How to Take Artistic Photographs

Explore this Article ■ Finding Artistic Opportunities ■ Using Photography Techniques ■ Editing Your Photographs ■ Questions & Answers ■ Tips and Warnings ■ References

Co-authored by Karen De Jager ✔ and **20 contributors**
Last Updated: April 8, 2021

You don't have to be a professional photographer to take artistic photographs. By learning a few simple photography techniques and experimenting with creative shots, you can create unique and beautiful photos.

Method 1

Method 1 of 3:
Finding Artistic Opportunities

1 **Scout locations in your area for backgrounds.** Finding an interesting background is a great way to make a simple portrait more interesting. Stucco walls can make great backdrops for portraits because they give texture and soft color. Cities usually have unique walls (brick, bright colors, metal, wood) you can use as backgrounds. You can even use a graffitied wall for something really different.

- It is important to remember to check out the background of your image. Is a tree coming out of your subject's head?

2 **Photograph shadows of your subjects.** If you find a time when the sun is low, you can capture some interesting shadows. Take your camera out when the shadows are at their peak to capture artistic moments.

- Try taking a photo when the sun is behind your subject to create a silhouette photo. This works best near sunrise or sunset. [1]

3 **Take reflection photos.** Take a photo of a subject near water, glass, or ice to create a reflection photo. A mirror copy of your subject will be in the reflection creating an artistic and unique photo.

- You can place different objects on top of water to create interesting reflections. [2]
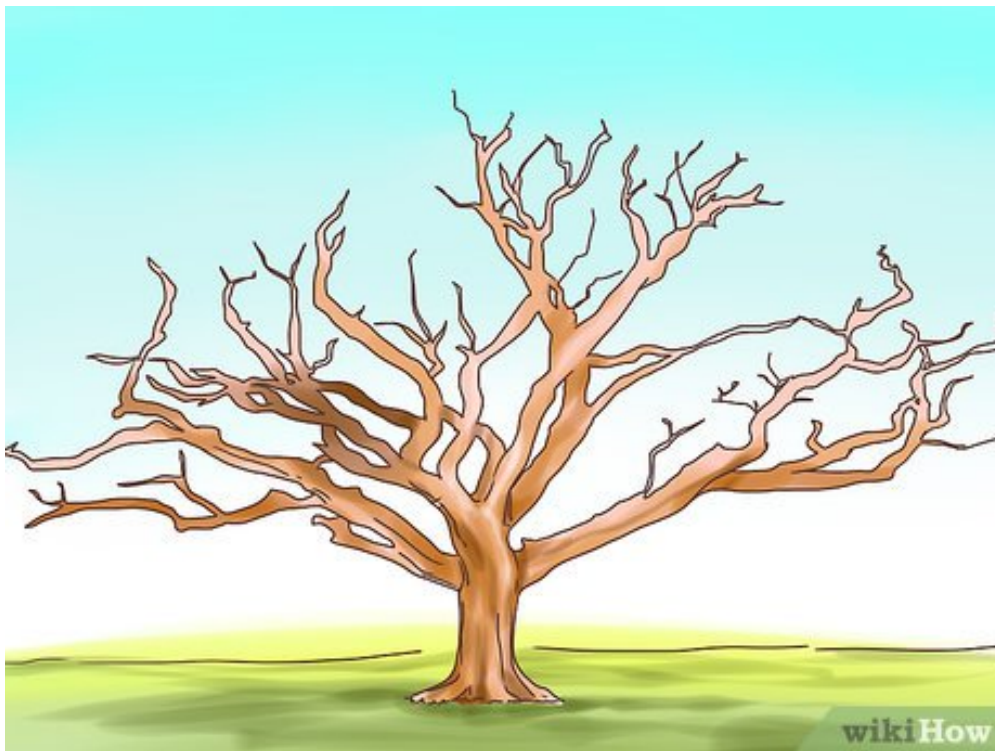
4 **Take pictures of simple scenes.** Keep your photos simple and just use one or two interesting subjects. Empty space is good and helps your subject stand out more. This is especially important with how small photos are often viewed on phones in today's age. You don't want people having to squint to try to see everything. [3]

5 **Try taking photos at night.** Taking photos of objects at night can be difficult because you don't have the help of the sun. When done well, night photographs are beautiful and artistic. Adjust the light exposure to capture images in the dark. Different objects at night require different amounts of exposure. Generally, the exposure will probably not be more than 30 seconds at night.[4]

