

In and Around Your Neighborhood

Using macro lenses to discover new ways of looking at your neighborhood with Tamron Pro Photographer, Armando Flores



PRESENTED BY

TAMRON

The World's Most Awarded Lens Company





Armando Flores' *interest in photography started back in high school, when his sister and he put their money together to purchase a 35mm film camera. He studied photojournalism in college and worked at a camera store to support his photo habit. He worked for a major camera manufacturer, where he honed his photography skills over the next 22 years. He photographed professional sport for over 17 years and loved being at the forefront of new technology. His passion has always been in lending a hand to the aspiring photographer.*

Follow Armando at

Twitter | @AFTamronTech

Instagram | @AFTamronTech

Facebook | @AFTamronTech

Macro Photography in and around your neighborhood

For Armando Flores, there's never a shortage of photographic subjects. That's because the Tamron Tech Team member just needs to explore his own Los Angeles neighborhood to get his creative juices flowing. "When I find myself with some time on my hands, or in need of a little inspiration, I'll grab my camera and walk around in search of eye-catching subjects," he says. "I usually don't venture too far, because if I find something I'd really like to photograph, I want to be able to return home quickly and grab the rest of the gear I think I'll need."

That gear includes his Tamron SP 60mm Macro and SP 90mm Macro VC lenses, which offer Armando the full power of life-size (1:1) macro; fast maximum apertures of F/2.0 and F/2.8, respectively, ideal for low-light situations and beautifully blurred backgrounds that get rid of distracting elements in the image; and state-of-the-art optical technology that produces sharp, detailed images when he's out scouting for subjects.

And that scouting process is never a laborious one. "Finding subjects to photograph isn't difficult," Armando says. "You can start with items you already own or things around the house or yard that you find intriguing. I personally love to photograph different varieties of plants, but if there's nothing attractive that's blooming—and California is in the middle of a terrible drought right now, so most of my neighbors have opted for drought-resistant plants that aren't as photogenic—I'll look for weathered items such as pieces of wood, or bolts and screws. Those are subjects that allow me to create more artistic, abstract images that focus on shapes, textures, and patterns."

Another appeal of macro photography for Armando is that he can easily return to the same spot at a different time of day, or on a different day altogether, and capture the same subject from a different perspective. "By trying various angles and compositions of the same subject in different lighting, you'll sometimes hit on a wonderful image that you didn't envision the first time you photographed that subject," he explains. "This improves my photography overall, because I'm constantly experimenting with a variety of techniques and ideas."

(continued on next page)

"Finding subjects to photograph isn't difficult...start with items you already own or things around the house or yard that you find intriguing..."



Tamron's flagship macro lens:
SP 90mm F/2.8 Di VC USD 1:1 Macro
Model F004 for Canon, Nikon and Sony DSLRs

(continued from previous page)

By mastering his ability to work with natural light, Armando has found that he can take macro photos in almost any lighting conditions. "I'll sometimes use something to bounce the light, and I'll often bring a small flashlight to enhance certain parts of my subjects," he says. "But most of the time the ambient light is sufficient to illuminate what I'm trying to show. The nice part about living in LA is that we have something we call the 'June gloom' (what most people call fog), a weather pattern that ensures overcast skies. Some people may not like it, but for a photographer shooting macro, it acts like a giant softbox."

Armando often brings a tripod—"a must when you're shooting multiple pictures quickly and working with a shallow depth-of-field"—and he's always trying to think of a theme or motif to anchor his work. "Lately what I've been looking to do is show different shades of the same color," he explains. "I'll have deep shades of green with lighter shades of green and simply layer them on top of one another for a striking photo."

With the tips, techniques, and camera settings specific to macro photography Armando offers in this ebook, he hopes photographers will realize the unlimited (and often untapped) potential of this photographic specialty. "I hope these images inspire you to go out and explore the world of the miniature," he says.



TIP ONE: By all means, ask your neighbors if you can use their gardens to find your subjects. You never know what treasures you may find in a neighbor's backyard.

TIP TWO: Early morning is usually the best time of day to begin if you are going to be photographing plants, flowers, or insects as the wind is usually calm and insects move slower because of the cold.

TIP THREE: You might want to consider using Aperture Priority as your camera setting on the Mode dial. Aperture Priority allows you to control the lens opening and this controls depth of field (DOF). The smaller the opening the greater the DOF and in macro photography you want to control how much or what part of your subject is in focus. The Manual setting will work just fine if you are comfortable using this mode.



