

# FOCAL PLANE

AUCKLAND PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

AUGUST 2002

## Shooting The Night

- Making the most of night photography

## When You Need Support

- Why you can't live without a tripod

## Also...

- Club News
- Workshops
- Exhibitions



# Breaking Through The Darkness

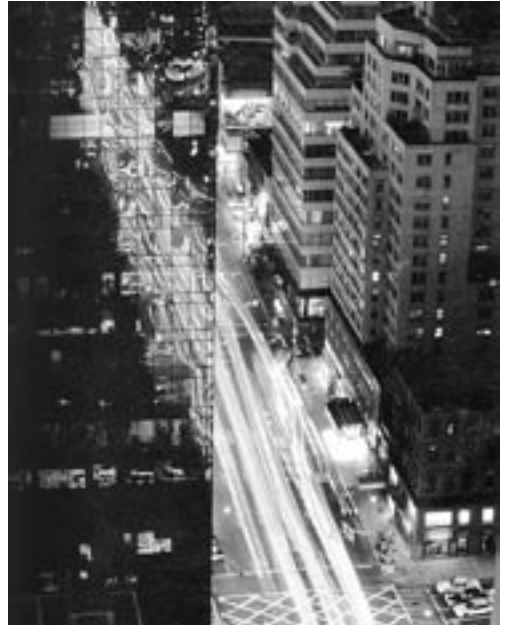
## – Shooting when the sun goes down

If you're one of the many photographers who put their cameras away when the sun goes down, you're missing a great opportunity for dramatic and unusual pictures. Whether you're a seasoned pro or an avid amateur, almost every subject looks more intriguing or more mysterious when glowing in the dark. People and buildings often take on eerie colour casts caused by street or building lights.

You don't need a whole lot of elaborate equipment to delve in the world of darkness. If you already own a 35mm camera with a 'bulb' or 'B' time exposure setting and a tripod you already have the basic equipment for success. If you have a modern, electronic automatic camera you can still use this to get started but you may find that your batteries do not last very long as long exposures and lower night-time temperatures may affect their performance. Older, clockwork driven cameras are ideal for working at night and can often be bought second hand at reasonable prices.

To start, load your camera with transparency (slide) film in the range 100-400 ISO, I don't recommend print film as you may find the processing lab will spoil your prints by automatically 'correcting' the interesting night time colours so that your work looks like it was taken in the day. Film choice at night depends on subject matter and desired effect, just as it does during daylight exposures. For example, if you intend to

photograph people in a street scene at night, then you might use a 400 or 800 ISO speed film, so that you could record the people before they moved so much that they wouldn't register on the film. On the



other hand, if you intend to use a flashlight to "paint with light," you'll likely want to choose a medium speed film, i.e.: 100 or 200 ISO so that your exposure will be long enough to do your "painting," but the film will still be sensitive enough to record the flashlight efficiently.

A reason to choose an even slower film would be if you wanted to have a particularly long exposure in order to enhance the surreal quality of many night photographs.

Place the camera on a tripod (to hold it steady) and if you have one, thread a locking cable release into the shutter button (to enable long time exposures to be made on the 'B' setting). If you have an automatic camera, turn the exposure dial till you come across the desired exposure length. Find the scene you want to photograph and compose the image you want to make.

By setting up on a building or bridge overlooking a roadway you can use a camera on a tripod to trace traffic patterns. During a long exposure--5 sec or more --cars will create colourful streaks of light on film while the shutter remains open. As a counterpoint to the moving lights, include a building or some other stationary object.

