

PCQC Video Presentation

Fundamentals of Photography II with Joel Sartore—National Geographic

Lesson 24: Editing, Culling, and Critiquing Your Photos

For the purposes of this lesson, editing does NOT mean post-processing. Rather it means just selecting the best pictures after you have finished shooting in the field, at home, or in the studio. How do you cull your photos down to the very best ones that capture the story you are trying to tell?

Lesson Takeaways

- Sometimes you will want help editing: A friend, mentor, or during selected educational meetings of the Photography Club of Quail Creek that focus on critiquing members' photos. Preview your photos first and get rid of the obviously bad ones.
- One approach: Edit an entire shoot in one sitting. Eliminate those that simply do not work. Make a second pass looking for the very best of the remaining shots...these are the contenders. Take a break, do a third pass looking at the contenders with a fresh eye. Are there any more to eliminate?
- Some things to think about as you edit and cull:
 - Background clean?
 - Horizon line straight?
 - Image offers a sense of place?
 - Light soft and even?
 - Subjects sharp and in focus
 - Does one image give you a more interesting angle or livelier moment?
- Everything in your frame should be intended. Unfortunately, none of the images may satisfy you. In that case you may have to do a reshoot. But before you reshoot, are there some minor issues that could easily be corrected with post processing? That being said, it's best to take the best shots you can so that post-processing is not needed. Solve visual problems before and while you look through the viewfinder and before you push the shutter button.

Assignment

Select a recent shoot, for example a PCQC Photography Club field shoot, and do a thorough critique and editing session.

- First pass: Eliminate those that are obviously not good. Try to pinpoint problems: too close; too far; blurry; an unintended intrusion (vehicle, telephone or power line, dead tree, etc.)
- Second pass: Find "keepers"
- Third pass: Find the best of the best. If needed, share with others to help in the decisions.