

Insight + Inspiration Series


# Architectural Photography



Photo by featured photographer:  
PATSY McENROE

## VOLUME 5

This Insight + Inspiration Guide dives into Architectural Photography and features articles from professional, working photographers who share their tips and tricks on setups, lighting, post-processing and more. Go behind-the-scenes in a home in Nashville, at Grand Central Terminal in New York City, and at the new Holiday Inn Express and Crowne Plaza at London Heathrow Airport.



# Interior Composition

by Fielder Williams Strain



WATCH THE VIDEO 



*Fielder Williams Strain, based in east Nashville, is a photographer specializing in architectural, commercial food, and product photography.*

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With most of my Architectural and interior design shoots my goal is to render the space in a visually interesting way while maintaining the intent and design elements of the architect or designer. With this and most spaces the first step is finding a composition that will lead the viewers eye through the frame. With all three shots I decided to compose a one-point perspective. The second step is to simplify by pairing down the elements in the frame or arranging things so that it is not too cluttered, and the viewer looks where you want.

In general, I want to accent the existing ambient lighting and then fill in with light where none existed. With the first shot I used one Paul C. Buff Einstein to supplement the existing ambient light-

ing coming through the window to the left of the frame. I then used one light to light the small hallway, one to light the wine area in the hall way and a forth light to fill in the shadows in the back-dining area. I later added a fifth light to better light the cabinets in the kitchen area. I placed this light in the middle of the frame with the plan to take the light and stand out in post.

The second shot was similar in concept but on a smaller scale. I used one Einstein to add to the window light coming from the left of the frame. I used a second Einstein to light the wine area to the right. A large window behind me was creating a very flat light on the chair closest to the camera so I used a large flag to block the light coming from that window.

The third shot was a little different. The two elements I liked most were the large tub and the glowing light in the background coming from a window in the shower area. The light hitting the tub was very flat, so I put one light in the walk-in closet to the right of the frame. My goal was to create a nice soft light as if there were a large window to the right of the frame. I added a second light to act as a slight fill.

Shooting tethered has been one of the best things I have done to improve my photography. It is great for being able to check and see my composition or whether my camera is level. But more than that being able to zoom in and pick apart the scene really allows me to control all aspects of my photographs.

For me composition is always a challenge. I give myself lots of options to take into Photoshop. I turn lights on and off. I bracket ambient light exposures. If I have to I can even take out detracting elements, but I can't change my composition. Not only is it the most important decision it is also the first decision I have to make because I can't move anything or set up lights until I know where my camera will go and which direction it will be facing.

My post-processing can best be described as heavy. I will generally composite together at least one ambient and one flash shot but I can often time use nine, or possibly even more shots. I typically use one of the flash shots as my main shot and then use one or more ambient

shots to cover my tracks by covering up any highlights or shadows created by the lights. Also, I will often use a shot where I purposefully over expose the interior with flash and expose properly for the exterior out a window so that the window area can easily be blended together into the scene. I did this with the dining area shot.

Except for the Paul C. Buff lighting gear, tripod, camera and computer the only specialized gear I used was a Canon 24mm Tilt Shift lens.

More important than the equipment, in my mind, are the people who help you meet your goals. Assisting me on the day of the shoot I had my good friend William Deshazer. He is a great photogra-

pher and I was lucky to get him on a day he was free. Anyone that can help you move things and stays busy is great to have on set, but Will, being a photographer, knew exactly what needed to be done and it was great to have a second set of eyes.

Also, I could not have done this without the help Barbara Ann Jeter, Real estate Agent at Partners in Building. She selflessly set up and allowed us to photograph this beautiful space in Franklin, TN. Thank you!

# Then and Now

by Salem Krieger

*THE CONCEPT WAS TO HOLD A PRINT OF THE GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL FROM THE 1960'S AND COMPARE IT WITH THE CURRENT FACADE TODAY.*



*Salem Krieger is a New York City-based architectural photographer.*

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WATCH THE VIDEO 

Prosoco International contacted me to photograph the facade of the Grand Central Terminal, NY. Their products were used in cleaning the building. The art director's concept was to have me hold a print of the GCT from the 1960's to compare it with the current clean facade today. I suggested we shoot it as a composite image. I wanted to get more energy into the image which is seen with the cars moving and various details in the surrounding buildings. The image was created as a composited image shot over 7 hours to get the light in the building windows, the cars moving, etc.

There were several challenges with this shot. First, I had to figure out the size of the print I would be holding. Once I established the size I cut a board to that size and then used it when I was on location to get the right positioning. In post-production, I would use Photoshop to composite my shot with the image of the original 1960's GCT.

