



SERENDIPITY

(or Chance Favors a Prepared Mind!)

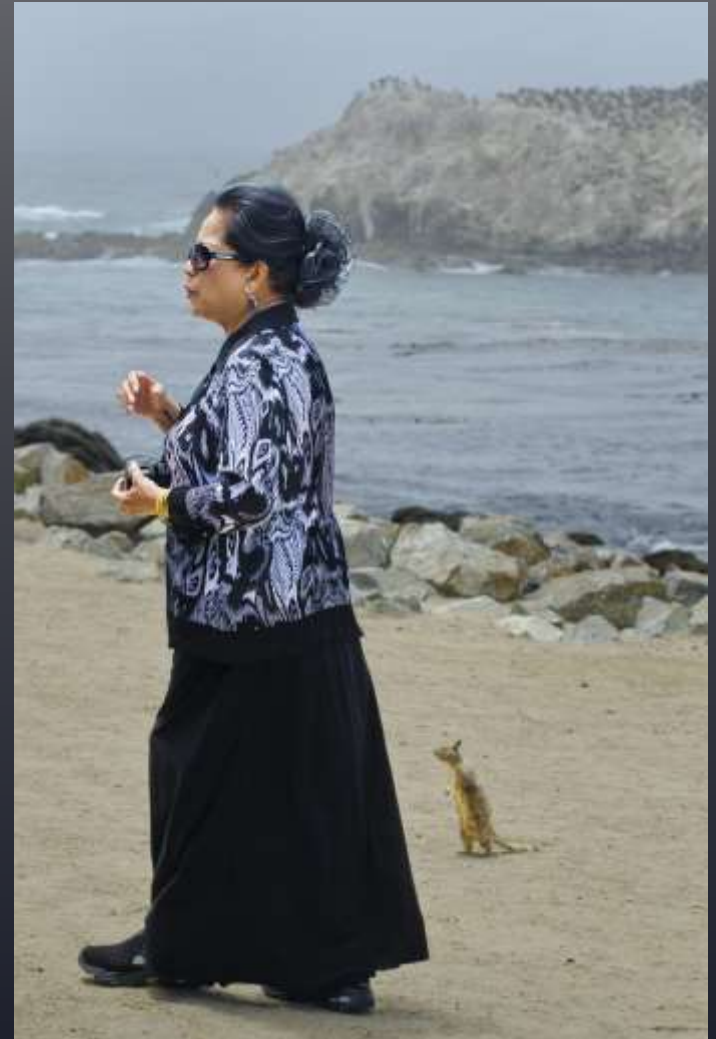
NVPS Members Forum Presentation
February 25, 2014
Dan L. Ward

Serendipity

- ❑ No amount of planning can replace Dumb Luck!
- ❑ It may be better to be lucky than good...

BUT!!!!!!

- ❑ Chance does favor the prepared photographer.



Henri Cartier-Bresson

The “father of modern photojournalism” credited this image, by fashion photographer **Martin Munkacsi** (1929) with helping him realize that photos can actually “fix eternity in a moment.”

Many seek to find “the Decisive Moment” in photography. Actually, he said “a” decisive moment. They are continuously available.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Boys_at_Lake_Tanganyika

Hannah Kozak:

"Truthful, honest photography is the best type of photography for me. The power of that type of imagery is the ability to show the here and now. That same exact scene in front of your viewfinder isn't going to be there tomorrow; it's gone forever."



http://www.tamron-usa.com/enews/archives/2014/jan214_kozak.php

Amanda Ward Braswell:

"Tibetan Buddhist monks were in residence at the Crow Collection of Asian Art in Dallas. They create a mandala from sand. I went upstairs and one of the monks happened to be sitting down at a table, reading a book. He had his back turned towards me and I framed & took what I believe to be a beautiful serendipitous shot."





Ellen Glanz:

"You can't get more spontaneous than the photo you take while bouncing along on the back of an elephant!"

<https://picasaweb.google.com/113665523451670289224>

Rick Sammon:

“Much has been written on the web about waiting years and years for all the elements in a scene to come together for a ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ shot. That’s all well and good, and sometimes it’s true.

But sometimes a good shot is just dumb luck. “



<http://dpexperience.com/2010/07/13/the-dumb-luck-shot/>

Rowland Scherman

For those who question whether they should always carry a camera, I have two words: “Flying Saucer.” If you don’t have a camera with you, that is the day you will see a flying saucer.



<http://www.rowlandscherman.com>

Jim Steele

“This picture was taken with my iPhone while waiting for the rain to stop. It's more of a statement about how little I had to occupy my time than it says about my artistic vision!