TIP FOUR: Setting the white balance on the camera to AWB (Auto White Balance) usually does a pretty good job with most new cameras. However, to achieve the most accurate white balance reading, you need to set your camera to custom white balance. This will give you more accurate colors and save you time in front of the computer in post. Please refer to your owner's manual on how to perform this function as it varies by model and manufacturer.

LENS USED:

SP 60mm F/2.0 Di II 1:1 Macro

SETTINGS:

Exposure: F/4, 1/3200 sec., ISO 200

TIP FIVE:

I usually prefer to set my camera and lens to manual focus (MF). I find that in autofocus, the camera tends to hunt and not always lock onto the part of the subject on which I want to focus. If you prefer autofocus, you need to select a single focusing point and single servo autofocus (refer to your owner's manual to select these settings on your camera). This will allow you to focus on your subject and then recompose as you depress the shutter release button half way.

LENS USED:

SP 60mm F/2.0 Di II 1:1 Macro

SETTINGS:

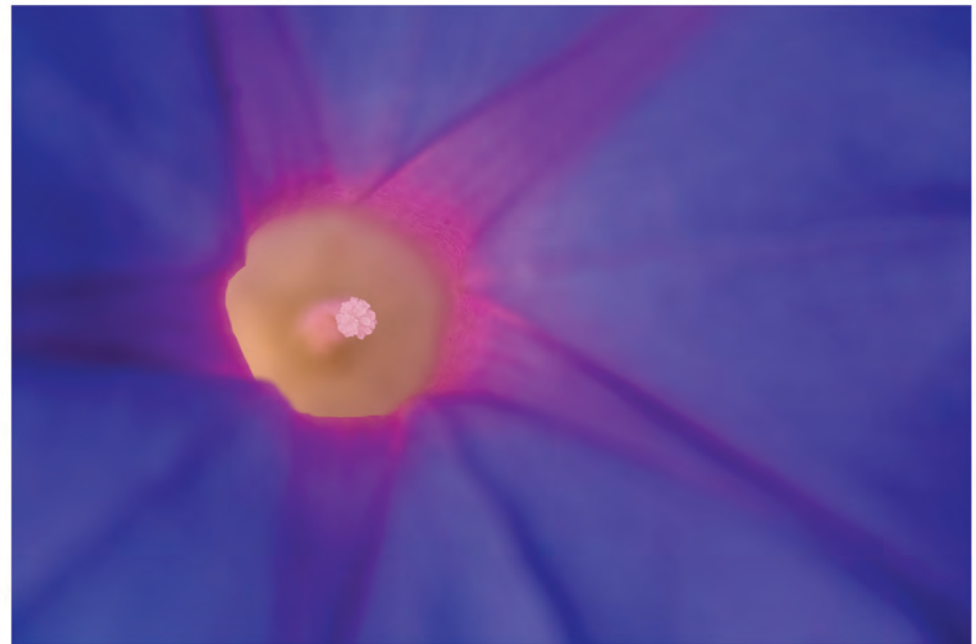
Exposure: F/16, 1/125 sec., ISO 200



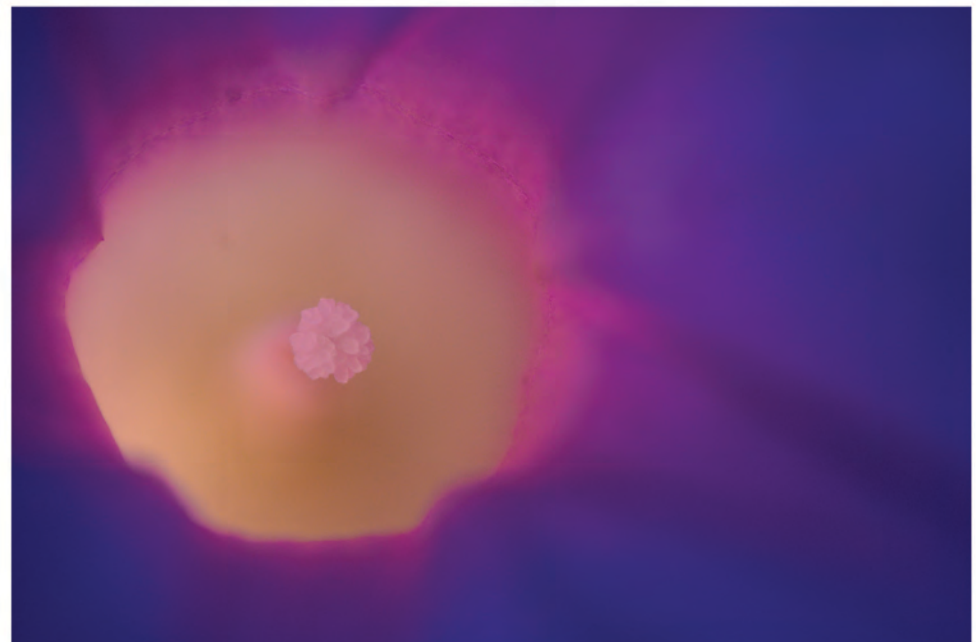
TIP SIX: I prefer using a macro lens for macro photography; they are extremely sharp lenses and are the only lenses designed to give you a 1:1 reproduction ratio at their minimum focusing distance. If you are photographing small objects and you want to show more detail, a macro lens at 1:1 will reproduce the object on the sensor the same size as it is in real life. A regular zoom lens with a macro setting might give you a 1:3 or 1:4 reproduction ratio, meaning that the object will appear one third or one fourth of its actual size on the sensor and final image. Zoom lenses with macro capability vary greatly, so please refer to the owner's manual for your lens to see its actual reproduction ratio.



1:3 Macro Ratio



1:2 Macro Ratio



1:1 Macro Ratio

LENS USED:

SP 60mm F/2.0 Di II 1:1 Macro

SETTINGS:

Exposure: F/8, 1/200 sec., ISO 200

**LENS USED:**

SP 90mm F/2.8 Di VC USD 1:1 Macro

SETTINGS:

Exposure: F/4, 1/3200 sec., ISO 200

TIP SEVEN: I love the SP 90mm F/2.8 Di VC USD 1:1 Macro. I sometimes find myself without a tripod and Vibration Compensation (VC) is necessary when handholding the lens at slower shutter speeds. Remember to turn off the VC function on the lens when mounted on a tripod, as it will not work properly. Tamron has a total of four different macro lenses available, all with a 1:1 reproduction ratio: the SP 60mm F/2 Di II designed exclusively for APS-C size sensors, the SP 90mm F/2.8 Di VC USD, the SP 90mm F/2.8 Di and the SP 180mm F/3.5 Di. One of the major differences is that the longer the focal length, the greater the working distance from the camera to the subject. This is useful when you need to add light to your subject or working with dangerous ones.



