

# MACRO AND CLOSE-UP

By Kent DuFault

To get your mind thinking of a story with macro and close-up photography, imagine your micro scene as an example of ordinary life.

In Image 001, the top photo is a macro photograph of a plant sprouting from concrete. The bottom picture is a lone tree surviving in the arid landscape of Africa.

The story that these two photos tell isn't that far apart.



## Assignment:

Create at least five macro or close-up photographs that immortalize a real-life scene. Use Image 001 as your example.



Image 001 – Photograph (T) by [Stanislav Kondratiev](#) and Photograph (B) by [Annika Hering](#)



Image 002 – Photograph by [Daniel Cheung](#)

A fun way to break into macro and close-up photographic storytelling is to create your own story using toy figures.



Image 003 – Photograph by Rober Gonzalez



#### Remember:

To satisfy the requirements of a story, you need more than just a subject standing there. You must convey something to the viewer, or else it's merely a static shot. Compare Images 002 and 003 to review the difference and what it means to your story.



Image 004 – Photograph by [Daniel Cheung](#)

Use backgrounds, props, and creative thinking to turn your action figures into even more intricate stories.



#### Assignment:

Obtain a toy action figure or two and set up some stories. First, try a simple story, and then progress to more complicated stories with intricate sets.



Image 005 – Photograph by [Erop Kameneb](#)

Image 005 is a stunning photograph of a reptile. However, the story value is low. We don't learn much about the lizard other than what it looks like.

How do you instill a story element into macro and close-up shots of small creatures and insects?





Image 006 – Photograph by [Leon](#)



#### Key Point:

A perfect storytelling element for a small creature and insect photography is to show their environment or an activity that they are engaged in, such as feeding.



Image 007 – Photograph by [Bonnie Kittle](#)

Seeing the environment of this crab tells us a story about its life.



#### Assignment:

Spend some time photographing small creatures or insects while using their environment to add a story element. If you don't own a little animal or reptile, ask around to friends, family, and co-workers. If you still can't locate any small creatures, try a zoo, or you can get truly serious and find them in the wild. Insects are easier to find but harder to photograph. Reptiles make an excellent starter subject.



Image 008 – Photograph (T) by [Dan Carlson](#) and Photograph (B) by [Sandy Millar](#)

Another excellent tool for telling a macro or close-up story is the cycle of life. Much of macro photography centers on nature subjects. Use that technique to your advantage. For the top photograph in Image 008, the photographer used the magnifying quality of water droplets to tell the story of how a leaf can feed itself. The bottom photo tells the story of birth, as a red poppy flower emerges from the bud.



#### Assignment:

Go out and photograph flowers and plants. Think about the story you want to tell and how you're going to display it in a photo. Use the 'cycle of life' as your inspiration.