Next, I studied the original GCT image to establish approximately where the original location was shot. 40th and Park Avenue looked very close. The lamp posts on Park Avenue aided me in figuring out the spot to shoot from. I believe the lamp posts haven't been moved since they were built, so it was convenient to use them. The Mercury Statue clock was also important in establishing the position of the 1960's image. I used the clock face to match up the two images in post-production. The clock is also the ideal candidate to grace Grand Central Terminal. Mer-

cury is best known as a messenger god, but ancient sources also attribute him to commerce and travel. He is depicted with two of his iconographical attributes, a winged hat and the caduceus (a wand held by Hermes or Mercury and associated with healing). He is accompanied by Zeus' eagle, Hercules to his right, and Athena to his left.

Another big issue I had, was realizing I would have to be situated for several hours on the Park Avenue overpass. The bouncing effect was caused by vehicles hitting a speed bump and it made the overpass railing move slightly which would affect the final composite. I worked out a plan where my assistant Sylvia would call out to me when I would have about a few seconds of no cars.

The set up was simple. Canon Mark III, Zacuto Z-Finder Pro, and a carbon fiber, Indigo tripod with a Manfrotto Ballhead, and tethering with my Tether Tools TetherPro USB cables.

Once the camera angle was set and the tripod was secured, it would stay this way for hours. Every capture had to be registered precisely. I started photographing in the daylight hours to get various details in certain areas of the image. When the sun was finally going down the lighting was now about the upcoming night shots. At night the GCT is illuminated by flood lights, which was great. It really showed off the details nicely and how well the building had been cleaned.



# Kitchen Interior

by Jordan Bush

My architectural projects are often for regular clients, spanning a local magazine, kitchen designers, and mill workers. This kitchen was photographed for the latter.

At the core, I approach photographing interiors for each of these clients is similar, but each has a unique audience and set of communication priorities. A designer will care a great deal about the functionality and layout of a space in addition to aesthetics, especially in a kitchen. A millworker will prioritize design and attention to detail in construction, such as joinery (how wood is joined together), and solid wood book matched grains (two pieces of mirror cut wood from the same tree). A magazine editor needs images that align with a written story. Property owners also have their own agenda for what they would like to see, and often we're all trying to get as much mileage out of the photographs as possible.

This was a new kitchen installation photographed primarily for the millworker, in addition to the homeowner and potentially two magazine articles. The kitchen aesthetic was inspired in part by an old movie and it evolved from there over time. Typically for this client, we would photograph for 2-3 primary photographs for a portfolio, and a number of detailed photographs for supplemental use. After photographing this kitchen, he ended up changing his website layout to include expanded views of kitchens within his portfolio to better show the concept, design, feel, and layout of the kitchen itself.

We wanted to show many custom elements of this kitchen all centered on high quality. Textures in hardwood show the level of attention and need to come through visually. The most elaborate feature in this space is a built-in hidden table that tucks away into the cabinetry or extends out as far as six feet. There are at least half a dozen moving parts and the table leaves are also hidden within the

structure. It was a marvel to see, and a custom GIF we made showed the functionality well.

This millworker designed and built not only this kitchen but another in the same neighborhood with a mirrored layout in a completely different style with its own features. Having photographed both spaces, we photograph from similar angles in each kitchen to show the two side by side. Just for fun, I flipped a few images from each space on the y-axis to look at them side by side which got a little trippy.

The homeowners had not decided on a backsplash and getting into the home for a photo shoot was a scheduling challenge. The millworker only had mobile phone photographs of the kitchen to showcase so we ended up photographing without the backsplash to put the new photographs to work. There's a balance between using a space that's new but settled into, while not overfull with appli-



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ances and decorations. Most of the time, we end up clearing the counters, doing a final cleaning even after a cleaning service comes through and re-staging.

When I'm on location, I've always missed the rapid adjustability and mobility of a studio stand with a cast iron base. I finally have a solution in the field that's portable yet fluid enough for architectural and editorial work. The Rock Solid Tripod Roller used with a tripod and the T-Setup is the smoothest and most functional setup I've found to date for tethered capture into my MacBook Pro. To go with it, I use the Capture Pilot App with Capture One to control the camera settings, see previews of images as they are made, and to release the shutter to ensure a tack sharp image. This guarantees the camera will be undisturbed which is ideal for making layer masks and GIF sequences to show functionality through stop motion.

Working from the bottom up, the Rock Solid Tripod Roller's locking caster wheels make moving the entire setup around a breeze. It transports in a ridiculously compact size and tripod legs lock in securely for stability and peace of mind. After some experimentation, my tripod is at the perfect height with the lower section of legs collapsed. The T-Setup with an Aero Traveler table creates a compact workspace for tethering to a notebook computer with improved versatility in composing. I can move the camera up or down, left or right, or wheel the entire rig around with ease. The T-Setup is incredible for putting a camera in corners, which was initially a hesitation of mine. With a 3-axis tripod head, it turns out corner placement is a strength of the T-Setup and Rock Solid Tripod Roller combo. Setting up a tripod, tethering, and recomposing is incredibly relaxed without adding considerable setup time or transportation space.

