

FCA Meeting – September 19, 2013
Photography demonstration by Mitch Stringer

Call to order 7:00 pm

Minutes submitted via email by Kristina Boardman

Chris Stusek, President, opened the meeting by introducing new members, and reminded members that fees were now due. Fee has increased to \$25 per year to cover an increase due to insurance costs. Chris congratulated members who were accepted into the Sidney Fine Arts Show and reminded members to email **Michael Beseau** with any exhibition news.

Chris provided a recap of the summer exhibition at Goward House, in which three paintings sold along with some prints and cards. The next show will be at Dale's Gallery. The information and dealines are published in the Grapevine. Commission of 40% will go to Dale's Gallery. Maximum size is 30 inches in any direction. If there are any questions they should be sent to **Jim McFarland**, who will be the contact during the show. No questions should be asked of Dale's Gallery. Timelines will be strictly adhered to. Posters and rack cards will be ready for distribution in October.

Chris mentioned that jurying for active status will take place the same day as our next meeting, which is October 24. Paintings can be dropped off between 10:30 and 12:30 at Agnes's house- #5 864 Swan Street, and pick up will be between 3 and 5. Please bring three originals and 10 images (digital or prints).

There will be an upcoming watercolor workshop with **Kiff Holland** at the Saanich Fairgrounds from October 18-20 (9:30 to 3:30). The cost is \$225 for members and \$325 for non-members.

There are two executive positions available: secretary and refreshments. **Janet Mercer** volunteered to be the secretary. Since no one volunteered to look after refreshments, there may not be any beverages at the next meeting. A sign up sheet will be passed around for members to volunteer to contribute something to the next meeting, and members can bring their own drinks.

Member **Elizabeth Caulton** noted that friend **Sophia Morrison** has an upcoming show at the Coast Collective on Abstraction, and that she and Sophia have a show coming up at Cedar Hill Recreation Centre Café in November. Chris suggested she email the information to our chapter for distribution.

In other news, **Agnes Cornell** has name tags for members that have ordered them, and also has the people's choice ballots from previous shows for members to collect.

Chris introduced photographer **Mitch Stringer**....

Mitch is a freelance photographer situated in Victoria, BC. Mitch has been photographing commercial, art reproduction, landscape, and wedding & portrait images professionally in Victoria since 1989. His commercial work has appeared in numerous publications including Thrifty foods, Western Living Magazine and Boulevard magazine.

Mitch has 25 years of teaching experience. Mitch is the primary photographic instructor at The Western Academy of Photography (both the Professional photography and Written Image journalism programs) and as a faculty instructor for The Applied Communications Program as well as Continuing Education classes at Camosun College.

Mitch is also the primary organizer of the Photographers at Painter's weekend held yearly in May at Painter's Lodge in Campbell River, British Columbia, now in its 10th year. This is a weekend designed to allow the participant the opportunity to associate and mingle directly with world class talent, top professionals in the photographic industry that are willing to come up for a weekend of photographic discussion, exploration and passion that is truly a unique experience.

Mitch began his demonstration by saying he would be discussing how to photograph two dimensional artwork. He noted this is a difficult process and that there are many considerations including the distinction that painting and photography are two different mediums. The artistic process uses oil, acrylic, watercolor, etc and the printing process using dyes and inks. The art color wheel revolves around red, yellow and blue. The photographer's color wheel revolves around red, blue and green.

Due to these challenges, there will always be a point of compromise color-wise. Having said that, Mitch said we can still take reasonable shots for promotion such as the web, for documenting purposes. For reproduction, however, it may be best to hire someone. He named some places where professional assistance could be sought, such as Terry at Artbox or Dave at Prism. Marney also suggested Scott Winfield at Art Ink Prints. Mitch went on to describe the process of having a reproduction done several years ago through Prism, and what that entailed. He mentioned that it is a process of shifting one color which then shifts another and getting it as close as possible to the original.

Mitch said papers come with profiles that are used to set up the printing process for that particular paper. Each paper has a different response to the inks and dyes. He brought samples of the different papers to show the quality. Always use the profile that came with each paper and follow the instructions to set it up correctly.

