


NIGHTCRAWL





NIGHTCRAWL is a magazine that showcases the nightlife in the city. Shooting in nighttime requires patience and creativity that a few have mastered. The featured photos are taken using cameras that can truly capture the light and environment of the nightlife.

The photos here are submitted by photographers and creatives who tell a story through their lens. Smart phones have evolved to take good pictures in low light, but we believe it's important to prioritize creatives who have invested in the proper gear.

We aspire to show off creatives who wander into the night, capturing moments most people miss. Our goal is to encourage readers to attempt the journey of night photography. To absorb the feeling the photos are communicating. The photos are modestly color-graded to tell a story or give it a certain mood.

Nightcrawl also features articles that guide new photographers on how to take such photos. We want our readers to fall in love with the photos and gain knowledge about night photography



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WHAT IS NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

Night photography is a genre of photography we create without needing to rely on high levels of light to create our images. In night photography, instead of looking for bright light to reveal all the details and secrets of the subjects we photograph, we look for subtle light sources that bring to life specific details and hide others, revealing a different reality than the one we see by day.

Even if we use the same equipment and basic techniques, night photography is fundamentally different from daylight photography, both from a technical point of view and in terms of the creative process. At night, everything is slower, from the slower shutter speed we need to record images, to the rhythm of life happening in front of us and that we capture in our images.

Night photography is a more contemplative type of photography, an almost meditative photography where we are more interested in what is not shown and what is implied than in what is well seen. Night photography is full of symbols and riddles, and we can use it in a poetic manner, to tell the story of an unseen world.

WHY NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

You have to like the night to be able to fully enjoy night photography. You need to like the calmness and the solitude the night provides and be comfortable with the lack of light. But if you like that, I can guarantee you that you will love night photography as it will help you discover a totally different world than the one you see during the day. The lack of light and the lack of people reveals an image of the world that can be completely different than what you see by day. This is when you can notice details you wouldn't notice by day and have experiences that wouldn't be possible in daylight.

This is what you look for when you shoot at night – a different experience, a different emotion that only the mystery of the night can give you. That rush of dopamine that you have when you know you are one of the few people around and one of the few seeing the scene in front of view in a different way than how everyone sees it by day. And in addition, that rush of adrenaline, when you feel a bit on edge because you cannot control the situation as well as you would during the day when you can see everything and you are not alone. That sensation of heightened senses can be offputting for some, just as it may be simulating for others, but you will definitely not be indifferent. However, if you prepare well and are careful where you do night photography, it can be a quite safe experience, despite the first impressions.

No matter how you look at it, night photography will give you some of the most inspiring experiences in photography and I highly recommend trying it if you haven't already. If you want to find out how to get inspiration for your photography, in night photography and in general you can read my recent popular article [How to Find Inspiration in Fine Art Photography](#).

THE BEST TIME TO SHOOT

The best moment to start shooting night photography is after dusk, and you can keep shooting well into the night. Dusk is the time toward the end of the astronomical twilight after sunset, just before the night sets. It is the moment when the lights start to come out when you are shooting in the city or when the moon or the brighter stars already start flickering in the sky when you are shooting the outdoors.

At dusk, the sky is not yet completely black as later in the night. It is still dark blue, and the light has a deep pinkish hue. This dark blue tint in the sky is what I like best about shooting at this time of the day. It creates great color contrast as a complementary color with the warm hues of the light sources and helps guide the viewer into the image.

Dusk is a magical time for photography. It is the time when the day melts into the night and when you still have some of the soft light of the day, but you also have the darker shadows of the night. When you shoot in the city at dusk, you also have artificial lights that can add atmosphere to your photographs.

While when you shoot landscape night photography, the light throughout the night will be mostly constant, and you can keep shooting, if you shoot night photography in the city, you will want to do that while the city has the best lighting. Part of the lighting in a city is provided by the street lights which are lit throughout the night.

NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY CAMERA SETTINGS

EXPOSURE LENGTH

In night photography, almost without exception, you will have to use a longer shutter speed than when you shoot by day. Even when you need a fast enough shutter speed to freeze motion, you will choose the lowest possible shutter speed that would freeze that specific motion. That is one of the fundamental differences between daylight photography and night photography.

That being said, there are two approaches to night photography in terms of exposure length.



The first approach is, as we mentioned before, using a fast enough shutter speed to freeze motion. The second approach is to use a longer exposure to record the motion in the image. Let's analyze both of them.

