

# High Performance Cameras for Ordinary People Or I Just Paid \$ 1,000 for this Camera – Now What?

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## First - Look at a lot of pictures

I have heard music teachers say that the single most important thing to do as a music student is to listen to music. As a student of photography, the most important single thing you can do is look at pictures. Look at and enjoy, but also study, pictures in magazines, books, art galleries, and on TV and in movies. Not just photographs, but paintings and graphic arts of all kinds. Cultivate your taste, and then make pictures you like. Reinforce your decisions by seeing other people's reactions to your photographs.

Overtime you will figure out what types of pictures make an emotional connection with people and which ones leave them cold.

In music, it is relatively easy to see which songs cause a reaction to people and which ones don't. You keep doing the songs that get a lot of applause and drop the ones that don't.

After awhile, you begin to see a pattern, you develop a style, your fan base grows, and people start spending money to hear you.

It works the same way with photography. Make the best pictures you know how to make, see which ones people like, and make more like that. Of course, you can't keep making the same pictures over and over again, no more than a band can keep playing the same song.

There is a growth process of experimenting, trying new things, picking out the best, and throwing everything else out, and trying again.

So how do I make great photographs if it is not the camera?

## Learn to Edit Profusely

For some reason or another, that part about throwing out everything but the best seems the hardest part for some people. In the film age, it may have had something to do with money. We hate to spend money on film and processing, only to dump the whole thing in the trash can, though I have done that lots of times. But in the digital age, this should not be such a problem. There is no, or very little, incremental cost in making one more photograph. And there is no cost to deleting the ones that don't work.

From an economic point of view, this should lead to more experimenting, more taking chances photographically, and in the end better pictures. As far as I can tell, this has not happened on a wide scale so far. Possibly because the average person has not come to grips with the tremendous control that digital photography offers, both in the camera, and in reproduction and display using photo editing software.

If you are reading this book, you are probably ready to take this step. So here we go.