

Practice Seeing Creatively

By Chuck Palmer

In her book, *Expressive Nature Photography*, Brenda Tharp suggests “Photography is a marriage of creative vision and craft. You really can’t have one without the other if you want to create memorable photographs.” I developed the skills necessary to capture images with the correct exposure, shutter speed, and basic composition many years ago. But I continue to seek guidance and inspiration on seeing more creatively. It is a process that will likely never end, but I thought sharing a few ideas I have come to understand might just help us practice seeing creatively in our quest for making remarkable images.

Seeing creatively is about seeing things in a different way. Our everyday lives are filled with photos of all sorts of subjects. We all have pre-conceived ideas on how things look, and this often is how we end up photographing them. So, to develop our creative vision, we must practice seeing creatively. We must drop the pre-conceptions and start looking at things differently. Here are a few ideas to practice seeing creatively.

- Show things how they are not normally viewed



See the Light - while on a photo walk, looking straight up at this outdoor light revealed the reflected light in the round brass fixture against a blue sky and the diagonal lines of the power lines overhead. I thought it made an interesting photo.

- Use a telephoto lens for landscapes, a wide-angle lens for portraits



Brianna – using a 24 mm wide-angle lens, I captured Brianna as she prepared to ride home with her surfboard. The wide angle provided a different view, emphasizing the lines of linear perspective formed by her board and arm. One my favorite portraits.

- Add mood and interest with silhouetted shapes



Afternoon Shopping – The setting sun in Bergen, Norway turned the city paving to a yellow brick road. I waited for a shopper to walk by. The moody shadows, and the shopper's silhouette made an interesting photo, and the person crossing in the background added to the story.

- Isolate part of the scene. Look for more interesting photos within your original photo



In the Zone – I first saw the setting sun shining through the modern architecture in Copenhagen Denmark. Then I noticed how the building and pedestrian bridge reflected a more interesting abstract image in the water. Isolating just the reflection made a very interesting painterly photo.

- Practice your creativity by breaking some rules. . . tilt your camera, don't fill the frame with your subject, center your subject, move your camera or zoom your lens during exposure.



My beating heart – This stained glass in San Pablo Catholic Church, in Marathon, FL was brightly backlit by the sun. I captured several images of the window, but this one captured at a slow shutter speed while zooming the lens was my favorite.

- Get High or get low. Shoot everyday things from a different point of view.



Sunrise Luminary – While photographing the sunrise one morning on Indian Harbour Beach, I couldn't help but notice how the sun illuminated the shell left standing by the high tide. I straightened the shell a little more upright and placed my camera almost on the sand for a different point of view.

Each one of us has the ability to be creative. It just takes some careful seeing, capturing images that are different than what we see every day, finding what works, then do it all over again. As the adage goes, practice makes perfect. The next time you pick up your camera, try some of these exercises and see what develops! And as always, may the remarkable photos always be yours.

Chuck