Lens Ball Photography

Bringing a lens ball to the beach or placing one in front of a landscape scene can give great scenic compositions. But, you can also use a lens ball creatively in an at home set up.

Landscapes / Scenics

All you need to create great lens ball scenics is a lens ball, itself. And they're lightweight and can easily fit in your camera bag. Reach for it whenever inspiration strikes! You can set your lens ball on a surface, on the ground, or even just hold it up to the composition. The image inside the lens ball will be "upside down". You can always reverse this orientation in post processing, if desired. Be careful, as the lens ball will get hot when placed in the sun; it can cause burns if you pick it up incorrectly.

- Lensball – a 3 inch (80mm) is a great size. A "MerryNine K9 Crystal Ball" from Amazon will run about $19.

Indoor Lens Ball Creations

Apart from scenic compositions, you can also get creative with a lens ball at home. The following details the lens ball set up for at home photography.

- Tools:
    - Lens ball – a 3 inch (80mm) is a great size. A "MerryNine K9 Crystal Ball" from Amazon will run about $19.
    - Rubber O-Rings – will prevent lens ball from moving around.
    - Background – a dark, non-reflective background will allow your lens ball and colors to pop. I use a black felt drape material. Black poster board is also suitable.
    - Light Source Options (you don't need all of these, but here are some possibilities)
        - Flashlight (Multi row bulbs) – Eco Gear FX Emergency LED Safety Light, EM70 or equivalent will work well.
        - LED Glow Stick - I have an Isiler brand with 15 color modes.
        - Neon Necklaces or Neon Sticks from any craft or party store.
        - LED Foam Sticks. I got mine from Windy City Novelties. These give a more subtle look.
    - Colored Gels – these are placed over the flashlight bulb rows to give different colors to your light trails. Can get colored cellophane sheets from any craft store.
- Preparation: Use a darkened room, as it ensures good color contrast and pops of color. Avoid reflections falling on the lens ball. Arrange a composition so that you will be able to sweep light behind and around the lens ball.
- Photography:
    - Focus on the lens ball. Set ISO to approximately 200 to avoid noise. In a dark room, on bulb mode, start with f8 or f11. This should allow about a 2-10 second pass with your light source. Pass the light source behind and around the lens ball, to taste. Use various sweep patterns to get different looks.

- Important: A note on Aperture: Upon review of your image (pay attention to the histogram), if your light source is too bright or blown out, you can adjust your aperture to f22. The proper aperture will depend on the strength of your light source.
- Practice and have fun! You will never get the same two resultant images.

- Be Creative
  - Try using a reflective base such as a mirror or an acrylic base to give reflections of the lens ball and light patterns.
  - Experiment with other transparent objects.
  - Try using other backgrounds. You can put the lens ball on a laptop and then project swirl video patterns behind it for light trails. "Google" computer swirl videos.