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Backgrounds... out of focus or black?

Our picture background as subject, is very important.

A good background will serve to valorize a principal image make it preminent.

Even if it is important to remember that some interferences must be avoided. So that make sure that in your picture cannot appear some "human" elements as : grids, electric cables etc.

For what concern backgrounds we can think to set:

An out of focus background

The best choice would be that "to put " subject in its context, leaving a background out of focus in order to get a sense of naturalness. To get such effect it will be enough to take a picture with a diaphragm that can assure you a minimum of depth of field but it cannot be very closed. Usually



diaphragms "intermediary" (from F. 5) can give us the illustrated result. In such way subject will stand out in a background that camera just perceives capturing only colors and its context, but subject elements will appear not "well defined" that would be able "to dissuade" a look from the main subject

fig. 1: an out of focus background allows to let subject enter in its environment

A black background

It's evident that, whereas there is not enough brightness to take picture with natural light, we will have to use flash. Even if it is better to have an out of focus background , we can get good results using a flash.



Often the flash light is too strong. In such case the best thing to be done is to screen flash with a diffuser; for that - if it doesn't have a specific diffuser- a good result can be gotten with white post-its glued on flash.

fig. 2: to use post – it to attenuate a flash light

Yes... a post-its that are used in an office; they have the merit to be able to be "glued" also in series one on modulating in such way the degree of light attenuation.

It is necessary to attenuate light because some parts of bugs could create reflexes that "sent" to a picture would decrease its quality, while in case of flowers it is possible that some clear petals would reflect too much light.

Now we will speak about "black fund" result. Firstable we have to make a difference according to cameras type

fig. 3: in case of black background only subject is in evidence but not its context



If we have a compact digital camera we will set a closer diaphragm (and eventually we need to attenuate a flash brightness of the flash using one or more posts - it – but if subject doesn't have some "reflecting" zones we don't need it). At closed diaphragm we join a rapid release time (from 1/200 in on).

A more closed diaphragm and a rapid release time will act so that camera "doesn't perceive" light that illuminates a background so it will result black, while our subject will sufficiently be illuminated in the foreground. The only problem in such cases it will be a presence of very clean shades created on our subject...but a white cardboard positioned (perpendicularly) sideways or "paper aluminum" will resolve this problem.

Using a cardboard we will have in fact a shades attenuation; using aluminum paper we will create an additional light source that acting sideways will cancel a lot of shades.



n. 1



n. 2

FIG. 4: USING A REFLECTING SURFACES TO CLEAR SHADES. PICTURE N. 1 SHOWS A RESULT WITHOUT A SURFACE OF REFLEX, PICTURE 2, SHOWS A WHITE CARDBOARD POSITIONING, PICTURE 3 SHOWS US A RESULT OF A REFLEX SURFACE .



n.3

To notice how trunk tree will appear.



When we have a reflex it can get a best result just putting a flash (connected with a cable) sideways in comparison to the subject. If we don't have any assistant "help" this operation will be complicated, to less than not to possess a stirrup for flash that allows such operation. Also in this case it will necessary to plan a closed diaphragm and a rapid release time

It will be opportune to balance illumination from the opposite side to that of flash using a reflecting element and closing diaphragm. Light will impress perpendicularly to subject illuminating it, but camera won't perceive a residual light that will spread in background that it will result, therefore, black.

A mention apart it deserves an "artificial" backgrounds use. It is possible to use colored cardboards that if adapted appropriately can furnish a background to images. They are some techniques that are effected "in studios" ...e whose examination will be treated in some others courses.