### 10 Tips For Night Photography

1. Look for reflections to add repeating graphic elements.
2. To add interest to a static subject, zoom or move the camera during a time exposure.
3. Add an eerie, otherworldly glow with a diffusion or soft focus filter.
4. When possible, compose to include both foreground and background elements to create a sense of depth and space.
5. Explore your subject thoroughly with a zoom or lenses of different focal lengths. Shoot overall, mid range, and close-up views.
6. Try a telephoto lens to isolate dramatic detail.
7. Use a tripod and cable release for total control of sharpness and depth of field.
8. With your camera on a tripod, use long exposures to trace the sinuous patterns made by the lights of moving traffic.
9. Create abstract light patterns by moving the camera during a long exposure, or by

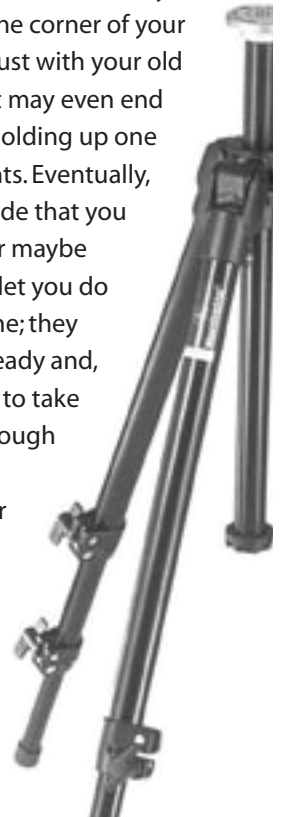
using a multi-image attachment.

10. Combine a sharp image with an intentionally out of focus one by using double exposure techniques.

## For those who need support with their photography.

**T**ripods - If you don't have one, buy one.

If in doubt, get one that's bigger and heavier than what you think you need, rather than smaller and lighter. If you buy a flimsy one now, you'll end up buying a bigger, heavier one later. The flimsy one will end up in the corner of your garage gathering dust with your old shovels and rakes. It may even end up in your garden holding up one of your tomato plants. Eventually, you'll probably decide that you need two tripods, or maybe even three. Tripods let you do two main things. One; they keep the camera steady and, two; they allow you to take the time to look through the viewfinder and really fine-tune your composition down to the last detail. Steady may not be a big deal if you're shooting fast film at 1/1000 of a second, but



it's a big deal if you're using slow film and need a 1/30 second shot, or 5 seconds, or 30 seconds. Note that "keep the camera steady" is not the same as "hold the camera". You were probably taught in one of your high school physics classes that a body at rest wants to remain at rest. Well, when the wind starts blowing, a 5 kg tripod will stay at rest much more so than a 2 kg tripod will. Here are some other considerations regarding tripods:

Why more than one? Because you may not want to carry your 10 kg tripod (with tripod head) when you take that 10 kilometre hike out the back of the King Country, or you are just going into the city to do some general photo journalism. You'll probably want to sacrifice some camera steadiness for convenience and use a lighter tripod sometimes.

When you buy that sturdy tripod, also buy a sturdy tripod, quick-release head. The "weakest link" theory applies to tripods too.

Some photographers hang their camera bag from the centre post of their tripod for added weight and stability. That probably works best if you rig up a homemade harness. I've never done it, but I've thought about it, even before I heard and read about other people doing it. It's a good idea if you

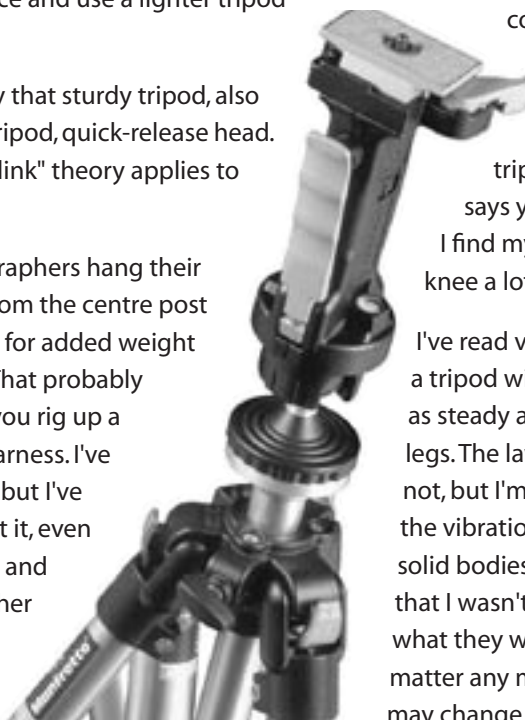
expect to stay in one spot for a while, but it might be a hassle if you tend to move around a lot.

