



PHOTOGRAPHY



RESETTING THE BAR

Our mandate is to set the bar and assume the enviable position of being recognized, at a glance, for our unique photography.

This isn't easy to do. It means imposing a ruthless discipline on measuring an image by its mood as much as its content. It means finding shots that stop people in their tracks, arresting their attention whether they are flipping through a magazine, surfing the web or waiting through

commercials. Our job is to search for moments, angles, times of day and weather conditions to capture that allure and intrigue.

For our destination brand, the best criteria you can use to judge your image selection is against the question: Does this look like a tourism photo? If the answer is yes, then don't use it.



The key is to build a bank of photos over time that promote your product or business, and live up to the brand standards. This means finding photographers who naturally shoot within our brand style. Please use these next pages as guidelines to gain an innate understanding of the family of brand imagery we are striving for, and share these guidelines with photographers so that they too understand our brand. If all British Columbia tourism partners used top-level, on-brand photography, our ability to attract new and return visitors would be tremendous.



PHOTOGRAPHY TIERS

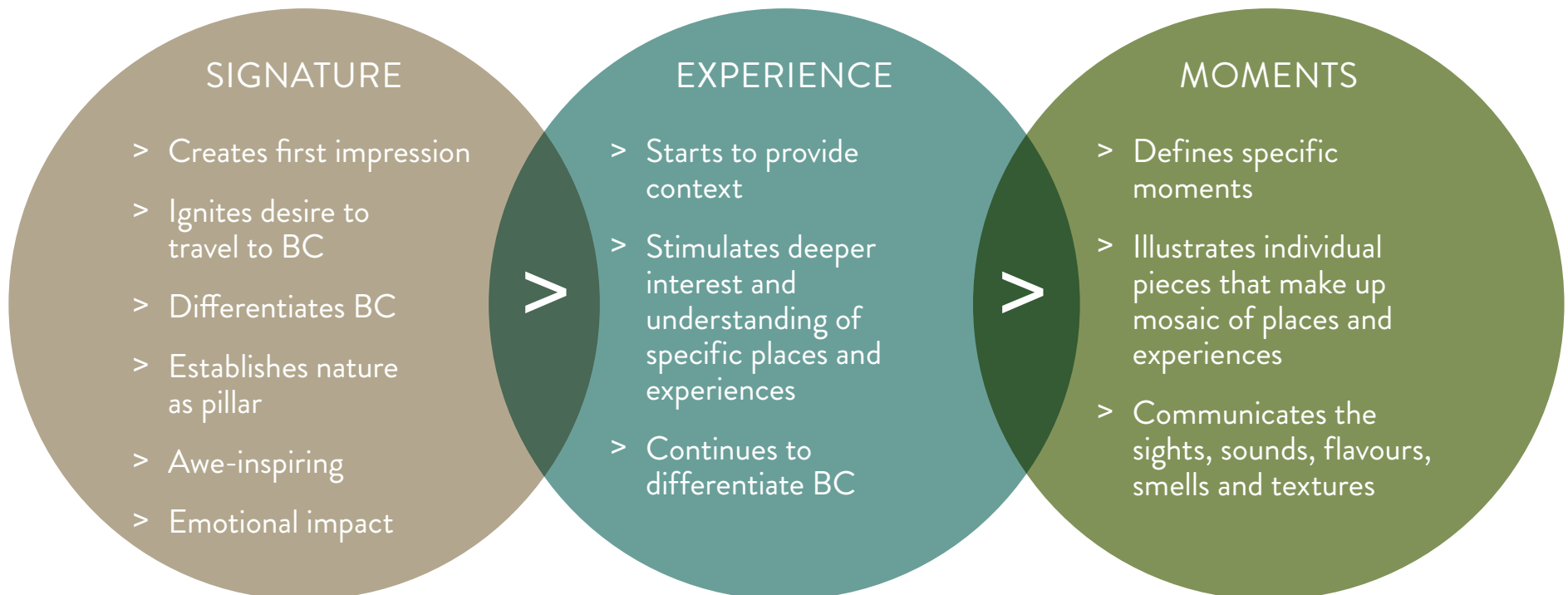
In broad terms, three tiers of photography represent the types of images needed to tell the story to the consumer. There is no hard line differentiating each tier, but rather a continuum. All are *brand* images, engaging and inspiring the viewer from an emotional perspective.

