GUIDES TO SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES OF PHOTOGRPAHY

FOCUS STACKING

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qr9U6fRNA4o

What is Focus Stacking?

It is a way of taking and combining several images where the point of focus (POF) is slightly different. This is very useful in Macro photography, where a very short Depth of Field (DoF) is used – by combing a number of shots a deeper area appears in focus. It can also be used in Landscape shots where it is important for the foreground to be pin sharp as well as the further view.

What does this mean for my Photography?

1) When preparing a shot, you might want to think about the depth of field – especially if using a wide aperture.
2) Note that some cameras offer automatic Focus Stacking. This can work well but the number of images and the difference in focus has to be preset – which can be fiddly. Photoshop provides a simple and extremely effective method of combining the sequence of shots and by using a manual method you can ensure the correct set of focus points work.

Here is a guide to how to go about Focus Stacking:

Needed:

- Digital Camera (not possible on current mobile phones)
- Tripod is essential to ensure the shot is identical except for focus point.
- It is possible to buy platforms that connect the camera to the tripod which then allows the camera to move in small amounts, without a change to focus. This is an alternative method.

Focus Stacking:

IN Camera

- Select your subject and think through the DoF you may want.
- On Tripod form your shot – then in MANUAL focus test the range you want to use – or select 'focus stacking' option.
- The focus stacking system is different in different cameras – but all are trial and error. You need to preset the number of shots and the differential movement of focus. If you do this frequently, you'll work out your ideal for a shot – experience is needed!
- Take your shots (min 3 or let the camera do this for you). NOTE: If in Camera check your camera does this in RAW and not jpeg.

IN Lightroom:

- In LR Choose the images you want to stack
- Right Click - Edit In – You will see an option at the bottom 'Open as Layers in Photoshop" – choose this.

- Photoshop will now load all the images – give it time and check by looking at them build in the Layers panel' on right side.



- Select the images you want to stack in the Layers panel – select top, press shift and then select bottom – selects all.
- Now click on Edit – Auto Align Layers – this ensures your images are all in alignment – and may result in losing bits around the edges.
- Now Click on Edit – Auto Blend Layers – 'Stack Images' - this blends them together – automatically choosing those bits of each image that are best in focus
- Now click on "Flatten Image" – this combines the layers to make a final version.
- Now click File - 'Save' and the resulting image will be transferred to your tray in Lightroom – next to the selected images.
- You can now edit this image as required.

NB – It is fine to edit the original selected images before this – for example you could further sharpen areas that you want to be extra but be careful in changing the crop or light levels as this could confuse the blending process.