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Architecture Photography

The urban landscape presents unique challenges for the photographer.

Glistening towers of glass and steel, nestled amongst historic buildings and modern concrete foundations.

The hassle and bustle of people, traffic and transit each offering their own touch of magic that will produce a fantastic image.

You will need to apply some basic Techniques of architecture

A good tripod is essential, you will need a wide angle lens, possibly a shift lens to allow you to keep the lines of tall buildings straight..

The angle you take the picture from is very important. The different light angle or type of light will change the perspective of the building – Dawn and dusk are usually the best to bring out the most exclusive details. This is known as the magic hour.

Always obtain permission to use the photo as some buildings are protected from photo publications.

A polarizing filter will eliminate the glare from the glass and shiny surfaces. Take multiple shots at different exposure levels to capture certain highlights.

Weather condition will also produce some dramatic effects.

Sometimes the building is too large to capture in a single frame use the panoramic feature of the modern cameras and use photo shop to combine them later.

Shoot at $f/11$ = focus on the main subject area, use a cable release to reduce shutter shake and take multiple images,

Be on the lookout for special features that will make your photo stand out

Be extra care of colour balance as different lights have different effects and it could either enhance your image or destroy it completely.

Use your imagination looking for lines and angles.

Architectural photography is both challenging and fun but when done properly you will appreciate the architectural structure and produce a fantastic shoot that people will love to view. And a keepsake that will last a lifetime.

The World we Build

As most People Take pictures of Buildings for living accommodations or places they visit by using the correct camera angle you will be able to highlight the true beauty of the structure and enhance its character.

Even though the building is stationary there are many problems associated with the Photographing it

- Exterior are too large for a single frame without distortion
- Interior are usually poorly light
- The whole city or town view could be very confusing if not composed Properly

Urban skylines

The character of the city is defined by its skyline

From boxed shaped skyscrapers to the domes of churches and the turrets of historic buildings

These shot are best are taken during the Golden Hour

From a distance use a wide angle lens to capture the entire skyline

Looking Down

From a high view point you have the opportunity to show the size and layout of the town

Look for Patterns

- Take a large range of lens Normal – for eye level version
- Wide angle for a broad view
- Telephoto to zero in on Patterns and features

Look for Antennas and chimneys for interesting shots

The Pulse of the city

To show case the city as a living environment you need to explore the area first observing how the people react at different times of the day

Establish a good view point To capture all the chaos

A telephoto lens is best for this focusing the people

Capture a local street vendor

Night time is a completely different perspective with the neon coloured lights

The Viewpoint

There is nothing more important than photographing a build with the proper view point

Each view point is different as it reflection the Imagination of the photographer and what they Wisk to portray.

You do want the image to be uncluttered to prevent any form of distraction

With a Good telephoto lens you will get the perfect shoot from a distance providing the weather is clear

If you are too close and point your camera up you will get Converging lines causing a distorted image

Sometime this is good as it revels the way a pedestrian will see the same building

If you don't want the converging lines you will need a wide angle or tilt lens.

Finding Patterns

The pattern found in some architecture/al structures offer some excellent opportunities to produce abstract images

Look for the repetition of the design pattern Use a telephoto lens and get multiple images with in a single shot

Focusing on the particular geometric shape of the design

Different light situations will provide for different perspectives of the same image

Looking for detail

By focusing on a small detail of the building will reveal the significance of the structure and the style

The small side details are often more interesting than the building itself A telephoto lens works best as you can zoo min close and focus precisely on the design

Such as a carved insignia carefully place in the panels between the floors

Conveying Mood

Make use of the light during the time you have and the weather conditions

As the rain drops bounce off the vehicles roof the skyscrapers top emerged in fog suggest a total isolation mood

The dark skied with no reflection coming from the buildings is an eerie feeling Use all of this to portray the mood you want and make the best out of a bad situation

Night Lights

The multi coloured lights will transform to a spectacular image use or imagination to use special techniques

Due to the low light you will need a tripod and a shutter release as you will probably be using a shutter speed of 1/30

Focus on light patterns use special effect filters capture the light trail of moving vehicles the possibilities are endless experiment and have fun

Buildings after dark

The appearance of the building changes after darkness sets in and it is lit by artificial light

Public offices usually have flood lighting on them giving them an isolated appearance by isolating them from any form of obstruction

Use the different light emanating from the buildings to produce dramatic images

By taking a series of photos from dawn to dusk you will have a story line going showing the changes to the buildings

You will need a slow shutter speed to capture the full effect Use a tripod and shutter release to avoid camera shake

