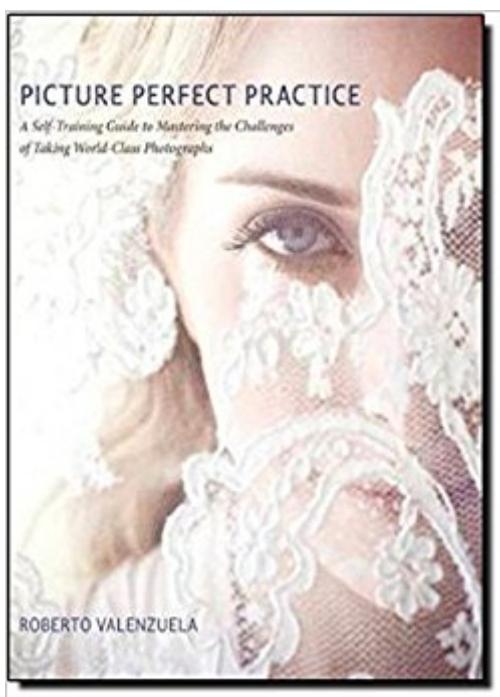


The book was found

Picture Perfect Practice: A Self-Training Guide To Mastering The Challenges Of Taking World-Class Photographs (Voices That Matter)



Synopsis

Foreword by Skip Cohen Translating the chaos of the real world into a breathtakingly simple, beautiful photograph can often seem like an impossible task. With busy, cluttered backgrounds and subjects who don't know how to pose, how can you take control and get a great shot no matter the situation? In Picture Perfect Practice, photographer Roberto Valenzuela breaks down the craft of photography into three key elements—locations, poses, and execution—that you can use to unlock the photographic opportunities lying beneath every challenging situation. Valenzuela stresses the need for photographers to actively practice their craft every day—just like you would practice a musical instrument—in order to master the art of making great images. With chapters that offer practice exercises to strengthen your photographic abilities, you'll learn how to approach a scene, break it down, and see your way to a great photograph. The Location section features chapters that cover symmetry, balance, framing, color elements, textures, and much more. The Posing section includes the Five Key Posing Techniques that Valenzuela uses every time he's shooting people, as well as a complete list of poses and how to achieve, customize, and perfect them. The Execution portion, with sections like "Lighting through Direction" and "Simplicity through Subtraction," reveals Valenzuela's overall approach to getting the shot. The book also includes an inspiring and helpful chapter on deliberate practice techniques, where Valenzuela describes his system for practicing and analyzing his work, which leads to constant improvement as a photographer. If you've been frustrated and overwhelmed by the challenges of real-world locations, posing your subjects, or executing a great image—or if you simply want to become a better shooter but don't know where to start—Picture Perfect Practice gives you the tools and information you need to finally become the kind of photographer you've always wanted to be: the kind who can confidently walk into any location, under any lighting condition, with any subject, and know that you can create astonishing photographs that have a timeless impact.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Roberto Valenzuela is a Beverly Hills-based photographer, specializing in wedding photography. He has been recognized as one of the world's top wedding photographers by Junebug Weddings, and has won over 50 international print competition accolades from the Wedding and Portrait Photographers International (WPPI) association. He is an active speaker and teacher at photography conferences across the country. Learn more at robertovalenzuelaphotography.com.

I cannot say enough good things about this book. It teaches you plenty of stuff; but, more importantly, it teaches you methods for engaging in photography and for practicing photography so that you can keep on improving and learning on your own. As such, it's invaluable. It starts off a bit slow. I have to admit, it took me a couple of months to get through the first part. It begins with a discussion of the elements of photography, such as geometry, balance, symmetry, patterns, etc. I've read a lot about those before, so it was a bit tough to get through. Even so, it was laying the foundation for what was to come. But, if you haven't read a lot about such topics, then you may not have the problem I had. Part 2 starts getting better. It discusses posing in great detail, and does so extremely well. It covers both broad concepts (such as natural posing) and specific details (such as what to do with hands). And it covers a slew of posing archetypes that can be adapted to different situations. Parts 3 and 4 are a bit short, but they use everything you've learned so far to teach you how to improve generally. Part 3 is about execution, or how to put it all together in the field. And Part 4 is about deliberate practice: he recommends some personal R&D on situations you're likely to encounter so that you'll be able to adapt when you do. What makes this part so great is that he not only gives you a method, but also offers some concrete examples of how practice paid off in a specific way. These two parts are what make the book so incredible for me. They're short, but they don't stand alone: they build on everything you've learned in the first two parts. The author is clearly

a master photographer. But he's also an excellent teacher. His book is very accessible, but also incredibly deep. I'm ashamed that it took me so long to realize how great the book really is! Although the book is technically about wedding photography, and plenty of the "detailed stuff" is suited to that type of photography, the broader concepts and methods he teaches can be of great benefit to any type of photographer. I would say that I don't think this book is for beginners. It assumes you have basic technical skills, and doesn't teach them. It's about creativity and execution. You don't have to be a professional to get a lot out of the book -- I'm not! -- but you should be fairly advanced. If you're not yet there, put this book on your wish list for the future and don't forget to come back for it.

This book is different. It approaches photography from the artistic side, not the technical side. You occasionally hear comments like "shooting with a small aperture" or "with an off-camera flash", but this is about as technical as it gets. Valenzuela does not discuss camera menus, gear choice, or lighting ratios. If you don't know what these terms mean, you'll need to look elsewhere (these are important things to know, no doubt). That being said, there are literally hundreds of information sources (many of them free) where you get that sort of technical information. Valenzuela's book rather approaches the topics from a creative/artistic point of view: it teaches you how to recognize geometry in the scenes you are shooting; how to reduce the background clutter by finding "simple" structures that are effective compositional elements; why a picture needs "balance" and how you can use elements you find in the scene to achieve balance; which expressions and messages you send by taking silhouettes; which emotions do you evoke by which method of posing; how do you effectively pose a subject; etc. The book addresses the "why", as in "what's the message you are providing with this method?

Pros: Plenty of ideas and examples where the author discusses and critiques. Cons: cost (is about 5-10 dollars too expensive for the content). Many of these shots and discussions can be found in some form for free in blog posts and articles. If you're familiar with his story, or with the later chapters in the book, you'll appreciate his emphasis on practice. He holds that when nearly every wedding couple or potential client had access to friends with good camera equipment, who can do an "okay" job for very little money, the only way to justify the professional is through his /her skill - where the ROI is obvious. And that can't happen when photographers don't hone their skills and just show up and wing it.

This is an excellent book. It deals with the art of photography rather than the mechanics of it. It made

me realize that a good picture does not start with the camera it only ends there. You have to have the concept first and then deliberately manipulate the environment and light to create your picture. The author gives plenty of examples and explains the process of composing a good picture. Even though he is a wedding photographer, his lessons can be applied to any kind of photography. Highly recommended. I would definitely buy other books by Mr. Valenzuela.

This book is totally focused on wedding photography. If I had read every review, I would have been tipped off, but all the material provided for the book outside of the reviews implies the book is far more general. In fact, most of the reviews imply the same thing. This is a very deceptively presented sales pitch - when purchasing over the web it is critical that items be correctly described.

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