

# SILHOUETTES

## BLUEPRINT

Using silhouettes in photography is a wonderful way to convey drama, mystery and mood in a picture. A silhouette is defined as a view of an object consisting of the outline and a featureless interior, with the silhouetted object usually being black.

The key to taking a powerful silhouette picture is to choose a strong subject with a defined and recognizable shape. The best option can be a human body silhouette, but there are many other possibilities too - silhouettes of trees, mountains, animals, buildings and so forth.

Photographs with silhouettes often don't convey a clear story and leave part of the image up to the imagination of the viewer.

This strategy is quite powerful because it makes the viewer become emotionally and intellectually puzzled by the image that doesn't reveal too much.

You can use more than one silhouette in your photographs to create a complex yet mysterious story.



Examples of silhouettes in photography

## 1 POSE YOUR SUBJECT

You'll need to pose your subject so that they truly stand out from the background and the viewer can see what's in the photo.



If you are shooting a person or a group of people, the whole outline of the body should be captured well. Also, if you have several subjects in focus, aim at separating them from each other in your silhouette pictures. Of course, avoid overlapping two subjects or a subject and a background at any cost - this will make the image look chaotic and confusing in a bad way.

### TIP:

You may also need to walk around your subject and crouch down to find the angle that best captures the outline of your subject.

## 2 LIGHTING

You should turn off your flash to have as little light on the front of your subject as possible.



In case you are shooting silhouettes in natural light, make sure you never point the lens directly at the sun. If there is too much light, the light will fall on your subject. If there is not enough light, your background will become gray. The main key to silhouette lighting is having your background lighter than your subject. This can be done in many ways, depending on your light sources and your background.

### TIP:

You will get the light right by having more light shining from the background than the foreground!

## 3 THE ESSENTIALS

### 3 CAPTURE THE ACTION

Capturing moving silhouettes is similar to capturing sport photography - you need to be prepared!



The easiest way to capture the silhouette of a moving subject properly is use a narrow aperture so the camera captures the whole scene in focus. You also need to carefully select the shutter speed. With moving subjects you need an absolute bare minimum of 1/125s but you will want to go even faster depending on how quick the movement is.

### TIP:

Experiment with panning technique if you want to capture a sharp silhouette and blurry background.