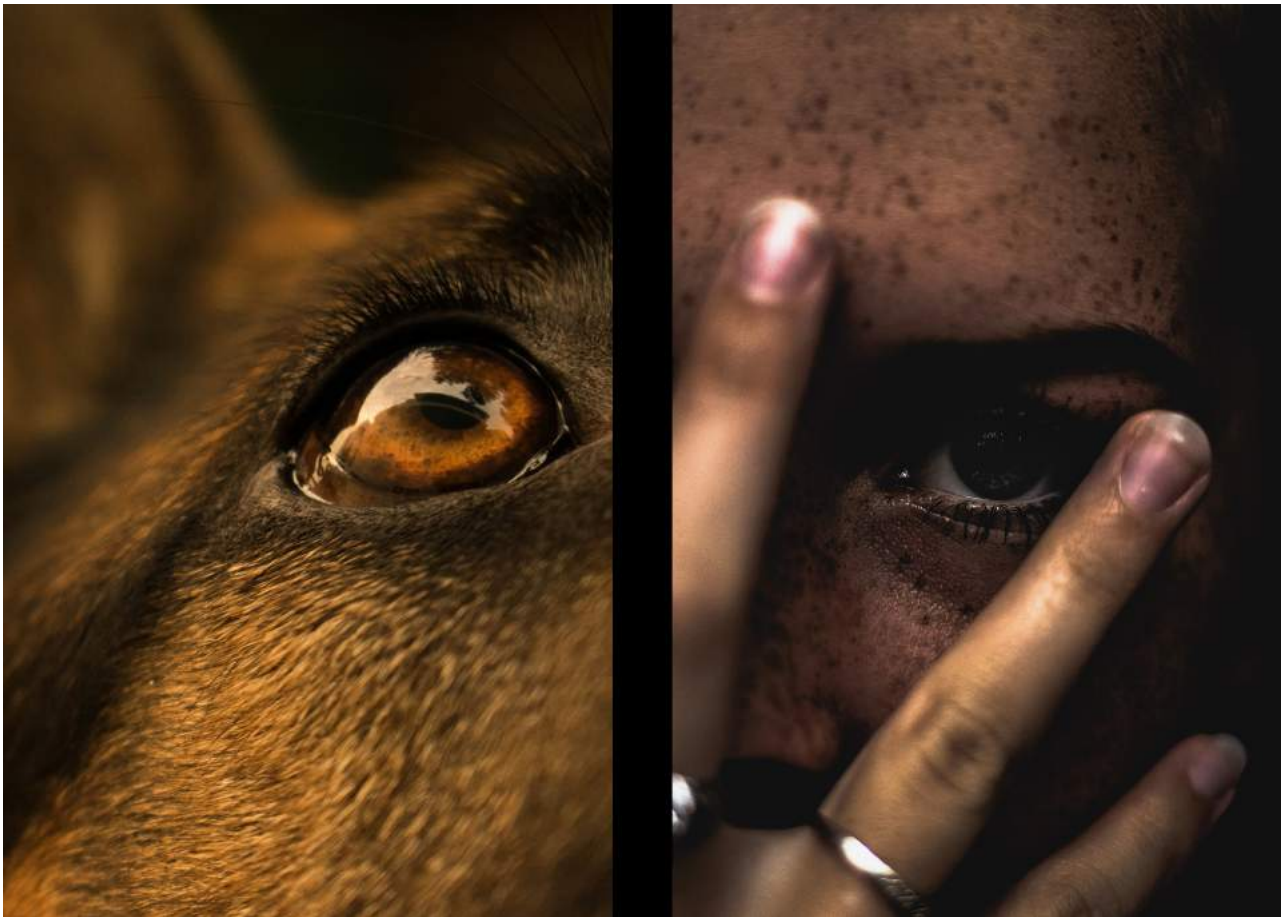


Image 009 – Photograph (L) by [Aniruddh Dixit](#) and Photograph (R) by [Cloudy Pixel](#)

I like to tell stories with macro and close-up photography by picking a theme and then creating a body of work around that theme.

Let's say the theme is 'eyes.'

The story on the left of Image 009 is 'the expectant dog.'

The story on the right is 'a woman hidden or hiding.'

Both pictures fall within my theme of 'eyes.'



### Assignment:

Pick a theme and then create a body of work around that theme. Vary the story from picture to picture. For example, in Image 009, the theme was eyes, but the story in each photograph was quite different.



Image 010 – Photograph (T) by [Shoabib SR](#) and Photograph (B) by [Robert Zunikoff](#)



### Remember:

Tell the big story!

This is a mantra of the photojournalist. These photographers gather bits and pieces into different story photos that, as a whole, create the big picture. This skill is also often used by wedding photographers.

The two photographs presented in Image 010 could be part of a bigger story.

Perhaps the watch depicts the time that a wedding started?

Maybe the rope is one piece of a larger story about a lone sailor crossing the Atlantic Ocean in his or her sailboat?



### Assignment:

Pick a story that you wish to tell. Think about the big story. Now, plan out and execute how you could use macro or close-up photography as part of that story. Use the examples portrayed in Image 010 to get you thinking.