TIP EIGHT: For best results, I will use a tripod, or at the very least, a monopod. When dealing with small objects at close distances your depth of field is very shallow, sometimes less than a quarter of an inch. Any movement of the camera at this distance can change the point of focus. My tripod of choice for macro photography is one with an articulating center column and a ball head. This allows me to shoot not only from above but also from many different angles. I will first walk around my subject to find the best angle and then set up my tripod to save time from having to reposition it. Check out the macro magnification on your zoom lens. Tamron's SP 70-300mm (model A005) has a maximum magnification of 1:4 and provides great close-up capabilities.

LENS USED:

SP 70-300mm Di VC USD

SETTINGS:

Exposure: F/5.6, 1/200 sec., ISO 400

**LENS USED:**

SP 60mm F/2.0 Di II 1:1 Macro

SETTINGS:

Exposure: F/8, 1/200 sec., ISO 200

TIP NINE: Depending on the time of day, light can be very harsh and you might need to modify it for a more pleasing image. I usually carry a 6-in-1 collapsible reflector that has a diffusion panel for bright or direct sun. If I find the need to add some light to a dark area or to even-out the light, I will use the white or silver reflector. If I want to warm up the subject, I will use the gold or soft-gold reflector, which will emulate early morning or late afternoon light.



TIP TEN: When shooting macro, I usually set my camera's image quality to RAW to ensure greater control over my photos in post. I don't mind that the larger file size takes more time to write to the card because working on a tripod usually slows me down anyway; I pay more attention to the finer details and therefore take fewer photos.

LENS USED:

SP 60mm F/2.0 Di II 1:1 Macro

SETTINGS:

Exposure: F/8 1/400 sec., ISO 200

TIP ELEVEN: Living in Southern California does not allow a lot of days to capture macro photos of subjects with dewdrops. Sometimes you need to bring nature with you; I carry a small spray bottle filled with water to apply mist water droplets onto the subject. If the background is not working for you, you can add or change the color by placing fabric or construction paper behind the subject.