- There are many things you can take photos of at night. Cities, campfires, fireworks, and the night sky make great night photographs.
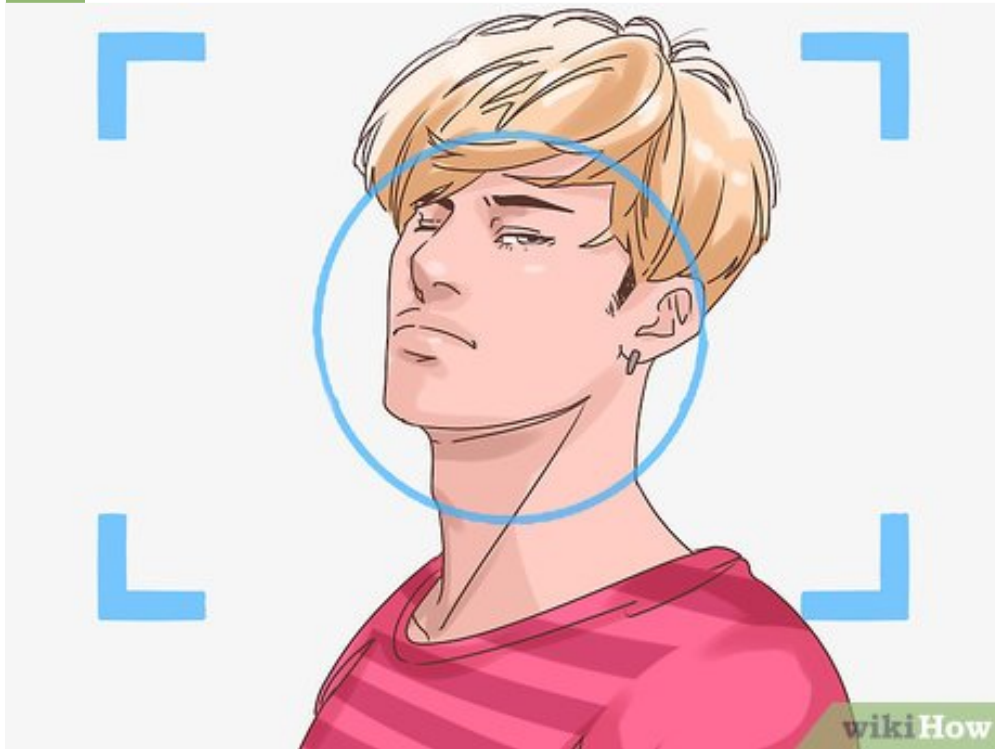
1 **Get close to the subject.** Digital zoom actually just crops a part of the image and enlarges it, which can lead to a loss of image quality. [5] Avoid using zoom and instead get close to your subject. [6] Get the camera right into someone's face if you need to and fill your view finder with your subject.[7]

2 **Take photos with depth.** For landscape photos especially, find photos where the subjects are in various depths of the photo. Having a subject in the foreground, the middle ground, and the background makes your photo have more dimension.

- Change the angle you are standing so there are multiple layers to your photograph.

- Position a subject in the front of the photo, the middle of the photo, and far away in the back of the photo.

- A common way to show depth is by photographing the path of a road that trails off into the distance. [8]
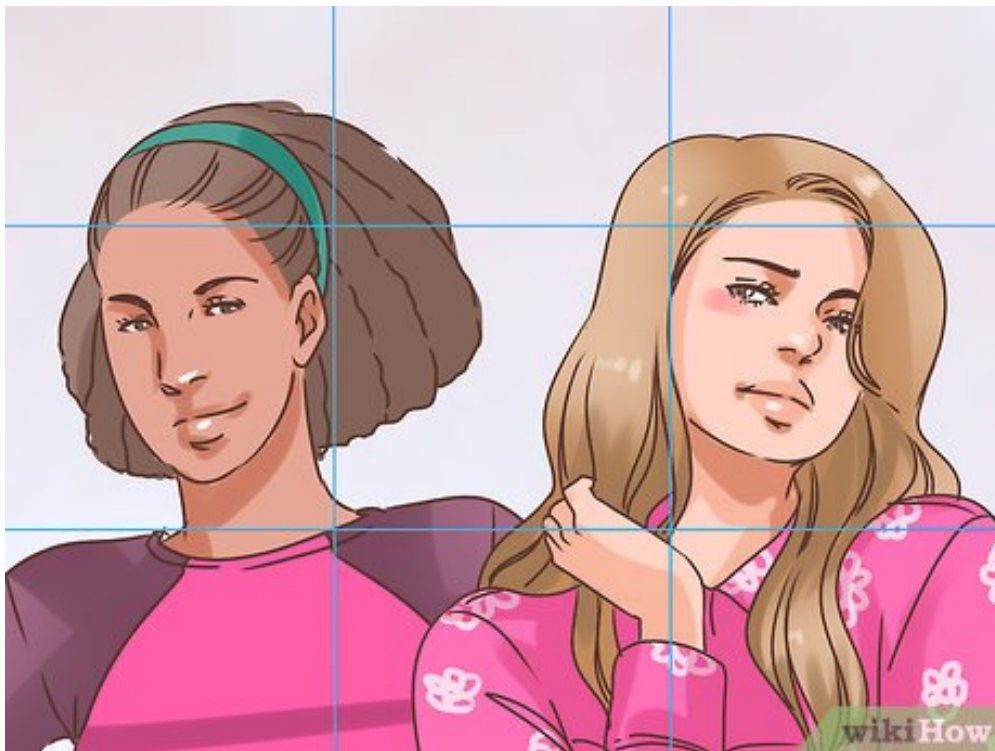
3 **Use the rule of thirds to create a more visually pleasing image.** When you are looking at your subject in the screen of your camera, imagine a 3x3 grid on the photo. Try to line the main subject of your image along one of the two vertical lines. If your image is a person, try to have their eyes along the top horizontal line of the grid, looking across the frame. Cameras usually have a setting (or phones usually have an app) that creates the 3x3 grid on the screen. [9]


