

Moose Podcast #452

Moose Peterson Howdy folks, and welcome to Moose Podcast number 452 Visual Depth. I trust you guys are still doing well. We got a little heatwave going this past weekend here in Montana. Then it's going to be back to cold. And they're saying it could snow. Crazy birds are going nuts. I've got some nesting birds all way too high for me to actually photograph. I have to use a spotting scope to see what's going on. But spring is definitely in full swing here. I trust you are having a grand one as well out there shooting, having fun, taking pictures and most importantly sharing those photographs. Please share. Please share. We've got an incredible world. People need to know about it and care about it. This week's episode is still being recorded using the Adobe Podcast and it's AI voice cleaner upper. Yes, I need all the help I can and it does make things a whole lot faster for me to get them done and posted. Had a couple of people asking about it. Well it's moose or the podcast Adobe.com. You can use it for free if you are a, uh, you uh, are uh, I guess it's called a member. You're part of the Adobe Suite somehow. That's how I have access to it. It's been. It's a first time I've been asked. That's a very good question. Uh, it works marvelously. I record, uh, using my usual podcast system, except for. I'm actually recording this via the web, and then afterwards, I can download the file and the transcript. Pretty slick. Now, remember, you can go to many locations. You can go to my website, to the blog post for the podcast. See the photograph I'm talking about. Download the transcript. Listen to the podcast. You can go to your favorite source like Amazon or Spotify. And of course on Spotify you have the ability to leave comments. So hey, I'm here to help any way I can. And for what? Giggles worth. I'm back on Facebook and the community is slowly growing. Long story short, I've never been a big fan of Facebook, but it is a way to talk to a lot of you folks. And since it's kind of working, it's not perfectly working for me, but it is working in the fact that you can have a conversation with me. So there you go. You can have it on Facebook or any other social media, that of your choice. A lot of emails this past week about the Nikon price increase that has been all over the web for reasons which are out of the control of a lot of manufacturers, including Nikon. There's going to be price increase. I think it's like the third week of June. Uh, no, I'm not freaking out about it. And I'm not. I'm advising nobody else do it either or go out and buy gear now because you might save 7%, maybe. I don't know what, uh, camera stores are going to do with that price increase if they're going to eat some of it. And uh, uh, because absorb it is just a wrong word, they're going to eat it. And then with the final price will be. But yeah, there you have it. Uh, welcome to our world. Interesting thing to me is that only Nikon components manufactured in China is actually getting the wallop. Uh, things that are made in Thailand, uh, at this point in time are not having a price increase. Can't keep up with this stuff. So there you go. Another interesting and I think very current, uh, thing that came out, which it's my book recommendation of the week, because this book literally just got released last week, the 27th of May. Sea of grass, The Conquest, ruin, Redemption of nature on the American Prairie by Dave Hodge and Josephine McCarty. Um, this is absolutely a stunning book. I, uh, it's a it's for me. It is a page turner. I'm, uh, uh, at least halfway through the 331 page book. And like I said, it just came out on the 27th. The thing that, uh, I mean, there's there's the information in this book is overwhelming. And the loss that we've had in this country, from the loss of our tall and short grass prairie is just absolutely mind boggling. The fact that I learned that, um, I am still shocked. Part of our property actually has some of historic

Montana short grass still left on a prairie. I didn't know it. Um, what I had was that. But, um, you know, the, uh, this the prairie, which, as they go into point, talk about how it was, was it was quite daunting to the pioneers when they came across and and tourists think of it as being just a wasteland. Uh, it is it is nonetheless one of the richest ecosystems on Earth. Yeah, richest ecosystems on Earth. That even blows away the rainforest of the Amazon. Now we have about 180 million acres left, and it kind of lies between, uh, they say, uh, Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Missoula, Montana. That's the western edge of the Shortgrass prairie. But in that 180 million acres, there's 220 varieties of butterflies, 1600 species of grass and flowers, and some 1 billion grassland birds. Um, and before we came across, you know, it had bison and wolves and grizzlies and eagles and all. It's just such an amazing thing. This book, it is absolutely a great read. Uh, will it help your photography? I think so. Will it help you be a bit better visual storyteller. I know, so so check out this brand new release. It's a great book. Sea of grass. And before a couple of my friends asked me, no, it's not available on Kindle, you're going to actually have to get a copy and flip the page, and it's worth it. Sea of grass. David Hong and Josephine McCarty. I want to thank my good friends at Bedford bedfordshire.com. Guys, keep rocking it. I keep needing little things and and I space out and I don't I don't get my act together to get it in time. Call up my friends at Bedford and boom there is that filter, that tripod, whatever it is, I happen to need the monopod. In this case, it's here. Ah, yeah, that's a whole nother story. I'm not sure how to tell you that, but yeah, I actually I've never even shot with a monopod. I don't own one, but I have one now. But that's another story anyway. Bedford's those guys I can't believe and gals how they do it. A call, a text. Boom! It's here. They've got the inventory. Got the prices. They even give Moose the moose discount. It's nice, I like it. You know, whether you go to the store or you go online, you give them a call. These guys are there to help you move your photography forward. New and used gear. All the brands, accessories. Bedford, say thank you for sponsoring the moose podcast and helping us photographers out all the way. You happen to do it? We work in a flat world. Photographers, painters to artists. Our work is, in all intents and purposes, one dimensional. Yeah, I know X and Y makes a 2D, but I'm sorry. On my wall, that metal print is as flat as it can get. It's flatter than the wall it's hanging on. So how do we suck the viewer of our photographs in? How do we express visually and tell a story about the dimensions, the roundness, the plumpness? When the subject is flat, how do we bring that across? When someone flips the page of a magazine, looks at our photograph, and we get this. We just pull them into the scene so they feel like they're falling in, and they can venture in with their eyes into all that we have translated from our experience and memory into that final photograph. There's actually many ways there's not just one. And they all kind of, in a way, complement each other. They all work with each other. I just bring it under the umbrella called visual depth. Now, at its very core, it's very simplistic, kind of, you know, feeling or technique or tool. Visual depth means you have basically three visual planes in the photograph. I'm going to just do a very simple verbal so you guys can understand what I'm talking about. We're at a basketball court. We have a player with a basketball and behind them is the backboard and the net. So you got court player with a ball backboard with a net. Now that floor between us and that basketball player that's the foreground. That's one plane where the actual player is with that ball. Where we're going to focus, which is typical, is in the middle ground because that's the that's between the foreground and the background, the background being that backboard and the basket. Now,

