

General Photography Guidelines For the *NER Coupler*

FROM: Christopher Carfaro Editor, *NER Coupler*
REVISED: February 4, 2024

Thank you for your interest in taking photographs for submission to the *NER Coupler*. There is a lot of information and suggestions below. If you are an experienced photographer, most of what's suggested is common sense and standard practices. - Chris Carfaro, Editor.

The *NER Coupler* is both a print and online magazine. We require all photos to be high resolution, meaning at/or greater than 300 PPI (or 300 DPI, dots per inch, if shooting film.)

IN GENERAL:

1. Please consider that the photo you are taking, might win the cover photo position. If that is the case, a portrait orientation is almost always preferable.
2. Please consider shooting your photos of any given subject, from different angles and using both landscape and portrait orientations.
3. Please provide caption descriptions, including the names of people in the photo.
4. When shooting portraits of people, please look at the background and mitigate if necessary A) with your f-stop, B) changing the background, C) pulling a curtain, D) avoiding backlighting, or E) moving the individuals.
5. If your photography involves an event where you think you will need PRESS - I.D., please provide us with your current headshot and the proper spelling of your name, the event name and date, and we'll have one sent to you.

PHOTOGRAPHING MINIATURES

1. **Camera Placement:** Put yourself in the shoes of a scale size person standing near your subject matter. How would they see your subject and try to shoot in a way that captures that angle.
2. **Scale:** It is impossible to scale down your camera, however you can scale down your aperture! A small f-stop will give you much greater depth of field and make your photo more realistic.
3. **Composition:** Look at the scene you want to photograph and consider different ways to capture it. You may be used to seeing it, but try looking again through the eye of the lens. Are there objects in the room that detract? Things you've gotten used to? What is the moment you want to capture and share? What time of day is it, how is the weather? Do you want the feel of a locomotive storming a trestle? Maybe the memory of returning to your hometown on the local passenger train as it glides into the station on a hiss of steam? What about a shot of a passenger being helped off the train with luggage by a conductor? Sometimes you might want to focus on a small part of the scene and let the rest fall off in clarity. Great, then open up your lens and let the background fall out of focus. This makes sense. However, if you are trying to capture a more panoramic feel, then indeed a smaller aperture, hence deeper depth of field is important. This is all part of composing your photograph and maneuvering your camera and equipment to meet your needs and capture the feeling you wish to share.
4. **Lighting:** You certainly need a good supply of light for a quality exposure, especially if shooting at a f-22, f-32 or slower aperture, but keep in mind that shadows are vital too. Consider the following,
 1. a lighting angle lower than 45° will give you more shadow and dynamics to your subject matter.
 2. The color of the light matters. Consider warm lighting (3000° K) to one side and cool (4000°+ k) on the other.

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3. Don't flatten out the subject matter by using the same intensity of lighting while trying to cover every angle around the subject.

5. Shooting the photo

1. Use different f-stops. Even on phone cameras, f-stop manipulation is present. For instance, on an iPhone, when shooting in "Portrait" mode, you'll see a tiny "f" in the top corner. Click on it and an adjustment slider will appear,
2. use additional lighting and reflectors,
3. get creative with low angle shots, different angles and orientations (Portrait vs. Landscape,)
4. if the model is huge, consider shooting multiple photos straight on - that can be merged together in Adobe Photoshop,
5. sometimes when its hard to get in close, try using a zoom lens from a further distance away from the subject. The other option is just the opposite, get a wide angle lens - their main purpose is actually to allow you to get in close.

PERMISSIONS

Whenever taking photos of another person's layout, models or people please politely secure permission to take those photos and if given verbally, make a note as to whom gave it, place and time. If possible, secure permission ahead of time with an email (and submit the email message with the photos.)

CHILDREN / MINORS

The *NER Coupler* will not print a photograph with a minor or child in it, unless written permission by use of a "Model Release" is received from the parents or guardian.

A printable pdf of a "Model Release" is available on the NER website, on the *NER Coupler* pages, at the bottom.