

Composed Depth In Photography



Perhaps the most frequently used photographic device to achieve a three-dimensional effect has been depth of field. If used effectively and in its proper perspective, this eye-catching axiom cannot only complement the overall style of the photographs, but can also be the determining factor in winning photographic competition. In his comprehensive book, *Photography*, John Upton defines the term depth of field as "the area between the nearest and furthest points from the camera that are acceptably sharp in focused image."

The first thing to know about getting the desired result of depth in photographs is that the lens of a camera works much like the human eye. The eye can automatically change to let in more or less light; when manually changed, the camera lens shares the same capability. On most lenses, there are several different aperture settings which are numbered according to size. The larger the number, the smaller the opening; however, as the number decreases, the opening is increased in size. As the result of a small aperture setting, more light is needed by a slower shutter speed to properly expose the film. Under extreme lighting conditions a tripod may be necessary.

There is no doubt that unusual angles combined with depth of field render even better photos. When composing a photograph before making the actual exposure, position articles in the immediate foreground or to either side of the main subject to add variety. Make sure that the composition has good symetrics and that one thing leads to another, ending at the main subject. Frame exactly what you want with the camera. Above all, do not be afraid to take more than one shot of something. Use different angles and positions. Diverse lighting is the result which lets the individual pick out the best photograph. Even standing on a chair to elevate the angle or putting the camera close to the ground changes the dimensional effect.

Depth changes with lenses of different focal lengths. For example, in my opinion the 28mm wide-angle lens has the best depth of field of view. In contrast, a 300mm telephoto lens has hardly any depth of field at all.

While many different things can be done to enhance and improve a photograph, composed depth of field is highly noticeable and can be implemented in all kinds of photography.

by Steve Rubey



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