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Macro Shooting and Depth of Field

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Since most of us do our flower and macro shooting in the warmer months, I thought a series of articles might be helpful. If you've been shooting close up photos (macro) with your digital SLR, you've probably struggled at some point with having adequate depth of field (DOF), in other words getting those small subjects in focus from front to rear. First here are the basics of how DOF works.

- Higher magnification (making your subject appear larger) yields a shallower DOF.
- Smaller apertures (i.e. f/11 versus f/4) will increase DOF.

Therefore DOF is a function of both aperture value and magnification. It really doesn't matter if you magnify by moving in close using a macro lens or stand far away using a telephoto lens. Either way, the larger you compose the image in the camera, the shallower the depth of field will be. So here are some quick tips to improve your DOF when doing macro.

1- One of the most effective ways to keep objects in focus is to align the camera so that the subject (or desired area of focus) is parallel to the back of the camera. The below examples illustrate this point. Both images were shot with a Nikon D5000, 60 mm micro lens and an aperture of f/8. The photo on the left displays some softness on the foreground petals while the photo on the right has all the petals sharp.

Support our sponsor

Hunt's Photo & Video has been a supporter of amateur photography in Long Island in general and has now "stepped up to the plate" once again, by supporting the Syosset Camera Club with an advertising subscription in the Viewfinder.

Sign up to receive their emails for great buys, and consider patronizing them with your next purchase of photo equipment.

Program 2012-2013

Meetings start at 7:30PM

May

16th Lecture and DXO representative

23rd End of Year

Competition- Joanna Gazzola, Rich Witkover, and Pat Walsh.

June

7th 6:30 PM, Awards Dinner at LaFamiglia



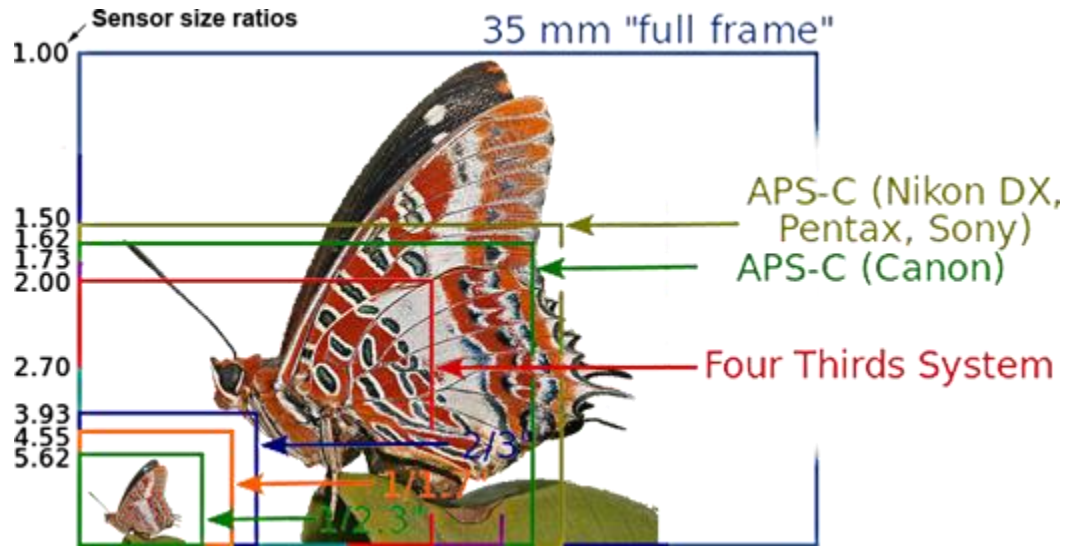
2- With today's high resolution cameras, you may not need to fill the frame with your subject depending on the end use, i.e. print size desired. Using the same settings, if you back away from your subject you're effectively reducing the magnification which will increase the DOF. You can then crop the image for the desired composition. This works especially well if you're not doing any printing but just sharing/showing images digitally. The below examples illustrate this point. The photo on the left is shown uncropped with the camera approximately 6" from the subject. The photo on the right used the same camera settings but with the camera position approximately 12" from the subject and later cropped in Photoshop. You should be able to see the improved detail in the flower and some of the leaves and in this case, there are still enough pixels after the crop to easily make a high quality 8 x 10 print. Also notice that because of the lower magnification, the photo on the right shows a bit more detail in the background.



So what camera is the best for shooting macro?. One might think that bigger is better with regard to sensor size, and when image quality is the primary concern, that generally is correct. However when shooting macro, depth of field (DOF) is of primary concern and some cameras are better than others in that respect. The higher the magnification the shallower the DOF, with magnification being the actual size of the image that's projected onto the sensor. If I frame a butterfly identically with a full frame camera and again with a Point & Shoot camera, the butterfly will be projected onto the sensors as shown in the diagram below. Even though the in camera composition is the same, the full frame butterfly has been magnified (projected) 5 times larger than the Point & Shoot camera. With the same aperture setting on both cameras, this increased magnification will render a much shallower DOF compared to the smaller camera. To see how much the DOF changes we'll have to

look at some numbers. For the diagram below let's assume a working distance of 1 foot, and an aperture of F/8 on both cameras. We'll use a focal length of 100 mm on the full frame camera with a 17 mm (100 mm equivalent) focal length on the Point & Shoot camera. Under those conditions the full frame camera will have a DOF of 0.12 inches while the P&S camera will have a depth of field of 1.5". Should we actually take this shot of a butterfly as composed below, there's no way the full frame camera with a .12 inch DOF will get the subject in focus from front to back. We'd have to close the aperture down to F/32 on the full frame camera to achieve even a 0.9 inch DOF and at that aperture the image quality will suffer due to diffraction. The P&S camera however will have no problem with its 1.5" DOF and there will be no loss of image quality due to diffraction. FYI, the numbers above were generated with an iPhone app called 'simple DOF', a great app for \$1.99.