After you have your camera steadied rock solid with your heavy tripod and sturdy tripod head, it doesn't make much sense to then grab the camera with your hand and push on the shutter release. Buy a cable release. If you don't have a cable release, use the camera's timer. The important thing is not to be touching the camera when you are taking the picture.

Don't extend all the segments of the legs if you don't need the height, particularly if it's real windy. The longer the extension, the less steady the camera. Extend the "fattest" legs first. The next fattest if you need them. Normally, though, you want to do what's

comfortable so that you don't mess up your back. You don't want to be leaning and bending over your tripod for too long. But, who says you have to stand. Try sitting. I find myself getting down on one knee a lot.

I've read various opinions about how a tripod with carbon fibre legs can be as steady as a heavier tripod with metal legs. The laws of inertia would suggest not, but I'm not much of an expert on the vibration characteristics of elastic, solid bodies. After I made up my mind that I wasn't going to pay the money for what they want for carbon fibre, it didn't matter any more. Of course, someday I may change my mind.



# Pukekohe Franklin camera club is 50 years old!

**A**wesome Workshop & Seminar Series to take place in November 2002. The Pukekohe Franklin Camera Club are proud to be celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> year in existence this year.

What a wonderful time to hold two inspiring photographic workshops. In November 2002, we are bringing two eminent, world-renowned photographers from the USA and Canada for two weeks of photographic workshop tuition and seminars to help us celebrate the awesome achievement of 50 years.

The photographers are Eddie Soloway from Sante Fe, New Mexico, and Andre Gallant from New Brunswick Canada.

## **Eddie Soloway**

Eddie Soloway's photographs are the expression of his passion and commitment to the natural world. His eye has developed during 30 years of exploring the earth's wild places. He spent ten years working for the Institute for Earth Education, where he helped develop wilderness journeys and school curricula and conducted educational workshops in five countries. In 1998 Eddie was the first recipient of the Excellence in Photographic Teaching Award presented by the Santa Fe Center for Visual Arts. Today he divides his time between teaching, making

fine-art prints, working on a book of images and essays, and shooting for Stone Images. An impassioned teacher, Eddie brings experience in both nature and photography to his workshop.

## **Andre Gallant**

Andre Gallant is a freelance photographer specialising in imaginative travel, people, and stock photography around the world. He has an impressive list of editorial and advertising clients and four books to his credit (three major works with Pierre Berton). André continually experiments with new visual approaches, techniques, and films in both his professional and personal photography, and he generously shares his ideas and expertise

For more information on these two photographers, you can check out their websites:

**Andre Gallant - [www.andregallant.com](http://www.andregallant.com)**

**Eddie Soloway - [www.anaturaleye.com](http://www.anaturaleye.com)**

Dates are as follows and the workshops and seminars are open to all who wish to participate.

### **Week of 2nd to 7th November 2002 -**

Andre Gallant Workshop – Private tuition for up to 15 people

### **Weekend of 9th & 10th November 2002**

Andre Gallant and Eddie Soloway – Lecture Series and Slide Shows. We have capacity for 140 people.

## Week of 11th to 16th November 2002

Eddie Soloway Workshop – Private tuition for 15 people.

There are quite a few spots left on the Weekend Seminar, as well as one or two spots on each of the individual week's workshops.

The two weeks of Workshops will be held in Pukekohe, with the Weekend Lecture Series and Slide Shows being held at the Quality Hotel Logan Park, Greenlane, Auckland. For only \$140 you can get an in-depth look at the work and techniques of both these photographers, over a weekend. Or, if you would prefer, you can get a full week of hands-on tuition from either Eddie or Andre.

