

SELECTIVE COLOR

This setting, unlike other Special Effects options, gives you the ability to control its operation. When you first choose this option from the menu screen, the camera displays a message telling you to press OK to select a color, as shown in Figure 3-72.

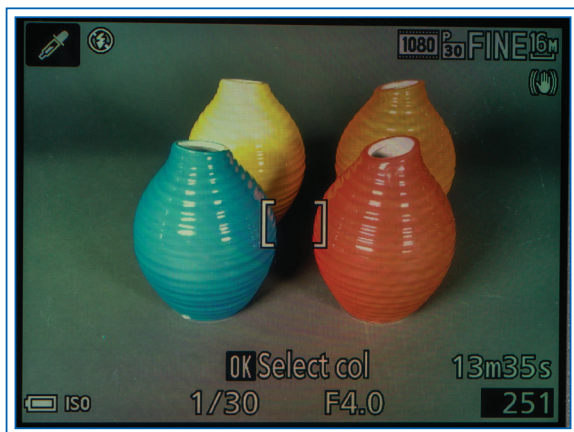


Figure 3-72. Selective Color Setting - Screen to Select Color

When you press the OK button, the camera displays a yellow indicator beside a vertical spectrum of 12 colors plus one entry for no color, as shown in Figure 3-73.



Figure 3-73. Selective Color Setting - Color Scale on Screen

Use the command dial to move the indicator to the block in the spectrum for the single color you want to retain in the image. Note that the topmost block in the spectrum has a negative symbol in it; if you select that block, the camera retains all colors and does not use the Selective Color function. The result in that case is an ordinary image with no special processing at all. It will look as if you took the image using Program or Auto mode. You might want to consider leaving the Special Effects mode setting on Selective Color with this top option selected. That way, if you accidentally turn the mode dial to the EFFECTS position, any shots (or videos) you take will not have the exotic processing of a setting such as Soft, Nostalgic Sepia, and the like.



Figure 3-74. Selective Color Example Image

Figure 3-74 shows the image that resulted from setting the color to blue on a partly cloudy day at a crafts fair.

HIGH ISO MONOCHROME

With the High ISO Monochrome setting, Nikon has made it clear in the setting's name what sort of special processing is involved; the camera uses a very high ISO setting with monochrome rather than color processing. In fact, with this setting, the camera sets ISO to what Nikon calls Hi 1, which is the equivalent of ISO

12800, a setting that cannot be achieved through the ISO menu item.

Although this setting can be useful when you are shooting in very dimly lighted conditions, in my opinion its best use is for creative purposes, when you want to have the gritty, grainy effect that is produced by the visual noise from high ISO settings. I enjoy using this setting when I don't want a great deal of realism and the subject calls for an impressionistic look. In Figure 3-75, I photographed a model Ferris wheel in front of a window, which resulted in an emphasis on the geometric pattern.



Figure 3-75. High ISO Monochrome Example Image

With this setting, the flash is forced off and cannot be used.

CROSS PROCESS

Finally, with the Cross Process effect, the P600 lets you add a color cast to an image. When you select this setting, the camera places a color scale at the right of the display with a pointer indicating one of the colors, as with the Food setting of Scene mode. Use the command dial to move the pointer to your choice of blue, red, green, or yellow, as shown in Figure 3-76.

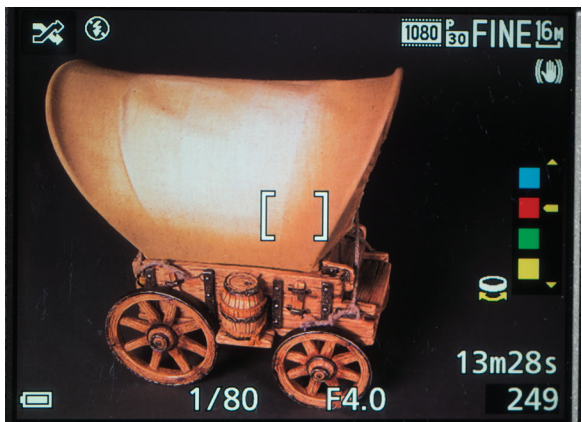


Figure 3-76. Cross Process Setting - Color Selection Screen

With the pointer in that position, take the picture; the image will be colored with the selected hue. This option can add an atmospheric aura to images. Figure 3-77 shows the use of all four settings along with an unaffected image, for comparison.