LENS USED:

SP 60mm F/2.0 Di II 1:1 Macro

SETTINGS:

Exposure: F/8, 1/60 sec., ISO 200



LENS USED:

SP 60mm F/2.0 Di II 1:1 Macro

SETTINGS:

Exposure: F/2.8, 1/500 sec., ISO 200

TIP TWELVE: Finally, if you find yourself out and about without a tripod or monopod and you come across some interesting subjects, set your camera and macro lens to manual focus and turn on VC. Dial in the desired reproduction ratio on the lens (you will find it on the lens distance scale) and set your camera to continuous shooting. Physically move in and out slowly when your subject starts to come into sharp focus, depress the shutter release button, and take a burst of three or four shots each time (repeat this step if necessary). You should get at least one image worthy of printing and mounting on the wall. Remember to thank your neighbor by making a print for them as well.



LENS USED:

SP 60mm F/2.0 Di II 1:1 Macro

SETTINGS:

Exposure: F/22, 1/125 sec., ISO 200



LENS USED:

SP 60mm F/2.0 Di II 1:1 Macro

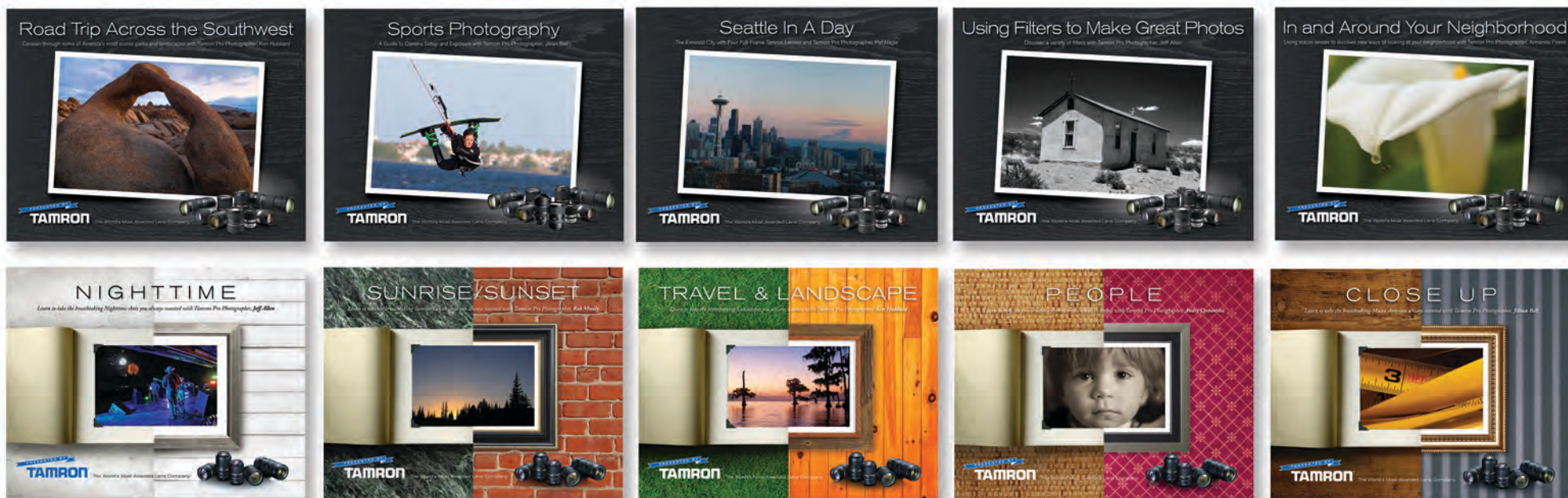
SETTINGS:

Exposure: F/22, 1/125 sec., ISO 200

FOLLOW US ON YOUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA



LOOK FOR OUR OTHER TAMRON PHOTO GUIDE eBooks ON OUR WEBSITE



Attend a Tamron Tailgate – Follow facebook.com/TamronTailgate for schedule updates.
#WithMyTamron

TAMRON®

Tamron USA Inc., Copyright © 2015. All Rights Reserved
10 Austin Blvd., Commack, NY 11725, Phone: 631.858.8400 | Fax: 631.543.5666 | Toll Free: 1.800.827.8880
www.tamron-usa.com | www.tamron-usa.com/withmytamron