

HORIZONEWS #29

NEWS, THOUGHTS AND IMAGES FROM HORIZON PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

*When I get up in the morning I brush my teeth and go about my business,
and if I'm going anyplace interesting I take my camera along.*

Elliott Erwitt

STUDENT PHOTOS: CLOSE-UP



How many pictures have you seen—or taken—that made you laugh? Being humorous with a camera isn't easy. What makes a picture funny? To help analyze this question, we decided to deconstruct a few images of the humor genre's grand-master, Elliott Erwitt. Over a 50+ year career, Erwitt has consistently demonstrated an instinct for capturing in a still image things that amuse.

1. *The seemingly absurd.* A man wades in the ocean with his head down as if he's searching for something—a lost ring perhaps—in a vast watery expanse.

2. *Wacky juxtapositions.* Two people engage in serious conversation apparently oblivious to their surroundings: a long hallway filled with leathery, mummified bodies.

3. *Unfunny photos that vibrate together.* A man in a nudist colony stares at the naked backside of a woman; the facing picture (in Erwitt's book) shows two horses that appear to be staring at the butt of another horse.

4. *The unexpected moment.* A singer reaches for a high note as the orchestra conductor glances at her, his expression looks like he's sucking on a lemon.

5. *Playing with scale.* A woman's shoes and calves, seen from ground level, tower gigantically over her tiny chihuahua.

6. *Surprising signage.* A "Lost Persons Area" sign is funny in itself, but far more with three women standing below it, presumably mothers of lost children, looking totally lost themselves.

Words and analysis don't do Erwitt's (or other people's) humorous pictures justice. For a sampling of his wonderful work (not all of it designed to be funny) go to www.elliott Erwitt.com.

The shot above, taken by **Ken Fall**, is right out of the Erwitt playbook, especially given that dogs have been Erwitt's favorite subject. Walking around Chesapeake City, Ken saw the sign, saw the dog, and married them together...perfectly. Like the best humor photos, no words or captions are needed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- > Coming soon: a new Horizon workshop for those interested in video...including those with video-capable still cameras. Check our website later this month for details.
- > Next year's western adventure with Horizon Director Steve Gottlieb: Arizona, May 10-16, 2010.
- > The last page of this HORIZONEWS contains the calendar for the remainder of 2009. Our 2010 calendar will be posted on our website at the end of this month.
- > If you missed our email announcement about Steve Gottlieb's new programs for businesses--an outgrowth of his Creative Vision class--see: www.visionmining.biz.

QUICK TIPS: WHAT TO FOCUS ON



Deciding what to focus on might seem obvious: you focus on what's important. But what's important isn't always obvious. At left, the person with the camera seems to be what's important, but then again...

These two shots were taken from nearly the same spot, with the same equipment, same focal length (about 250mm), and same exposure (1/200th @ f4). The only significant change was focusing point.

When you want to limit what's in focus, i.e., have limited depth of field, remember the three key factors: 1. The greater the distance *differential* between two objects, the more out of focus one object will be. The water reflecting in the lens was about 100 feet from the camera, while the man was about 20 feet, or *five times* closer. 2. The longer the focal length (250mm here) the less in focus. 3. The larger the f.stop (f4 here), the less is in focus.

After taking a picture, before you move on to the next subject, experiment with changing your focus point. You might be surprised to discover another interesting shot hidden right there in your viewfinder. And as a general notion, keep your mind open to appreciating how things look when they're out of focus. Would you have said to Claude Monet: "You're great with colors, Claude, but those lilies are so fuzzy!" (Photos: **Steve Gottlieb**)



END FRAME



Nowadays, we assume a shot like this was done using PhotoShop. Not so. Our student/model was able to hide her body on the ground behind the toilet seat. To keep both toilet and face in focus required: 1. a small aperture; and 2. focusing *in between* the front of the seat and the face. To create the illusion that the head was *inside* the bowl required use of a long lens, which compresses distance between objects. Elliott Erwitt--and you--might find this image contrived and/or sophomoric, but it amuses us...and the process of taking it generated intense laughter. (Photo: **Bill Daniels**; concept: **Steve Gottlieb**.)

Take A Look

At Our Upcoming Workshops

Chesapeake City, MD unless other location noted



Michelle Jennings

October

Cape Cod: Oct 10-12 (1 space left)

Manhattan: Oct 10-11 (New York City)

Canon Experience: Oct 15-18 (Wait List Only)

Weddings: Oct 15-18

Historic Chesapeake City & Environs: Oct 23-25

Camera Basics: Oct 30 (Wait List Only)

Creative Vision: Oct 31-Nov 1 (2 spaces left)

People in the Studio: Oct 31 (Dover, NJ)

November

Still Life (Fine Art & Products): Nov 1 (Dover, NJ)

Nudes: Nov 7

Glamour: Nov 8

People & Portraits on Location: Nov 7-8

Camera Basics: Nov. 20

Flash Magic: Nov 21-22

December

Editing Your Images: Dec 5

PhotoShop Basics: Dec 5

PhotoShop: Making Your Images Sparkle: Dec 6