4 **Use motion blur photography.** Slow down your shutter speed to capture objects in motion. A longer shutter speed means you can capture the movement and get a "blur" in your photograph. Change your camera to Shutter Priority Mode so it can adjust the exposure and aperture accordingly. Usually the subject moves to get this effect, but you can also move your camera to create a motion blur photograph. [10]

5 **Experiment with angles.** You can try taking photos of your subject from different angles.[11] Taking a photo of your subject from below makes it look more powerful and important. A photo taken from above a subject makes it look weaker and less important. Using different angles can manipulate how a subject appears to the viewer of the image. [12]

Method 3 of 3:
## Editing Your Photographs
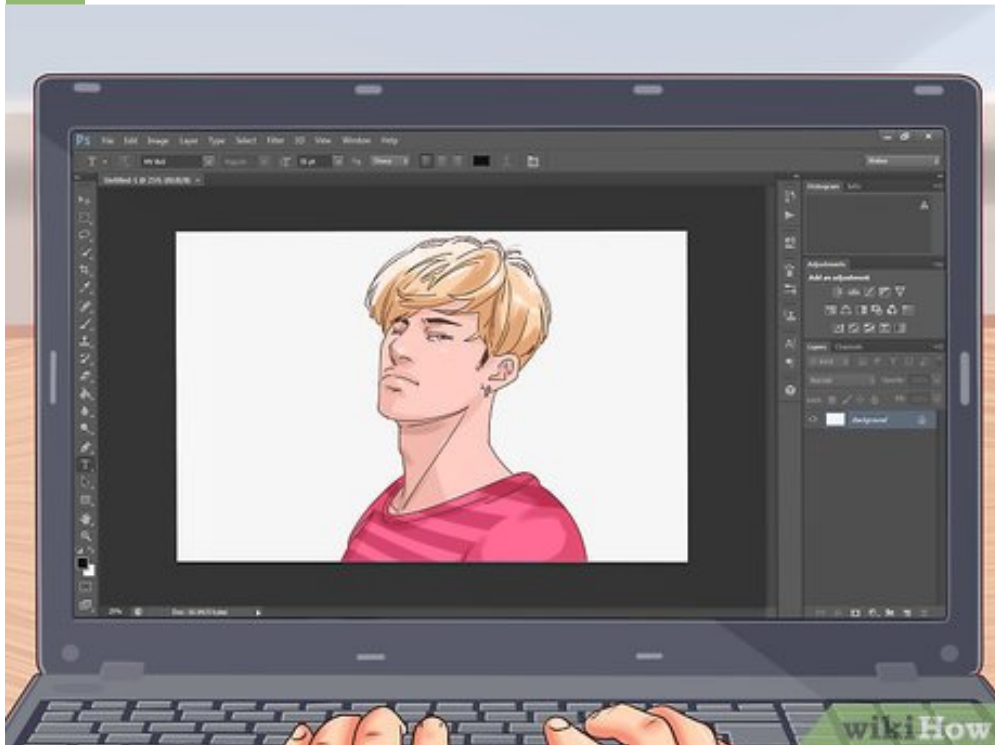
1 **Use computer software or apps to edit your photos.** You can edit your photos on your computer by using a variety of photography editing software. There are free online services you can try if you just want the basics such as Pixlr and PicMonkey. If you want something advanced and your budget is big enough, you can purchase a professional editing software such as Adobe Photoshop. You can also edit your images on your phone. There is a large array of photo editing apps available. Adobe Photoshop has two apps, Lightroom and Express. [13]
