

Creative Photography

By Hayley Roberts

Hayley generously allowed me to publish the tips in her handout from her marvellous presentation last year. There are a lot of 'creative' Further Reading links for her website, which are an excellent Altered Reality/Creative primer for those taking up AR/C this year. - Ed.



Creative Photo Considerations



Story – what's happening in your photo? Having a story makes the image more interesting and engaging and prompts you to think about all the elements your photo should contain to convey that story.

Subject – who is your character? What physical attributes do they need to have to tell the story? For this you can use yourself, friends/family or hire models from Model Mayhem and dress them accordingly.

Setting – when and where is your story taking place? I recommend scouting locations around your area for any that are unique. You'll find the most interesting places if you go outside your comfort zone.

Props – having something for your subject to interact with will further the story and make it more interesting.

Wardrobe – what would your character be wearing? You can pick up great and cheap outfits using eBay and op shops. Ask yourself - Does the outfit suit the story? Time period? Character? Does the colour contrast with the surroundings?

Pose – what is the character doing in the story? Are they powerful or submissive? Always shoot a variety of poses so you have options.

Lighting – can it help tell your story?

Framing and camera settings – is it wide or tight, low or high, sharp or soft focus?



Be sure to sketch out your idea and make a shot list before photographing your elements.

Compositing Considerations



Choose your base photo as a reference.

Assess the features of your base photo so you can shoot the subject or the scene with similar conditions.

What perspective and angle was it shot from?

What are the lighting conditions?

Where is the scene lit from?

Is it hard or soft light?

What's the colour balance of the light?

What are the shadows doing?

Pose - pose your subject to fit the scene as well as any props you might wish to composite in.

What is the depth of field? The focus of your images needs to match.

Add some storytelling elements. Adding movement to your images brings them to life. Techniques like moving hair, costume and props makes the image more dynamic.

Post Processing

You want the colour, saturation and contrast of all your elements to match using Photoshop tools like Curves, Levels, Brightness/Contrast and Hue/Saturation.

Look at your lighting and shadows and paint these in if necessary.

Depth - An image with depth is always a stronger image and adds to the believability, so make sure you have elements in the foreground, the middle ground and the background. Having something in the foreground covering a part of your subject enhances the believability that they are actually in the scene.

Finishing touches will tie the elements together and direct the viewer's eye:

Selectively blurring the surroundings will draw attention to subject, as will tricks like making the subject slightly brighter and more saturated.

Manipulate the colours and the composition to follow traditional art principles such as rule of thirds and complementary colours.

Adding an overall colour, texture or a layer of noise ties everything together because it gives each of the composited elements a similar look. ■



Further Reading:

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/how-to-create-a-conceptual-photograph/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/introduction-to-compositing/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/stock-photo/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/floating-objects/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/textures/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/replace-skies/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/miniature/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/photoshop-brushes/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/dispersion-effect/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/snow/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/underwater/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/reflection/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/how-to-use-layers-and-masking/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/shadows/>

<http://hayleyrobertsphoto.com/hdr/>