

Intermediate Photography

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Session 3



BULB

Night Photography

Knowing what time the sun sets is a powerful help.

...as well as having a good solid tripod

Sunset in Vancouver... Go!

Some starting numbers for exposure.

Basic Exposures for Night Photography
ISO 100

Full Moon 1/60 @ f8

Half/Crescent Moon 1/60 @ f5.6

Neon Signs 1/30 @ f5.6

Store Windows 1/15 @ f5.6

Fireworks 1sec @ f16

Brightly Lit Streets Downtown 1/8 @ f5.6

Flood Lit Buildings 1sec @ f4.0

City Skylines 1 sec @ f4.0

Metering Patterns and Exposure Lock

centre weighted average

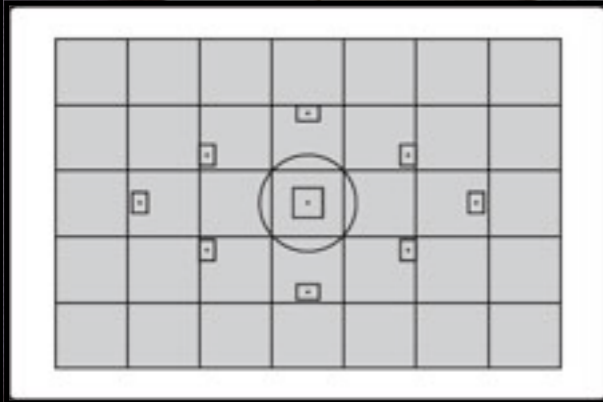


matrix or multi segment

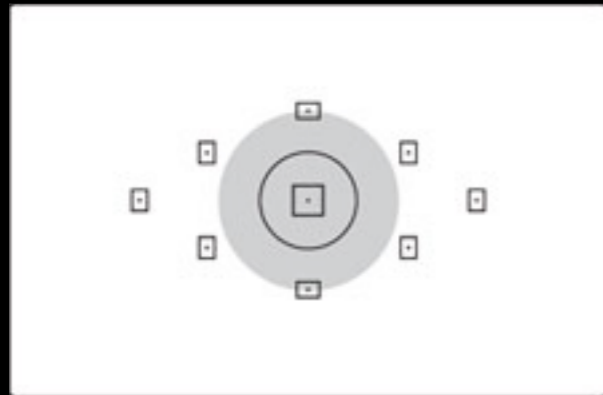
spot



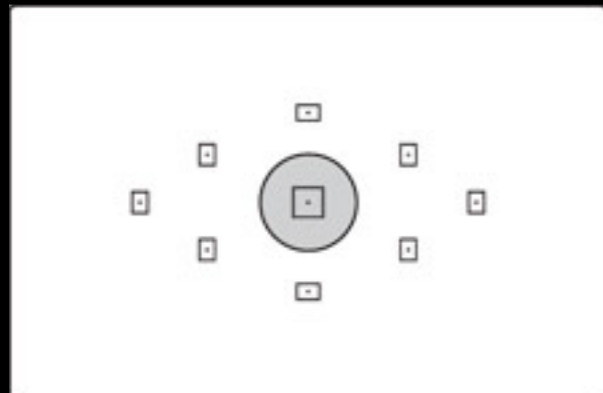
Pattern



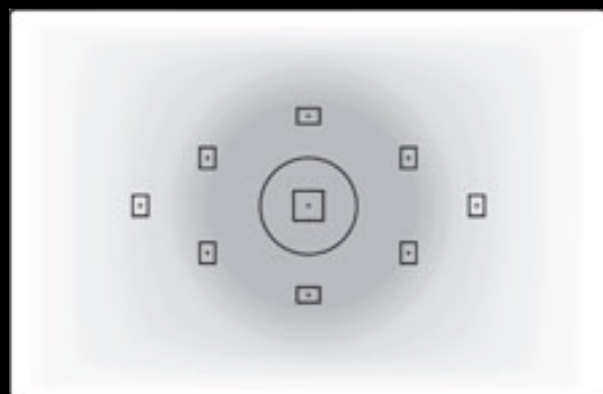
Evaluative



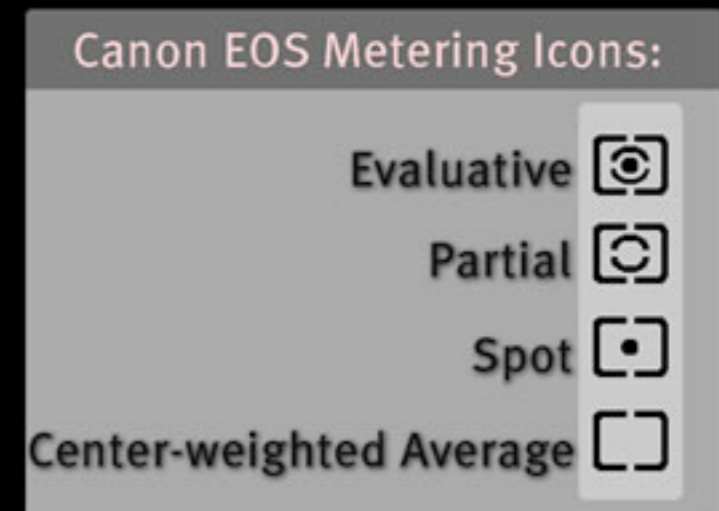
Partial



Spot



Centre weighted average



Pattern



Evaluative



Partial





Spot




Centre weighted
average

Canon EOS Metering Icons:

Evaluative 

Partial 

Spot 

Center-weighted Average 



Nikon D700 with and 80-200 f2.8 lens set to 112mm. Exposure was 25 seconds at f6.3 ISO 100

With the long exposures used while making photos at night objects reveal themselves differently than we normally see them. Moving cars are reduced to bright slashes on the road, the cloud's movement become streaks of changing tones, the flashing lights of an aircraft about to land poke holes in the sky. If you are lucky and the air is still, the trees will retain a sharp silhouette against a vibrant backdrop.

