



Ohio Valley Camera Club of West Virginia

President's Message Artistic Images vs Traditional Images February 1, 2011

Is a photographer an artist? I am not sure when an artist becomes an artist but I am curious if a photographer could be considered an artist. And would we then refer to him or her as a photo artist? Not sure what term would fit. When we add to the mix a large amount of creative digital work then at some point the photo stops being a photo and becomes a piece of digital art.

So how does all this fit into a photography club? I think that there will always be two basic types of photographers. The traditional photographer that strives to create an image that perfectly captures the moment and documents or tells a story. Then the other type of photographer that sees a shot not for what it is but what it could be. To see beyond the natural image and to use it or parts of it to become a creation that is in the photographer's mind.

I believe most club members struggle with this since we are asked to judge now beyond the technical qualities of an image and look into what the photographer was attempting to create. Some of the members may even move back and forth between traditional photography and digital art when creating their own images.

The club had also struggled with the definition of digitally enhanced photography and when an image transcends from a black and white or color image to a digitally enhanced image. One definition would be when the image has been digitally manipulated to the point that the final image no longer looks like the natural world the image was created from. For example, HDR "High Dynamic Range" photography when enhanced produces an image beyond what the natural eye can see. These types of images contain lots of contrast and can look un-natural making them digital art.

So I now think that some of our members could say they are digital photographers while others say they are digital artists, with some members moving back and forth between the two types. This is not to say that any one is better than the other. Both have a place in our club and to realize and learn both types makes us better judges in our competitions.

Michael Adkins, President