

1: Close-Up and Macro Photography: Its Art and Fieldcraft Techniques: Robert Thompson | NHBS Book Store

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The advent of digital photography swept away one of the most challenging problems in image capture: Now you can get down, dirty and close in the image capture business and make macro the digital way with a per cent success rate. There is nothing more satisfying than to make a huge print of an insect, mineral specimen or any small object that is normally so tiny to the naked eye and captured with the technique of macro photography. To shoot macro in the days of film – aside from the requirement of using an SLR camera – you needed a few add-ons to take highly magnified images of extremely small subjects. You could begin by slipping a diopter lens to the front of the existing standard lens – this would impart a degree of magnification; you could also install extension tubes between your normal lens and the camera body; you could also acquire a set of macro bellows and place them between lens and body; and finally, you could invest in a fairly expensive – and optically superb – macro lens that was dedicated to macro shooting; another option was to fit a reversing ring that allowed you to fit the lens on backwards – this improved the lens close up resolution and allowed to you to focus much more closely. But to be honest, it was a hassle – although you can still use these methods if using a DSLR to shoot macro. These days, digital does it with a dash! With a digital camera – compact or DSLR – even newbies are surprised by how easy it is capture really, really big shots of tiny subjects. In truth, you can make digital macro photography as basic or as complex as you wish it to be: The higher-priced compact digicams can do it even better, some offering macro shooting with a powerful zoom lens, so you can stand back a bit. Image by macropoulos What is Macro Photography? First, an explanatory note for all those with a modicum of photo history and tech basics: For its part, the term micro referred to a film image that was larger than 1: But the rules that apply in accomplishing successful and satisfying macro photography still stand. Normal photography works in using a camera to record a sharp image by adjusting the lens-to-sensor distance to attain precise focus: In macro photography, a sharp image of a tiny object requires the lens to be positioned much closer still, with the lens moved even further out than for normal photography. As far as my investigations go, just about all compact digicams and most dSLRs have a selectable macro mode. In some cameras you can select macro mode via an external control, while in others you must access the viewfinder menu. What a wonderful world in which to shoot macro! Image by macropoulos Tips for Macro Photography Beginners Being curious about how digital cameras can capture macro so easily I investigated the subject. Here are my findings, gained by chatting to the tech expert at a major camera company. Engage macro mode on a digicam and the system adjusts the lens elements to re-arrange them into an array that best suits close focusing. Quite a feat, as even simple camera lenses have a surprising number of lens elements to juggle. Unfortunately, by engaging macro mode with the vast majority of cameras you lose control of both the lens aperture f-stop and shutter speed. Why is this so important? The best macro photography – regardless of camera – requires that you use the smallest lens aperture to gain optimum image sharpness and depth of field. Using a small lens aperture means you need more light, so you need to extend the exposure time to make a correctly exposed photograph. With DSLR cameras the macro operation is somewhat different. Select macro and you activate a different chain of events: Shooting macro with a compact digicam is easy but you have to forgo a fair bit of control and you need to understand that the demands of an amateur as far as resolution and colour quality are less stringent than the pros. The pro approach would be to use a purpose-built macro lens on a DSLR. Dedicated macro lenses are not cheap but they are optimised to operate at closer than normal distances. With macro lenses you are unlikely to experience problems such as colour fringing and optical distortion; many macro lenses also compensate for the additional exposure necessary when racking out the lens to distances very different to those used in normal photography.

2: close_up_and_macro_photography_art_and_techniques

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Close-up and Macro Photography: Its Art and Fieldcraft Techniques by Robert Thompson Focusing on fieldcraft techniques for macro and close-up photography, Thompson covers the vital but often overlooked skills necessary to achieve consistent professional results in the field.

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