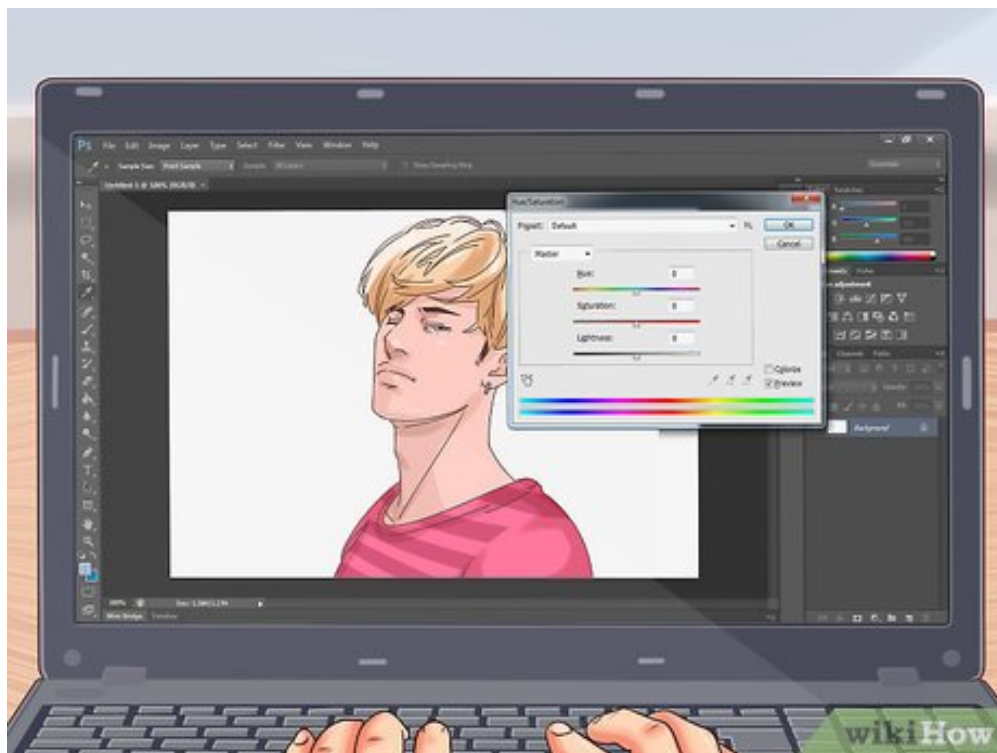
2 **Adjust the lighting to affect the mood.** You can edit the brightness and contrast of your photo to makes the entire image lighter of darker. Changing the shadows and highlights affects the areas of the image that are specifically the darkest and the lightest. The hue and saturation can change the coloring of the image and make it more or less colorful. Making these adjustments can make a regular photo have an entirely different mood and artistic appeal. [14]

3 **Crop and rotate your image.** It seems simple, but cropping your image can increase your photo's artistic value. Cutting the image, even slightly, can make a huge difference. A large landscape image can become a more specific and unique photo if it is cropped down. You will want to keep the photo size at standard photo dimensions when you crop it. Adjust the rotation of your photo to straighten it and give it a clean cut appearance or experiment by rotating the photo at a creative angle. [15]
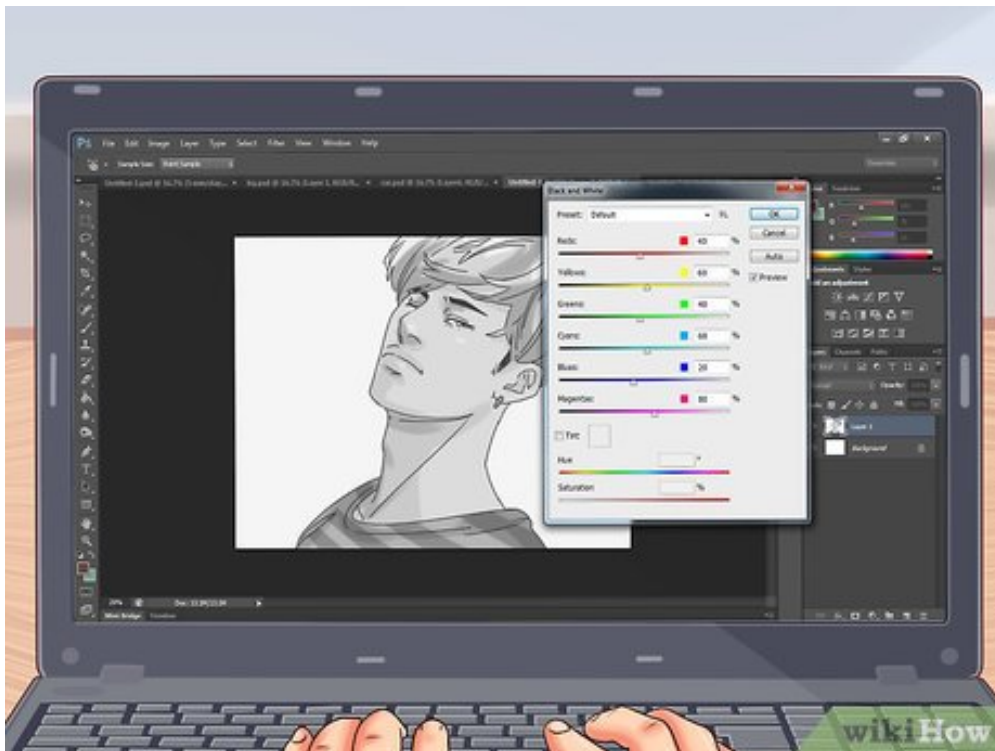
4 **Make your photo black and white.** You can desaturate your photo to make the image black and white. Photos look best in black and white when they are focused on textures and shapes. The lack of color draws your eye to the textures and shapes look bolder. [16]