Mitch spoke about lighting and how it can affect your photos. He said you will notice at a store like Home Depot that there might be a display panel of lights containing warm and cool whites and full spectrum lights and florescent tubes. Each gives off a different color. For example, inexpensive florescent tubes would appear green (because they lack the blue/red spectrum). When warm white lights are used the reds might be harder to control.

A question was posed by a member about the perception of shade outdoors being the best light for taking photos. Mitch said ideally the best light is north sky light. He said that type of light is not available then you could place your artwork on a table near a window to catch the available light. Look for constant even light. You could add a sheer curtain to a window to soften the light but you may lose the texture in your painting. You could use sunlight but then you may have reflections. Try to find “open” shade, which means as close to the edge as possible in the shade. The deeper you are into the shade the cooler it will be, which means the bluer your image will be. One comment was that it could be adjusted in photoshop but Mitch stressed that you should get it as close to correct as you can before taking the photo to save working on it in post production. Use the time instead to square up the image and adjust the lighting as best you can. If you only have potlights and lamps it is hard to make it even, but move them around or the painting around until you can get the most even lighting possible.

Mitch demonstrated how to set up a photo with two light sources, one on each side, using “hard lights” (hot lights). They were daylight balanced lights. He suggested it is better not to have mixed lighting so in this case he would probably turn off the room lights. He suggested using a tripod to allow the image to be level and the camera to be still, saying it would improve the quality of the image significantly.

Mitch said that although you can correct image distortion in post production, it is much easier to fix it in the first place before you take the picture. Be sure to centre and level your image. He said that a three way head on the tripod is helpful for the best control because it can be adjusted individually both vertically and horizontally but it is not a necessity.

Mitch went on the talk about white balance. He said all digital cameras have this function and that you should consult your manual if you need extra information. The setting would be called AWB for auto white balance. This function allows the camera to pick up a spike in the color spectrum and remove it. If the image has all of one color, it confuses the camera. There might also be florescent settings called FL 1,2 and 3 for warm and cool whites. There may be a shade setting, which would add yellow assuming that there is a lack of it.

Another option aiding at arriving at the correct colors is a Macbeth Color checker. It is a card which contains boxes of very specific colors. This can be placed beside your image and then when you take it to the printers they will match up the Macbeth colors squares too the standard, thereby bringing your art to the closest color match possible.

Mitch introduced the members to a polarizer and demonstrated how this can remove erroneous glare from your image. He explained how it can be threaded on to the camera and how you turn it to reduce the glare when possible. Mitch advised the members to make sure to take photographs before adding the glossy varnish layer and certainly before placing behind glass.

Regarding lenses, if your camera has the ability to change lenses, Mitch described some options. A wide angle lens may not be the best optics. To get the least distortion, instead shoot from afar with an “optical” zoom, which differs from a “digital” zoom. A macro lens is gorgeous but they can be expensive.

Mitch tried a variety of lighting and suggested we do the same. Try tungsten (incandescent) light, which is yellow/orange. The longer it burns the more orange it becomes. Try florescent light. Feather (overlap) the lights to make an even light source. Try daylight bulbs and set the white balance to daylight. Mitch said a nice bulb is a Solex bulb (50 watt, 4900 Kelvin, high color referencing index). Marney said she sets up a mixture of several bulbs in her studio to work under so the paintings will work well in many lighting situation. He spoke about flash and demonstrated how to alter the flash when necessary. As an example, try aiming towards the ceiling to avoid hot spots on the work, as bouncing the light off the ceiling will diffuse it.

Mitch suggested that once you have experimented and found your most ideal location for photographing your work, take a picture of your set up or leave tape lines. That way all your photos will be consistent and it will save you the work next time.

Mitch talked about color and showed by example how adjusting the light source can significantly affect the color. He also showed how to adjust color and vibrancy post production and mentioned there are many programs that will do this. He was asked about using a scanner to duplicate the artwork and agreed that this too is a possibility. Yes, there are programs that can stitch images together for larger pieces, although they are not always straightforward to use. There is an automated function but you have to learn to use it. Raw capture from your camera is the best way to shoot as it has the biggest and best color. Shoot raw and then save to tiff to work on. Work in tiff rather than jpeg, because tiff is non-lossy (you won't lose quality) and jpeg is lossy (you will lose quality).

Chris thanked Mitch for his demonstration.