Colour in the city

Generally the city leaves a greyish impression

But if you concentrate on the colour of the buildings such as

- Window displays
- Signs and posters
- Vehicles
- And even people

You will be provided with an abundance of colour full of interesting contrast

Streets at dawn

The Golden hour provides an opportunity for some excellent shots almost free from pedestrian and vehicle traffic

The light changes rapidly but try to capture as much change as possible to tell the story

Messy morning are a pale simplicity to the structures but by using the golden hour you will be able to night light the delicate textures and patterns engrave in the structures

You will need to capture a few pedestrian and vehicles to so signs of life

Photographing Interiors

Due to the limited space and small scale You must pay attention to Camera position angle of view and the type of lens you use

There will be a contrast in the light us it wisely to create the mood you want also focus on small details

Mixed Lighting

Usual in most rooms there is a mixture of Tungsten and florescent lighting thus resulting in an orange glow

The old method of attaching a 82B filter will help balance the light

The auto white balance might work as well.

Experiment with different filers and white balance setting to establish the mood you want

Working in a small space

The standard 50 mm lens is almost impossible to work with

You might want to invest in a 20 to 35 mm lens

Wide angle lens will cause major distortions around the edge

Look for special features such as a spiral staircase

Look up though the spiral capture a plate in the middle

Day Lit Room

The best way to light any room is with natural light with no additional lighting

The hash sunlight will wash out any fine detail to avid this cover the window with a clean white sheet to eliminate shadows and to distribute the light use reflectors made from tin foil with a hard card board back

Doors and Windows

In order to convey the true character of a building focus on the doors and windows as these are the most personalized items of the building

Houses are decorated as per the occupants taste whereas the entrance to Government buildings appears to be impersonal and intimidating

The searching eye

Your Goal as a Photographer is to eliminate the bland image of the structure

This requires skill and Imagination

Every building is designed and built to reveal its own characteristic and personality

Look for simplicity in the design of the buildings in a small fishing village compared to the massive concrete formation found in large cities

Each Building will present its own way of privacy and comfort

Small Towns

The small town will lack the large concrete structures found in the city but they will have a more distinctive atmosphere

They are self-contained with a centralized Point and usually have a lot of history and traditions

To effectively capture the true character of the small town focus on the people as they are more relaxed than those within the city

They are not as stressed out More peaceful You might find aa country market a general store Or a community church hall

Villages and Rural Communities

Outside the city limits you will find a small community that appear to be frozen in time.

This will require specialized photographic techniques as any bright flashes of light will distract from the historical value of the town

You need to establish a good view point to capture the full beauty

Normally these small towns are tourist attraction so arrive early when it is not as crowded

Show the historical value by highlight the special features within the town

The buildings a more spaced out you might want to experiment with a wide angle lens To give the impression space or capture the entire town using a telephoto lens from a high vantage point

Villages Towns and Cites

Going from shooting single buildings to shooting buildings in a cluster involves a lot more than just a change of scale

You need to capture how each building relates to each other

The mood of the individual building is less important than the overall impression of the community

This will require a great deal of planning as every community has its own personality

It is your job as a photographer to compose your shots properly and show the true character of that community

Using Reflections

A reflection of a building provides for an exceptional photo experience highlighting the colours and the graphic structure

With the proper angle you will get the perfect abraded view

A glass wall building acts like a mirror to capture the reflection of another structure

This method is most effective during the golden hours of the day

Use a telephoto lens and work from an appropriate distance

Portrait of Buildings

The true characteristic of the building should be revealed in the photograph

The technique to photograph the portrait of a building is very similar to that of a human portrait

You will need to determine which features are most important and choose the best lighting to highlight them

Portraying Houses

Most of the domestic Architecture is of the comfortable side by design for living rather than for show

By use creativity you will be able to portray the family dwelling at its best bring out the true character

Walk around the building to establish the best view point

Use the surrounding shrubbery to draw the viewers' eye toward the dwelling

Silhouetting for shape

The blank shape of a silhouette will often reveal more about the structure and characteristics than a brightly lit image

The trick is to unexposed the shot while framing it against a brightly lit sky.

