

snap shots

Volume 14 Number 5

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A "cheapskate's" guide to extreme macro photography

Sunday, January 4, 2009, 1:30 P.M., at Waltham High School

Low-budget macro shooting offering outstanding quality is easier than you think!

PHSNE member Arthur Vaughan presents a program that describes a process for shooting extreme macro photographs using stacked auxiliary lenses and only the standard "pop-up" flash found on many cameras. Using a simple home-made support bracket and a variety of stacked add-on lenses, anyone can produce amazing extreme macro images having true "studio" quality lighting, for a fraction of the cost of a system requiring multiple flashes, expensive factory made support brackets, and big name macro lenses. Using the set-up described provides maximum portability for hunting down and following small insects and spiders who aren't going to sit still for photographers using cumbersome tripods.



Arthur S. Vaughan

Subjects covered include:

- Rigging up a lightweight macro flash bracket allowing your camera's pop-up flash to provide all the light necessary for shooting at extreme magnifications using small apertures
- Techniques for shooting "focus-free" macro (set it & forget it)
- Tips for stacking and using a variety of add-on lenses with standard "kit" auto-focus lenses
- An unbelievably simple "macro-studio" for photographing tiny spiders
- Tips for stalking dragonflies, grasshoppers, and jumping spiders

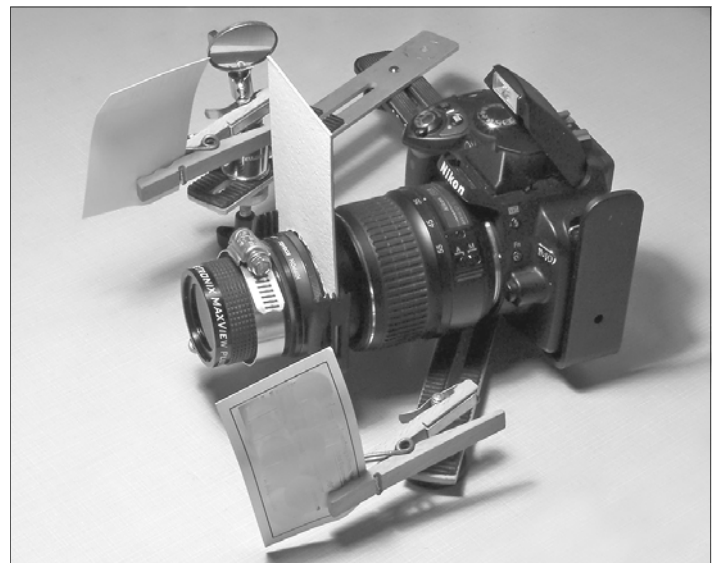
The process was initially developed using a variety of point-and-shoot cameras. Although they produced amazing results, the relatively limited depth of field offered by most p&s cameras was difficult to work with. Arthur presently uses a Nikon D-40 camera which flash synchs @ 1/500 sec. This allows shooting at ASA

400 or 800 with little interference from ambient light.

This camera's small size, light weight, and large screen make it an ideal macro "machine". Shooting apertures generally range from f:11 to f:36. The short duration of the flash provides fast exposures, making the use of a tripod unnecessary. A photographer using this type of macro set-up can produce outstanding images that might be difficult to achieve using conventional macro shooting methods.



Arthur Vaughan has been a member of the Merrimack Valley Camera Club for 25 years, serving 8 years as president. He worked for ATT&T, Lucent Technologies, and Bell Laboratories for 31 years and retired in 2001. During his career, he did extensive work in photomicrography. His current interests include color and b&w printmaking, stereo (3D), photomicrography, anamorphic photography, and digital restoration of photographs.



Shows and Exhibitions Around New England

"Off Stage, Up Close: Rock 'n' Roll Photographs" at the **Portland Museum of Art** draws from a large private collection of photographs of rock musicians to document the change popular music and musicians wrought on American culture in the late 20th century.

The show features more than 200 photographs including studio portraits and candid outtakes of stars from Elvis Presley to Jimi Hendrix to Madonna to Courtney Love. They are photographs of famous people that often helped make the photographers famous in their own right -- names that include Lee Friedlander, Kate Simon, Laura Levine, Baron Wolman, Bob Gruen, Jim Marshall, and Lynn Goldsmith. January 22 to March 22, 2009 at the Portland Museum of Art, Seven Congress Square, Portland, ME, 207-775-6148, www.portlandmuseum.org.)

