



Penrith RSL
Photographic Club

Camera Angles

The Official Newsletter of The Penrith RSL Photographic Club Incorporated - Established 1995
Member of the Federation of Camera Clubs (NSW) Inc - <https://fccnsw.myphotoclub.com.au>

September, 2025



LEFT:

Ideas for photos can come from anywhere and at any time.

In September 2018, a food tampering incident occurred involving sewing needles being inserted into strawberries.

This news worthy event led my CSI team to investigate and helped somewhat in bringing the culprit to justice.

FUNNY, CREATIVE, INSPIRATIONAL - THE GENRE OF

Miniature Toy Photography

The reason why I do this type of photography is that I love the dynamic and imaginative stories you can create with toys. There is so much you can do with this genre, the possibilities are endless.

The idea behind miniature photography is to create a new world – where fictional characters exist and a story is taking place. The small world you create is only limited by your imagination.

There are no rules in how realistic it needs to be or how accurate to life it should be either. It's a wonderful area of photography where all the rules go out the window and you can't be wrong.

The best thing about miniature figure photography is that you don't need too much in the way of equipment to get started. Over time you can make your shots more complex, realistic or conceptual which will require more and

more props but when you are a beginner keep it simple.

WHERE TO BUY YOUR HO SCALE MINIATURE FIGURES?

The three main manufacturers in the world for HO scale figurines (that I use) are Woodland Scenics (US), Noch (Germany), and Preiser (Germany).

A quick trip to your local toy, hobby or model store should get you to the right place or jump onto the internet and search for 'miniature model characters'.

Try to get some 'everyday' characters that aren't doing specific actions that you can use in the background of multiple scenes so you aren't limiting yourself as to what the story is about each time.

PLANNING YOUR MINIATURE PHOTOGRAPHY SCENES

Some toy photographers take time to create surrealist landscape dioramas around their main character(s) or an

entirely abstract composition. You can just keep it simple when starting out with a simple white or black background.

The first stage of my miniature photography comes simply in the form of inspiration. This involves coming up with ideas for scenes where I can incorporate real-scale entities into scenes with miniature figures. Once I have the idea, I then make a note of it and start the necessary preparations.

HOW TO KEEP THE FIGURINES IN PLACE

There are two methods for having the figurines stay in place. The first is to add a bit of glue (glue stick) to their feet or add a tiny bit of blue tack.

If you are using miniature Lego figures for photography then get a baseboard too to help them stand up. You can cover this up with sand, grass or gravel to make the scene look more authentic, but it'll mean they won't fall over as easily.

For information about the club or articles of interest you wished published in Camera Angles please contact The Editor and Secretary: Peter Thorpe on 0416 070 512 or any of the club officials – Manesh de Silva, President on 0498 377 455, Allen Cullen, Vice President and Activities Coordinator on 0418 674 598; Belinda Desmond, 2nd Vice-President on 0417 427 057; Ian Aggett, Treasurer on 0412 472 524 or Dave Whiteman, Training Coordinator on 0407 351 358. Visit our web site at <http://penrithrsl.wix.com/photographic-club>

CREATING A BACKGROUND

Choose your background first and then your surface material. It could be sand, a piece of AstroTurf, gravel or something else. Once the background and surface are set up then it's time to add the scenery.

Consider how realistic you want it to look. To do this accurately I'd recommend setting up the camera and framing up the shot (don't worry about the camera settings just yet). Use the live view on the camera to see how everything looks and what is falling out of frame.

Because everything is so tiny and fiddly (if you have large hands) I would suggest using a pair of tweezers to place the miniature figures and scenery. It gives you that surgical precision without your fingers knocking things over or leaving marks on the surface.

If you'd prefer to keep the budget low and the shot simpler, then just use a white wall or a plain piece of A1 sized card as your backgrounds. Push a table up against the wall and attach your card to it letting the rest trail on to the table to create an infinity curve as your miniature figures background.

If you want to get even more adventurous (and keeping the budget low) how about staging a scene using the bathroom sink or tub? It's a safe and less messy way to create a water scene. You can use coloured gels to cover your lights to tint the water blue.

The last thing you should place into your scene is your main figures regardless of where you're shooting. Once you've set up the scene you can choose their positions more accurately to start telling the story.