I put together a tethering kit loaded out in a duffel bag, storing the T-Setup, Rock Solid Tripod Roller, Aero Traveler Table, USB cables, gaffers' tape, JerkStopper, TetherBlock, and SecureStrap all in one place. It makes for easy transportation, quick setup, teardown, and is inclusive of the essentials I need to get to work.

Getting setup and overcoming lighting challenges can take some time. Achieving soft light evenly across a large space can be difficult but this kitchen ended up being photographed with natural light. I used large bounce cards and flagging windows with a frost type fabric to even shadows across various perspectives. I made a couple of composited photographs to remove warm highlights from overhead lighting on stainless appliances and countertops for a cleaner look. In any architectural project, I try to start with all of the lights off and building in an additive fashion, controlling quantities of light with dimmers and watching the scene to see how it changes. From there, additional lighting can be added to fill in shadows, or images made for creating layer masks in post-production later.

There are situations where adding a flash in an adjoining room or even outside of a window can add depth to a photograph. The added light will draw a viewer's eye through the frame, making spaces feel larger and brighter. In those cases, the RapidMount SLX with RapidStrips and RapidMount PowrGrip can help by putting a flash in new places up high, attached to a window, a steel beam, the options are endless. They're great for areas where space is limited and there isn't room for a nightstand, or if you don't have one immediately on hand. They're great for placing a flash behind a subject in portrait work, too, quickly adding a hair or rim light.

Tethering is the most transformative tool in working with many cooks in the kitchen. The level of detail and control that tethering presents while making collaborative refinements can't be matched. It's far easier to communicate my vision, explain options, show areas that might need improvement, all through tethering. The final results are always better. Using Capture One 11 as an integral part of tethered capture, the ability to have adjustments automatically applied to each new image on capture also moves the results closer to the final product quickly and efficiently. The workflow overall lets me focus on the task at hand and helps those working with me give feedback and help in meaningful ways.



## INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY

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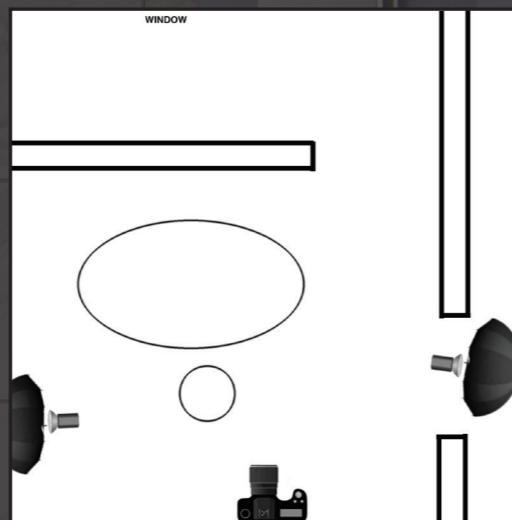


“The main goal of the lighting was to fill in any of the shadows and add a little bit of pop to the ambient light that was already there.”

I love the Einstein™ flash unit from Paul C. Buff, Inc. **sturdy build** and its **color consistency**. ”



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# Case Air Wireless Tethering System

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Classical or contemporary; architectural photography can be as challenging as it is rewarding

In this shot, Adams is using the Case Air Wireless Tethering System to wirelessly send images to his iPad for reviewing composition and exposure. His whole setup is easy to move around as he's mounted the iPad in an AeroTab Universal Tablet System and secured the AeroTab using a camera ballhead and Rock Solid Master Clamp it to his Rock-N-Roller Multi-Cart.



Adams Visual Communications is a creative production company based in Denver, CO

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## GEAR USED:



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Tether Tools  
Rock Solid Master Clamp



Benro Tripod



Rock-N-Roller Multi-Cart



# Exterior Shots in Chicago

by Patsy McEnroe

My goal is to make the best shot I can at the best time of day. And I'm trying to tell a story with my images, often using elements in the surrounding area. If I have a tree that could be used as foreground to frame the shot. I even have used light streaks from cars to add a fun touch to the photos. Many times, I'll add people in the shot to help show scale of the space or how the space is being used.

My biggest challenge always depends on the shot. If you're shooting at dusk, time can be challenging. If your shooting exteriors or a public space that you don't have control of people and cars can be challenging.

For this shot, the crucial components were my camera, computer, and Tether Tools TetherPro USB cable to connect them both. I use Capture One software to get most of my color corrections, and finish it with Photoshop CC.