when we include those three elements in a photograph and we're talking very generalized, simplistic, the viewer gets the feeling of being on that court with that player either defending or heading towards that basket. It's it is a very simplistic way of telling the story. Now, before I get a bunch of emails, no, a photograph does not have to have a foreground, middle ground or background to be successful. There are plenty of examples where that's not the case. But I am going to say that having a foreground middle ground background is a whole lot more important than the rules of composition. Because when you have those three things, the viewer, your photograph feels like they are next to you, if not in that photograph. And that is the key. If we're going to reach out and tell a story and grab heartstrings, we have to make the viewer of the photograph part of that storytelling. They have to be an active audience member. Now, this is the most the classic way of thinking of it and using it is with landscape photography. Posted a photograph, um, Friday a simple, easy get out during the middle of a break in a rainstorm. Click kind of photograph. You can see the water in the foreground. You can see these very, very cool clouds leading all the way through the middle ground. And the very far background is the far shore, the other shore of the the waterway. And that visual depth, it Just it has. It has sucked people in and many a comment about how they like it. They love, quote unquote, the layers of the clouds. And that is visual depth. When you feel those layers, that's another way of thinking of it. Now you can have as many planes in your photograph as you want, but then you have to start thinking about the subject, where is the subject going to be? And the more layers you have in there, you have to move the eye through the frame to that subject, and then continue through that frame to tell your story, to bring your viewer back to the beginning and the end of what you're trying to tell them. Now, one of the classic mistakes that I see and it's I made it, I made it where I made it is that you have a this is got a beautiful landscape. I'll stick with the the seashore. Okay. And you're on some sand dunes, and you're looking down the shore, and you got some great clouds. And you say, okay, I've got a lot of people would think that they have sand dunes and clouds. That's two. You need three. And they get down low and they find some ugly bush or some dead grass. And they put that in the corner. They go, okay, there I go. I've got three planes, I've got visual depth. I get the brass ring. That's a big mistake. Putting some out of focus. Dead shrub in the corner or what's worse, what's really worse are dry rocks. Dry rocks suck, man. And when you put that in the corner of your frame to kind of be your anchor point, it ends up being a visual wall to that visual depth. And you don't want a visual wall. You want people to be sucked in. Now you have to shoot F45 to have visual depth. Not at all. What's a great example of that? Well photographing shorebirds. Now you're going to say, how do you have visual depth when you're photographing a critter or an aircraft or a person? I mean, if you want to see great visual depth in a portrait, just look at Joe Mccauley's stuff. He really rocks. Or I mean, there's a lot of portrait photographers that understand this as well. They do just gorgeous stuff. Audrey, my fellow ambassador, gosh, she does her stuff that she posted last week off the charts. Gorgeous. But back to that howitzer. How do you bring in visual depth for the foreground? In this case, it could be in focus or out of focus. Personally, I'd rather have it be a soft, out-of-focus foreground and the middle ground where the howitzer is tack sharp, then the background behind it. Well, that can be whatever you want. It could be a lot of bird photographers like to have nothing back there. The same water that would be your third or your background, your visual final plane. It could be some grasses. It could be a number of possibilities. But you've got a foreground, a middle ground where the dowager is,

and then you've got a background there. You have three visual planes making the mind feel and see and experience visual depth in basically a one dimensional medium takes time to do. It takes time to master it. Something to think about, maybe more than composition and that is simply visual depth. You folks have a marvelous week. Get out there and shoot. Share your photographs. Tell your stories. And remember to make every click your story.