SHORT EXPOSURES IN NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

That is the case when you need to have everything sharp and immobile in your image. That may mean people moving, cars moving or the stars in the sky moving. You want all those elements to be sharp and you want to freeze the movement.

When you need to freeze the movement, depending on how fast the movement is, you will choose the lowest shutter speed that can freeze that movement. That is happening regardless if you shoot handheld or you place your camera on a tripod. For instance, when shooting people walking, a shutter speed of 1/60 is a good start. You may need to increase that in some cases but I find that 1/60 is the lowest I would go when shooting people in the street. On the other hand, if you shoot the night sky and you want to have the stars sharp, you can increase your exposure up to 15 or even 20 seconds before starting to capture movement in the stars, the so-called Star trails. Remember that these are

values that you should use with wide-angle lenses. If you use longer lenses, the shutter speed has to be faster.

All nice and beautiful so far, however, if you have any kind of experience with higher ISO you will know that even if the cameras are becoming better and better, they still have a lot of issues with higher ISO and if you increase the ISO beyond a certain value you will start getting a lot of noise. Actually, high ISO quality is one of the things that has improved the slowest compared to other capabilities of modern cameras. It is getting better, but it still needs quite a bit of work. So you have to try to limit the increase in the ISO in order to not get too much noise in the image. Noise, especially in the form of grain that you can have if you shoot film, can be interesting, but it will take away from the sharpness and detail of your image, and it is not always suitable for any kind of photograph.

LONG EXPOSURES IN NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

Another approach to night photography is, instead of shooting with a fast shutter speed, to use a longer shutter speed that will give you enough time to record the light correctly in the image without needing to increase your ISO. This is my first choice for the cases where I don't need to freeze motion, and since most

of the time I'm not trying to freeze motion in night photography, I will be using this technique 80% of the time and only use fast shutter speed when I shoot street photography at night.

The most important thing you need to be able to get a long exposure, both by day and by night, is to place the camera on the tripod so the camera doesn't move at all during the exposure. That gives you the freedom to increase the exposure as much as you like until you get the effect you need without increasing the ISO and without getting a blurred image.

BEST SUBJECTS FOR NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

OBJECT NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

Object night photography is similar in approach to daylight night photography as to composition and elements that create the image. We are focusing on one object at a time and on highlighting the elements that work best at night, which can be different than those that work best for daylight photography.

These subjects can be either landscape or architectural subjects: trees, rocks, natural formations for landscape photography, or specific buildings, structures, or urban art for city and architecture photography.

PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPHY

These are images that can either be approached in a similar way to the daylight ones if we want to emphasize the built environment in the city or the elements of the landscape, or we can look for a different approach if we want to focus on the lighting of the scene. When I'm thinking about the lighting of the scene, I mean the lighting of the city or the buildings in city or architecture night photography, or the light of the moon or the stars in the sky that is something we can do in both landscape or city photography.

STREET NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

A particular type of night photography is the photography we can call Street night photography, where we focus on incorporating the human presence into the image together with the backdrop of the city.

While we can incorporate the human presence in landscape night photography, we will have many more subjects for this kind of photography in an urban area where we find more people, even if not as many as during the day.

Another interesting subject is motion blur night photography, where we can incorporate the blurred silhouettes of people or cars interacting with the urban environment. Also, we can focus on the street lights and how they interact either with the people passing by or with the city's environment – trees, benches, and other urban structures.

LIGHT REFLECTIONS

Shooting light reflection can be fascinating. You can combine this technique with shooting Street night photography or you can use it to create abstract images of light and shadow when shooting the city lights reflected in water poles, rivers, windows, glass buildings, or other reflective surfaces.

A particular kind of light reflection photography that I like is shooting reflections of the buildings, people, or any urban elements reflected on the wet pavement when it rains. Shooting in the rain during the night can be one of the most fascinating experiences that can allow you to not only play with the mysterious city lights in the night but also with their reflections on the pavement or on any outer surfaces turned into a mirror by the raindrops. I love rain photography during the day too, but at night everything becomes truly magical.

LIGHTING PHOTOGRAPHY

When we create this kind of photograph, we are more interested in the light as a subject than in the subject of the image itself, and this is a type of night photography that will be more versatile in the city. For instance, we can shoot a building or a bridge lit by artificial light but not for the building or bridge itself but for the way the light is lighting them. We can focus on the patterns the light creates or the way the disposition of the artificial light sources renders a well-known object in a new "light".