> **Signature:** This level is focused on creating an impression; an inspiring visual introduction to the most emotive aspects of our nature. These images go beyond visual information to create emotionally driven viewer involvement.

> **Experience:** This level begins to add more visual information while continuing to reinforce the emotional equity of the brand. They include subjects or activities that narrow the focus, but retain a highly brand sensitive look and feel.

> **Moments:** Then, by defining the moments in a casual, editorial style, we can illustrate the individual pieces that make up the mosaic of British Columbia's cities, towns and activities. They make it that much easier for the viewer to imagine themselves being here.

THREE TIERS OF BRAND PHOTOGRAPHY



A THOUSAND WORDS

We have shifted the parameters of our photographic styling to represent ourselves more authentically, squarely establishing nature as our pillar. The standard of our signature or “Wow” photography is largely graded on emotional impact. In general, story and emotion rule.

How that plays out in photography is affected by our physical realities. BC is a province with vastly different geographies and climates. From wet coastal rainforests to arid deserts. From snow-capped mountains to seemingly endless rolling grasslands. This variety is a tourism strength,

and a broad tapestry for our new brand. But looking for authenticity in how we represent this brand visually means looking for depth and drama, often highlighting the beauty and texture created by our skies.

We will look for light and shadow to bring dimension to our images. From haunting landscapes shrouded in mist or rain, to blinding reflections playing on a smooth lake surface. In every case, in every region, we are proud to show our province in all of its natural, climactic moods.



- > Nature as a central theme
- > Authenticity
- > Emotional impact

Moody photography is already loved by the masses. The popularity of Instagram's desaturating and focal-obscuring filters are living proof of this. People are not impressed by the picture-postcard images of the past. They are looking for real life, depth and emotion in their photographs.

Remember that a degree of obscurity can help reinforce our photographic DNA: back-lighting, concealed or silhouetted faces and grainy, gritty resolution texture can work in your favour.

- > Moderate obscuring makes the photo less slick and more interesting (example on left: snow on lens and lens flare)
- > Distance and back-lighting remove facial detail, but emotion and story remain



Imagine a room fully lit with fluorescent tubes that were designed to flood a space with light. Compare that to a room which uses well-placed potted lights that create a pattern of focused spot light. This is part of the visual solution that will help separate our photos from the competition. Fully lit shots can come across as flat, while dappled light produces depth, texture and mood.

This is not a rule, but a technique that can help bring photography on brand.

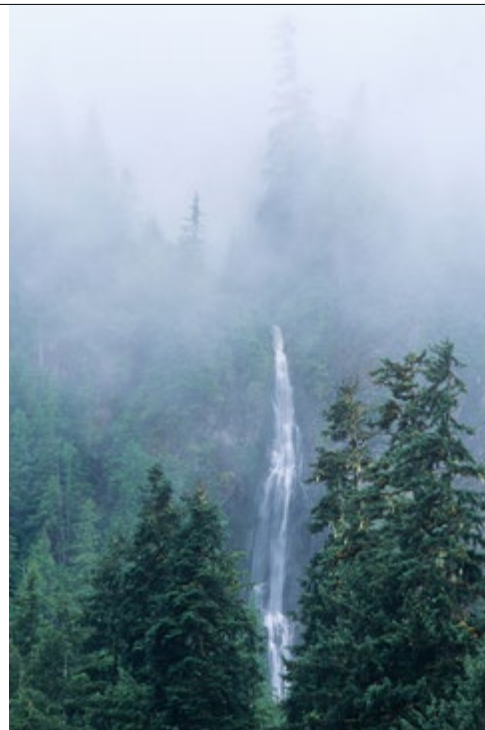
> Dappled light creates drama,
even in sun-drenched scenarios



Intrigue can be created by using other enhancements such as film-like grain or airborne particles, as in the snow boarder and waterfall images below.

