

## The Creative Process in Photo Composition

*“Claud Monet once said, ‘To see, one must forget the name of the thing we are seeing.’ Monet was probably one of the first to recognize that art is not necessarily what you see, but rather what you as an artist make others see.”*

*Quote from Creative Macro Photography by Charles Needle*

Often, I am asked about my process used to build a creative composition from photographs. I’ve not been able to give an answer that seems satisfactory. Of course, one needs to learn about the tools that are available in Photoshop and other photo editors. That is basic. But how does one pull together an appealing result?

As a former software engineer, I spent my work time analyzing and planning a specific result, and correcting. But such a process does not adequately help me to build a photographic creation.

When I start working on a new photo composition, I usually have no idea of what I want as the final result. I find an image that inspires me, and then I start searching my thousands of existing photos to see what might work well with the original photo, along the lines of shapes and colors, as well as a potential story telling result.

Unfortunately, the results are often worthy only of the recycle bin, after many hours of work! But that is little different from the photographic process itself. On a photo shoot, one or two really good keepers out of several hundred, is a good day!

Creative inspiration does not come on demand, but it does require a willingness to experiment, to play, to indulge in whatever relaxation is necessary to open up the flood gates of one’s mind, so see beyond the ordinary. Talking to one’s higher self, to deceased loved ones, to Spirit and then listening for inspiration, also helps, especially the listening part! Relaxing into beauty in our lives, feeling gratitude, a good long jog or walk also help to predispose one to inspiration. Such activities promote the production of your body’s endorphins, nature’s way of allowing for inspiration! Mostly, the willingness to constantly seek inspiration; to try, fail, and try again; the willingness to NOT give up and to stay committed are prerequisites to success. Part of that process is to keep exposing yourself to the work of other great photographers. The first two links below are examples.

Recently, I saw a Ted Talk in which the presenter shows us his creativity and how he achieves it. Although it is not about photography, the mental process is the same. It’s an enjoyable and informative video. Fortunately for us, photographic composition does not cost as much as his music video compositions!

### Helpful Links

Creative Compositions:

<http://www.psa-photo.org/index.php?2016-17-pid-individual-creative-round-three>

Creative in-Camera Photography: <http://www.barbarabenderphotoart.com/>

Ted Talk: [https://www.ted.com/talks/ok\\_go\\_how\\_to\\_find\\_a\\_wonderful\\_idea/](https://www.ted.com/talks/ok_go_how_to_find_a_wonderful_idea/)