I guess I could have named it ‘Homage to Samuel Becket’ and let folks wonder what the hell I was talking about...”

The best camera is the one you have with you --- but ONLY if you know how to use it!



<http://jamesdsteele.blogspot.com>

Craig Sterling

“Seek to photograph the familiar in an unfamiliar way, but sometimes you just have to be in the right place at the right time.”

In this example, Craig walked by Jim Steele's studio, just as Jim had a printer paper feed problem.



<http://vimeo.com/81330569>

Shelley Miller

Kids are so unpredictable
and some of my favorite
children's photos are
when they did the
unexpected and I
managed to catch it.



<http://vimeo.com/81330569>

Walker Evans

Walker captured people unawares using a hidden camera. Initially, he hid the camera inside a folded newspaper. Later, he used an angled mirror. His subway series inspired two generations of surreptitious fine art photography.

Today, he would probably be arrested as a terrorist suspect.



[http://www.masters-of-
photography.com/E/evans/evans_subway_portrait_full.
html](http://www.masters-of-photography.com/E/evans/evans_subway_portrait_full.html)

Stacking the Deck

- ★ Shutter Lag
- ★ Manual Settings
- ★ Depth of Field
- ★ Stealth
- ★ Preparation
- ★ Anticipating



Shutter Lag

★ Shutter Response

- Varies with cameras
- Shutter lag – BAD
- Instant release – GOOD

★ Auto Focus Release Options

- Is slightly out of focus better than no photo?
- Turn off auto focus release
- Reassign auto focus to something other than shutter button



Manual Settings

★ Manual Settings for a “Sweet Zone”

- Arthur Fellig, aka “Weegee” – f/8 and Be There!
- f/8 , 12 feet, 1/125, ISO 400

★ Image Stabilization

- Historical Guide - inverse of focal length for 35mm
 - 300mm lens = 1/300 sec, 125mm = 1/125 sec, etc.
- Image stabilization adds 2 to 4 stops
- Test it – results vary by individual!



Depth of Field (DoF)

★ Depth of Field (DoF)

- Maximum DoF will be the highest f/ stop
- Most DSLRs have preview buttons
- We can “chimp” but shouldn’t we know what is happening?

★ Sharpness is not the same as DoF

- Most lens are sharpest between f/5.6 and f/11
- Check with one of our resident know-it-alls for more details

★ Hyperfocus

- Focus at infinity loses part of the focal range
- Hyperfocus puts infinity at the far range of “in focus”
- Bryan Peterson: landscapes f/22 focused at 3 feet

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperfocal_distance



Stealth

Inspired by Walker Evans, a low end lens maker created a fake lens hood with a mirror mounted at a 45 degree angle, for taking “sideways” photos.



Shoot at a
90° Angle to
the camera

Neither the speaker nor NVPS endorse or encourage the use of this type of equipment. Should you use one, we may ask “Whatever happened to ol’ whazzername” should Rendition occur.

A Little Less Stealth

Bob Krist

Bob carries a bottle cap with a ¼-20 bolt mounted through it, converting litre drink bottles into a non-obvious table-top tripod. He captures many of his travel images while comfortably seated at a sidewalk café.



Another “Less Obvious” Aid String Monopod



A String Monopod reduces vibration by putting tension on the camera. The end of a string is attached to the tripod socket while the other end is attached to something solid.

In a variation, the photographer stands on both ends and the middle of the string is looped over the camera. By pulling against the string, the photographer reduces vibrations.

The SteadePod is a polished version

Preparation



- ★ Know Your Equipment
- ★ Photograph with a goal, but welcome serendipity
- ★ Watch for Patterns of Behavior
- ★ Practice & Be Mindful
- ★ Avoid Analysis Paralysis
- ★ Performance = Potential – Interference (Tim Gallwey)
- ★ Develop Your Photography “Inner Game”

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzR8x5MgvDw

Anticipation



“The combination of grit, humanity, intensity, merciless opportunism and spatial precariousness, coupled with an eye for uncanny details, regularly resulted in pictures that you can’t stop looking at.”