Another approach, in this case, may be seeing the scene in front of us in an abstract way and playing with the artificial lights we have in front of us. Because we have more variety in the city, we can find more subjects for night photography focused on lighting in an inhabited area than in the great outdoors.

NEON LIGHT SIGNS

In most cities, especially in big cities, you will find a multitude of situations where you can shoot neon lights. You can find them in brand names or advertising panels hands on buildings or in the street, show names on theaters, like for instance on Broadway in New York, in Theaterland in London West End, or other similar theater district areas, or even in the case of modern street art.

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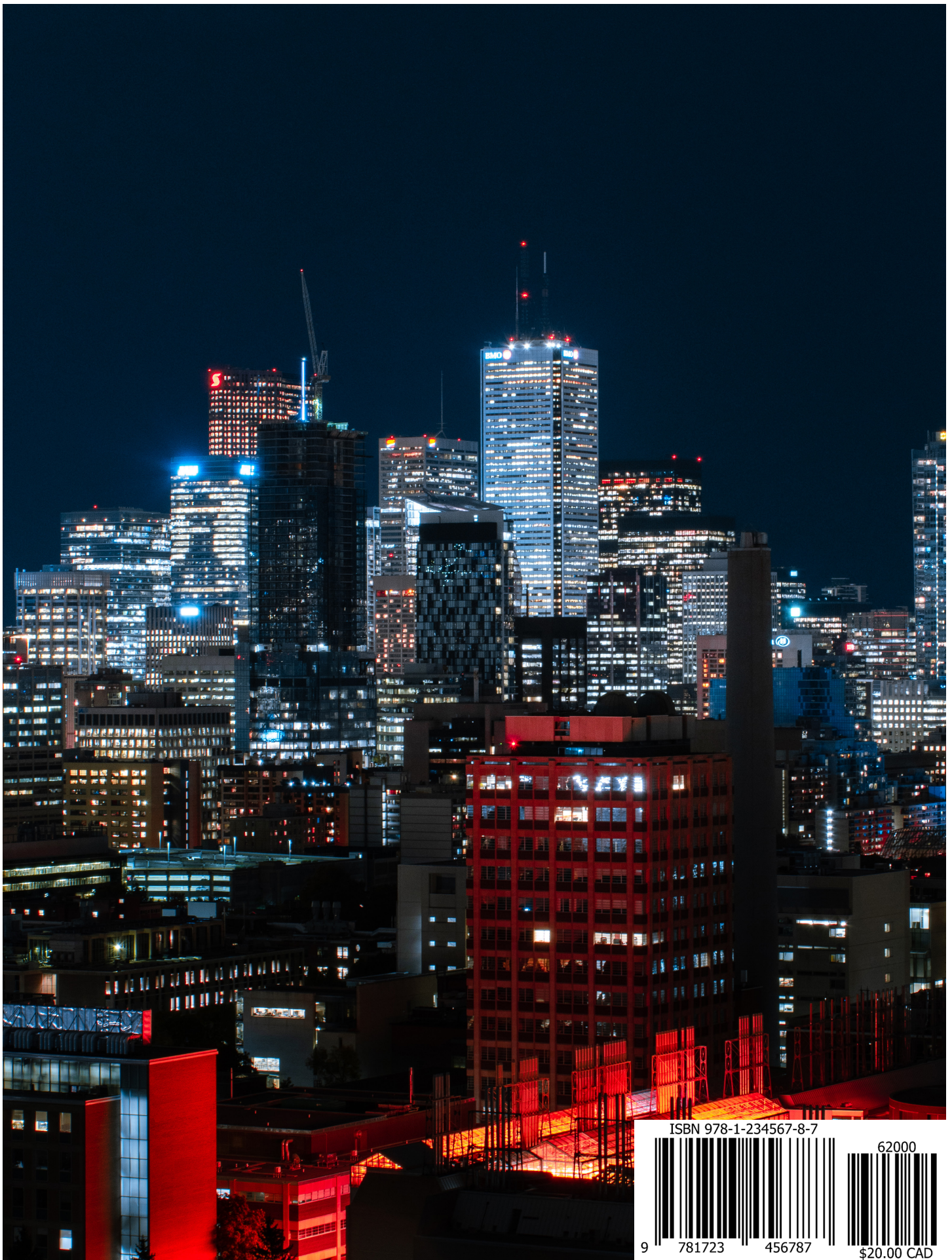
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