**Information Sheet for Shooting Scenes**

**By William Lulow**

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* **Decide on a point-of-view**
* **Decide what you want to show**
* **Pick a good time of day**
* **Use a tripod whenever possible**
* **Try to show foreground in wide-angle shots as close as possible**

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**When shooting architecture or single structures:**

* **Pick a good vantage point**
* **Use a slightly longer lens if you can to reduce distortion**
* **Try to use a filter to heighten contrast**
* **Beat the sunrise, wait past sundown**
  + **Warmer colors, excellent light within two hours of sunset/sunrise**
  + **Often displays extraordinary clouds**
  + **Side lighting improves textures, lengthens shadows for dramatic look**
  + **Ground fog/mist provides interest and creates mood early a.m.**
* **Setting – Scout Your Location**
  + **Practice someplace close to home and revisit often at different times of the year**
  + **Make a written or visual journal of favorite shooting locations**
    - **Take pictures each time you are there regardless of…**
      * **Bad light, poor conditions, not having the right gear**
    - **Even a few written notes will help for next time**
* **Setting – Scout Your Location**
  + **For cityscapes try** [**Google**](http://www.google.com/) **search under Images using the city name**
  + **Find great tips in general Landscape/Nature photography books**
  + **For traveling outside the U.S. brush up on the culture, history, architecture and customs of your destination**
* **Take a tripod whenever possible.** 
  + **Lightweight tripod is better than none.**
* **Consider a polarizing filter, if your camera allows**
  + **Improved color, color saturation, less reflections**
* **Consider custom white balance**
  + **May dramatically improve color accuracy**
  + **Reduces post processing in home computer or at photo lab**
* **Cityscapes and Low Light Shooting**
  + **For night shots in the city and elsewhere, try your camera’s night mode, if available**
    - **Flashes for subject in foreground (within 10ft.), and uses a slower shutter speed to let in the ambient light in the background.**
    - **Tripod or other method of steadying the camera will be a must.**
  + **Use the self timer for sharper pictures**
* **Whether using DSLR or P&S camera with zoom range, try wide angle and telephoto**
  + **Wide angle establishes a scene, has different impact than telephoto**
  + **Telephoto is handy for isolating parts of a scene**
    - **Helps simplify if many distracting elements exist**
    - **Creates variety, encourages exploring new ideas**
* **Plan composition with camera before setting up the tripod**
  + **Free yourself up by selecting camera position handheld first**
* **Seek out objects to convey scale**
  + **People, animals, solitary trees, tree stumps, boats, etc.**
  + **Offers a more three-dimensional look to the scene**
* **Since horizontal compositions are most common, always try a vertical first, then shoot a horizontal**
* **Keep the shot interesting by keeping subjects away from the middle of your scene.**
* **Visualize a grid with horizontal and vertical lines breaking up the scene into 3 sections.**
* **Build the Scene – Fore, Mid, Background**
  + **Sometimes great scenic pictures present themselves. Often, we can improve the first perspective we see**
  + **Fore, Middle, Background like characters in a play – Look for connections between them, similar colors, leading lines, patterns, etc.**
  + **Move yourself and the camera left, right, up, down and check the scene with your camera**
* **Build the Scene – Foreground**
  + **Choosing your foreground subject**
    - **Mirror lines, shapes, colors of mid and background**
    - **Use middle-toned or slightly bright foreground subject – Our eyes go to brighter objects first**
    - **Get VERY close to foreground objects when using wide angle**
    - **Consider low angle to emphasize foreground subject**
* **Build the Scene – Foreground**
  + **Show detail in shadowed areas with fill flash**
  + **Look for natural framing devices like trees and arches**
  + **Strong color or tone in foreground object will de-emphasize hazy, blah backgrounds**
* **Build the Scene – Middle Ground**
  + **Avoid large, uninteresting middle ground that doesn’t connect well with foreground and background**
  + **Maintain visual interest with leading lines, patterns of color or middle ground objects**
  + **Getting camera closer to foreground objects will diminish middle ground**
* **Build the Scene – Background**
  + **Keep horizon line straight**
    - **Use any in-camera grid or guides to help**
  + **Position horizon on top or bottom third, unless using a reflection**
  + **Generally, the side included more in the scene (top or bottom), should have the most interesting elements (clouds, mountains, breaking waves, etc.)**
  + **Find dramatic skies or avoid sky if too bright or too dull**
* **Build the Scene – Background**
  + **Clouds are often most exciting just after a storm as sun breaks through**
  + **Exclude extremely bright or dark spots in the background**
    - **They detract from subject (especially if bright – we notice brightest areas first)**
    - **They make the camera’s job more difficult – balancing exposure to suit the entire scene**
    - **Try exposure compensation to control brightness**
* **Tying it all together – See it your own way**
  + **After practicing building a scene, follow your instincts**
  + **Look for compositions out of the ordinary**
  + **Select a composition that pleases you, not what you think others will like**
* **Tying it all together – Know what you like**
  + **Take time to understand what you like about a scene – Ask yourself questions**
    - **What interests me most about this scene? Is it the color, amazing shapes, a perfectly symmetrical tree, a unique neon sign?**
    - **What do I want to emphasize?**
    - **What do I want to minimize?**
    - **How can I simplify the scene?**

**Notes**

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**Workshop Evaluation: (Kindly tear off this page)**

**1. Name one important thing you learned from this workshop.**

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**2. What might you do differently the next time you’re on vacation with your camera?**

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**3. Evaluate this workshop. Check off to what degree you found the following helpful (or not). 1 being not very helpful, 5 being extremely helpful.**

**-Overall presentation\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5**

**-Clarity of presentation\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5**

**-I understood what the instructor said\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5**

**-Quality of the illustrations\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5**

**-Workshop will help with my images\_\_\_ 1 2 3 4 5**

**4. Are you interested in taking more workshops? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Later\_\_\_\_**

**5. Name and email (optional)**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**