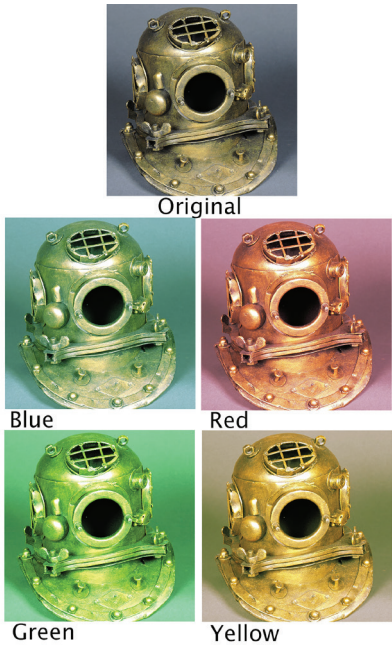


Figure 3-77. Comparison of Cross Process Settings

One final note: When the Movie Options menu item is set to the HS 480/4x option, the Soft, Nostalgic Sepia, and Painting settings of Special Effects mode are not available.

User Settings Mode

The last slot on the mode dial to be discussed is the U setting, as shown in Figure 3-78, which allows you, the user, to store a full set of your favorite or most often-needed settings for immediate recall.



Figure 3-78. User Settings Mode

When you turn the mode dial to the U position, you take advantage of a powerful feature of the Coolpix P600. You can set up the camera exactly as you want it, with a shooting mode, zoom amount, white balance, ISO, and other settings, and then recall all of those settings instantly just by turning the mode dial to the letter U. The only shooting modes that you can save settings for are Program, Aperture Priority, Shutter Priority, and Manual; you cannot save them for the Auto, Scene, or Special Effects modes.

Here is how this works. First, set up the camera with all of the settings you want to be able to recall. For example, suppose you are going to do street photography. You may want to shoot with a fast shutter speed, say 1/250 second, at ISO 1600 in black-and-white, using continuous shooting with autofocus, at the 16:9 aspect ratio with a large image size and Fine quality.

Your first step is to make all of these settings. Turn the mode dial to S for Shutter Priority, and turn the command dial to set a shutter speed of 1/250 second. Then press the Menu button

to summon the Shooting menu, go to the menu item for Image Quality, and choose Fine. For Image Size, select 4608 x 2592 pixels, which, as indicated to the left of those numbers, translates to a 16:9 aspect ratio with an image size of 12 megapixels. Then navigate in the menu system to the Picture Control selection and select the Monochrome option. Set the ISO menu option to 1600. Next, select the Continuous item on the Shooting menu and navigate to the next screen; on that screen, go down to the second option, Continuous H, marked with an H on a stack of frames, for high-speed shots. You also may want to push the zoom lever all the way to the left, for wide-angle shooting.

Once all of these settings are made, press the Menu button to call up the Shooting menu, and scroll down (or scroll up and wrap around to the bottom) to select the Save User Settings item, shown in Figure 3-79, and then press the OK button or the Right button; you will see a confirming message saying Done.



Figure 3-79. Save User Settings Menu Item

Be sure you have all the settings the way you want them before you press OK or the Right button, because the camera does not ask you to confirm your choices; it just says “Done.” I was a bit taken aback the first couple of times I used this feature, because in most other cases there’s a chance to back out before you make your choices final; not here.

