

Picture Perfect - Here's How to Take a Great Picture

It is true that one cannot learn Art or cannot induce in someone the eye for beauty. But obviously, if you have it in you, it can be honed to perfection; however small that is. As a self taught landscape photographer, who has learned everything from the hours of waiting for the perfect light to the mistakes committed, I feel both glad and proud to share the secrets and the insights of landscape photography that contributes to the making of a great photograph. This is for all those who breathe through their lenses like me! But before telling you the few basic ingredients to perfect landscape photography, let me tell you one secret that holds true even for the universe. It's called the harmony. The key to every great thing is to strike the harmony right and landscape photography is not an exception. Open your eyes to the harmony all around you! Landscape Photography: The rule of three P's- preparation, patience and perseverance To capture the mystical and scintillating beauty of nature, you shall have to wait at her doorsteps, respecting her own tantrums, whims and fancies. After all, something that is so great or so beautiful is not readily available. And for all who thinks, landscape photography is easy, here's where you will find out that it is not. Behind a photograph that is par excellence, there are days of research, hours of thoughts, weeks of getting to know the topography, angles, crowds etc., endless failures and months of sleepless eyes eager to catch the perfect moment. To get something great, you need to have perseverance, patience and also a lot of preparation. As a landscape photographer, I can guarantee the fact that a great shot takes a lot of time and a whole lot of mental preparation. So, my first advice to you would be before looking through your lenses, look around the geography. Scout your chosen area. Note its important features; note the unusual and interesting angles, and its changing crowd levels. Take time to prepare the shot and make sure you are ready with your tripod or mini-tripod, cleaned lenses and the cable release before the best time of the day. Try out different filters and wait for a good foreground. If you have people in your frame, talk it out with them and break the ice to make them feel comfortable. Choose a simple and clear layout- too many subjects dilute the depth and focus of your photograph. Remember that what you call as a good shot is the one that focuses your attention on the subject by using a fairly sparse background and a simple and interesting composition to strike a clear harmony. Removing the clutter for your picture requires real skill. Achieve that. Landscape Photography comes out best when you focus on your subject. Not just landscape photography, any picture you click, requires that subtle judgment of de-cluttering your picture. For example, if you are capturing a musician, try zooming in, getting close to your subjects eye level and find a simple backdrop for your subject which will highlight your subject. Look for that vivid balance. Play with colors. Look for bold solid colors for that unforgettable photograph. For vivid and warm landscape photography, notice the "Stock-quality" images. If you notice them, you would see that they make great use of color. So, while you are taking such a photograph, search for solid primary colors. Bright red, emerald green, lightning yellow, and ocean blue- solid colors give a different dimension to your picture. Use a polarizer to bring out the vivid colors. While you are playing with colors try to avoid patterns as much as possible as they tend to distract your viewers from the subject. Alternatively, for a calmer effect on your landscape photography ,look for "color harmony". Scenes restricted to similar tones and colors, or even a single color brings out a calm, restful image where the eye plays with the differing shades and intensities. Look for pastels, cream, or delicate shades, when it's a serene effect you want to capture. Create drama with lights In my vertical, which is landscape photography, I have often seen that photographs that win competitions are often the ones that make fascinating use of light. Keep an eye out for that silver lining- the beams of light shining through clouds, sparkling light through the trees or windows, elaborate long shadows and the effect of side and backlighting. Try and use the beautiful warm golden hours of early morning and late afternoon. You will experience magic through your lenses at these hours. Maybe this is why they are called "magic hours".Landscape Photography requires the skill of the use of light. Of the people, for the people by the people Include the power of people in your photographs. You must have noticed that magazines in particular always create a dramatic effect by including people in the shot. A human face or figure always gives the viewer a human connection. It instills in your viewer a sense of being there, a sense of scale.

If you want to portray emotions there is nothing better than capturing a face to say it all. Laughter, despair, hope, hopelessness, proud, age- a human face tells it all. Simplify the shot down to one person for that exclusive reaction. Catch the promise of tomorrow with the young and the worldly and the weather worn. Young and old faces make wonderful subjects with their innocent expressions and aged with wisdom faces respectively. They make your shots warm, friendly, and someone you can relate to. Like a good old friend. Such photographs never grow old. Take heed of the above ingredients and mix them in an equal proportion according to your subject, place and time and you will see that in no time you have a photograph that you can be proud of!

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