

Nikon

W O R L D

GRAHAM HOBART
PERSPECTIVE'S CONTROL





ABOVE The Hunt Oil Tower in Dallas, Texas. "What I wanted here was to balance the tone of the sky with the color of the glass, the vertical neon blue strips of light at the front and the white strips lining the building." D800, PC-E NIKKOR 24mm f/3.5D ED.

OPPOSITE PAGE "Sometimes the three-dimensional aspect of a building can be discarded for graphic effect," Graham says of this photo of the W Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas. His client was the manufacturer of the glass, so Graham chose to make a picture that framed a flat plane. D3, AF-S NIKKOR 14-24mm f/2.8G ED.

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LEFT The lobby of the Aloft hotel in Dallas. "The interior lighting blended with the twilight filtering through the windows and with my tungsten lights on the left side, just out of the frame. I took three vertical shots using the shift control of the 24mm PC-E lens and stitched the images in Photoshop." D800, PC-E NIKKOR 24mm f/3.5D ED.

BELOW "This is the lower level of the Aloft. This image is a combination of two of my approaches: putting people right in the room and playing with blocks of color, shape and light." D800, PC-E NIKKOR 24mm f/3.5D ED.



OPPOSITE PAGE "In London, on a rainy day, I was wandering the streets, looking for big, impressive buildings to shoot. At sunset I came across this stairway at the side of the Lloyd's of London building. There were ground lights illuminating the steel structure with purple light. I set the white balance on the D800 to the direct sunlight setting." D800, PC-E NIKKOR 24mm f/3.5D ED.

When it comes to architectural photography, Graham Hobart constructs his images to elicit specific emotional responses.

For the interiors of hotels and restaurants and the landscapes of home swimming pools, he places the camera in the scene to give the viewer the feeling of being right there, in the space. "You can call it the immersive experience," Graham says.

For structures, it's the grandeur approach, aimed at conveying size, scale and impressive design. "I can achieve that often by just getting right at the base of a building and looking up at it," he says. Sounds pretty simple, but there's a lot of judgment and calculation

involved. Even though he's dealing with a massive structure, a relatively small change in distance can make a big difference in a viewer's emotional response. "The moment you step back from an ideal distance, everything seems to equalize," Graham says. From 30 yards he can capture a photo that says the structure is overwhelming, even unapproachable, but from 40 yards a picture might convey a totally different feeling; now that building is manageable.

In his third method, the geometric approach, he tries to compose images in which the geometric aspects of the building or the space—shape, volume, color, line and proportion—are the subjects. "I'm trying to



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bring the abstract elements of these geometric forms into the reality of what people are seeing,” Graham says. “When it works, people know what they’re looking at—their minds tell them they’re looking at a room or a building—but there’s the added element of their minds working with the parallel universes of the abstract and the real at the same time.”

Graham’s success in producing these images for clients, who include construction and engineering companies, hotel owners and builders of swimming pools, depends on his skill, imagination, persistence—and to no small degree, his equipment. In the film days he shot with 8x10, 4x5 and medium-format cameras. “When I turned to digital, architecture was at first a bit of a squeeze as I tried to make do with wide-angle lenses,” he says. Everything fell into place when he matched his D3 with a PC-E NIKKOR 24mm f/3.5D ED, and it all reached perfection when he began using a D800. “Before the D800,” he says, “the goal was the quality of a two-page magazine spread. With the D800, I’m talking posters and wall displays. The first time I magnified a D800 picture on the monitor was a mind-blowing experience. It took a few shoots before I started to grasp just what kind of quality I’d stepped up to.”

His 24mm PC lens allows two key functions: tilt and shift. With the former, Graham can increase the plane of focus—that is, he can get the foreground, middle ground and distance in focus, achieving depth of field greater than any f/stop can provide. The PC’s shift comes into play most often when a tall building is his

LEFT A home in a northern suburb of Dallas. The pool builder commissioned photos to use as entries in worldwide pool-building competitions. To the scene’s light sources Graham added two constant tungsten lights, one behind the palm tree, one behind the garage roof at left. He used the camera’s incandescent white balance setting to get a deeper-blue sky. D800, PC-E NIKKOR 24mm f/3.5D ED.



LEFT Moonlight and a canopy of blue twilight lit Klyde Warren Park in Dallas. "And," Graham adds, "I was running parallel to the pathway, popping an SB-800 Speedlight near the arches during the 15-second exposure." D800, PC-E NIKKOR 24mm f/3.5D ED.

subject. If he tilts his camera up to take the image, he's going to get keystoneing, which is shorthand for converging vertical lines. But with the 24mm PC lens on his tripod-mounted D800, he keeps the camera parallel to the subject and shifts the lens up to capture the composition; no tilt, no keystoneing.

There's also one more very cool thing he can do with his PC lens. Call it the

panorama shift: with the camera on a tripod, he can rotate the lens 90 degrees, left or right, so the shift no longer raises and lowers the lens, but rather moves it left and right. He can then take three photos—one with the lens shifted left, one with it centered and one shifted right—and stitch the images together using post-production software. The technique allows him to make a much

wider and more detailed view, adding to the overall impact of the image—and, he hopes, to the viewer's emotional response. ■

Graham's website, ghcommercialphotography.com, features additional architectural images as well as examples of his corporate, lifestyle and travel photography.



ABOVE A suspended circular walkway that connects four blocks of a building complex in downtown Houston forms the framing device here. "This one is a combination of my grandeur and geometric shapes approach. When the phones stopped ringing after the 2008 economic crash, I decided to shoot the things I wished my clients had hired me to do. The idea was to keep practicing and to inspire myself so when the turnaround came, I'd be ready to go." D2X, AF Nikkor 14mm f/2.8D ED.