"Exposures: Other Histories in Early Postcards from Africa" at the **Boston University Art Gallery** looks at the classic "ethnic" photographic postcards of Africa and Africans, black-and-white images made between about 1870 and the 1930s -- pictures that are typically understood as reflecting European stereotypes. The exhibition offers an alternative narrative, focusing on images that

PHSNE Membership

PHSNE membership is \$15 for students, \$30 for individuals, \$36 for a family, and \$40 for foreign membership. Please send checks in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar-denominated international money orders for dues payments.

Current members can read their renewal date from the mailing label on snap shots. For example, "Dec 2008" means your membership expires in December of 2008. Please check your label before sending in your dues.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to Joe Walters Jr, PHSNE Membership Chair, P.O. Box 650189, West Newton, MA 02465 (phone: 617-694-5594; email: membership@phsne.net, or use the Web form at www.phsne.net/contacts).

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Photographs become history: The rock musician Nico, above, helped set the style of the '60s rock revolution, while the Sierra Leonian women (right) sat for an African portraitist, a bit of photo history almost forgotten.

(Left) Nico (Christa Päffgen) © The Philip Townsend Archive. (Below) Bondu Girls, 1908 postcard by Alphonso Lisk-Carew



convey the participation of Africans in the photographic encounter both in front of and behind the camera.

Photographic postcards included in the show reveal Africans as cosmopolitan people and document other histories. The images show vibrant cities during the colonial era and illustrate how Africans fashioned their own cosmopolitan image of modernity. Staged studio portraits taken by European and African photographers reveal information about complex historical events, including the history of the slave trade and historic forms of dress, while casting light on early developments in African photography.

The exhibit also lifts the veil of anonymity from successful African postcard photographers such as Malian Seydou Keita (1923-2001), who continued earlier African photographic practices well into the late twentieth century. Nov. 21 to Jan. 18, 2009. (Boston University Art Gallery, 855 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, MA, 617-353-3329, www.bu.edu/art.)

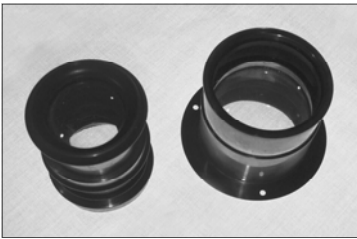
Dartmouth College's Hood Museum of Art draws on its collection of post-1950 photograph for the first time for "*Focus on Photography*," a survey of its collection concentrating on two major themes: portraiture and landscape. Exhibit includes works by James Nachtwey, Sebastiao Salgado, and Eugene Smith. (Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, Wheelock Street, Hanover, NH 03755, 603-646-280, www.hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu.)

Handyman's Corner: There Is A Fungus Among Us

You have just opened your camera case, the one you have not opened since who knows when. You reach in and take out your prized Teliflorist Telephoto 290mm 11.4 and swiftly mount it on your Doeverythingmatic SLR, planning on using it to capture that once in a lifetime shot of a Doublebreasted Yellowbellied Stool Pigeon on your birdfeeder.

"Why can't I get it to focus clearly?" you ask no one in particular. A quick assessment discloses that there is an obvious growth on the lens surfaces. FUNGUS! If you are very lucky, the fungus will be on an exterior surface. But, in all probability, it will have grown on inner surfaces.

The first and best method to solve this is "Do not let it happen." Proper storage will, in most cases, prevent fungus. All bets are off if you store your cameras and lenses in a climate that has continuous periods of hot and humid weather.



Storing gear in an airtight container with an ample amount of a good desiccant (silica gel), along with very regular examination to assure that the desiccant is still working, is the best and simplest method. It helps to maintain fairly constant temperatures.

A quick warning: simply putting the gear in a plastic bag that can be sealed is *not* a good idea. When stored, the gear may have enough moisture in or on it, even though it is not visible, to encourage a growth of fungus.

If the fungus is on an exterior surface, start the cleaning process by using a blower to remove any loose dust. Follow this by using rubbing alcohol, available at any drug store (not denatured alcohol since the agent in it is usually sodium hydroxide, a very corrosive material). Use the alcohol as you would use any other cleaning liquid.

If the lens is coated and the coating is very soft, it is possible that the coating will be removed. This is the choice: leave the fungus and not be able to use the lens or try to remove the fungus and have a usable lens without coating.

You can try a mild abrasive material if the alcohol treatment does not work. Common tooth paste works very well. Use a well dampened cleaning tissue, put a small amount of tooth paste on the tissue, and use a circular motion over the entire surface with minimal pressure. The fungus, if left in place long enough, will actually etch the glass, and only professional polishing may remove the etched mark – and it may very well not.