The caveat here is that the image quality (i.e. detail and low noise levels) with the P&S camera is no match for the full frame camera. Nevertheless, I'd settle for the lower quality and have the whole subject in focus. Granted we're comparing extremes here with regard to sensor size but that's mainly to give you an idea of the differences



you can expect with different cameras. So after all that, what's the best camera for macro photography? My personal opinion is that any of the APS-C sensor cameras or the new micro 4/3 sensor cameras are a good compromise of image quality and DOF. I like the 4/3 sensor best but at the moment the only true macro lens for the system is the Panasonic 45 mm f/2.8 - a little short on focal length for my taste. That's soon to change though with the announcement of a 60 mm macro from Olympus. Because there's exactly a 2:1 ratio between a full frame camera and the 4/3 camera's sensor, this lens will have a 35 mm equivalent of 120 mm, a great focal length for macro in the field. That 2:1 ratio between sensor sizes also means that the 1:1 magnification on this new lens will produce an image that will appear two times larger than on a full frame camera. Pair this new lens with Olympus's OM-D (EM-5) camera that has outstanding image quality, even at high ISOs, and you've got a system which will undoubtedly produce the most stunning close-up images ever seen. In the meantime, the OM-D is available as a kit with the 12-50 mm lens which is no slouch when it comes to macro work.

Adobe to discontinue ownership of programs

Illegitimi non carborundum (don't let the bastards wear you down)

In case you haven't heard yet, Adobe will no longer sell boxed versions of its software, or even the option to buy their programs from the popular suite. They are dropping the Creative Suite (most often abbreviated to CS), shifting all the programs to the "Creative Cloud" brand that it uses for Web apps (CC). There will be some amazing refinements in Photoshop, such as a tool to remove blur due to camera movement among other things.

If you don't already own Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Illustrator or other parts of the Creative Suite software you will have to subscribe to them monthly as part of a software package. The update is available for an annual membership that breaks down to \$49.99 per month for the full suite. Those who already own these products will get a discount on the first year of the new cloud service, for \$29.99 per month. It's like the neighborhood drug pusher giving out free pot. Individual app subscriptions are available for \$19.99 per month.

Are you annoyed enough to do something about it? There are many alternatives including the other Adobe alternative, Lightroom (at least for now). Alternatively, if you want to use layers, you might want to take re-read the April Viewfinder and give the GIMP another look as well. Did I mention that the GIMP is free?

Goldstein Receives PFLI Service Award

At the May 9 meeting of the SCC, yours truly was presented with the PFLI Service Reward for "*dependable and consistent service toward the advancement of Photography.*" A tad overstated in my opinion but very much appreciated. My thanks to those of you who supported me for this award.



Fooling Mother Nature

Sometimes you feel like getting a good bird picture in your back yard, but who wants a bird on a stockade fence or on a feeder. You can solve that problem by building a perch/feeder from a nice looking branch and placing it against a nice natural background. The example shown here was made from a branch found along the road, which is supported by a stand constructed from scrap wood. 1" wide, shallow holes were drill along the top that are filled with bird seed. Just add seed, attach your longest lens to the camera, pull up a cold one and a lawn chair and wait.



**Syosset Camera Club
End of Year Standings**

Black And White A		
Scheinerman	First Place	SALON
Chhatpar	First Runner Up	
Patwa, R	Second Runner Up	
Black and White B		
Kirshenbaum	First Place	
Ross, J	First Runner Up	
Bass	Second Runner Up	
Black and White AA (Salon)		
DeBiase	First Place	
Silverstein	First Runner Up	
Agdern	Second Runner Up	
Color A		
Scheinerman	First Place	SALON
DeBiase	First Runner Up	
Chhatpar	Second Runner Up	
Color B		
Weisler	First Place	
Kirshenbaum	First Runner Up	
Ross, J	Second Runner Up	
Color AA (Salon)		
Silverstein	First Place	
Agdern	First Runner Up	
Patwa, R	Second Runner Up	
Creative		
Silverstein	First Place	
Chhatpar	First Runner Up	
Newman	Second Runner Up	
Projection A		
Agdern	First Place	SALON
Scheinerman	First Runner Up	
Chhatpar	Second Runner Up	
Projection B		
Rose	First Place	
Bass	First Runner Up	
Langholz	Second Runner Up	
Projection AA (Salon)		
Silverstein	First Place	
Ferrara	First Runner Up	

End of Year Dinner

The awards Diner is on June 7th. Time is running out to get your tickets. Please get your check to Peter Newman or Carole Greenberg ASAP for \$58 per person.

Also, if you have already done so, please send images to Peter Metzger for inclusion in his "slide show" presentation



And the Winners Are:

The 2012-13 competition year has seen some amazing growth in the capabilities of our membership.

Special congratulations are in order for Ira Scheinerman who will move up to the Salon category in 2013-14 in both Black and White and Color prints and to Alan Agdern who will round out his credentials by adding Projection to his list of Salon categories.

Now that the regular competitions are finished, it's time to prepare for the End of Year Competition. This is always an exciting competition. Bring your six favorite images in each category. No new work- only those that have already been scored.

As usual, the End of Year Competition will be scored by three judges. After a preliminary elimination round, the judges will enter their scores electronically and the final score will be the sum of the three scores.

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This will be the last issue of the Viewfinder until September when we resume our regular schedule of meetings.