ALL IMPORTANT LIGHTING

When it comes to lighting you need it to be even. The best way to achieve this is with lamps – specifically, daylight bulbs. Daylight bulbs provide a neutral-coloured light, not too yellow, not too blue, but just right for taking pictures of models.

If you can control the brightness levels of these lights and change the white balance of them even better. LED ring/

panel lights should let you change the colour temperature to get it to daylight balanced which is around 5500-6500K.

Position your two lights in front and slightly to either side of the miniature figures. Remember, you're lighting the miniature, not the background. Don't worry about getting a solid white background, especially if it would cast an unflattering light on the miniature.

But do consider the background and surface if you are including a terrain texture in a light tent or outdoors as this is important to the story.

Always keep in mind the position and angle of the camera when setting the scene. By strategically placing it and setting the angle, you avoid unwanted background and foreground elements from appearing in the final photo.

It's a good thing to get down to a low angle to shoot. This helps the miniatures look larger than they actually are.

CAMERA & LENS CHOICE

Any DSLR camera will have the manual settings to get you shooting miniature photography so don't get too hung up on what type of body you need. The lens is more important. Having a good zoom lens, covering from 35mm-85mm or a macro lens should be more than adequate for this type of small-scale photography.

Small apertures typically offer a greater front to back depth of sharpness providing you focus on the right place.

This means you need to select an aperture around F/16 to F/32. This will make your shot darker so compensate by slowing down the shutter speed (and keep it on a tripod if you go slower than 1/125th) and raise the ISO incrementally until your exposure scale hits 0.

If you do have to use a shutter speed slower than 1/125th then you run the risk of incurring camera shake when you trigger the shutter button. To get around this use a shutter release cable, or the 2 or 10 second self timer on the camera. Remember, shutter speed doesn't matter as your subjects are not going anywhere.

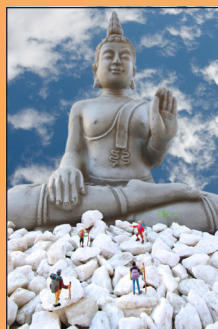
Best lens to use for miniature photography

A macro lens is ideal for capturing intricate details, but other lenses like standard 50mm or even wide-angle lenses can be used depending on the desired effect.

Macro lenses excel at close-up shots and high magnification, while standard lenses can offer a good balance between perspective and detail, and wide-angle lenses are useful for capturing expansive scenes or creating forced perspective effects.



Shot using a 18-270mm lens at 184mm for a good balance between perspective and detail



The vastness of this outdoor scene (in miniature terms) required me to use a wide angle lens 10-24mm at 11mm with the camera placed on the ground



100mm Macro lens was used to capture the detail in the flower stamen

Keeping you posted



Maybe we could visit these two galleries on our weekend away to Canberra.

PRINTING SERVICE

We have 2 members printing images to a profession standard, suitable for competition or Show & Tell usage.

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(02) 4733 4357 or briaen2@bigpond.com

Chris Carter

0416 150 000 or chris@carterfamily.biz

Please speak to either for costs and an understanding of what they require.

EXHIBITIONS

WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Australian National Maritime Museum
15 May – 19 October, 2025

EXTERNAL COMPETITIONS

APS NATIONAL EXHIBITION NATURE

Closes 22 September

More info and entry at:

<https://apsnature.myphotoclub.com.au/>

UPCOMING THEMED COMPETITIONS

THEMED COMPETITIONS

You can enter up to 2 images, at any size, with a \$2 per entry fee. The purpose of these themed competitions is to get you to think creatively about a subject and then take a new photo rather than picking something you have previously shot, that happens to fit the theme.

CHRIS TODD MEMORIAL COMPETITION

Our third themed competition will be a LANDSCAPE competition and will be held on Monday, 13 October. PRINTS ONLY.

AND NEXT MONTH - OCTOBER

13th Themed Comp – Landscapes (Prints Only)

The Chris Todd Memorial Trophy theme for this year is Landscape Photography.

19th 19th Sunday Outing – Rookwood Cemetery

An outdoor sculpture exhibition amongst the pathways and gardens in one of the cemetery's oldest sections.

27th Polar and sub-Polar Wildlife Photography

Professional Nature and Specialist Polar Photographer, Joshua Holko will share his wealth of knowledge and experience along with some of his iconic images.

Download the full syllabus and newsletters at:
<http://penrithrsl.wix.com/photographic-club>

Meetings start at 7.30pm