Roberta Smith writing about Weegee’s photography
January 19, 2012 *New York Times*

Polishing Our Craft

★ Learn from your fellow club members

- Photo Expeditions, workshops, mix and mingle

★ Get feedback

- Competitions, portfolios and critiques
- Learn from constructive criticism (ignore noise)

★ Learn from the pros

- Adorama: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJPxYKbqLbU&feature=c4-overview&list=UU8PkSdbj37CdE00kmE7Z1dw>
- B&H: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAsBG5zCYqM>

★ Be your own worst critique

- Learn from our own efforts
- Ask yourself why and why not

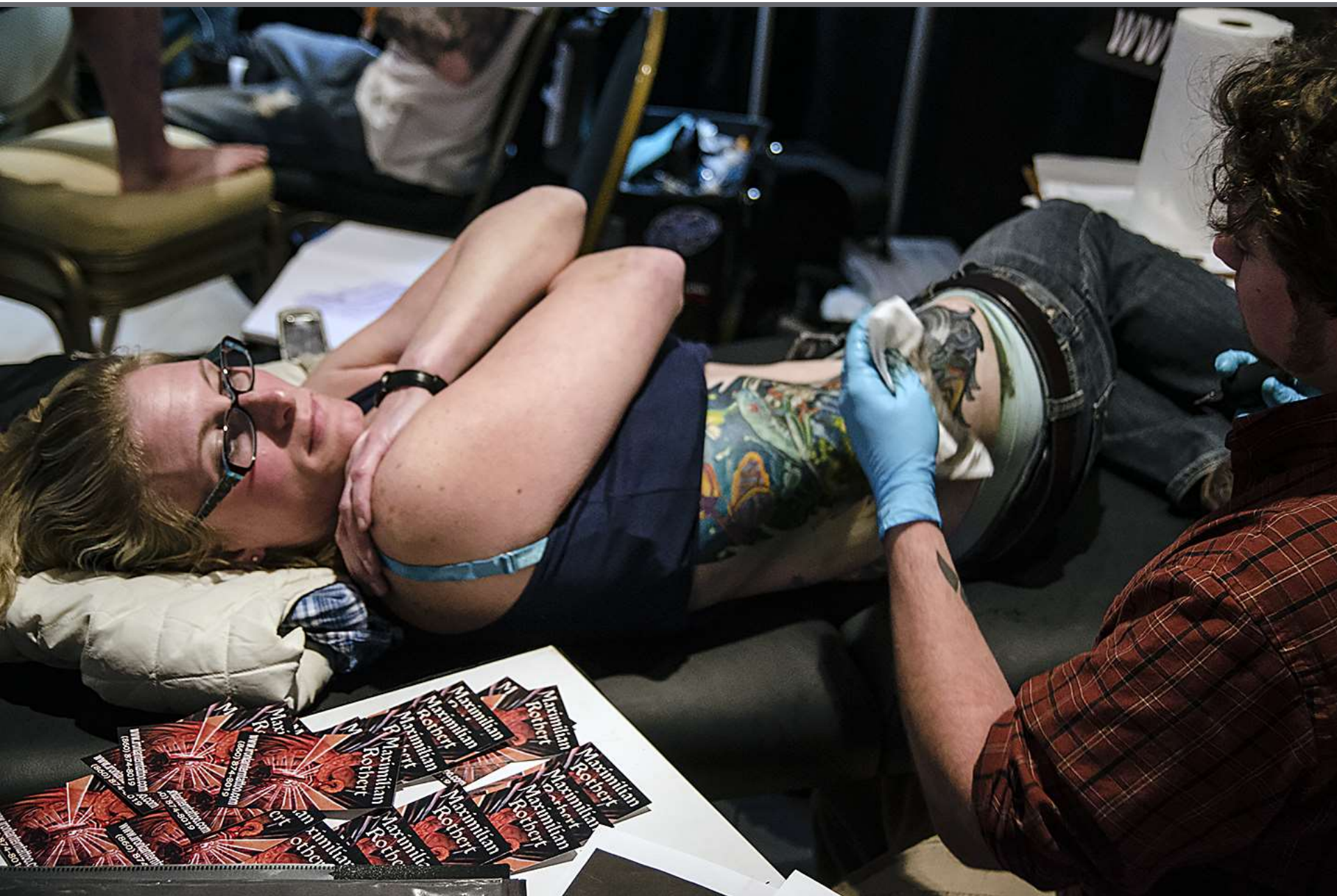
★ Practice, Practice, Practice

- Images are the least expensive portion of our camera gear

Having a good camera is one thing, having imagination is another

The following images
are **not** my best work,
but I was there and ...



































“Urban Waterfall”
was taken with an
inexpensive point
and shoot. It won
first place in an
international photo
competition and has
been featured in four
gallery shows and
was the featured
image for the show
following a regional
competition.



Think “Flying Saucers”
and be prepared