Now, to check how this option worked, try making some very different settings, such as Manual exposure with continuous shooting turned off, a shutter speed of one second, Picture Control set to Standard, the zoom lever moved all the way to the T for telephoto, ISO set to Auto, and Image Size set to the maximum, 4608 x 3456 pixels. Then turn the mode dial to the U setting, and you will see that all of the custom settings you made earlier have come back, including the zoom position, shutter speed, black-and-white shooting at ISO 1600, and everything else. This is really a wonderful feature, and more powerful than similar features on some other cameras, which can save menu settings but not settings such as shutter speed and zoom position.

The lone flaw I find with this mode is that there is only one slot for it on the mode dial, and therefore only one group of settings that can be saved at a time. But it's much better than nothing. I suggest you experiment to find one group of custom settings that is the most useful to you, and save it to the U mode for instant recall. Of course, you can change the settings that are stored as often as you like. You may want to jot down in a notebook some of your favorite groups of settings for various situations, so you can program the most appropriate set into the U slot when you're setting out for a particular type of shooting session.

CHAPTER 4: THE SHOOTING MENU

Much of the power of the Nikon Coolpix P600 comes from the many options included in the Shooting menu, which gives you control over the appearance of images and how they are captured. Depending on your preferences, you may not have to use this menu too much. You may prefer to use the various scene settings or Special Effects mode selections, which choose many options for you, or you may prefer, at least on occasion, to use Auto mode, in which the camera makes its own choices. However, it's nice to know you have this degree of control available if you want it, and it is useful to understand what types of items you can exercise control over.

The Shooting menu is easy to use once you have played around with it a bit. As I discussed earlier, the menu options change depending on the setting of the mode dial on top of the camera. For example, if the mode dial is set to the green camera icon, for Auto mode, the Shooting menu options are very limited, because Auto mode is for a user who wants the camera to make almost all of the decisions without input from him or her. If the mode dial is set to one of the dedicated scene types with its own slot on the dial (Landscape, Night Portrait, or Night Landscape), the Shooting menu is re-named after the currently active mode.

For example, if you select the Night Landscape mode from the mode dial and then press the Menu button, the menu that

appears on the display is labeled Night Landscape, rather than Shooting, as shown in Figure 4-1.

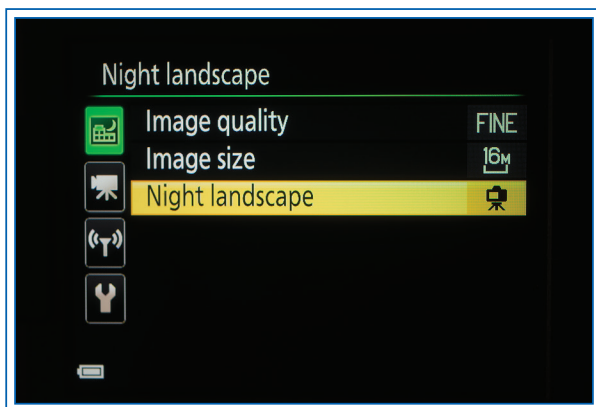


Figure 4-1. Night Landscape Menu Item

These menus, as in Auto mode, are abbreviated versions of the Shooting menu; they include only a few items from the normal Shooting menu, usually Image Quality and Image Size. In addition, they may include a specific menu item for the mode that is in effect. In this case, there is a Night Landscape menu item, which lets you select either Hand-held or Tripod for shooting.

When the mode dial is turned to the SCENE setting, pressing the Menu button brings up another version of the Shooting menu, in this case called the Scene menu. This menu provides a way to select either Scene Auto Selector or any one of the 17 specific scene types (Portrait, Easy Panorama, Sports, etc.).

In addition, at the very bottom of the Scene menu, just after the entries for Moon and Bird-watching, the camera presents you with the options for choosing Image Quality and Image Size, as shown in Figure 4-2. (The Image Quality and Image Size menu options are dimmed and unavailable for selection when Easy Panorama is selected for the scene type.)