Shots created with a shallow depth of field provide dimension and a tangible sense of “being there.” When you throw the foreground and/or background out of focus, it reflects the way the human eye perceives the world, and can bring a stronger focus to your subject.

> Texture and a shallow depth of field can create mood and sense of real life



Cropping into a photo can provide an obscuring effect similar to light/shadow play and mist cover. Don't be afraid to experiment with breaking traditional rules like cutting into faces or more deeply into the frame. This exploration can lead to unexpected success.

> Bold cropping, even into faces, can add dimension to the story



One of the most valuable methods in assembling on-brand photos is to choose imagery based on monochromatic tones. Images that are predominantly made up of one part of the colour spectrum or limited to earthy tones tend to be soothing, and make a more creative statement. Two images below show how content is boldly held together using a narrow colour range which reduces noise and draws the viewer in.

> Contrary to popular practice, choosing images with monochromatic tones is a powerful way to engage a viewer



Colour intensity can be narrowed by dialing back on the saturation to achieve a palette of earth tones, but take care not to overuse desaturation. Colour rebalancing or other digital techniques can erase credibility and the true beauty of the shot. The effects should be subtle and undetectable to the lay person.

This is not to say that colourful shots, or shots that are pin sharp without any obscuring (as in the ski image below) have no place in our photo repertoire. What makes this image so powerful is the subtle reduction in colour intensity and the photo-journalistic spontaneity.

This latter quality prevents the shot from feeling clichéd, avoiding the standard of people always looking overjoyed, where the only emotion is happiness. Realities of life are so much more relatable and engaging. Eyes on camera is usually avoided. In fact, face away from camera keeps the subject anonymous, allowing the viewer to imagine themselves there, in that moment.

- > Desaturation converts bright colours to earthtones
- > Natural emotions conveyed
- > Anonymity works: eyes away from camera, faces away from camera
- > Photo journalistic styling keeps angles, expression realistic



URBAN

Most of the approaches that we've discussed so far apply perfectly to nature and wilderness. When it comes to shooting cities and the urban environment, the techniques may change, but the end goal of capturing Cultured/Raw remains the same.

Aerial or wide cityscapes can be tricky. Here, weather and time of day have a huge influence on the success of the photo. Try to find drama in a composition and tell the brand story of urban centres in relation to their natural surroundings. Ocean, lakes, rivers, forests and mountains should play a starring role whenever possible.

> Regardless of subject matter, try to weave wilderness or natural surroundings into the photo



AVOID



HAPPY OVERLOAD



COLOUR OVERLOAD



HONEYMOON OVERLOAD



AVOID



THE SPONTANEOUS CLICHÉ



THE ROMANTIC CLICHÉ



THE PARTY CLICHÉ



AVOID



CONTRIVED COMPOSITION AND DEPTH OF FIELD



CONTRIVED SYMMETRY



CONTRIVED ACTIVITY



AVOID



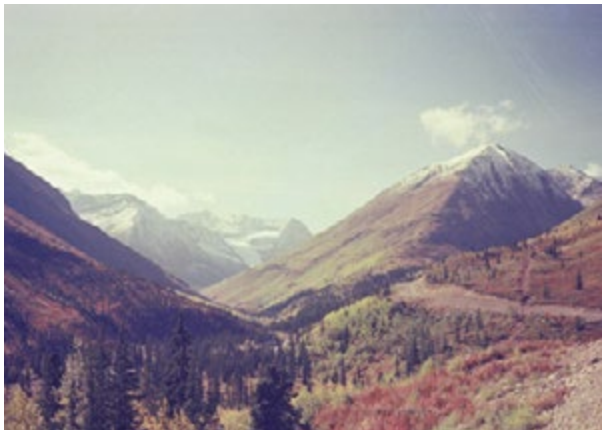
DESATURATION OVER-USE



PHOTOSHOP OVER-USE



COLOUR TINTING OVER-USE



AVOID



EXPOSURE EFFECTS



LIGHTING EFFECTS



EXTREME LENS EFFECTS



THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS NOT



THIS IS NOT



THIS IS NOT



(ABOVE) **GOOD:** shallow depth of field; monochromatic tones, even in background; tight cropping; airborne snowflakes; snow and winter tones contrast the warmth of the aged wood