We at the Pukekohe Franklin Camera Club are really excited about this event, especially as it falls within our 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations. Both Eddie Soloway and Andre Gallant are looking forward to renewing their acquaintance with New Zealand, and we cannot wait till November comes around and we are able to share them with you.

Registration forms and more information is available by contacting the Pukekohe Franklin Camera Club, either Jennifer Belt on 025-781 346, or e-mail at Jennifer@ww.co.nz or Rosita Manning on 09-238 7284 or e-mail at campo@ww.co.nz

## Club news

As you all may already know, Felicity Rogers has cancelled the 'At Home' meeting at the club on August 15th. Don't

panic. We are sure to have her along on another night instead. Instead of Felicity, we will be treated to A collection of slides from the North Shore Salon of Photography 2002 Slides, plus slide shows from Jack Sprosen and PSNZ., I would still like to take this opportunity to thank Felicity for thinking of us and hope that she will not be as busy on another night and will be able to talk to us about her digital work.

## In other news...

I am sure we would all like to thank once again, Maurice Petchell and John Michael for their fantastic talks. Thanks Maurice for very interesting speech on the technical side of digital photography. I am sure we will never look at a digital camera the same way again. I hope you enjoyed your bottle of wine that we all had pleasure in presenting you with.

Thanks John for your fantastic humour. I kept us captivated throughout your talk. We will never look at our 35 mm cameras in the same way again. Good luck on the rest of your travels and I hope that you will grace us will your presence in the near future.



*John Michael being presented with his bottle of wine at the end of his talk. Thanks John*

## **Two nights a week**

What do people think about having two evenings a month instead of one? We could have one week dedicated to being a competition night (which we know you all love). Another night could be a workshop night, or a Audio Visual night with a talk. The possibilities are endless. Don't be shy, send one of us an e-mail and let us know what you think. Even if you are happy with one night, let us know. It is your club, lets make the most of it.

## **Workshops Galore**

Members interested in attending any of the following workshops should confirm interest by emailing [aps.nz@clear.net.nz](mailto:aps.nz@clear.net.nz) or phoning Peter on (09) 620 0222 or [aps.nz@xtra.net.nz](mailto:aps.nz@xtra.net.nz)

## **What's on offer**

Night Photography, Close-Up Photography, and Portrait/Lighting. A minimum number of 5 are required to run these and dates will be advised once attendance numbers are known. (1st or 4th Thursday of a month) These workshops will not be run this year if interest is inadequate.

## **Audio Visual**

Any members currently planning to enter an Audio Visual in the club competition on November 21 should contact Peter immediately at [aps.nz@xtra.net.nz](mailto:aps.nz@xtra.net.nz) or Ph (09) 620 0222.

## **Last chance.**

## **North Shore Salon**

The North Shore National Salon prints will be exhibited at the Aotea Centre until the 11th August, so you only have a couple of days to see it in its entirety. If you do miss it, don't panic, just look below.

## **Up and coming at the club**

### **15 August**

A collection of slides from the North Shore Salon of Photography 2002 Slides, plus slide shows from Jack Sprosen and PSNZ.

### **19 September**

Nature Trophy and Open

### **17 October**

Portrait Trophy and Open

## **Exhibition**

'Alien registration: Lost voices' - A photo-installation By Naomi Bell. From the 27 August-14 September 2002

This exhibition involves a photographic exploration of two journeys. One is the artist's maternal grandparent's journey from Czechoslovakia, as refugees from Nazism, to New Zealand in 1939. The other is her own journey in retracing their experiences and its legacies on their descendants in New Zealand.

## **For Sale**

If anyone has anything to sell or trade and would like to seek the advertising power of the Auckland Photographic Society newsletter. Give the editor a bell with your details and I will endeavour to post it in the next issue. No worries mate.



*Auckland Photographic Society*  
Since 1883

**Meeting on the 3rd Thursday of every month 7.30pm**

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