When shooting first we collaborate the composition with the client, then we figure out the best time to photograph the space. Then we start lighting with strobes, hot lights if needed but we try to make it as natural as possible without making it look like it's been artificial lite.

Shooting tethered is Awesome! When we started shooting digital we had the Com-

pactFlash, expose the shot, then take it out of the camera to see it on the computer screen over and over. That takes time and it's annoying but cool at the same time. But now take the shot and bam, the shot is on the screen.

My biggest tip, collaboration is key. When I work with clients there is a lot of collaboration, first thing you need to do is to LISTEN to them. You find out what your client needs are for the shot, then you make the best shot. Everyone is involved.



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# Shooting on Property

by Victor Kery



I recently completed a photography project for the interior of a newly opened hotel at London Heathrow Airport, Terminal 4. The hotel is an exciting, new dual-branded establishment, which encompasses Holiday Inn Express and Crowne Plaza. With over 700 bedrooms, this Arora Hotels project was a huge undertaking and I was tasked with photographing everything from bedrooms to meeting rooms, before the grand opening. I wanted the message of both brands to shine through in the photos, to really show those visiting the hotel and potential customers what they stood for. So, I worked hard before the day of the shoot to really understand each brand and how I could convey their standards through my photographs. This forward planning also helped me because members of the public were already in the building on the day of the shoot. It was clear that I needed to stay on the brand at all times in order to best represent the hotels.

I met with the hotel owner and the manager before the photo shoot, so that we could iron out all the details and make sure we were all happy with the arrangements. This was a really good opportunity to discuss exactly what the hotel wanted to achieve with the photographs and for me to explain my vision. I presented to them in the form of a mood board and explained that my ultimate goal was to showcase the calm, relaxing atmosphere of the hotel juxtaposed against the hustle and bustle of the airport terminal. The hotel felt that my approach was right for them but emphasized that they were really keen for me to complete as much of the photography as possible in one day. For them, having rooms closed off for a long period of time translated to a loss in revenue and they wanted to mitigate this as much as possible. They also informed me that I needed to photograph nine different bedroom types, two bars, two restaurants, the lobby, airport links,

as well as the hotel's exterior in order to best show off the hospitality that the hotel has to offer.

I started extremely early on the day of the shoot, just after 5 am. There was so much to do and I wanted to finish the interior shots by 5 pm so that I had time to find the perfect location for my exterior shots. The weather conditions were ideal for the exterior shots of the hotel, and it was all down to finding the right angle to achieve the look I wanted.

I needed the rooms to be ready to photo from the minute I got into them and it was quite difficult because I had to plan the photograph before even seeing the rooms, but it worked out well. I did have to make minor adjustments to some rooms, including moving bins, closing curtains and moving furniture, but I was able to take great pictures of each room in just one hour. For each room, I

produced two wide angled shots of the bedroom, two shots of the bathroom, and a couple of close-ups. As I photographed the bedrooms I was alone, but management constantly checked on me to ensure I was OK. This was extremely beneficial because it allowed me to show them some previews to check they were as happy with the shots as I was, and we all knew we were on the right track. I was accompanied by a member of the management team when I was in the public areas of the hotel, which was ideal when it came to requesting that members of the public move or to have furniture shifted around.

One downside of taking the shots before the grand opening was that not everything was ready. For instance, when I photographed the restaurant, there were pictures that hadn't yet been hung, meaning that I had to go back and re-shoot as the finishing touches weren't completed. At least at this point, I knew what I was doing and so the re-shoots didn't take too long.

I like to work, wherever possible, with the minimum amount of gear so that I am not hampered by bulky equipment and my set-up time is as quick as possible. This particular shoot was completed with two camera bodies, a 19mm PC-E lens, a few prime lenses for the close-ups

and just one speed light. I was particularly grateful for my Tether Tools Case Air because it allowed me to operate my camera wirelessly from my phone, meaning that I could make adjustments on the go. It helped me light different parts of the bedroom separately, get the best shots of each and then merge them together into one photograph during post-production.

Most of the final images contained elements of around 12-18 separate shots, and I like my shots to be as natural as possible - I didn't want to re-touch every crease in the bed linen. I shot my exterior photograph after the sunset and just before the sky turned really dark. I was disappointed not to be able to get an airplane in the shot, but they were too low to capture them over the hotel.

I believe that you can achieve a lot with a minimum amount of gear, it just takes careful planning. You need to understand what is required of you and the lighting of the location. When photographing, you often won't have the time to create the perfect environment, but tethered shooting can really help you manage the project as best as you can. Always make sure you speak to the client too - let them know exactly what your plans are and when they can expect to receive the final images.



*Viktor Kery is a UK based photographer for hotels and restaurants, specialising in food and interior.*

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