Update: PHSNE Forum and Publications Archive

The PHSNE Forum (www.phsne.net/forum) recently added a board for members to post items for sale, wanted or trade. Several items have been posted for sale including Kodak Travel Tapes, Early New England glass negatives, and Richard Harmon's photographic collection (over 1000 items). Most recently, Susan Rouleau is offering 61 stereo views from 1878-79 of the construction of the Boston Water Works. And Dick Moore is looking to obtain magic lanterns and lantern slides.

To view the For Sale, For Trade and Wanted board go to the Forum home page, then down to the Collecting Corner, then click on the third board.

Recent additions at the PHSNE Publications Archive site (www.phsne.net/pubs) include all issues of snap shots since September 2005 and a PHSNE group photo from 1979 taken with a Kodak Cirkut Camera. To check out these and other recent additions to the Publications Archive site go to www.phsne.net/pubs, then click on New Items in the left hand menu.

-- Joe Walters

PHSNE wishes to express its appreciation to Dave DeJean who has edited snap shots for the past three years. Thanks, Dave for a job well done!

Suggestions for articles and comments should be sent to snapshots@phsne.net

For fungus on interior surfaces, the task is probably best left to professional servicing. In order to expose the interior surfaces, the lens has to be taken apart. Not too many do-it-yourselfers will have either the specialized tools or the expertise to re-assemble the lens correctly.

If you really want to try this cleaning I strongly suggest that you attend the next PHSNE Auction. Buy an inexpensive lens that fits one of your cameras and experiment with it. Take several photos of subjects that will be available after the experiment. When the cleaning is completed, take repeat photos and compare them for quality.

Many older lenses will have their elements permanently spaced and this will allow reassembly without the need for collimating the lens. Newer lenses may require adjusting elements to achieve proper focus. This requires considerable knowledge and equipment making it more difficult than the average person can do.

-- Bud Midgley

Get Your Photographic Items Ready for the February Members' Auction

We keep finding more and more collectible items at the warehouse. So far we have 60 items for sale, and we expect to have a total of 75 from PHSNE and about 40 more from members. As we did last year, we will auction members' items alternating with PHSNE cameras, some of which came from the estates of deceased members.

Photograph in color (at right) by Vladimir Voloshenko, 1990, "Waterfall," Russia. Plaubel Makina (below), 1920-33, 2.9 lens and roll film back. Shutter restored, external finder missing.



Voightlander Vitomatic II (above) 35mm, 1958. Lens 50mm F2.8. Pilot 6 SLR 120 Kamera (left) Werkstätten Dresden 1936-37.

PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month, September to June, at 1:30 p.m. at Waltham High School, preceded by a mini trade fair at 12:30 and an open meeting of the PHSNE board at 11:00 a.m.

Feb. 1 — Annual Members Auction

Mar. 1 — Pete Bass on Polaroid large-format

Apr. 5 — Field trip to Planetarium; Ed Jameson

Directions

Waltham High School is at 617 Lexington St., Waltham, MA. The high school is at the top of the hill, behind other school buildings.

From I-95 (Route 128) Northbound: Take Exit 27 and follow Totten Pond Rd. 1.2 miles east until it dead-ends into Lexington St. Turn left and go .5 miles north. Turn right into the school complex.

From I-95 (Route 128) Southbound: Take Exit 28, Trapelo Rd., east 1.3 miles to Lexington St. Turn right and go south .8 miles to school complex on the left.

From Boston/Cambridge: Take Rte. 2 west to Exit 54B, then Lexington St. south 1.7 miles to school complex on the left.

From Lincoln and West: Take Route 2 east to Exit 53, Concord Ave. Go east 1 mile, then right onto Lexington St. and 1.3 miles south to school complex on the left.

PHSNE Online

PHSNE's Web site is online at www.phsne.org. Ralph Johnston is the Webmaster.

Join the PHSNE Forum online discussion: sign up and log in at www.phsne.net/forum, moderated by Joe Walters. For an archive of back issues of *snap shots* and meeting presentations, visit www.phsne.net/pubs.

PHSNE web site is currently being revised. Details about the new and vastly improved web site will be published in the February edition of snap shots.

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Photographic Historical Society of New England
Next Meeting: Sunday, January 4th
Waltham High School, 1:30 P.M.
"A Cheapkat's Guide to Macro-Photography"

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