For the Love of the Photograph,



Editor's note: From time to time, I like to share pieces by David Duchemin, an author, photographer and teacher from British Columbia. He has an extensive website, excellent blog, and many tutorials on line. He has published many books on the creative side of photography, and often makes PDFs of his work available for free download. You can visit his site and subscribe to his newsletter "The Contact Sheet" here: <https://davidduchemin.com/>

A Note about this Month's Theme, "Still Life"

Last July, BPC's treasurer Alan Alquist gave us a wonderful presentation on staging, lighting, capturing and editing still lifes. To refresh your memories, the images here are from that presentation.



I think that while photography is the easiest medium in which to be competent it is probably the hardest one in which to develop an idiosyncratic personal vision. It is the hardest medium in which to separate yourself from all those other people who are doing reasonably good stuff and find a personal voice, your own vision, and to make something that is truly, memorably yours and not someone else's. A recognized signature style of photography is an incredibly difficult thing to achieve... Photography is not an easy medium. It is, finally, perhaps the hardest of them all.

— Chuck Close

It's not enough to have talent; you also have to be Hungarian.

— Robert Capa