What is night photography? I'd say it's any photo taken between sunset and sunrise. It's where photos are made in natural light at the end of its workday.

Photography at night is about managing contrast. Night scenes are inherently contrasty. They're often dark fields spotted with bright sources that easily exceed the range of tones a camera can record in a single exposure.

Timing becomes critical because often you're blending natural and artificial light sources, neither of which you have control over. It becomes about patience. Photographers have to put themselves in a position to record an image when the light in the sky is in balance with the lights in the buildings and the window for that kind of balance is very brief, perhaps only 10 minutes before the sky becomes too dark to provide any illumination to contrast against the dark buildings.

Arrive early and stay until dark is my advice.

Nikon D700 and a 28-70mm lens set to 44mm. Exposure was 30 seconds at f9 at 100 ISO. A polarizing filter was used to reduce the specularity of the reflections on the water.



This image was taken 40 minutes after sunset. There was still enough light to define the buildings from the skyline.

Stitched panorama of two photos made with a Nikon D700 and a 28mm lens. Exposure was 30 seconds at f7.1 100 ISO.



This image of the same skyline as the previous slide was made just over an hour after the sun had set. The sky is much darker and the light is entirely from artificial sources with a crazy range of colour temperatures. When making photos at night set your white balance to what looks right for the scene; there usually isn't a wrong setting. The white balance in both examples was set close to cool fluorescent.

Nikon D700 with 28-75mm lens set to 44mm. Exposure was 25 seconds at f7.1 at 100 ISO.



The Lions Gate Bridge is a beloved icon of the city of Vancouver, Canada. It links Vancouver, via Stanley Park to the the north shore city of North Vancouver.

Sunset was at 7:20pm. This photo was taken an hour and a half after the sun had set. By waiting for the sky to darken fully the features of the bridge are simplified against a simple black background; it has more graphic punch than if it were photographed against the chaotic background of houses, industry and commercial buildings that line the lower mountains of the north shore of Burrard Inlet.

White Balance

Artificial light sources come
in many colours.

Sometimes the best image is blended from multiple white balance settings



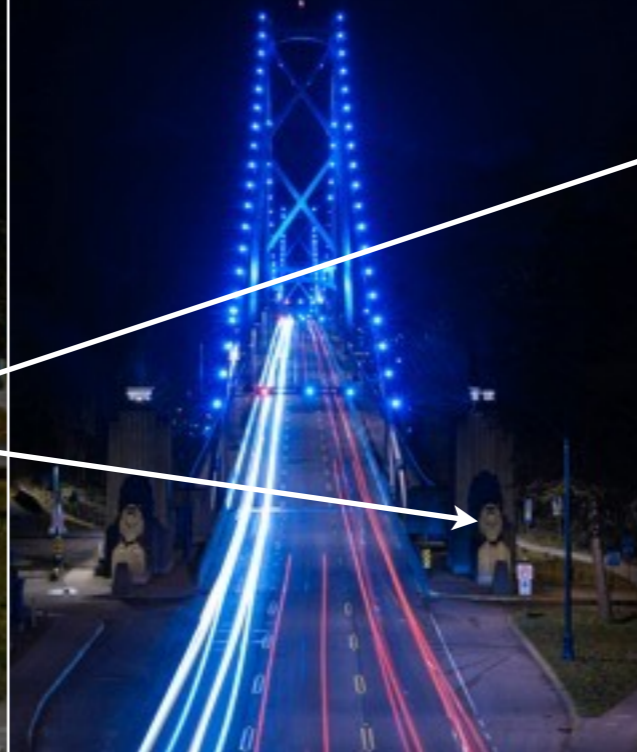
5300k -8 tint



2000k -11 tint



2000k +9 tint



The sun reflecting off the windows at The Vancouver International Airport. This photo was made just after sunset.

Nikon D2X and a12-24mm lens at 24mm. Exposure was 1/60 sec at f4.5 100 ISO White balance set to daylight.



*Nikon D2X and a 28-70mm lens at
28mm. Exposure was 1/30 sec at f5.6
100 ISO white balance set to
daylight*



Tungsten



Cloudy



Fluorescent



Playing with white balance can change the mood of the photo. It also brings out different details in the image.

Nikon D700 and a 28-75mm lens at 28mm. Exposure was 13 sec at f 20 100 ISO.



Not every image has to be in colour.

Nikon D700 and a 28-75mm lens at 28mm. Exposure was 13 sec at f 20 100 ISO. Converted from colour file.



The passing taillights of a car, rounding the corner, mirror the lights of the port of Vancouver.

Nikon D700 and a 28-75mm lens at 28mm. Exposure was 20 sec at f 22 100 ISO. White Balance daylight



When small apertures are used, sometimes starburst patterns form around bright light sources in the photo.

*Nikon D700 and a 85mm lens.
Exposure was 15 sec at f 16 100 ISO.*

The star burst patterns around the lights are seen in this detail image of the Lions Gate bridge are emphasized by using small apertures.





*Nikon D700 and a 85mm lens.
Exposure was 2 sec at f4 ISO 250.
White balance set to fluorescent.*

The still image...
moving





Half of the 8 second exposure of the image was static. During the last 4 seconds the camera was panned to the left. The aperture was f4.5 28-75mm at 56mm



*Half of the 30 second exposure of the image was static. During the last 15 seconds the lens was zoomed from 28mm to 75mm. The aperture was f7.1
28-75mm at 56mm*