



Overview

Abstract photography transforms ordinary subjects into extraordinary visual experiences by focusing on shapes, patterns, and textures. This artistic form challenges photographers to move beyond literal representations, allowing for emotional and imaginative expression.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the principles of abstract photography and its visual elements.
- Develop technical skills to manipulate camera settings for abstract effects.
- Cultivate a creative mindset to see the world through an abstract lens.

Related Reading

Before you start, read these related blog posts to deepen your understanding:

Mastering Abstract Photography	Creative Vision	Patterns
Shapes	Texture	

Before You Shoot

- Choose a location that offers diverse textures and shapes.
- Gather props or objects that can be photographed in an abstract way.
- Ensure your camera battery is charged and memory card is empty.
- Familiarize yourself with your camera's manual settings.
- Consider the time of day for optimal natural lighting.

Assignment Tasks

1. Capture an abstract image of a textured surface (e.g., bark, wall) at f/4, 1/60s, ISO 100 in manual mode.
2. Photograph a moving subject (e.g., a person walking) using a slow shutter speed of 1/4s, f/5.6, ISO 200 in shutter priority mode to create motion blur.
3. Create an abstract composition using light and shadow by shooting at f/8, 1/125s, ISO 400 in aperture priority mode, focusing on the interplay of light.
4. Photograph a close-up of an object with intricate details (e.g., a flower) at f/2.8, 1/200s, ISO 100 in macro mode to emphasize textures.
5. Use reflections in a puddle or glass at f/5.6, 1/30s, ISO 200 in manual mode, focusing on the abstract shapes created by the reflection.
6. Experiment with double exposure techniques in-camera or digitally to merge two images, shooting at f/4, 1/60s, ISO 100 in manual mode.

Stretch Tasks

- Create a series of abstract images exploring color theory, focusing on complementary colors and shooting at various settings to capture the essence of each color.
- Develop a photo essay that tells a story through abstract imagery, using a variety of techniques and settings to convey different emotions.



DO / DON'T

DO

- ✓ Do explore various angles and perspectives to find unique compositions.
- ✓ Do use negative space effectively to enhance the subject's impact.
- ✓ Do experiment with different lighting conditions to see how they affect your images.
- ✓ Do take multiple shots of the same subject with varying settings to discover unexpected results.
- ✓ Do critically evaluate your work to identify areas for improvement.

DON'T

- ✗ Don't rely solely on post-processing to create abstract images; focus on capturing the essence in-camera.
- ✗ Don't be afraid to break compositional rules; abstraction thrives on creativity.
- ✗ Don't forget to experiment with different focal lengths to alter perspectives.
- ✗ Don't overlook the importance of background elements; they can significantly affect the abstract quality.
- ✗ Don't rush your shots; take time to observe and find the best abstract potential in your subject.

Reflection Questions

- What emotions do your abstract photographs evoke, and how do they differ from literal representations?
- How did experimenting with different camera settings affect your approach to abstraction?
- What challenges did you face while shooting abstract images, and how did you overcome them?
- In what ways can you further develop your unique style in abstract photography?

Technical & Creative Focus

Technical:

- Use a wide aperture (f/2.8) to create shallow depth of field, isolating subjects with a blurred background.
- Experiment with slow shutter speeds (1/15s) to capture motion blur, enhancing the abstract feel.
- Set ISO to 200 for optimal image quality in bright conditions, reducing noise in your images.
- Use manual focus to precisely control the focus point, creating unusual focal planes.
- Adjust white balance to 'Shade' to warm up colors and enhance textures in your abstract shots.

Creative:

- Look for patterns in nature or architecture that can be emphasized through abstraction.
- Utilize reflections in water or glass to create layered compositions.
- Experiment with lighting angles to cast interesting shadows that add depth.
- Incorporate everyday objects in unconventional ways to challenge perceptions.
- Use intentional camera movement (ICM) while shooting to create dynamic abstract images.