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD:** over lit, uninteresting background that is not quite out of focus enough

(ABOVE) **GOOD:** dappled light produces pronounced light and shadow; mist and rolling clouds add depth and texture

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD:** bright, flat light; parallel, uniform horizon lines appear static

(ABOVE) **GOOD:** dramatic weather; great texture with waves; white spot on whale provides quick identification; monochrome tones, but light and shadow create shading

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD:** as magnificent as this moment in time is, the colour and light come across as a lucky, amateur snapshot, typical of tourism images

THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS NOT



THIS IS NOT



THIS IS NOT



(ABOVE) **GOOD:** overcast skies mute colours; down-to-earth tones; mist creates layers of progressively receding landscapes; hikers are natural (not posed)

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD:** bright, overlit; hikers look posed

(ABOVE) **GOOD:** mist mutes background without eliminating it, which puts focus on foreground; low light enhances shadows in mid ground; together these effects create depth

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD:** bright, reflected light flattens background and mid ground; with everything crystal clear, we are left with a stark, emotionless image

(ABOVE) **GOOD:** desaturation produces earth tones; muddy gradient in sky adds drama with a natural, suede smoothness; candid, photo journalistic moment excuses any eyes-on-camera

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD:** over posed; typical bright, perfect sky; patchy shadows are distracting and don't add much to the mood

THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS NOT



THIS IS NOT



THIS IS NOT



(ABOVE) **GOOD:** clouds push background further away; light low on horizon creates depth with long, black shadows and gradient in water

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD:** mid-day light washes out tree and water texture; uniform horizon lines dampen interest

(ABOVE) **GOOD:** fading daylight cuts light at an angle and throws a soft rose glow in highlight that doesn't overwhelm; monochromatic tones; slight haze softens background; vignetting adds richness

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD:** bright sunlight flattens everything; crowded; too much going on

(ABOVE) **GOOD:** monochromatic tones; airborne dust and skimming light add drama

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD:** background is uninteresting; harsh light; inanimate posture of goat is static

THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS ON-BRAND



THIS IS NOT



(ABOVE) **GOOD**: intense, minimal, skimming light highlights edges but doesn't eliminate detail in shadows; airborne snow adds drama

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD**: exaggerated sunset colours feel unnatural and saccharine sweet

THIS IS NOT



(ABOVE) **GOOD**: light and shadow; shallow depth of field with foreground thrown out of focus; interesting active angle on biker

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD**: bright, flat light

THIS IS NOT



(ABOVE) **GOOD**: monochromatic tones; contemplative posture of subject seems candid and in sync with the environment; a credible, emotional moment in time

(BELOW) **NOT GOOD**: feels clichéd

SUMMARY FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

Our mandate is to improve all levels of our photography by using light, shadow and moderate obscuring to make images more provocative; weaving in the brand pillar of nature; and uniting all photos with techniques that heighten drama, emotional impact and real-life credibility.

- Don't use photography that feels like DMO clichés.
- Don't colourize images to make them look more "moody" (e.g. tinting a sunset pink or a dusk sky purple).
- Don't overlight your subject, resulting in a flat image with no depth.
- Don't use really colourful shots, unless critical to the story.
- Don't use exposures that create motion blur, especially with moving water.
- Deprioritize faces of people (not necessarily removing people).
- Capture natural human emotions (people don't have to look happy).
- Look for unique, unexpected compositions that capture real life or tell a story.
- Judge images by emotional impact.
- REMEMBER THESE TECHNIQUES:
 - > Monochromatic colour
 - > Photo-journalistic style
 - > Dappled light
 - > Desaturated earth tones
 - > Gentle obscuring (cloud, mist, lens flair, backlight)
 - > Texture and grain
 - > Shallow depth of field
 - > Unusual cropping