

# PCQC Video Presentation

Fundamentals of Photography II with Joel Sartore—National Geographic Photographer

## Lesson 11: Night Photography

We often think that night photography would seem extremely difficult, but, we have starlight and moonlight. Nighttime light is ever present, even in the most remote locations of the world. In this lesson, we are introduced to a number of experiments for getting unique and even breathtaking photographs at night.

### Lesson Takeaways

- **All you need is:** patience, a tripod, a cable release or delayed release setting and a long exposure to make a good nighttime photo.
- We can harvest urban light well outside a city. Just notice the glow from distant city lights bouncing off clouds.
- **To get started:** dial the ISO into the thousands on M or manual setting, and play around with different shutter speeds. Dial down the ISO to eliminate any noise of static in you preview shots.
- **Use flashlights or car headlights to “paint” objects with light.** Set the shutter speed from 30 seconds to 1 minute and have some people lighting the scene with flashlights or walking through the scene with a flashlight.
- **Position your vehicle headlights to wash the scene.** Set the ISO low and use a multiple second exposure. Adjust settings from there.
- **Take advantage of holiday decorative lights.** Shoot with a little bit of defining sky light to help get some detail in the background.
- **Open flash can be tried in a completely dark scene.** Lock the shutter open on B or bulb setting, use a cable release or delayed setting, and a tripod. Have a person walk through the scene while an assistant lights the person repeatedly. This produces some interesting artistic results.

### Shooting Star Trails

- **Shooting a star trail needs about a 3200 ISO setting on your camera.** Make sure you are in a dark protected location with no possibility of an accidental auto drive by or a flashlight illuminating the scene. This could not only ruin your shot, but could damage your sensor.

- **Prepare before your shooting star trail adventure.** Use lunar tables to determine when the moon will not be glowing and that it will be completely dark out for
- a period of 90 minutes to 2 hours. (shooting while camping out west is a fun adventure for the whole family.)
- Using a tripod, point your camera to the north. Take one picture with the cap on. You will use this totally dark frame to remove noise and imperfections when in post-processing.
- Set the camera to take a picture every 30 seconds over a 90 to 120minute period. Stars move a little bit every 30 seconds. So, shooting at this rate allows you to capture this movement.
- Use RAW files so that you can do some post-processing to make the shots turn out right.

## Assignment

Go to a dark location away from major light sources and try "painting" a scene with a flashlight. Use an old building, a favorite vehicle or an isolated group of rocks or cacti or trees would work well for the assignment. Use a tripod, a cable release or delayed setting, use a low ISO, and see what you get as you sweep light over the scene.

Quote from Joel Sartore:

"Night photography is a little bit like cooking. You kind of season to taste."

Online Night Photography course at 50% discount through Digital Photography School. Great deal for those who would like to pursue this night photography in more detail.

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