A cloudy overcast will not produce this type of effect

Your point of view is critical as the sun must be directly behind the structure

Simplifying the view

The Goal of Architectural Photography is to find an unclutter view of an Architecture structure

In a city you will find many obstructions

- Passing Traffic
- Pedestrians
- Trash cans
- Bus stops
- Newsstand
- Plus many more

All distracting from the main subject

To avoid some of the distraction use a single

- focal point
- Long exposure
- Neutral density filter
- Small aperture
- Blur the foreground and back ground

Outside the city limits you might be able to get away with a wide angle lens up close

Choose your point of view carefully and add some attractive elements to set the mood

Camera Position

The position of the camera is critical

You will need a few different shots to show the complete room

Focus on a main focal point such as a fireplace

A wide angle lens is probably your best bet

The camera is very sensitive to dust Remove all foreign substances wipe down all surfaces remove any clutter straightens the wall hangings and beware of glass reflections

Aiming for Accuracy

Vertical walls should look vertical but when you point the camera upward to get the top of the building they will appear to be converging on an angle

To eliminate this you will need a tilt shift lens

A cheaper way is to eliminate it by finding a taller structure and shooting from that angle

Use a telephoto lens from a good distance

Aiming for Drama

The convergence of vertical lines is considered to be an error in Photography

But if you are going for the abstracted dramatic effect shoot from a low point and point up or a high point pointing down creating the perfect vertical feeling

Use a wide angle lens to produce distortion around the edges

By using your imagination and experiment with different angles you will get some fantastic abstract images

The Right Light

Depending on the weather conditions and where the sun is shining on any given day it will provide multiple opportunities for some fantastic images

An overcast day will provide for a diffused light thus allowing you to focus on the finer details and the unique designs of the building

The Golden hours are the best providing for a better contrast of the textures. If you are shooting late in the day use the shadows to your advantage. Producing that only unique image

Revisit the same site at different times of the day and notice how your perception of the building changes

Using Lens

The best two lenses for Architectural Photography are Wide angle and Telephoto

Allow for multiple Point of views

Use your Imagination to portray the building in the best situation

At times you will need a long exposure thus making a tripod mandatory a shutter release with also add to further protect from camera shake blur

Walk around the building to establish the best view point

Judging the exposure

Try for an overcast day or a hazy atmosphere in order to diffuse the bright sun

The ideal situation is to have the light hit the building on angle as the long black shadows will pose for a distraction

In order to obtain the correct exposure measure the dark area the measure the bright area take the average of the two then take multiple shot bracketing the average value setting ISO to auto

When you Photograph Architecture the most important question to ask is which angle or view point you want.

To answer this question is to explore the different viewpoints by walking around the building and taking note of the surroundings and vantage points.

You may want to shoot from an adjacent tall building or Hillside. Use a telephoto lens to zoom in on the actual building

The different Qualities of the daylight sun can drastically change the mood and the appearance of the building.

Cloudy or overcast days are the best when you want to emphasize the unique architectural qualities of the building.

The early morning or late afternoon sun can produce some interesting effects on the building, Use a polarizing filter to eliminate unwanted reflections from the glass.

Some buildings have interesting sculptures or designs. Zoom in on these special designs. You will be surprised with the interesting shots you can achieve.

The key to this type of photography is precision you must have a steady hand or tripod, Sharp focus, and perfect light in order to get the full effect as the original artist intended

Reflection can provide some interesting shots as well

A window reflection of an adjacent building, the setting sun reflecting off the window makes the building appear to be on fire. Water reflections if done properly is very difficult to tell which is the real image and which is the reflected image

Word of caution stay out of the reflection nothing will destroy the photograph more than the reflected image of the photographer in the picture.

Get your exposure right

Shadows and sunspots are very misleading. The human eye will adjust to these but the camera will not...

To get the best shot in situations like this take multiple spot light readings and average them together. Use the manual settings of your camera for the best results.

With the digital camera today it gives you a little more freedom as you can take multiple shots then later select the best one

In Architectural Photography a darker image is more acceptable than a washed out image.

Night time photography of buildings will produce some fabulous shots but to successfully accomplish this you need a tripod, and timed exposure.

Convey the mood

If you wish to darken the sky for a better contrast use a graduated neutral density filter or a polarizing filter to highlight the true colours.

The Power of Industry

From an environmentalist prospect industry is a sore spot but as a Photographer You could capture some dramatic Photos

The blast furnaces belching out smoke causing a solid smoke stream against the blue sky

As night falls the smoke will trap specs of hot ashes that glow

Experiment with the different textures and formations

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Bio

My name is David Wright.

I have many years' experience writing procedures on how to test high tech electronic equipment. Re wrote technical manuals so that the average person could understand them.

Set up numerous training programs to train junior techs.

My documenting skills are excellent paying attention to details satisfying the toughest ISO auditors.

I have enhanced my writing skills by successfully completing a course in Writing for Children's literature.

Completed course from AWAI in Copy writing service, B2B copy writing, Seo management , Email marketing and web design

This has helped me write how to articles and Information Books that you will find on my website Discount E Books <http://www.discount-ebook-s.com/>

I have had a Camera in my Hand since 1965 gone pro in 1999

Took the course from ICS in Photography

I am now at a point in life I would like to share my knowledge with the world and the best way I know how is by Print either electronically or Hard copy paper.

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