Expert Q&A

How can I change the settings on my camera to make my photos look more artistic?

Karen De Jager
Professional Photographer
Expert Answer

Get to know your camera's metering and how to take advantage of it. Try different apertures to tell a different story. If you have a large aperture, you will have a very small depth of field, which means almost nothing will be in focus. If you have a small aperture, almost everything will be in focus. With the use of an aperture, you can focus on a baby's eyelashes and blur out the rest of their face, as an example.

Helpful 2   Not Helpful 0

Tips

- Take many photos of the same subject.

- Experiment with different angles and lighting.

- You can use any camera to take artistic photos.

- Make sure your lens is clean and your hands are still.

Sources and Citiations

1. ↑ http://iphonephotographyschool.com/quick-tips/
2. ↑ http://iphonephotographyschool.com/quick-tips/
3. ↑ http://iphonephotographyschool.com/quick-tips/
4. ↑ http://www.johnharveyphoto.com/LearnNight/index.html
5. ↑ http://www.photoxels.com/digital-photography-tutorials/optical-digital-zoom/
6. ↑ http://thenextweb.com/lifehacks/2011/07/31/how-to-take-incredible-photos-with-your-phone/
7. ↑ http://digital-photography-school.com/how-to-use-a-camera-phone/
8. ↑ http://iphonephotographyschool.com/quick-tips/
9. ↑ http://thenextweb.com/lifehacks/2011/07/31/how-to-take-incredible-photos-with-your-phone/
10. ↑ http://digital-photography-school.com/how-to-capture-motion-blur-in-photography/
11. ↑ Karen De Jager. Professional Photographer. Expert Interview. 18 March 2021.
12. ↑ http://iphonephotographyschool.com/home-photography/
13. ↑ https://www.gapyear.com/articles/121125/cormac-scanlans-guide-to-photo-editing-for-beginners
14. ↑ https://www.gapyear.com/articles/121125/cormac-scanlans-guide-to-photo-editing-for-beginners
15. ↑ https://www.gapyear.com/articles/121125/cormac-scanlans-guide-to-photo-editing-for-beginners
16. ↑ https://www.gapyear.com/articles/121125/cormac-scanlans-guide-to-photo-editing-for-beginners

About This Article

Co-authored by:
Karen De Jager
Professional Photographer

This article was co-authored by Karen De Jager. Karen De Jager is a Professional Photographer and the Owner of Spectrum Photography LLC, operating in the broader East Bay area based in Pleasant Hill, California. Karen is a published and award-winning photographer who offers both in-studio, outdoor, and on-location sessions specializing in capturing a wide variety of special moments and events in a natural, photojournalistic style. Her ability to look at every photoshoot as an adventure and general passion for delivering excellent customer service led to Spectrum Photography's recognition by Expertise.com as the "Best Wedding Photographers in Vallejo" in both 2018 and 2020. This article has been viewed 32,753 times.

★★★★★
1 votes - 100%

Co-authors: **20**
Updated: **April 8, 2021**
Views: **32,753**

Categories: Photography

https://www.wikihow.com/Take-Artistic-Photographs